

The applicability of a universal definition passive to certain grammatical constructions in Spanish *

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En este trabajo se investiga la aplicabilidad de una definición universal de voz pasiva a un número de estructuras gramaticales del español. Esta definición, propuesta por el profesor Edward L. Keenan, de U.C.L.A., y según la cual la pasiva es una relación entre predicados lógicos, pretende captar las propiedades compartidas por las construcciones pasivas en todas las lenguas naturales. De este modo se podrán establecer generalizaciones que conduzcan a una definición de la clase posible de lenguas humanas.

Aquí se estudia una variedad de predicados y se concluye que las diversas estructuras en que ellos ocurren, y que deben ser consideradas pasivas, son una muestra clara de que la relación activa-pasiva no es estructural, sino semántica. De acuerdo con este análisis, una transformación de pasiva no se justifica en español. Los datos además confirman una definición de pasiva como una regla de degradación del sujeto y no de promoción de un complemento directo como lo ha postulado la Gramática Relacional.

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INTRODUCTION

Keenan (Ms., 2/22/78) has recently proposed a universally valid definition of passive. The purpose of such a definition is to allow us to state the universal properties of passive in natural languages and to draw cross-linguistic generalizations which will ultimately lead us to a definition of the class of possible human languages (Keenan, 1977).

In Keenan's approach, passive is defined as a relation between logical predicates. We quote the definition for ease of reference:

"For any two sentences S and T in any language L, S *bears a passive relation* to T iff the three conditions below all hold:

(i) *The Predicate Condition*: the logical predicate of S is a passive of the logical predicate of T. The definition of passive predicate is given as follows: Let A be an n-place predicate, n greater than zero. Then P is a basic passive of A iff P is an n-1 place predicate such that for all x_1, x_2, \dots, x_{n-1} we have that:

$P(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_{n-1}) = t$ iff for some y, $A(y, x_2, \dots, x_{j-1}, x_j, \dots, x_{n-1}) = t$ (j greater than or equal to 1, less than or equal to n). And P is an extended passive just in case P is an N-place predicate, and whenever it holds of n elements, i. e., $P(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) = t$ we have that $A(x_n, x_2, \dots, x_{j-1}, x_1, x_j, \dots, x_{n-1}) = t$.

(ii) *The Correspondence Condition*: for each distinct major constituent C in S there is a distinct constituent C' in T such that:

(a) C and C' are conditioned variants

(b) C and C' are semantically interpreted as the same thing (i. e., if they are simple NPs they refer to the same x)

(c) C' bears the same thematic relation (Agent, etc.) to T as C does to S. In such cases we say that C' *corresponds* to C.

(iii) *The Demotion Condition*: the subject (Su) of T is not a correspondent of anything in S which is a Su, a DO (Direct Object), or an IO (Indirect Object) of S (i. e., the Su of T has "lost" its grammatical status in S, i. e., been demoted)".

This paper investigates the scope of the above definition and its applicability to certain grammatical constructions in Spanish.

I. *The "Canonical" Passive*

- 1 a. El cantante fue criticado por la prensa.
'The singer was criticized by the press'
- b. La prensa criticó al cantante.
'The press criticized the singer'

- 2 a. Los desertores fueron fusilados al amanecer.
'The deserters were shot at dawn'
- b. Los guardias fusilaron a los desertores al amanecer.
'The guards shot the deserters at dawn'

The examples above illustrate the canonical type of passive construction in Spanish, with *ser* plus an *adjectival participle* (*to be + participle*). We take the logical predicates of (1a) and (2a) to be "fue criticado por" ('was criticized by') and "fueron fusilados" ('were shot'). "Fueron fusilados" is a basic passive of "fusilaron" ('shot') since whenever "fueron fusilados" is true of some object *z*, then there is an object *x* such that "fusilaron" is true of the pair (*x*, *z*), as in (2b). "Fue criticado por" is true of the pair of objects "el cantante" (*z*) and "la prensa" (*x*), and it is an extended passive of "criticó" ('criticized'), which is true of the pair (*x*, *z*), as (1b) illustrates.

Two more conditions must hold for (1a, 2a) to be passives of (1b, 2b) respectively: the correspondence condition and the demotion condition. Both are obviously fulfilled, so we conclude that (1a, 2a) are passives of (1b, 2b).

It has been argued (Silva-Corvalán, 1977) that passive sentences like (1a, 2a) should not be treated as transformationally derived. In fact, there appears to be sufficient evidence for an analysis of the past participles as adjectives in these constructions. Once this argument is accepted, then there is no reason not to derive these passives directly from the Phrase-Structure rules, like other copulative sentences.

II. "Estar" plus Adjectival Participles

Spanish grammarians have often noted that a certain class of sentences with *estar* ('be'), namely those with *estar + adjectival participle*, display passive properties. These constructions, however, do not allow an agent 'por-phrase' ('by-phrase'), and this may be the reason that has led to the analysis of *estar + participle* sentences as active, or *copular*. In this section, we consider these constructions in the light of Keenan's universal definition of passive.

- 3 a. María está bonita / enferma / gorda.
'Mary is pretty / sick / fat.'
- b. Juan embelleció / enfermó / engordó a María.
'John beautified / sickened / fattened Mary.'

- 4 a. María está sentada.
'Mary is seated.'
- b. Juan sentó a María.
'John seated Mary.'
- 5 a. María está calmada / callada / cansada / enojada / aburrida / perdida.
'Mary is calmed / silent / tired / upset / bored / lost.'
- b. Juan calmó / calló / cansó / enojó / aburrió / perdió a María.
'John calmed / silenced / tired / upset / bored / lost Mary.'

Observe that in (3a) the predicate adjectives "bonita / enferma / gorda" may be taken with *está* to be the logical passive predicates of those in (3b). However, the definition of a passive predicate states that P is a basic passive of A iff whenever $(P(z) = t$ there is an object $x, A(x, z) = t$ and this condition does not hold for (3). We conclude that (3a) is not a passive of (3b) because "z está bonita / enferma / gorda" can be true even though there is no x such that "x embelleció / enfermó / engordó z" is true. For the same reason, (4a, 5a) are not the passives of (4b, 5b).

On the other hand, the analysis must be different for (6-8), which have a constituent that apparently corresponds to the semantic agent: "tus promesas" in (6a), "los relámpagos" in (7a), and "las pulgas" in (8a).

- 6 a. María está cansada de / enojada con / aburrida de / tus promesas.
'Mary is tired of / upset by / bored with / your promises.'
- b. Tus promesas cansan / enojan / aburren a María.
'Your promises tire / upset / bore Mary.'
- 7 a. El niño está asustado con los relámpagos.
'The child is scared of the lightning.'
- b. Los relámpagos asustan al niño.
'The lightning scares the child.'
- 8 a. El niño está picado de pulgas
'The child is flea-bitten.'
- b. Las pulgas picaron al niño.
'The fleas bit the child.'
- 9 a. Juan está aceptado / admitido en Lingüística.
'John is accepted / admitted in Linguistics.'
- b. El Departamento de Lingüística aceptó / admitió a Juan.
'The Department of Linguistics accepted / admitted John.'

In these sentences, the logical predicates in (a) “*está cansada de / enojada con / aburrida de*”, “*está asustado con*”, and “*está picado de*” bear an extended passive relation to “*cansan / enojan / aburren*”, “*asustan*”, and “*pican*” respectively. Further, the subject of the (b) sentences is an oblique constituent in the (a) sentences. The correspondence condition needs to be discussed: it is crucial for this condition to hold that the major constituents *C'* in (a) correspond semantically to the major constituents *C* in (b). In (6-8) *C'* and *C* are semantically the same, but it is not quite obvious that their thematic relations are the same. In (b) the DOs “*a María*” and “*al niño*” are experiencer-patient, but what is the thematic relation of the corresponding nominals in (a)? And is the relation of the subject in (b) the same as that of the oblique in (a)?

A close examination of (6-7) appears to indicate that the thematic relations of *C'* are the same as those of *C*: “*tus promesas*” and “*los relámpagos*” have the thematic relation “stimulus” both in (a) and (b): and “*María*” and “*el niño*” are also “experiencer-patient” when promoted to subject position in (a). The analysis shows, then, that (6a, 7a) are passives of (6b, 7b).

We take the predicate in (8a) “*está picado de*” to be the extended passive predicate of (8b) “*picaron*”. For every constituent in (a) there is a distinct constituent in (b) which is semantically the same and which bears the same thematic relation in both (a) and (b). Given that the subject in (b) is an oblique constituent in (a), we conclude that (8a, b) are in a passive relation.

Example (9) also illustrates a passive relation. The predicate “*está aceptado / admitido*” is a basic passive of that in (b) “*aceptó / admitió*” since (a) logically implies an agent. So $P(z) = t$ and $A(x, z) = t$. The correspondence and the demotion conditions also hold.

(10-15) illustrate *estar* constructions with a subject whose referent is –animate.

- 10 a. Los resultados están dados en la página 85.
 ‘The results are given on page 85’
 b. El autor dio los resultados en la página 85
 ‘The author gave the results on page 85’
- 11 a. El dinero está depositado en mi cuenta.
 ‘The money is deposited in my account’
 b. Juan depositó el dinero en mi cuenta.
 ‘John deposited the money in my account’

- 12 a. Las tazas están guardadas.
'The cups are stored away'
b. Juan guardó las tazas.
'John stored away the cups'
- 13 a. El suelo está manchado de aceite.
'The floor is stained with oil'
b. El aceite manchó el suelo.
'The oil stained the floor'
- 14 a. La manzana está comida de gusanos.
'The apple is worm-eaten'
b. Los gusanos comieron la manzana.
'The worms ate the apple'
- 15 a. La ropa está comida de polillas.
'the clothes are moth-eaten'
b. Las polillas comieron la ropa.
'The moths ate the clothes'

It is clear that in (10-15) an entity different from that referenced by the subject of the (a) sentences performed the actions. Thus the predicates in (a) are in a passive relation to those in (b), and the demotion condition also holds. In fact (10-12) cannot have an expressed agent; and in (13-15) the agent appears in an oblique phrase. The correspondence condition is also fulfilled by the constituents in (a, b): they are semantically the same, and the subjects in (10a-15a) are "patient" and so are the corresponding DOs in (10b-15b). "Gusanos" is "agent" (or perhaps "agent-experiencer") both in (14a, b), and "aceite" is "agent" (or "instrument") in (15a, b). Note that if the preposition "de" ('of') were replaced by "con" ('with') as in "El suelo está manchado *con* aceite", the corresponding (b) sentence would be "Juan manchó el suelo *con* aceite" ('John stained the floor with oil'), where "aceite" would clearly have the relation "instrument"

It is interesting to notice the tense differences between the passive (a) and the corresponding active (b) predicates. The passive predicates with *estar* are present and imperfective, while the corresponding active predicates are perfective. It seems to us that *estar* passives are usually imperfective, so we may somewhat speculatively hypothesize that the basic difference between *ser* and *estar* passives is given by their respective *perfective* and *imperfective* meanings. Bello (1925: 289) notes that in passives with *ser* the time of the action is the same as that indicated by the auxiliary verb (i. e., *ser*),

while in sentences with *estar* + past participle the action has occurred before the time indicated by the auxiliary verb (i. e., *estar*).

In this section, constructions with *estar* + adjectival participle have been discussed and some of them have been shown to fit the universal definition of passive given by Keenan. This characterization depends crucially on the identification of the logical predicate of any given sentence P, and the establishment of a passive relation between this predicate and the logical predicate of a sentence A. Thus, not all sentences with *estar* + participle are passive according to the definition. This prediction is correct and it reflects the fact that superficially identical structures may have different semantic interpretations.

III. *The Case of "open" and "close"*

In this section we discuss a class of sentences which contain a verbal form used intransitively and whose subject is –animate.

- 16 a. La tienda abre / cierra a las 12.
'The store opens / closes at 12.'
- 17 a. El correo abre / cierra temprano hoy.
'The post office opens / closes early today.'
- 18 a. La gobernación no atiende los domingos.
'The governor's office does not "offer services to the public" on Sundays.'
- 19 a. La oficina atiende de 8 a 5.
'The office "offers services to the public" from 8 to 5.'
- The predicates in (16 a-19 a) "abre, cierra, atiende" may also be used in transitive constructions, as in (16 b-19 b).
- 16 b. Juan abre / cierra la tienda a las 12.
'John opens / closes the store at 12.'
- 17 b. Los empleados abren / cierran el correo temprano hoy.
'The employees open / close the post office early today.'
- 18 b. Los empleados no atienden la gobernación los domingos.
'The employees don't "offer services to the public" at the gov's office on S.'
- 19 b. Juan atiende la oficina de 8 a 5.
'John "offers services to the public" at the office from 8 to 5.'

We may then ask ourselves if the (a) and the (b) sentences are in a passive relation. The logical predicates in (b) are 2-place predicates, i.e. true of pairs of objects. The logical predicates in (a) are 1-place predicates such that whenever $P(z) = t$ for any z then for some object x , $A(x,z) = t$, so we might conclude that P is a passive of A in each of the sentences in (16-19). However, our argument for a passive relation fails the correspondence condition both with respect to the semantic interpretation and the thematic relations of the constituents in (a) and (b).

According to the correspondence condition, the major constituents in the active and the possible related passive sentence must be semantically interpreted as the same thing. In (16-19), however, the referents of the subjects in (a) are not the same as those of the DO's in (b), although they are represented by the same lexical items. Observe that in (16 b), "la tienda" ('the store') refers exclusively to the place, the inanimate entity "tienda". In (16 a), on the other hand, the reference of "tienda" has been extended to include the people who work in it. This phenomenon has been sometimes referred to as "personification". A more appropriate term appears to be "animation", since it is not the case that "tienda" now refers only to "persons", but it has added the feature +animate to include "person/s who work at the store" in its reference. The animation of "tienda" allows it to cooccur with verbs of action such as *abrir* ('open') and *cerrar* ('close'). We have shown, then, that the subject of (16 a) is semantically different from the DO of (16 b) and this proves that (16 a) is not the passive of (16 b).

The subjects of (17 a-19 a) also illustrate this phenomenon of extension of the meaning of a -animate "place NP" to include the people who work at the place. Thus, the referent of, for example, the subject of (19 b) or (19 c), where "oficina" is exclusively -animate, is not the same as that of (19 a) where "oficina" is also +animate and cooccurs the action verb "atender" ('offer services to the public').

- 19 c. Barrieron la oficina.
'(They) swept the office'

The thematic relations of the subjects and DOs in (16-19) are consequently not the same. The DOs in (b) bear the thematic relation "patient" and the subjects in (a) the relation "agent"¹.

¹ This interpretation is valid at least to the extent that the subjects in (a) are capable of "action" with the incorporation of the feature +animate.

On the basis of the lack of major constituent correspondence between (a) and (b) in (16-19), we conclude that (a) and (b) are not in a passive to active relation.

IV. *The Case of "recibir", "bajar", and "subir"*

In this section we discuss constructions with predicates traditionally analyzed as actives, but which appear to show some passive properties.

- 20 a. María recibió una carta de Juan.
'Mary received a letter from John'
b. Juan envió una carta a María.
'John sent a letter to Mary'
- 21 a. María recibió una buena paliza de Juana.
'Mary received a good beating from Jane'
b. Juana le dio una buena paliza a María.
'Jane gave Mary a good beating'

Are (20 a-21 a) passives of (20 b-21 b)? To answer this question it is necessary to determine if "recibir" is a passive of "enviar" and "dar". Is it the case that whenever "x recibió y" is true there is a z such that "z envió / dio y to x"? Keenan (Ms. Nov., 8, '77) argues that this is not the case because the proposition "John received a letter (from Bill)" does not entail that someone (Bill) actually *sent* the letter to John (John may have received it by mistake) nor that anybody *gave* the letter to John (it may have been left in John's desk).

We have said before that a crucial step in the analysis of possible passive sentences is the determination of the logical predicate.² If a sentence is ambiguous as to what its logical predicate is, then it may be passive in one reading and active in a different reading. (21) illustrates this case. In one interpretation, the logical predicate of (21 a) is *recibió*, a 2-place predicate which is not a passive of the 3-place predicate *give*. On a different reading we may analyze "recibir una buena paliza de" as the main predicate. In this interpretation, whenever "recibir una buena paliza de" holds of some x, then there is a y such that "y dio una buena paliza a x" is true, so the predicate of (21 a) is an extended passive of (21 b). The demotion condition holds because the subject of (21 b) is not a subject, DO,

² There is a certain amount of arbitrariness in the determination of the logical predicate of a given sentence. This seems to us to be a weakness in Keenan's universal definition of passive.



or IO of (21 a). The correspondence condition also appears to hold (we assume that the dative clitic *le* is only a copy of a major constituent): “María” is “goal” in (a, b), “una buena paliza” is “patient” in (a, b), but is the thematic relation of the subject “Juana” in (21 b) the same as in the oblique in (21 a)? It appears that in (21 b) “Juana” has more agent-like properties than in (21 a), where its relation seems to be purely “source”. The difference is certainly quite subtle, and it may be to some extent due to the subjecthood status of “Juana” in (21 b) rather than to an actual thematic difference. We conclude, therefore, that “Juana” is “agent-source” in (a, b) and that (21 a) is a passive of (21 b) under a logical analysis which identifies “recibir una buena paliza de” as the logical predicate of (21 a):

(22, 23) raise a problem for Keenan’s definition of passive.

- 22 a. Los precios bajaron / subieron mucho este año.
 ‘Prices went down / went up a lot this year’
 b. Los comerciantes bajaron / subieron mucho los precios este año.
 ‘Salesmen raised / lowered the prices a lot this year’
- 23 a. Los impuestos subieron / bajaron este año.
 ‘Taxes went up / went down this year’
 b. El Gobierno subió / bajó los impuestos este año.
 ‘The government lowered / raised taxes this year’

Note that in general “x sube” does not entail “y sube x” (e.g. balloons, smoke, hot air) so it is possible to argue that “los precios” belong to a category of -animate entities which may spontaneously go up or down without the intervention of an outside agent. In the case of “prices”, questions of supply and demand may, for instance, cause the spontaneous rising of the prices. It is difficult, on the other hand, to sustain the same argument for “taxes” since taxes don’t go up or down spontaneously but as a result of usually governmental action. Therefore (23 a), implies a logical agent and is thus amenable to a passive analysis: “subieron” in (23 a) is a 1-place basic passive of “subió” (23 b) since whenever “subieron” is true of “los impuestos” there is an object x (e.g. “el Gobierno”) such that “subió” is true of the pair (x, los impuestos). The demotion and the correspondence conditions are met by (23 a, b): “los impuestos” is patient in both, and “el gobierno” is agent in (23 b). The agent may not be expressed in (23 a).

The existence of sentences like (23 a) as compared to (22 a) presents a problem because the analysis of a sentence as passive

would depend on the semantics of the subject NP in determining whether a predicate P is or is not in a passive relation to a predicate A. Note, however, that Keenan (Ms., 2/22/78) has stated that "to know if two predicates are in the passive relation we don't have to know anything about what sentences they occur in or which NPs occur in the sentences. All we have to know is which objects, pairs of objects, etc. the predicates are true of" (p. 4). If we accept this statement, then the predicate of (23 a) should be considered independently of the sentence where it occurs, in which case "subieron" may be true of 1 or 2 objects, according to whether it is intransitive or transitive. In this framework (23 a), would have an active intransitive predicate. Although this analysis may not seem to be the most appropriate, it is the only one allowed by the definition of passive and the condition stated above. Accordingly (23 a, b), are not in a passive relation. It is possible that such an analysis may capture the speakers' interpretation of "taxes" as entities that may go up or down spontaneously in a way analogous to "prices".

In section IV we have discussed sentences with "recibir", "bajar" and "subir" and have concluded that these predicates may not be analyzed as being in a passive relation to any other predicates.

V. *The Case of "resultar"*

Predicates with "resultar" ('turn out to be, to be, to result') seem to bear a passive relation to active predicates, as in (24, 25).

24. a. María resultó favorecida por / perjudicada con los resultados.
'Mary was favoured / harmed by the results'
b. Los resultados favorecieron / perjudicaron a María.
'The results favoured / harmed Mary'
25. a. Bill resultó herido / golpeado en la demostración.
'Bill was wounded / beaten at the demonstration'
b. La policía hirió / golpeó a Bill en la demostración.
'The police wounded / beat Bill at the demonstration'
c. Bill se hirió / se golpeó en la demostración.
'Bill hurt himself / hit himself at the demonstration'

(24 a) clearly fits the definition of passive: "resultó favorecida por / perjudicada con" (P) is an extended passive of "favorecida / perjudicada" (A) since whenever $P(z, x) = t$, then $A(x, z) = t$, and the correspondence and demotion conditions are also met.

It might be argued that (25 a) does not imply the existence of an agent different from Bill, in which case (25 a) would not bear a

passive relation to (25 b) since "Bill" would be both "agent" and "patient" in (25 a). Observe, however, that the identity between agent and patient in a given sentence in Spanish is expressed by means of a reflexive construction with *se*, as in (25 c).

- 25 c. Bill se hirió en la demostración.
'Bill got hurt at the demonstration'

Anarguably (25 c), completely excludes the possibility of an outside agent, while (25 a) does not. On the other hand, it seems that "Bill" has more agent-like characteristics in (25 a), but this may also be due to the subject status of "Bill" in (25 a), as "María" in (21 a).

In sum, predicates with "resultar + past participle" have been shown to bear a passive relation to corresponding active predicates according to Keenan's definition. Spanish constructions with "resultar + pp" correspond fairly closely to English constructions with "get + pp" as in "Bill got hurt by the police", but this correspondence does not extend to sentences like "Bill got his bicycle stolen", i.e. when a DO occurs between "get" and the "past participle". This latter construction does not have a syntactic parallel in Spanish.

It must be noted that passive predicates with "resultar + pp" are of restricted productivity.

VI. *Impersonal Sentences with Zero Subject and Third Person Plural Verb*

In this section we discuss a type of impersonal sentence which has been referred to in the literature (García, 1975) as one of the three passive-like devices in Spanish (the other two being constructions with *se* and with *uno* ('one')). In this type of impersonal sentence, illustrated in (26), the verb appears in the third person plural form and there is no expressed independent subject NP.

26. Compraron la casa de la esquina.
'(They) bought the house at the corner'

Note that the subject marker on the verb (3 pl.) in (26) is non-anaphoric and non-referential. Even though (26) implies an agent, the speaker does not know who this agent may be. Compare (26) with (27, 28).

27. Los Smiths regresaron a Los Angeles y ϕ compraron la casa de la esquina.

'The Smiths returned to L.A. and (they) bought the house at the corner'

28. Los Smiths regresaron a L.A. Ellos compraron la casa de la esquina.

They

Where the verb inflection in (27) and the pronoun in (28) are anaphoric and referential. Sentences like (26) are then ambiguous as to whether the subject marker on the verb is referential or not, and only the context may disambiguate the situation. Further examples of this type are (29,30).

- 29 a. Atropellaron al perro.
'(They) ran over the dog'

- 30 a. Podaron los árboles del parque.
'(They) trimmed the trees in the park'

There are also impersonal sentences with 3 p. pl. verb whose referent is to a certain extent identified by means of an adverbial locative phrase, as in (31-34).

- 31 a. Hablan portugués en Brasil.
'(They) speak Portuguese in Brazil'

- 32 a. Producen muy buen vino en Chile.
'(They) produce very good wine in Chile'

- 33 a. Bailan mucho durante el Carnaval de Río.
'(They) dance a lot during the Carnival in Río'

- 34 a. Trabajan duro en este país.
'(They) work hard in this country'

These impersonal constructions are of interest to us because they appear to bear a passive relation to the following constructions with expressed agents:

- 26 b. Los Rojas compraron la casa de la esquina.
'The Rojas

- 29 b. Un camionero atropelló al perro.
'A truck driver

- 30 b. Unos hombres podaron los árboles del parque.
'Some men
- 31 b. La gente habla portugués en Brasil.
'People
- 34 b. La gente trabaja duro en este país.
'People

Thus, the logical predicates of (26 a) and (29 a-32 a) may be analyzed as being 1-place predicates and (33 a, 34 a) as being 0-place predicates, all of them bearing a passive relation to the corresponding (b) sentences. It follows that the correspondence and demotion conditions also hold since the only difference between the (a) and the (b) sentences is the lack of expressed agent in (b). Recall, however, the condition stated in section IV. If we adhere to this condition, then our analysis must treat predicates like "comprar", "atropellar", "podar", etc. as true of pairs of objects regardless of the sentences in which they occur. In this context independent analysis, the logical predicates in (a) above are not passives of the logical predicates in (b). The fact that one of the arguments, the subject, of the predicates in (a) is never expressed in these sentences does not change the analysis, but this explains the "passive-like" properties of the impersonal sentences: they fulfill two of the three conditions for a passive definition, the demotion of the subject, to zero in this case, and the correspondence condition.

Weber (Ms., 1978) has suggested an amendment to Keenan's definition of passive in the following terms: "If P lacks a subject NP, then P is a passive of A only if there is a sentence P' such that:

- 1) P can be derived from P' simply by the deletion of the subject NP, and 2) P' is a passive of A."

If we postulate that impersonal sentences result from the deletion of a subject NP which is + PRO + IMPERSONAL, then the deep structure of (26 a) would be roughly as in (26 c).

- 26 c. PRO compraron la casa de la esquina.
 (+ IMP)
 (+ 3 pl.)

(26 a) is derived from (26 c) by the deletion of the subject, but

(26 c) is *not* a passive of (26 b), so this is further evidence for a non-passive analysis of impersonal sentences with zero subject and 3 p. pl. verb.³

VII. "SE" Constructions

This section presents a summary outline of the various *se* constructions and discusses impersonal sentences with *se* in the light of Keenan's definition of passive.

The morpheme *se* has traditionally been described as having three uses: 1. allomorphic; 2. reflexive-reciprocal; 3. impersonal.

1. *Allomorphic "se"*. *Se* appears as an allomorph of the dative clitics *le*, *les* (3 p. sg., pl.) in sentences where it cooccurs with the accusative clitics *la*, *lo* (3 sg., fem., masc.), *las*, *los* (3 pl., fem., masc.) as in (35 b; 36 b).

- 35 a. María le_1 dio un libro $_j$ a Juan $_1$
 'Mary (to him) gave a book to John'
 b. María se_1 lo_j dio a Juan $_1$
 'Mary (to him) gave it to John'
- 36 a. María les_1 dio unas manzanas $_j$ a los niños $_1$.
 'Mary (to them) gave some apples to the children'
 b. María se_1 las_j dio a dos niños $_1$.
 'Mary (to them) gave them to the children'

2. *Reflexive-Reciprocal*. *Se* is used as the reciprocal pronoun for 3 person plural, and as a reflexive pronoun for 3 p. singular and plural. The reciprocal use is illustrated in (37).

37. Juan y María *se* escriben a menudo.
 'John and Mary often write to each other'

³ Weber has lately expressed to me that his "simply by the deletion of the subject NP" refers only to cases of deletion, determined by discourse factors, of subject NPs which may optionally be expressed in surface structure. This interpretation would invalidate my analysis of (26c), but then Weber's amendment must make explicit that P' is an actual surface sentence.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to argue for or against a given generative description of impersonal sentences, but it seems to me that there is a strong case to be made for a PS rule in Spanish which would expand S into a VP and optional NP, as in "S → (NP) VP". Discourse sensitive semantic rules would then assign an interpretation to the sentences generated.

There are two types of reflexive constructions in Spanish, called *regular* and *romance* reflexive. In these constructions *se* is part of a paradigm which includes:

me (1 sg.)	nos (1 pl.)
te (2 sg.)	os / <i>se</i> (2 pl.)
<i>se</i> (3 sg.)	<i>se</i> (3 pl.)

2.1 *Regular reflexive*

In these constructions there is identical reference between subject and object, the verb is transitive, and the subject is + animate, as in the examples below.

38. Juan_i se_i lava bien.
'John washes himself well'

2.2 *Romance reflexive*

There seem to be at least four different types of romance reflexive constructions, illustrated below.

2.2.1. *With an "intermediary" subject* which is not identical with the DO. The subject brings about the action by ordering, directing, paying, etc.

- 39 a. Juan se hizo un terno.
'John had himself a suit made'
- 40 a. Juan se operó anoche.
'John was operated on last night'

Observe that (39 a, 40 a) appear to be analysable as passives of (39 b, 40 b):

- 39 b. El sastre le hizo un terno a Juan.
'The tailor made John a suit'
- 40 b. El doctor operó a Juan anoche.
'The doctor operated on John last night'

But (39, 40) do not meet the correspondence condition, which requires that the thematic relations be the same. In fact, Juan is "benefactee" and "patient" in (39 b) and (40 b) respectively, while in (39 a) and (40 a) "Juan" is causer in addition to "benefactee". In the same way, reflexive sentences such as (37, 38) above would fail the correspondence condition with possible corresponding actives because they do not preserve the thematic relations.

3. Impersonal "SE"

In what follows, we study the properties of impersonal *se* sentences with the purpose of establishing if any of them fit the definition of passive. Due to length limits I do not concern myself here with the various and conflicting existing proposals which try to account for the derivation of these sentences. I will base my analysis on surface structure and I will discuss these constructions only with reference to Keenan's universal definition of passive.

Impersonal constructions with *se* occur only with a third person singular or plural verb, and those in (3.1.3, 4, , 6; 3.2), the properly impersonal ones, occur only with verbs that imply human agents. Meteorological verbs constitute an exception in constructions such as "Se llovió la casa" ('The house got rained in'). We may divide these impersonal sentences in two large groups: 3.1 those that have a nominal which may trigger verb agreement; 3.2 those that do not have a nominal.

3.1 With nominal

3.1.1 *Reflexive-passives*. The examples below illustrate a type of construction where *se* cooccurs with a transitive verb which is used intransitively, and a -animate subject NP triggers agreement on the verb.

- 50 a. "Hamlet" se escribió en el siglo XVI.
'"Hamlet" was written in the 16th century'
b. Shakespeare escribió "Hamlet" en el siglo XVI.
'Shakespeare wrote "Hamlet" in the 16th century'
- 51 a. Las pinturas se exhiben en el salón rojo.
'The paintings are exhibited in the red room'
b. El artista exhibe las pinturas en el salón rojo.
'The artist exhibits the paintings in the red room'
- 52 a. Estas lenguas se hablan en Africa.
'These languages are spoken in Africa'
b. La gente habla estas lenguas en Africa.
'People speak these languages in Africa'
- 53 a. La noticia se ha divulgado por todo el país.
'The news has been disclosed throughout the country'
b. La prensa ha divulgado la noticia por todo el país.
'The press has disclosed the news throughout the country'
- 54 a. Las paces se firmaron por los plenipotenciarios.
'The peace treaties were signed by the plenipotenciaries'

- b. Los plenipotenciarios firmaron las paces.
 'The plenipotentiaries signed the peace treaties'

We take the logical predicates of (50 a-53 a) to be *se + verb*. These predicates (P) bear a basic passive relation to corresponding predicates (A) without *se* because P is a 1-place predicate and whenever $P(z) = t$ for any z then for some object x , $A(x, z) = t$, as illustrated by (50 b-53 b) above. The correspondence condition also holds because for each major constituent C' in (a) there is a distinct constituent C in (b), and both C' and C are semantically the same and bear the same thematic relation. (a) also fulfills the demotion condition because the subject of (b) is not the subject, nor a DO or IO in (a). In fact, the agent may not be expressed in reflexive-passive sentences, except in very rare sentences such as the one exemplified by (54 a). (54 a) is an extended passive (the logical predicate of which is "se firmaron por") of (54 b). We conclude, therefore, that Keenan's definition correctly characterizes reflexive-passive constructions as passive.

3.1.2 *Ambiguous between reflexive and passive.* Sentences (55 a-58 a) illustrate a type of construction which appears to be ambiguous between a passive and an active meaning.

- 55 a. El dulce se quemó (con el fuego tan fuerte).
 'The jam burnt (with the strong fire)'
 b. El fuego tan fuerte quemó el dulce.
 'The strong fire burned the jam'
- 56 a. El vaso se quebró (con el agua caliente).
 'The glass broke (with the hot water)'
 b. El agua caliente quebró el vaso.
 'The hot water broke the glass'
- 57 a. La puerta se abrió (a las 8).
 'The door was opened (at 8)'
 b. Juan abrió la puerta.
 'John opened the door'
- 58 a. Los techos se hundieron (con el peso de la nieve).
 'The roofs sank (with the weight of the snow)'
 b. El peso de la nieve hundió los techos.
 'The weight of the snow sank the roofs'

We have already established that predicates of the types *se + verb* are passives of predicates without *se*. The next step is to investigate if the other conditions hold between the (a) and the (b) sentences above.

It is clear that the demotion condition is fulfilled but the thematic relations need to be discussed. The DOs in (b) are patient. Are the corresponding subject NPs also patient? the answer is “yes”. But in addition to being patient, these NPs are often viewed as somehow responsible for the occurrence of the event onto themselves. This is the so-called “middle voice”, which implies a certain amount of “involvement” of the subject in the action. Note, however, that with the PPs “a las 8” and “con el peso de la nieve” added to (57, 58) the “middle” reading appears to be lost. By defining the action as occurring at a specific time in (57 a), the -animate subject “puerta” loses its agent-like properties and an animate agent is implied as causing opening of the door. The PP in (58) signals the agent-causer of the action and here again the subject loses its agent-like properties. (57 a, 58 a) would then have to be interpreted as passives given that all the conditions would be fulfilled. On the other hand, without the PPs the ambiguity remains and we would have to conclude that if the subject is assigned the feature \pm agent, which is possible under a spontaneous occurrence of the action, the correspondence condition fails and (a) is not a passive of (b) in (57, 58).

The analysis of (55 a, 56 a) appears to be even more problematic. Somehow both “el vaso” and “el dulce” seem to possess the property of “breaking” and “burning” by themselves, without implying an outside agent. Even if we add a PP which may be understood as signalling the agent, it does not seem to be possible to sustain an analysis where “vaso” and “dulce” are solely subject patient. This appears to indicate that “el fuego tan fuerte” and “el agua caliente” are not the only responsible agents, i.e. that “dulce” and “vaso” are to some extent agents and that therefore the correspondence condition between (55, 66) fails. According to Keenan’s definition of passives, middle-voice constructions do not qualify as passives, but the fact that they meet one of the conditions (i.e. passive predicate) explains their passive-like properties.

It is not surprising, then, that sentences like those in (55 a-58 a) are considered to be ambiguous as to whether they are “active” or “passive-reflexive”. Keenan’s definition resolves the problem quite nicely by not assigning the label “passive” to any particular structure, but to sentences which fulfill certain semantic and syntactic conditions.

3.1.3 With generic nominals. The nominal in these sentences may or may not trigger agreement on the verb. The variation is dialectal, the standard form being that with agreement. The unmarked order

of these sentences is VS. The postverbal position of the NP plus the fact that it does not always trigger agreement, has led some linguists to analyze it as a DO (Aissen (1973) Otero (1972, 76) ⁴).

The grammatical relation of the NP in these sentences is not crucial to our study. Still, we assume here that the NP is the subject in these sentences for the following reasons: 1. the statistically most frequent order in one argument sentences is VS in Spanish (see Silva-Corvalán 77-78), and in the sentences under study, the NP occupies the postverbal position; 2. the verb always agrees with the subject in standard Spanish; 3. it is not possible to pronominalize the NP by means of an accusative pronoun, as shown by the (b) sentences below.

- 59 a. Se alquilan apartamentos.
'Apartments for rent'
b. *Se los alquilan.
c. Se alquila apartamentos.
'(They) rent apartments' (Sub-standard).
d. Juan alquila apartamentos.
'John rents apartmens'
e. Alquilan apartamentos.
'(They) rent apartments'
- 60 a. Se venden botellas.
'Bottles for sale'
b. *Se las venden.
c. Se vende botellas.
'Bottles for sale' (sub-standard)
d. Juan vende botellas.
'John sells bottles'
e. Venden botellas.
'(They) sell bottles'
- 61 a. Se arreglan zapatos.
'Shoes repaired'
b. *Se los arreglan.
c. Se arregla zapatos.
'(They) repair shoes'

⁴ Aissen explains agreement between verb and DO as the result of an analogic rule which applies when the DO "looks like a subject", and Otero considers those sentences where there is agreement as "agrammatical". Of the two proposals, Aissen's appears to be more adequate, though the condition "to look like a subject" is not made explicit and it remains a weakness in her analysis.

- d. Juan arregla zapatos.
'John repairs shoes'
- e. Arreglan zapatos.
'(They) repair shoes'

What we want to establish here is whether the sentences in (a) and (c) are passives of those in (d) or (e) (the *e* class of sentences is discussed in section VI). The predicates of (a) and (c) bear a passive relation to those in (d) and (e), irrespective of whether one of the arguments is not expressed in (e), and the demotion condition is met. The correspondence condition also holds because the DOs are patient in (d, e) and they are also patient in (a), regardless of their grammatical relation. The thematic relations of the NPs are the (a), (c), (d), and (e) sentences. We conclude, then, that sentences of the type illustrated by (59 a-61 a) fit the definition of personal passive and all its conditions; and sentences like (59 c-61 c) where the NP is a DO because it does not trigger agreement, fit the definition of impersonal passive.

3.1.4 (62 a-64 a) illustrate sentences with impersonal *se* in which the NP is clearly a DO: it may be replaced by an accusative clitic; it is preceded by the object marker *a*; and it does not trigger agreement.

- 62 a. Se fusiló a los desertores.
'The deserters were shot'
- b. Los guardias fusilaron a los desertores.
'The guards shot the deserters'
- c. Los desertores fueron fusilados.
(as a.)

- 63 a. Se curó al enfermo.
'The sick person was cured'
- b. El doctor curó al enfermo.
'The doctor cured the sick person'
- c. El enfermo fue curado.
'The sick person was cured'

- 64 a. Se respeta a los mayores.
'The elderly are respected'
- b. La gente respeta a los mayores.
'People respect the elderly'
- c. Los mayores son respetados.
(as a.)

(62 a - 64 a) are impersonal passives of (62 b - 64 b) given that there is no major subject NP in (a), the logical predicates in (a) bear a passive relation to those in (b), and the correspondence and demotion conditions hold.

This analysis raises a problem, however, because the sentences in (c) might be the passives of (a), which would contradict the observation that passives cannot bear a passive relation to other passives. On the other hand, it is possible that (c) is in a passive relation only to (b), given that the "por-agent" phrase which corresponds to the subject in (b) may be expressed in (c), while it cannot in (a). This is evidence against the interpretation of (c) as a passive of (a) because it violates the condition that requires that for each distinct major constituent C' in P there must be a distinct constituent C in A, and A here would lack a constituent that is present in P.

3.1.5 The only difference between sentences (65 a-67 a) and those discussed in (3.1.4) is that the DO does not need to be marked with *a*. The marker *a* serves, in addition to case marking, a disambiguating function in (3.1.4): to distinguish between a passive and a reflexive meaning (e.g. "Se curaron ϕ los enfermos" = "The sick people cured themselves"). In (65-67), on the other hand, the semantics of the verb and the NPs preclude the possibility of a reflexive interpretation where the subject is agent, so *a* becomes redundant. The NPs in (a) are DOs and patient.

- 65 a. Se llevaron los heridos al hospital.
'The wounded were taken to the hospital'.
b. Las enfermeras llevaron los heridos al hospital
'The nurses took the wounded to the hospital'
- 66 a. Se trajeron trabajadores del campo.
'Farm workers were brought in'
b. Las fábricas trajeron trabajadores del campo.
'The factories brought farm workers'
- 67 a. Se contrataron profesores de Alemania.
'German teachers were hired'
b. El gobierno contrató profesores de Alemania.
'The government hired teachers from Germany'

(a) are passives of (b) above. The analysis is the same as the one given for (62-64).

3.1.6 The impersonal *se* also occurs in sentences with a preverbal –animate NP, as in (68 a-70 a). These sentences have been contended to be different from (59 a-61 a) in that the NP in the former ones is considered to be both deep and surface subject because: 1. it always triggers verb agreement; 2. it is preverbal; 3. it cannot be replaced by an accusative pronoun ⁵.

- 68 a. Los apartamentos se venden fácilmente.
'The apartments sell easily'
b. Juan vende fácilmente los apartamentos.
'John sells the apts. easily'
c. Venden fácilmente los apartamentos.
'(They) sell the apts. easily'
- 69 a. El papel se paga bien aquí.
'Paper is paid well here'
b. La gente paga bien el papel aquí.
'People pay paper well here'
c. Pagan bien el papel aquí.
'(They) pay paper well here'
- 70 a. Las sábanas se cambian los lunes.
'The sheets are changed on Mondays'
b. La camarera cambia las sábanas los lunes.
'The chambermaid changes the sheets on Mondays'
c. Cambian las sábanas los lunes.
'(They) change the sheets on Mondays'

It has already been shown (section 3.1.3) that of the three arguments given in favour of the subjecthood of given NP (a fourth one has also been adduced: lack of a determiner in the NPs in (59 a-61 a), but Otero, (75), among others, has cited examples of subject NPs with zero determiner when the noun is generic), the positional one is not valid, and the sentences in (59a-61a) also trigger obligatory

⁵ It is certainly also possible to postulate a different analysis of these sentences, in which *se* is not part of the predicate but instead an impersonal subject (much like French 'on'). In this analysis, the predicates of (59a-61a) would fail the passive predicate condition. The advantages of this alternative analysis are not yet clear to me. In any case, there are many arguments against analyzing *se* as an NP subject (v. Contreras, 1974; García, 1975; Roldán, 1971). *Se* is a verb clitic pronoun which, as other pronouns, could be base generated. The different semantic values of *se* would be given by rules of semantic interpretation. This proposal must obviously be investigated further, but such a study is beyond the scope of this paper.

agreement in standard Spanish. The arguments for a different derivation or these two sets of sentences are rather weak. Note that it is also claimed (Aissen and Perlmutter, 1976) that a sentence like (68 a) has a subject, but (68 d) does not, primarily on the basis of subject placement.

- 68 d. (Fácilmente) se venden los apartamentos.
 'The apartments are sold easily'

Syntactic arguments based on the position of the constituents in a given sentence may be totally vacuous in Spanish given that word order is pragmatically determined (v. Silva-Corvalán, 77-78) and, as stated earlier in this paper, the usual position for the subject in intransitive constructions is VS.

There seems to be sufficient evidence to postulate for (68a-70a) the same analysis proposed for (59a-61a). Accordingly, we conclude that (68a-70a) are personal passives of the corresponding (b) and (c) sentences. It must be noted that (68 a) has an alternative "middle voice" interpretation which becomes clear if we replace "fácilmente" by "solos" ('alone'), as in (68e).

- 68 e. Los apartamentos se venden solos.
 'The apts. sell by themselves'.

In this reading, "los apartamentos" is both "agent" and "patient", (68a, e) fail the correspondence condition with (b, c), and cannot be analyzed as passive.

In section 3.1 we have discussed constructions with impersonal *se* and a transitive verb. It is concluded that these constructions fit Keenan's universal definition of passive. This definition solves the problem posed by some sentences which are syntactically ambiguous between passive and reflexive by assigning them to one these categories according to their semantic interpretation.

3.2. *Impersonal Passives of Intransitive Verbs*

In this section we discuss impersonal *se* sentences with no surface NP for *se* to refer to, or for the verb to agree with. In these sentences the verb is always used intransitively and in the third person singular.

- 71 a. En Chile se come bien.
 'There is good eating in Chile'
 b. La gente come bien en Chile.
 'People eat well in Chile'

- 72 a. Se bailó toda la noche en esa fiesta.
 'There was dancing all night at that party'
 b. La gente bailó toda la noche en esa fiesta.
 'People danced all night at that party'
- 73 a. Se vive solo en las ciudades.
 'There is lonely living in cities'
 b. La gente vive sola en las ciudades.
 'People live lonely in cities'
- 74 a. Se es feliz en la niñez.
 'There is happiness in childhood'
 b. La gente es feliz en la niñez.
 'People are happy in their childhood'

(a) and (b) above appear to be in an impersonal passive relation according to Keenan's definition. The logical predicates "se come, se bailó, se vive, se es" are 0-place predicates and basic passives of "comió, bailó, vive, es" which are 1-place predicates in their intransitive reading. (71a-74a) seem to correspond to sentences with a morphologically marked passive verb in Latin, such as (75).

75. currit-ur 'there was running'
 run-pass + 3sg

although in the Spanish case the agent cannot be mentioned, not even in an oblique phrase as it may appear in Latin.

CONCLUSIONS

The variety of structures which have been shown to be passives in Spanish according to Keenan's definition of passive is clear evidence that the active-passive relation is not structural but rather semantic. Given a model of grammar which includes a semantic interpretive component and given that it has already been shown (Bresnan, 1977; Wasow, 1976; Silva-Corvalán, 1977) that passive constructions are lexically conditioned, it becomes obvious that a passive transformation is no longer justified.

Furthermore, the discussion of passives in Spanish indicates that passive is not a movement operation given that in many passive sentences the constituents are in the same order as in the corresponding passive, since when the DO "becomes" a subject, this subject remains

in postverbal position, the statistically most frequent position for subjects of intransitive verbs (v. section 3). The movement rule is not justified either in free word order languages (e. g., Czech, Russian) nor in VOS (e. g., Fijian, Gilbertese) languages where the constituents change their grammatical relations but not their position, such that:

V	O	S
V	V	V
tr		
V	S	Oblique
intr		

The examples discussed in sections 3.1.4 and 3.2 provide counter-evidence for the Relational Grammar definition of passive as a promotion rule. In such examples, the DO is present as a DO in postverbal position, or absent, but not as a DO promoted to subject. These impersonal passives support, on the other hand, a definition of passive as a demotional rule. In fact, although it is possible for the DO not be promoted in a passive sentence, it is not possible not to demote the subject to an oblique or to zero and still have a passive construction. The domotion condition of the passive appears to be universal, and in fact obligatory in some types of passives in many languages (e. g., Fula (West Africa), Spanish, Quechua).

Keenan, on the other hand, views passive as basically a relation between predicates. His definition is more powerful in universal perspective because it covers cases that Relational and Transformational Grammar would fail to account for. This same power, however, may be its weakness in that it appears to be too encompassing. An added problem would arise if it were shown that there exist natural language constructions which are inherently passive and which do not have a corresponding active predicate, as might be the case in Philippine languages and in English (e. g., "John was born in 1965").

The results of this study support Keenan's (Ms., 2/22/78) hypothesis that passive is not a category in the grammar of a language "in the sense that there is no rule or complex of rules (whether they be lexical, phrase structural, or transformational) which uniquely characterizes the passives in that language". In fact, it has been shown in this paper that in Spanish there are many grammatically distinct ways of forming passives and further, that these different structures also correspond to things that are not passives, but active sentences, copular sentences, or reflexive sentences.

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