

PATIENT VS NON PATIENT ORIENTATION OF THE ACTION AND THE VOICE DISTINCTION IN MG*

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1. The point of view put forward by the traditional grammar as far as the MG voice system is concerned (morphological - semantic distinction between active, middle and passive verbal forms: suggested criteria) is disputed.
2. A sketchy attempt is made at stating the passive vs active voice distinction in terms of the patient vs non patient orientation of the action expressed by the predicate, on the basis of its syntactic and semantic features. The above theoretical assumption is further examined as far as the following points are concerned: (i) in relation to the descriptive adequacy of the suggested opposition (+/- patient orientation), in comparison with other oppositions already suggested in the literature, (ii) in relation to the MG data, in order to see how well they could be captured by this distinguishing criterion.
3. A crude sketch of the distribution of the verbs is attempted.
4. Finally, some problems concerning the above classification are indicated.

1. Introduction.

1.1. My aim in this paper is to examine some aspects of the voice system in MG. More precisely, I shall try to define the MG voice distinction in terms of the direction of the action, stated on the basis of the conceptual structure of the predicate. This criterion is selected so as to aid a more systematic and adequate description of the active vs the passive behaviour of MG verbs.

1.2 According to the traditional model of description (the so-called traditional grammar), verbs are classified into the following three basic categories, in respect to their voice: the active, the middle and the passive¹. The distinction is mainly

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¹ Cf. Τζάρτζανος 1946: 230-53; Μπαμπινιώτης - Κοντός 1967: 226-229. On a further subdivision of the verbs, namely the neuter (*κοιμάμαι* 'to sleep', *κάθομαι* 'to sit', *πεινώ* 'to be

semantic², since it is based upon “the disposition of the grammatical subject to the action expressed by the verb (Μπαμπινιώτης - Κοντός 1967: 226). In the *active voice* the subject is presented as acting, performing the action (*τρέχω γρήγορα* ‘I run fast’, *γράφω ένα γράμμα* ‘I write a letter’); in the *middle voice* the subject is presented as acting upon himself (*ντύνομαι* ‘I dress’, *πλύθηκα* ‘I washed’ etc.). In the *passive voice* the subject is presented as acted upon (*ή πόλη καταστράφηκε από τον έχθρό* ‘the city was destroyed by the enemy’ *ο άρρωστος χειρουργήθηκε επιτυχώς* ‘The ill man was operated on successfully’).

The point of view put forward by the traditional grammar is confusing and from a synchronic point of view does not totally correspond to the voice system of the verbs.

The reasons are the following:

(a) There is a morphological overlap between active middle and passive verbal forms, as it has already been pointed out in different traditional grammar books³ since: (i) morphologically active forms have a middle (*άλλάζω* ‘to change’, *άνταμώνουμε* ‘to meet each other’) or passive meaning (*πεθαίνω* ‘to die’, *άρρωσταίνω* ‘to become ill’) and (ii) morphologically mediopassive forms «have active ‘meaning’»: *σέβομαι* ‘to respect’, *μεταχειρίζομαι* ‘to use’ etc. and share the same subcategorization frames with the active verbs ending in -ω.⁴

(b) The semantic distinction between actives, middles and passives mentioned above is disputed. It has been shown (Θεοφανοπούλου - Κοντού 1980, 1982) that the existence of a middle voice –under the traditional specification of the term– distinct from both the active and the passive is problematic, since the so-called middle verbs overlap with the actives and passives not only morphologically, but also semantically⁵ and syntactically. The notion of the «special relation of the action with the subject from whom it originates and for whose interest it is carried out» – expressed by a «middle» verb– does not synchronically constitute a distinctive fea-

hungry) cf. Νεοελληνική Γραμματική 1941: 304. On the contrary, according to Householder - Kazazis - Koutsoudas (1964: 102). «Greek verbs have two voices: active to indicate that the subject performs the action and passive to indicate that the subject is either the goal of the action or that it acts upon himself.» Cf. also Warburton 1970: 68-84 for a more systematic account of the voice distinction of MG verbs. On some problems arising from the distinction between active, middle and passive verbal forms cf. Lyons 1968: 371 ff. and Mirambel 1978: 128-140.

² Morphologically verbs are classified into two ending systems: active (in -ω) and mediopassive (in -μαι), with partial overlaps (Cf. among others Νεοελληνική Γραμματική 1941: 306; Mirambel 1978 : 128-140; Warburton 1970 : 68-84, passim).

³ Cf. among others Τζάρτζανος 1946 : 230-31; Mirambel 1978 : 128; Νεοελληνική Γραμματική 1941 : 305-306.

⁴ Cf. also Θεοφανοπούλου - Κοντού 1982 : 59-60.

⁵ The mediopassive form itself is semantically ambiguous: middle/passive; Cf. sentences like: *ή Μαρία διαφημίστηκε πολύ τώρα τελευταία* ‘Mary has been advertised very much lately’, meaning either that she has been advertised by someone (unspecified agent) or that she has been advertised by herself (lacking an agent).

ture of the middle verbs taken as a whole (cf. *μεταχειρίζομαι* 'to use', *σέβομαι* 'to respect', *εφοδιάζομαι* 'to be supplied' etc.)⁶. On the other hand the suggested criterion: the subject is acting (active)⁷ vs it is acted upon (passive) is not always sufficient since it covers only cases of dynamic verbs (activity verbs)⁸, leaving aside the statives⁹ (transitive or intransitive): cf. *έχω* 'to have', *νοιώθω* 'to feel', *λπάμαι* 'to be sorry' etc.).

1.3. Taking as a starting point the assumption that the voice of a verbal form is basically determined by the function of its grammatical subject, I shall try to present some evidence that the active vs passive behaviour of the MG verbs could basically be stated in terms of the orientation of the action (+/- patient) expressed by the predicate¹⁰. The active vs passive behaviour of the so-called middle verbs can also be accounted for in terms of the same criterion. Such a conception of the active vs passive voice distinction could be considered as universal since it is based upon the conceptual structure of the predicate and the depending thematic relations.

Before going on to some of the basic issues, I should like to mention that the present discussion is a crude sketch of a possible approach to the MG voice system, taken as a whole; consequently:

1) I will not deal here with the specific problems of the different verbal categories.

2) I will not try to specify the relation between the active and the corresponding passive constructions (whether it is lexical (Freidin 1975)¹¹, or transformational¹² or even the result of two different rules (Wasow 1977).

⁶ For some further problems concerning the semantic value of the MG voices cf. Mirambel 1978, especially 131-134.

⁷ Τζάρτζανος 1946 : 230-231; Νεοελληνική Γραμματική 1941: 304; Householder -Kazazis - Koutsoudas 1964 : 102; Μπαμπινιώτης - Κοντός 1967: 226.

⁸ Dynamic verbs «denote either events (including acts) or processes (including activities)» (Lyons 1977: 706).

⁹ Stative verbs describe existing situations that are «homogeneous, continuous and unchanging throughout their duration».

¹⁰ It goes without saying that for a proper specification of the different verbal subcategories some other parameters should also be taken into account: the presence vs absence of an agent adjunct or prefixes *αὐτο-*, *ἀλληλο-* for the patient oriented construction, the semantic /syntactic features of the subject (animacy, intention/volition of action) in combination with the semantic structure of the predicate for the non patient oriented constructions (dynamic, stative verbs).

¹¹ According to him (1975 : 384) «the active-passive relation can be captured in the lexicon without a passive transformation... and such a solution does not involve the problems created by a transformational account».

¹² The transformational account of the passive sentences (cf. passive transformation) was expressed within the older framework of generative-transformational grammar; cf. among others Chomsky 1957; 1965; 1970; Emonds 1976: 65-74; Culicover 1976: 160-172.

3) The present discussion is mainly based upon Gruber's (1965-1976) and Jackendoff's (1972) theoretical assumptions on semantic representation of words, as well as Freidin's (1975) and Anderson's (1977) analysis of the English passives¹³.

2. Thematic relations of the predicate and voice distinction.

2.1. The thematic relations were posited, first, by Gruber (1965-76) as the «pre-lexical structural relations at the prelexical semantic level of representation». Following his assumptions Jackendoff (1972) showed that many syntactic and semantic problems could be examined more adequately «by paying attention to the thematic relations a given NP bears within its clause». Accordingly, syntactic constructions like actives and passives or pairs of sentences bearing an ergative relationship can be specified in terms of the semantic equivalence of the predicates and the semantic functions associated with them rather than syntactic categories and their grammatical relations (Cf. Freidin 1975; Anderson 1977).

According to these theoretical assumptions it would be possible to determine the voice distinction in MG on the basis of the semantic functions of the predicate and its thematic relations; more precisely, the passive vs active voice distinction could be stated in terms of the patient vs non patient orientation of the action.

The direction of the action expressed by the predicate can be specified on the basis of its semantic and syntactic features which determine:

(a) its semantic functions (agent, patient, source, goal, etc.)¹⁴. It is obvious that the presence of a semantic function meaning «patient»¹⁵ constitutes the necessary condition for the consideration of the action as patient oriented.

(b) its thematic relations, that is corresponding selectional frames in different constructions, in terms of semantic functions rather than syntactic categories. The patient vs non patient relationship depends upon its possible association or lack of association with the grammatical subject of the sentence. Such an association can be compulsory, hence the verb is unidirectionally patient oriented (cf. *λιποθυμῶ* 'to faint', *ἀρρωσταίνω* 'to become ill', *πεθαίνω* 'to die') or optional, hence the verb is multidirectionally agent, patient oriented, etc. (*σκοτώνω* 'to kill', *καταστρέφω* 'to destroy', *διαφημιζῶ* 'to advertise' etc. Cf. *ὁ Γιάννης σκότωσε τόν Πέτρο* 'John killed Peter': agent oriented; *ὁ Πέτρος σκοτώθηκε ἀπό τόν Γιάννη / μέ μιά σφαῖρα* 'Peter was killed by John / with a bull': patient oriented).

2.2 The above hypothesis concerning the active vs passive voice distinction calls for further examination of the following points:

¹³ Some of the notions upon which I have based my description (thematic relations and their syntactic representations) have been now incorporated and further developed within the *Government and Binding* model of description. (Chomsky, 1981). Thus it would be interesting to consider the whole question of voice distinction (functional role of the passive, its crucial properties etc.) and the arising problems under the GB perspective.

¹⁴ On the definition and the role of the above semantic functions cf. Gruber (1965-1976) passim; Jackendoff (1972), Anderson (1977).

¹⁵ I will come back to the term «patient» and to the way I am using it as a positive term of the opposition +/- patient orientation of the action.

1) in relation to the descriptive adequacy of the suggested opposition +/- patient orientation of the action, as a voice distinguishing criterion (especially within the MG system), in comparison with other oppositions already suggested in the literature (agent-instrument-patient¹⁶ or theme-agent¹⁷).

2) in relation to the MG data, in order to see how well they could be captured by the above indicated criterion.

2.2.1. We begin with the first point. The term 'patient' generally refers to the entity that undergoes the action expressed by the predicate, and is generally associated with the subject position of the intransitive and the object of the transitive. (cf. *the door opened* - *John opened the door*). This term was preferred to the more general term 'theme' which is used by Gruber (1965-1976) and Jackendoff (1972) for the following reasons:

(a) The term 'theme' itself, as it is used by Gruber and Jackendoff, is problematic, since its definition refers mainly to the motional predicates (cf. verbs such as *go*, *come*, *roll*, *float*, etc.)¹⁸, but it is not applicable to other cases (cf. verbs like *blame*, *hear*, *see* or verbs like *stand*, *cling*)¹⁹. This means that although there is a strong semantic and syntactic correspondance between 'theme' and 'patient' in most cases, the two terms are only partially overlapping. So, besides the cases in which the two terms can be used irrespectively (*the door opened*, *John opened the door*), there are examples where the grammatical subject can be considered as the theme, but not as the patient (Cf. *John resembles his father*; Anderson 1977: 374) and others in which the direct object is the patient, but not the theme (*John painted on my picture this morning*; Anderson 1977: 369).

(b) The more restricted meaning of 'patient' («the entity that undergoes the action described») as opposed to the very general notion of 'theme'²⁰ corresponds more accurately to the function of the subject in «passive» constructions in general. So, if patient is defined as the entity denoting the "receiver"/result of the action performed, the term «patient oriented construction» explicitly describes a resultative process of activity which is oriented not from its initiator, but from its receiver /result.

2.2.2. The suggested opposition +/- patient orientation of the action (patient being

¹⁶ Cf. Brakel (1976) who distinguishes the following sentence patterns: agent oriented, instrument oriented, and patient oriented (actives and passives).

¹⁷ Cf. Anderson (1977) who specifies the relation between active and passive sentences in English in terms of the function of the rules: the Agent-rule and the Theme-rule, respectively.

¹⁸ Hence the definition as «the entity conceived of as moving or undergoing transitions» (Gruber 1965-76: 38).

¹⁹ Cf. also Freidin 1975b : 192 «Gruber's definition of 'theme' does not work for predicates of location like *stand* and *cling*. Thus he defines 'theme' for this class as «subject» where the latter refers to a syntactic, not a semantic function».

²⁰ Namely, «the element filling the first argument position of GO (x, y, z), STAY (x, y) or BE (x, y) etc. In a sense the *Theme* is the «logical topic» of the clause; the element that the clause is about, in a purely logical sense divorced from any particular use of the clause in discourse» (Anderson 1977: 367).

the marked term and non patient meaning any other function of the grammatical subject) corresponds to the MG data. According to these there is a tendency for morphological marking of the patient oriented constructions, by partial or complete generalization of the mediopassive ending into the corresponding active constructions (the mediopassive ending being considered as the marker for the patient oriented constructions).

The above assumption is supported by the following observations:

(a) Mediopassive participles in *-μενος* are formed from intransitive, morphologically active verbs with middle or passive meaning: *δίψασα* 'I got thirsty' - *διψασμένος* 'thirsty'; *άρρώστησα* 'I got ill' - *άρρωστημένος* 'ill'; *πόνεσα* 'I suffered' - *πονεμένος* 'painful'; *πείνασα* 'I got hungry' - *πεινασμένος* 'hungry'.

(b) Passive intransitive constructions tend to replace the corresponding actives, where the grammatical subject is [-anim]:

- (1) ζέστανε ο καιρός / ζεστάθηκε ο καιρός
'the weather became warmer'
- (2) φώτισε τό δωμάτιο / φωτίστηκε τό δωμάτιο
'the room brightened'
- (3) λέρωσαν τά ρούχα / λερώθηκαν τά ρούχα
'the clothes became dirty'

(c) The same tendency is also to be observed in some children's²¹ data where the mediopassive ending is overgeneralized into intransitive constructions, especially in certain cases where the subject is [-anim].

- (4) ή πόρτα άνοίγεται (vs άνοίγει) δύσκολα και κλείνεται (vs κλείνει) δύσκολα.
'the door opens and closes with difficulty'
- (5) δέν ξεχωρίστηκε (vs ξεχώρισε) άκόμη ό πρώτος
'the first one has not stood out yet'
- (6) βράστηκε (vs έβρασε) τό κρέας
'the meat boiled'
- (7) λειώθηκαν (vs έλειωσαν) οί πατάτες
'potatoes are mashed'
- (8) άκουπίστηκαν (vs άκούπησαν) οί ρόδες κάτω
'the wheels touched the ground'
- (9) φυτρώθηκαν (vs φύτρωσαν) πολλά λουλούδια στόν κήπο
'many flowers grew in the garden'
- (10) φουρτουιάστηκε (vs φουρτούνιασε) ή θάλασσα
'the sea became rough'
- (11) χαλάστηκε (vs χάλασε) τό φαΐ
'the food was spoilt'
- (12) πονέθηκε (vs πόνεσε) τό χέρι μου
'my arm hurt'

²¹ The data come from the diary of my son John (3.0-6) Cf: also Θεοφανοπούλου - Κοντοῦ 1982 : 75, Κατῆ 1982 : 280.

- (13) θά ιδρωθῆ (vs θά ιδρώση) τό αὐτοκίνητο
'the car will sweat'
(14) θά στεγνώθῆ (vs θά στεγνώση) μόνη της ἡ μπλούζα μου
'my shirt will get dry by itself'
(15) νευριάστηκα (vs νεύριασα) πού δέν μποροῦσα νά τό κάνω
'I got upset because I could not do it'

(d) Further supporting evidence comes finally from some adult's errors in the passive constructions of morphologically mediopassive verbs with active meaning, such as:

- (16) αὐτές οἱ ἀπόψεις δέν ἀποδέχονται ἀπό τή συνέλευση (instead of γίνονται ἀποδεκτές)
'these views are not accepted by the assembly'
(17) ἡ καλωσύνη σου ἐκμεταλλεύεται ἀπό τόν καθένα
(lit.) 'your kindness is being taken advantage of everybody'
(because of your kindness, you are being taken advantage of everybody)

Such examples, although rare, show a tendency for overgeneralization or interpretation of the passive ending as a means of morphologically marking the patient orientation of the action.

3. A sketchy distribution of the MG verbs: patient vs non patient oriented.

We come next to a closer examination of the MG verbs, according to the suggested criterion, in order to see how well it can capture the attested voice distinctions.

3.1. *Patient oriented constructions.* On the basis of their morphological, syntactic and semantic structure and behaviour, the following constructions can be characterized as patient oriented:

3.1.1. Syntactically intransitive predicates (morphologically active or mediopassive) whose conceptual structure requires a semantic function meaning 'patient', obligatorily associated with the grammatical subject. Such verbs can be characterized as unidirectional, as concerns their voice (patient oriented only).

The following cases are to be specified:

(a) The intransitive verb (morphologically active or mediopassive) pairs with a corresponding transitive counterpart (causative) in such a way that the subject of the intransitive (+/- anim) corresponds semantically to the object of the transitive (+ causative). This transitive / intransitive correspondance can be stated in terms of thematic relations, the patient being alternatively associated with the subject of the intransitive (patient oriented) and the direct object of the transitive, the grammatical subject of the causative being considered as the cause of the action (agent). The above assumption is exemplified by the following sentences where (a) represents the patient oriented construction²², pairing with the corresponding causative (b):

²² The presence of a «true» agent (proper name, animate noun) expressed by a PP (*ἀπό* + NP) or by the corresponding prefix (*αὐτο-*) is excluded:

(i)* τό πάτωμα γυαλίζει ἀπό τήν Μαρία
'the floor shines by Mary'

- (18) a. τό πάτωμα γυαλίζει
'the floor shines'
b. γυαλίζω τό πάτωμα
'I shine the floor'
- (19) a. τό μπουκάλι άδειασε
'the bottle is empty'
b. άδειασα τό μπουκάλι
'I emptied the bottle'
- (20) a. τό μικρό γατάκι πνίγηκε στό ποτάμι
'the little cat was drowned into the river'
b. έπνιξα τό μικρό γατάκι στό ποτάμι
'I drowned the little cat into the river'
- (21) a. πάχυνα τώρα τελευταία
'I got fat lately'
b. το πολύ φαΐ πάχαινει
'too much food makes one fat'
- (22) a. χλώμιανα
'I turned pale'
b. ή άρρώστια μέ χλώμιανε
'the illness made me pale'

(b) The intransitive verb is not related to a corresponding transitive active. The patient function of the grammatical subject, in these cases, is exclusively determined by the conceptual structure of the predicate: *ζεκαλοκαιριάζω* 'I spend the summer', *νυχτωθήκαμε* 'we were overtaken by night' etc.

3.1.2. «Passive» constructions with unspecified or specified agent (morphologically or syntactically expressed)²³ are also characterized as patient oriented. These

- (ii)* τό μπουκάλι αὐτοάδειασε
'the bottle got empty by itself'

On the contrary the presence of a PP (*άπό/μέ + NP*), expressing the indirect cause is possible:

- (iii) Τό πάτωμα γυαλίζει άπό τό πολύ τρίψιμο
'the floor shines from scrubbing'

The intransitive verbal forms cooccur many times with a corresponding 'passive' differentiated from the former morphologically, syntactically and/or semantically: these «passive» constructions are characterized by the mediopassive ending and the possibility of an agent adjunct:

- (iv) άλλαξες (*άλλάχτηκες) πολύ
'you have changed a lot'
- (v) τά λάστιχα του αυτοκινήτου άλλάχτηκαν (*άλλαξαν) άπό τον ίδιο τον οδηγό
'the tyres of the car have been changed by the driver himself'
- (vi) άσπρισα (*άσπρίστηκα) σέ μιά νύχτα
'my hair turned white overnight'
- (vii) τό σπίτι άσπρίστηκε (*άσπρισε) ύποδειγματικά άπό τον κυρ-Νίκο
'the house has been beautifully whitewashed by Mr. Nick'

²³ The agent adjunct (*άπό + NP*) can denote a «true» agent (proper name, animate noun), an agent-like adjunct (inanimate object, abstract noun) or the indirect cause. The agent is

constructions, consisting of a morphological active/mediopassive verbal form or a periphrastic construction, pair with the corresponding active sentences in relation to their selectional restrictions. The active/passive sentence relations can be stated in terms of their semantic functions so that the patient is alternatively associated with the grammatical subject of the passive (patient oriented) or the direct object of the transitive active (non patient oriented). In case of unspecified agent, the patient is obligatorily associated with the grammatical subject like the intransitives (cf. 3.1.1a; patient oriented only):

- (23) ή παράσταση αναβάλλεται
'the performance is postponed'
(24) λέγεται ότι απειλείται ή ειρήνη
'it is said that peace is threatened'

The following active/passive structural relations are to be specified:

- (a) $NP_1 \text{ Vact. } NP_2 \longleftrightarrow NP_2 \text{ V}_{\text{pass/act.}} \text{ (by } NP_1)$
(where $NP_1 \neq NP_2$)

- (25) a. ό έχθρός κατάστρεψε τά μνημεΐα
'the enemy destroyed the monuments'
b. τά μνημεΐα καταστράφηκαν από τον έχθρό
'the monuments were destroyed by the enemy'
(26) a. ένας διάσημος χειρουργός χειρούργησε τον πατέρα μου
'a famous surgeon operated on my father'
b. ό πατέρας μου χειρουργήθηκε από έναν διάσημο χειρουργό
'my father has been operated on by a famous surgeon'
(27) a. μάζεψα τά χαρτιά μέ προσοχή
'I picked up the papers carefully'
b. τά χαρτιά μαζεύτηκαν μέ προσοχή
'the papers were picked up carefully'
(28) a. συγκέντρωσα ενδιαφέρουσες πληροφορίες για τό θέμα αυτό
'I collected some interesting information on this subject'
b. συγκεντρώθηκαν ενδιαφέρουσες πληροφορίες για τό θέμα αυτό
'some interesting information was collected on this subject'

expressed morphologically by the prefixes *αυτο-* (for the reflexives) and *άλληλο-* (for the reciprocals). It must be mentioned here that a systematic analysis of the intransitive motion verbs carried out by Helen Antonopoulou in her PhD dissertation (personal communication) suggests that the lack of an agent adjunct (explicitly or implicitly expressed) constitutes a basic distinguishing criterion between the intransitive constructions and the passive ones in which the presence of such an agent is possible. The action expressed by the intransitive predicate is the result of an indirect cause or is left inexpressed (e.g. *έπεσα* 'I fell down' - the physical cause = the gravity).

(b) $NP_1 V_{act}. NP_2 \longleftrightarrow NP$ (αὐτο-) V_{pass} .
(where $NP_1 = NP_2$)

- (29) a. ὁ Γιάννης κατὰστροφῆσε τὸν ἑαυτὸ του
'John destroyed himself'
b. ὁ Γιάννης αὐτοκαταστράφηκε
'John was selfdestroyed'
- (30) a. ἡ Μαρία διαφημίζει τὸν ἑαυτὸ της
'Mary advertises herself'
b. ἡ Μαρία αὐτοδιαφημίζεται
'Mary is selfadvertised'

(c) $NP_1 V_{act}. NP_2 \longleftrightarrow NP$ (ἄλληλο.) V_{pass} .
(reciprocity NP_1 and NP_2)

- (31) a. ὑποστηρίζει ὁ ἕνας τὸν ἄλλον
'One supports the other'
b. ἀλληλοὑποστηρίζομαστε
'we support each other'
- (32) a. χαιρέτησε ὁ ἕνας τὸν ἄλλον
'One greeted the other'
b. ἀλληλοχαιρετηθήκαμε
'we greeted each other'

(d) $NP_1 V_{pass}. NP_2 \longleftrightarrow NP_2$ $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{τυχαίνω} + NP_{Gen}. \\ \text{ἔχω, βρίσκω} + NP_{Acc}. \\ \text{δέχομαι} + NP_{Acc}. \\ \text{γίνομαι ἀντικείμενο} + NP_{Gen}. \\ \text{γίνομαι} + \text{VERBAL ADJ.} \end{array} \right\}$ (by NP_1)

- (33) a. δὲν ἀποδέχονται τίς ἀπόψεις σου
'they do not accept your views'
b. οἱ ἀπόψεις σου δὲν τυχαίνουν ἀποδοχῆς / γίνονται ἀποδεκτές
'your views are not acceptable'
- (34) a. σέ ἐκμεταλλεύονται
'they take advantage of you'
b. γίνεσαι ἀντικείμενο ἐκμεταλλεύσεως
'you are being taken advantage of'

3.2. *Non patient oriented constructions.* A verbal form is characterized as non patient oriented if its grammatical subject can not be conceived of as the receiver /result of the action expressed by the predicate. Under the proposed analysis the following cases can be specified.

3.2.1. The semantic features of the predicate exclude the presence of a function meaning the patient; consequently, the verbal form is inherently non patient oriented. Some of the main verbal classes which belong to this category are the following:

- (a) agentive²⁴ motion verbs²⁵ (intransitive²⁶, morphologically active or mediopassive): *τρέχω* 'to run', *κολυμπῶ* 'to swim', *πηδῶ* 'to jump', *ἀνεβαίνω* 'to come up', *κατεβαίνω* 'to come down', *σκαρφαλώνω* 'to climb', *περπατῶ* 'to walk', *χορεύω* 'to dance', *ξεκινῶ* 'to start', *ἀποσύρομαι* 'to draw back', *έρχομαι* 'to come', etc.
- (b) agentive activity verbs not implying necessarily any motion (intransitive with different subcategorization frames): *επικοινωνῶ* 'to communicate', *ἀλληλογραφῶ* 'to correspond', *μιλῶ* 'to talk', *συνεργάζομαι* 'to collaborate', *προσπαθῶ* 'to try', *συναγωνίζομαι* 'to compete (with, against)', *συμπεριφέρομαι* 'to behave' etc. A semantic subclass of the above category constitute, the so-called middle reflexive verbs: *πλένομαι* 'to wash oneself', *ντύνομαι* 'to dress oneself', *γυμνάζομαι* 'to exercise oneself', *μακιγιάρομαι* 'to make up oneself'.²⁷
- (c) Besides the agentive verbs mentioned above, verbal forms excluding the presence of a patient function are the non agentive transitives (*ζυγίζω* 'to weight', *ἔχω* 'to

²⁴ An agentive verb is a verb whose grammatical subject is identified as agent. It is distinguished by a number of syntactic/semantic properties such as the animacy of the subject, the intentionality of the action, the possibility of having purposive constructions etc. (Gruber 1965-76 : 157 ff.).

²⁵ If the motion verb is causative, then its subject is identified as agent only like any causative (cf. *τρέχω τό ἄλογο* 'I run the horse'). If it is intransitive (i.e. non causative), then according to Gruber (1965-76: 148) «the theme is optionally identified as agent. In fact this is possible as a general rule if the subject is Animate.

John went into the room
John rolled down the hill
John floated across the lake

If the subject is non Animate the possibility of an Agent does not exist».

The above mentioned examples from Gruber illustrate some clear cases of +/- animate subject which is consequently interpreted as +/- agent. But there exist some more problematic cases, especially with non animate subject which could also be conceived of as agents:

- (i) *τά σύννεφα τρέχουν στόν οὐρανό*
'the clouds run in the sky'
(ii) *ὁ πύραυλος κατευθύνθηκε στό διάστημα*
'the rocket was directed toward space'

²⁶ In some apparent exceptions, the NP in direct object position does not denote the patient:

- (i) *τρέχω τέσσερα μίλια τήν ἡμέρα*
'I run four miles every day'
(ii) *κουτρουβάλησα τίς σκάλες*
'I tumbled down the stairs'

This assumption is supported by the following evidence:

(a) There is no corresponding passive construction with the NP (*τέσσερα μίλια, τίς σκάλες*, in the above sentences) bearing the subject position:

- (iii) **τέσσερα μίλια τρέχονται τήν ἡμέρα*
(iv) **οἱ σκάλες κουτροβαλήθηκαν*

(b) In some cases the NP alternates with a PP:

- (v) *κουτροβαλάω ἀπό τίς σκάλες*

²⁷ The subject of the verbs of this semantic class has already been considered as the agent of the action (Theophanopoulou - Kontou 1980 : 13).

have', *ξέρω* 'to know', *νοιώθω* 'to feel', etc.) and intransitives (*λυπᾶμαι* 'to be sorry', *πενθῶ* 'to mourn', *μένω* 'to stay' etc.) which are usually classified as stative. It has already been pointed out that such cases are not definable according to the basic distinguishing criterion of traditional grammar²⁸, since they do not denote an action performed by the subject. Subsequently, they could not be classified as active.

- (d) In this category, I could, finally include «impersonal» verbs, such as: *πρόκειται* 'the question is...', *συμβαίνει* 'to happen', *εἶναι δυνατό*, *ἀναγκαῖο*, etc. 'it is possible', 'necessary', etc., although their lexical representation and behaviour is far from clear to me.

3.2.2. The second category of verbal forms characterized as non patient oriented contains constructions in which the semantic features of the predicate require a function meaning the patient. This function occupies the direct object position, the grammatical subject being associated with another function (agent, indirect cause, instrument etc.). These active constructions (morphologically active or mediopassive), consisting of a transitive dynamic activity (+/- causative) verb, are morphologically, semantically and syntactically related to the corresponding patient oriented constructions (ergative constructions or active/passive pair sentences).

These pair sentences are, subsequently, alternatively considered as non patient /patient oriented. The grammatical subject of the non patient oriented constructions can represent among others:

(a) the agent:²⁹

- (35) a. ὁ ἐχθρὸς κατέστρεψε τὰ μνημεῖα
'the enemy destroyed the monuments'
b. τὰ μνημεῖα καταστράφηκαν ἀπὸ τὸν ἐχθρό
'the monuments were destroyed by the enemy'
- (18) a. γυαλίζω τὸ πάτωμα
'I shine the floor'
b. τὸ πάτωμα γυαλίζει
'the floor shines'
- (26) a. ἕνας διάσημος χειρουργὸς χειρουργήσε τὸν πατέρα μου
'a famous surgeon has operated on my father'

The syntactic criteria upon which I have based my views are:

(a) The marginal use of the corresponding active form with a reflexive pronoun (*πλένω τὸν ἑαυτό μου* 'I wash myself', *ντύνω τὸν ἑαυτό μου* 'I dress myself', vs constructions like *καταστρέφω τὸν ἑαυτό μου* 'I destroy myself', *ἐξαπατῶ τὸν ἑαυτό μου* 'I cheat myself').

(b) the lack of compound mediopassive forms with the prefix *αὐτο-* (**αὐτοπλένομαι*, **αὐτοντύνομαι* vs *αὐτοκαταστρέφομαι*, *αὐταπατῶμαι*).

²⁸ The subject is acting (active) vs it is acted upon (passive).

²⁹ I classify here cases of «true» agent, i.e. proper names or nouns (singular, plural, collective) characterized as animate, but not cases of inanimate nouns or abstract ideas, appearing in agent-like constructions and functioning as agent (cf. Warburton 1970 : 81). The reason is that only the presence of a «true» agent adjunct constitutes a distinguishing criterion between the patient oriented constructions : 3.1.1. (a) and 3.2., as it has already been noticed above (cf. note 23).

- b. ο πατέρας μου χειρουργήθηκε από έναν διάσημο χειρουργό
'my father has been operated on by a famous surgeon'
- (36) a. τό δικαστήριο άθώωσε τόν κατηγορούμενο
'the court of justice absolved the accused'
b. ο κατηγορούμενος άθώώθηκε από τό δικαστήριο
'the accused was absolved by the court of justice'
- (b) The indirect cause, or the instrument:³⁰
- (37) a. ο άέρας διάλυσε τά σύννεφα
'the wind dispersed the clouds'
b. τά σύννεφα διαλύθηκαν (μέ/άπό τόν άέρα)
'the clouds were dispersed'(with/by the wind)
- (38) a. οί φωνές μας τούς ξύπνησαν
'our voices have woken them up'
b. ξύπνησαν (άπό/μέ τίς φωνές μας)
'they were woken up' (by/with our voices)
- (39) a. ή σφαίρα σκότωσε τόν στρατιώτη
'the bull killed the soldier'
b. ο στρατιώτης σκοτώθηκε άπό/μέ τή σφαίρα
'the soldier was killed with the bull'
- (40) a. ή πέτρα έσπασε τό παράθυρο
'the stone broke the window'
b. τό παράθυρο έσπασε μέ/άπό τήν πέτρα
'the window was broken with a stone'

4. In this paper I made a rather sketchy attempt to present the passive vs active voice distinction in terms of the patient vs non patient orientation of the action expressed by the predicate. The above assumption requires further support:

(a) by a systematic examination of the different verbal categories, especially those characterized as non patient oriented. This examination should aim at the specification of the criteria according to which it would be possible to determine the different functions of the grammatical subject and their hierarchical order, probably in terms of binary oppositions.

(b) by a systematic examination of forms with ambiguous function of their grammatical subject (agent/patient) and the specification of the factors which each time determine its specific function.

I am referring here to the following cases:

(i) mediopassive verbal forms –especially motion intransitive verbs– with animate subject which can function either as patient or as agent:

- (41) τά παιδιά συγκεντρώθηκαν στήν αυλή του σχολείου
'the children gathered / have been gathered in the school yard'

³⁰ Under this term I include the cases of inanimate object or abstract ideas as well. The limits between all these cases are not always strictly specified. (cf. also Warburton 1970 : 83 «Among the agent phrases of either abstract ideas or inanimate objects... several appear to be instrumental or causative phrases rather than true agents. e.g. in έχι επηρεαστί από μεγάλα λόγια (He has been influenced by big words)»).

- (42) *τιναχτήκαμε επάνω όταν άκούσαμε τό θόρυβο*
 'we sprung up when we heard the noise'
 (43) *παίρνοντας τή στροφή ό όδηγός τινάχτηκε στον άέρα*
 'making a turn, the driver was thrown in the air'

(ii) intransitive motion verbs with non animate subject which is not intuitively understood:

- (44) *τό άεροπλάνο πέταξε πάνω άπό τά σύννεφα*
 'the aeroplane flew over the clouds'
 (45) *τό άυτοκίνητό μου δέν μπορεί νά τρέξει πολύ*
 'my car can not go very fast'

(iii) «middle» reflexive verbs; the agent function of their grammatical subject is for some speakers counterintuitive³¹.

Finally, the presented model of description should be tested by making a parallel examination of the voice system of other languages. Preliminary data seem to indicate that the specification of voice distinction in terms of the patient/non patient orientation of the action, with different oppositions within the latter, is more than a specific feature of the MG voice system. This assumption is supported by the fact that the above distinction is determined on the basis of the semantic structure of the predicate and its thematic relations which are universal.

The occurring morphological or syntactic differences among the voice system of different languages do not contradict the suggested model of description; instead they could be attributed to the language specific characteristics (syntactic restrictions, idiosyncratic features of the different verbal forms) and, in general, to the voice grammaticalization process which differs from language to language, and must, therefore, be examined within each language system.

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³¹ All the above cases concern the feature +/- animate of the grammatical subject. There arise, thus, some doubts about our considering of it is a basic criterion for an agentive construction. Such problematic cases call for further determination of the notion 'animacy'; on the other hand, the role or reinterpretation of a function and the specification of the conditions under which such a process is accomplished should also be taken into account. I am referring specifically to the «middle» reflexive verbs (case iii) which are reinterpreted as patient oriented on the analogy of their respective reflexive counterparts (*άτοκαταστρέφομαι, άτοδιαφημίζομαι, άτοπαρηγοριέμαι*, etc.).

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