

Implicit Agents and the Person Constraint on SE-passives

Across Romance languages, SE-verbs can take reflexive, anti-causative, middle and passive readings. Out of these, it is only the passive reading that is constrained by the *Person Constraint*: The subject of SE-passives cannot be 1st/2nd (all Romance) nor 3rd p pronoun or proper name (Romanian, as well as Spanish). Crosslinguistically, this constraint is not found with past participle passives. The theoretical ingredients of the proposal bear on the analysis of the implicit Agent of passives and related to it on the theory of agreement. According to my proposal, the Initiator of both types of passives is not projected in Spec,Voice, and its interpretation is restricted by the phi-features attaching to [Voice_{passive}]. The difference between the two passives is that in SE-passives [Voice_{passive}] is part of the complex head [Tense-Voice_{pass}-V], which is located high, in the position of Tense, whereas in participle passives [Voice_{pass}] is lower, heading its own projection, distinct from the projection of Tense. Since the Initiator is not projected in Spec,Voice, the Person Constraint cannot be explained in terms of intervention. What matters is the (non-)availability of Person-features for AGREE.