A Chomskyan Approach to the Syntactic Configurations of Passive Transformation in Pashto Language

Dr. Amjad Ali[*]
Dr. Muhammad Iqbal[**]

Abstract

This paper undertakes a syntactic analysis of passive transformation in Pashto language. The analysis it discusses is based on Chomskyan module of passive transformation. Being a very rich area in English, much has been written and discussed about passivization in English. These formal and semantic descriptions of passivization have been applied to passive structures in Pashto. Although this area has not been systematically analyzed in much of the linguistic corpora of Pashto, the current study derives some significant conclusions regarding the syntactic structures of passive phenomenon. The study contends that passives in Pashto are morphologically marked by the insertion of auxiliary "shom" and a passive participle which takes "-le" ending. There are, however, some syntactic differences between English and Pashto regarding passivization. Whereas English has three types of passives, namely "Be", "Get' and "Have," Pashto characteristically has one and that is "Be." Moreover, English canonically has agentive passives while Pashto has agentless passives. The agentive passives, however, are possible and are realized as "-from PP" unlike English where it is "-by PP." The study concludes with a few conclusive statements about passive transformation that may provide impetus to further research in this area.
Key words: Passive transformation, Chomskyan syntactic module, types of passives

1. Introduction

Svartvik (1966) rightly regards passive transformation as the most researched area in English linguistics. The syntactic displacement of the subject and object and the addition of the auxiliaries plus passive morpheme make it syntactically rich area in English. Passive transformation is both a syntactic and morphological phenomenon. It is marked by a distinctive form of verb calls "passive participle" and the insertion of an auxiliary. Depending on the type of auxiliary that is inserted in the passive, it can be "Be," as (1), "Get" as (2) or "Have" as (3).

1. "The window was broken by John."
   NP2   Aux (Be)   V (passive participle) Adjunct (by +NP1)
2. "The window got broken (by John)."
   NP2   Aux (Get)   V (Passive participle) + (Adjunct= by +NP1)

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[*] Assistant Professor, Department of English Islamia College Peshawar
[**] Associate Professor, Department of English Islamia College Peshawar

3. "John had his window broken (by Michael)."
     NP3   Aux (Have)   NP2 V (Passive participle) (Adjunct= by +NP1)

The semantic dimension of the transformed structure that whether it has the same semantic level as that of the active is a much-debated question in linguistic circle. Of the three types, "Be-passives", according to Maurice and Freeman (1999), are prototypical passives. They are unmarked and are semantically neutral, which is not true of "get-passives." "Get-passives" occur with verbs such as physical assault ("get hit"), mental or emotional strain ("get punished'), hindrance ("get-trapped"). It lacks expressed agent, so generally lacks "by-phrase"[1]. Such passives are dominantly associated with verbs that emphasize actions or processes. "Have-passives" are used when an action is performed by hiring the services of someone. Hence, (3) can be taken to mean that John was in agreement with Michael to break the window.

At the thematic level, however, the passive construction demonstrates the same configurations as its active congener. The agent of the active takes adjunct position and the patient is transposed to the subject slot. This type of movement is carried out under certain syntactic principles that have been the subject of discussion in this paper. Moreover, this movement does not alter the deep structure of the transformed construction. Active and passive manifest the same syntactic configurations. These principles, subsequently, have been applied to Pashto transformation. It will be observed that both English and Pashto undergo the same syntactic processes regarding transformation. This provides a linguistic support to Chomskyan Universal Grammar which states that all languages are the same at the deep levels demonstrating some variations at the surface levels only. This study is a working answer to some of these linguistic principles.

2. Literature Review

Passivization, according to Williams (1995) is the process of dethematizing the subject and themematicizing the object. The phenomenon, therefore, resembles verbs raising. Saeed (2003) takes passives as the process of entailment. A passive congener is the semantic entailment of the active. For Kuno (1987), passive constructions provide a means for empathizing with the object of the active. In the following examples, a passive construction 6 (b) seems acceptable but not in 7 (b) because the narrator narrates the happenings from Liza's point of view.

6.   "Liza had an untoward incident at the party she attended last night."
     a. *"A six-foot-tall rowdy harassed her."
     b. "She was harassed by a six-foot-tall rowdy."
7.   "Liza had an untoward incident at the party she attended last night."
     a. "She slapped a six-foot-tall rowdy in the face."
     b. *"A six-foot-tall rowdy was slapped in the face by her."

The acceptability of 6 (b) and the unacceptable of 7 (b) can be accounted for the fact that the preposed NP "she" in 6 (b) alludes to the person the narrator is empathizing with.

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[1] This, however, is too strong a claim. There are both "Get" and "Have" with "by-phrases."

Consider the following.

4. "The ship got sunk by a torpedo."

5.   "The admiral had the ship sunk by the Air Force." See Jackendoff (1990, p. 180)

Palmer (1987), on the other hand, takes passivization as a process wherein subjectivization of the object happens due to prominence reason. The subjectivized NP "the house" makes it the focus of speaker's attention.

        8.   "John built the house":
        9.   "The house was built by John."

Similar patterns can be observed in other syntactic structures like the following.

        10. "The house stood in front of the station."
        11. "The station stood behind the house."

In (10), the NP "the house' has been focalized while "the station" has been defocalized. Langacker (1987) terms it "focal adjustability" and considers it analogous to the focus difference between 12 (a) and (b):

        12 (a). "The cat is under the blanket."
        12 (b). "The blanket is over the cat."

He (1987) also observes that passivization happens when the transposed subject is a determinate NPs as "this book" in (13).

        13. "This book was written by Paul Postal."

Similarly, indeterminate NPs such as "by-phrase" are more typical of passives than actives as shown in the following examples.

        14. "This book was read by everyone in the class."
        15. "This book was read by John."

Sentence (14) is more acceptable than (15) due to the indefiniteness of the "by-phrase"--- "by everyone."

The rules of "case relations", observes Palmer (1988), must also be considered while prioritizing the subject of the passive. Hence, an agent takes precedence over a goal and a goal over the instrument. This thematic hierarchy explains the acceptability of the first sentence in each of the following.

        16 (a). "The birds have eaten all the strawberries."
        16 (b). (?[2]) "The strawberries have been eaten by the birds."
        17 (a). "A child was killed by the runaway car."
        17 (b). (?)"The runaway car killed a child."

Applying thematic hierarchy, "the birds" and "a child" are more eligible to function as subjects than "strawberries" and "the runaway car" because they entail maximum properties as agents i.e., volition, sentience, causation and movement[3].

This phenomenon of thematic relations also marks the NP "the key" in (18) more qualified as a subject because the agentive property of causation is more in it than the PP "with the key" which thematically is an instrument.

        18. "The door opens with the key."
        19. "The key opens the door."

Chafe (1970) describes the process of passivization within the framework of information structure. For him, the preposed patient "the bin" is recognized as new information while the postposed agent "by Alex" in passives conveys old information as illustrated in the example below.

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[2] (?) stands for a questionable acceptance.

[3] These properties are based on Dowty's (1991) principles of "Proto-Agent and Proto-Patient."
See Saeed (2003).

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20 (a). "Alex emptied the bin."

21 (b). "The bin was emptied by Alex."

3. The Syntax of Passive Transformation

Chomsky (1986) describes passive transformation as a phenomenon that marks the foregrounding of the object and the corresponding backgrounding of the subject. Furthermore, passives are marked by the auxiliary "Be" which "-S selects[4]" the matrix verb as passive participle. The transposed subject of the active appears as an adjunct in the form of "preposition (by) + nominal" and hence, retains its agentive role as it had in the active. He (1965) observes that the passives take "-en" morphological form of the verb which lacks Case assigning property. It, therefore, is intransitive and cannot take a direct object. This actuates the insertion of preposition[5] -- canonically "by"-- for Case assignment. This preposition plus NP assumes the thematic role of agent in the passive construction. Moreover, the "by-phrase" assumes the syntactic structure of an adjunct and hence, features as an optional constituent of the passive construction. The movement of the object to the subject slot in the passive is described as A-movement which represents the transposing of the NP from internal argument position (complement of the V) to external argument position (subject position). It, therefore, is termed as argument (A) movement. The active construction follows the syntactic structure of (i) whereas passive follows (ii):

(i)   " NP1—Aux + V+ NP2"

(ii)   "NP2--Aux + be +en –V--by + NP1"

Bolinger (1980) considers passive transformation as a phenomenon of a switching mechanism wherein the object replaces the subject. Furthermore, this phenomenon is also marked by the

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[4] Semantic selection

[5] Palmer (1988, p. 86) points out prepositions "about, at, with, in" etc., which collocate with the predicates such as "worry, surprise, satisfy, disappoint" etc., as given below.

21 (a). "The accident worried them all."

21 (b). "They were all worried about the accident."

22 (a). "Her behavior surprised us."

22 (b). "We were surprised at her behavior."

23(a).   "His actions satisfy them."

23 (b). "They are satisfied with his actions."

24 (a). "You disappoint him."

24 (b). "He is disappointed in you."

Jackendoff (2019), however, takes such constructions as passives and contends that passives are marked by "-by PP." Email dated 13 Dec 2019. "ray.jackendoff@tufts.edu"

addition of passive morpheme and the adjunct "by-phrase" which do not find representation in the active constructions. This has been illustrated in figure (iii).

(iii)

Subject of the active   ⟶   adjunct of the passive (agent)

Verb   ⟶   Passive Participle

     25 (a). "The thief stole the shoes."
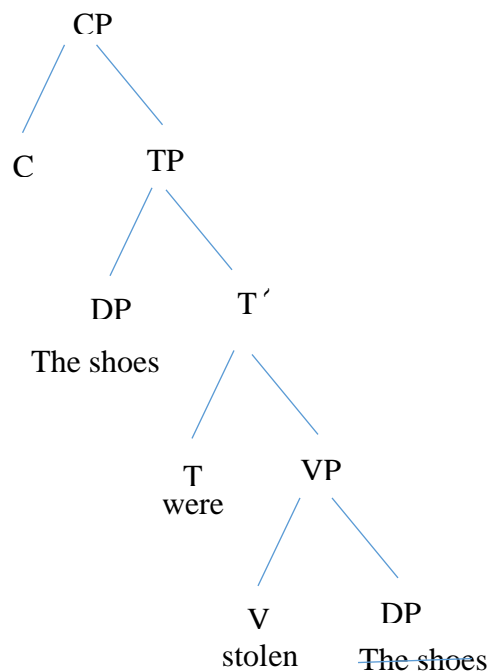
      NP1 (agent)   V   NP2 (theme)

      25 (b). "The shoes were stolen by the thief."

Syntactically, the complement of the active verb occupies the spec-CP position within TP as shown in (v):
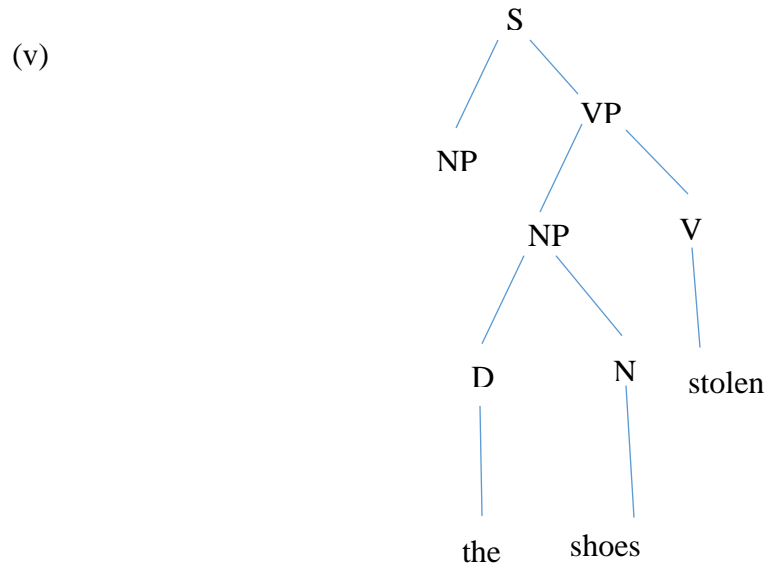
The tree diagram for 20(b) is (iv).

(iv)

Thematically, an active sentence takes an agent and a patient or a theme as shown in 25(a). The NP1 "the thief" functions as the agent while NP2 "the shoes" acts as the complement of V (theme) in the sentence. When the sentence undergoes the process of passive transformation, NP2 acquires the subject slot and NP2 appears as adjunct taking the form of "by-phrase." The thematic roles of the NPs, however, remain the same. In the passive construction, the NP2 "the shoes" is the theme as it still receives the effect of the action "stealing" and consequently undergoes a change in terms of place though constitutionally remains the same. The act of stealing is performed by the NP1 "the thief" and that is the reason that it takes "-by" PP form, which as Jackendoff (1990, p. 215) believes, the agent NP takes when it appears as a PP.

The underlying deep structure of the passive 25 (b) assumes a different syntactic configuration as illustrated in (26).

     26. "Stolen the shoes by the thief."

The NP "the shoes" serves as the complement of the V "break" and is governed by the VP "break" as shown in figure (v).

(v)

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                                S
                               / \
                                  \
                                   VP
                                  / \
                        NP       /   \
                                /     \
                              NP       V
                             /  \       \
                            /    \       \
                           D      N      stolen
                           |      |
                           |      |
                          the    shoes
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As can be observed in (26), the passivized structure lacks an overt subject in the deep structure, and since a sentence without a sentence is filtered out as unacceptable by the Extended Projection Principle (EPP), this actuates the movement of NP2 (theme in this case) to the subject slot with a view to fill this empty position. Passive constructions, therefore, are marked by an "NP" movement. The transposing of NP "the shoes" leaves behind a trace notationally represented as "e" and as Chomsky (1986) contends: "When a category is moved by a transformation, it leaves behind an empty category, a trace" (p. 66), the trace cannot be filled by another NP. This is shown in (vi).

(vi). "The shoes + Be + stolen + trace (e)."

Moreover, the passive morpheme "-en" form loses its Case assigning ability during this process of transformation. In other words, the morphological form of the passive verb is not the Case assigner. Burzio (1986) observes that a predicate can assign accusative Case to its complement provided that it contains the ability to assign external theta role to its subject. As passive verb does not mark theta role of the subject because the subject is transposed due EPP, it cannot assign Case to its complement. Passive participle, therefore, is "intransitive" (Chomsky 1986, p. 74). Consider the following examples.

27. "She washed the dishes."
28. *"The dishes were washed her."

Sentence (28) indicates that the passive morpheme "-en" cannot take NP1 "her" as a complement. This, observes Ura (1996), triggers the addition of preposition "by" as a Case assigner.

4. The Semantics of Passive Transformation

Bolinger (1981) perceives passivization as a syntactic tool for sounding impersonal. It provides a viable option for dispossessing something possessed and can conveniently be used as a covert agent for holding someone else responsible for your own deeds. Hence, in 29(a) the speaker holds the opinion, while in 29 (b) he exonerates himself from this opinion about John.

> 29 (a). "I believe John to be a thief.
> 29 (b). "John is believed to be a thief."

As discussed above, the agent of the passive "-by phrase" takes the form of adjunct and consequently, can easily be deleted in passives. This allows the speaker to opine something without sounding personal. Consider the following examples.

> 30 (a). "The cabinet accused the prime minster of misconduct"
> 30 (b). "The prime minister was accused of misconduct."

Whereas the active 30 (a) puts the whole blame on the NP1 "the cabinet," the corresponding passive congener 30 (b) shifts it from the ministers and makes it more generic in meaning.

The same truth value is conveyed by "Get" passives in which "get" features as an auxiliary in place of "be." Consider the following.

> 31 (a). "I broke the cup."
> 31 (b). "The cup got broken."

Get-passives, observes Lakoff[6], demonstrates a situation wherein the speaker presents the happening as unwilful without his willingness. Yim (1988), therefore, characterizes "Get-passives" as dynamic incorporating action verbs, not static verbs as shown below.

> 32 (a). "The bed was slept in by John."[7]
> 32 (b). *"The bed got slept in."

Bolinger (1980, p. 190) takes passivization as a phenomenon when the object receives the effect of an action. In other words, the object is not spatial but is either effected or affected as shown below.

> 34 (a). "The dog walked under the bridge"
> 34 (b). *"The bridge has been walked under by the dog"

The passive congener of 34 (a) has been marked with asterisks (*) because the NP2 "the bridge" does not get affected by the action of walking. It is in spatial relation to the NP1 "the dog." There, however, can be a situation when NP2 is perceived as a potential affectee of the action. If a forest guard cautions visitors of 35 (a), the passive congener 35 (b) becomes acceptable, for he has in his mind a possible damage to the pond.

> 35 (a). "Nobody is to camp beside this pond."
> 35 (b). "This pond is to be camped beside by nobody".

Similar observations hold for 36 (a) which has a corresponding passive as 36 (b).

> 36 (a). "John sat on the chair."

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[6] (quoted by Saeed (2003), p. 168)

[7] The active congener of (32) will be (33):

> 33. "John slept in the bed."

In (33), "sleep in" is V and the NP2 "the bed" comes as the complement of it. See Chomsky (1986, p. 201).

36 (b). "The chair was sit on by John."

In this case, the NP2 "the chair" assumes the role of affected object[8] (patient), and hence, qualifies to be the subject of the passive construction.

5. Syntactic Configurations of Passives in Pashto

This section not only discusses the syntactic structures of passives but also attempts to address the inclusion or exclusion of agents in Pashto passives**.** The exclusion does not need much syntactic reasons for, as Abid Khan (2020) observes, passive structures are characteristically agentless. The action of the sentence originates in the subject and is passed onto the object. The derived subject, however, does not find any phonological realization. He gives the following example.

37 (b). "Zu owakhala shom." "(Me beaten was.)"

زۀ ووهلے شوم

The corresponding active of the sentence will have a surface structure like 37 (a):

37 (a). "Hagha zu owakhalam." "(He me beat)."

هغۀ زۀ ووهلم

However, the passives that take realized agents need some syntactic description.

The projection rules for an active structure can be written as (vii):

(vii). "NP1 +NP2+ V+ Aux"

Applying this projection rule to 37 (a), we get 38 (a).

38 (a). "Hagha (he) +Zu (me) +owahalam (beaten)."

هغۀ زۀ ووهلم

NP1   NP2   V+ Past (Aux)

The passive sentence can be represented as (viii):

(viii). "NP2 +V+ Aux"

This projection rule generates a syntactic structure like 38 (b):

39 (b). "Zu (me) + owakhale (beaten) +shom (was)."

زۀ ووهلې شوم

NP1   V   Aux (Passive)

38 (b) Shows that "shom" is added as an auxiliary in passives.

Chomsky (1986, p. 160) in his X-bar module expresses the relation between the head word (X) and the complement (WP) using the following notations:

(ix). "X'→ X (WP)"

(ix) shows that English head word (X) takes the complement (WP) to its right. However, since Pashto is a right branching language, the complement, therefore, appears to the left of the head word as illustrated below.

(x). "X' → (WP) X"

Consider the following example.

39. "Sher Khan Gul Khan owa kho." ("Sher Khan Gul Khan beat").

شیر خان ګل خان ووهو

NP1   NP2   V

Applying this paradigm to passive structure, we get the following projection rule:

(xi). "NP2 + V (passive participle) + (Aux)."

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[8] Quirk& Greenbaum (1973) use the terms effected and affected objects for patient and theme thematic roles respectively.

As can be seen in (xi), NP2 is the complement of V at the deep level and since the subject slot falls vacant due to the movement of NP1 to the adjunct position, this actuates the movement of NP2 to the subject position in order to be the subject of the passive structure. In active, as in 38 (a), the complement of V NP2 "Zu" (me) is to the left because Pashto is written from right to left. If 38m (a) is transcribed in Pashto, it will look like (40).

       40 (a). "Hagha zu owahalam." "(He me beat)."

       هغۀ زۀ ووهلم

       40.   Owakhalam Zu Hagha (beat me He)

       ووهلم زۀ هغۀ.

Moreover, the auxiliary "shom" is missing in the active structure. This means that like English, it is added to the passive structure.

 In Pashto, "shom" can be recognized as "Be" passives. This is the characteristic type of passives and can be both agentive and non-agentive. Agentless passives are the most unmarked types of passives. Consider the following sentences.

       41 (a). "Zu ba sta kar okam."   "(I will your work do.)"

       زۀ به ستا کار اوکړم

       41 (b). "Sta kar ba oshe."   "(Your work will be done.)"

       ستا کار به اوشي

In 41 (a), the surface subject of the sentence has a phonological realization but this backgrounded subject acquires a null position in the corresponding passive. Also consider,

       42 (b). "Dalta Shezona patege." ("Here things are stolen.)"

       دلته شيزونه پټېږي

The corresponding active will be 42 (a).

       43 (a). "Ghula dalta shezona pate." "(Thieves here things steal.)"

       غلۀ دلته شيزونه پټوي

6. Agentive Passives in Pashto

The phonological realization of the agent is also a syntactic viability in Pashto passives. Consider the following examples.

       44 (a). "Ma da payala maata kra." (I this cup broke.)

       ما دا پياله ماته کړه

         NP1   NP2   VP

       43 (b). "Da payala mata shwa." "(This cup broken was.)"

        NP2   VP

       دا پياله ماته شوه

There is, however, the possibility of adding an overt agent to this passive construction as in the following.

       44 (a). "Zama (Ma[9]) na da payala mata shwa." "(From me this cup broken was)". Or

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[9] These two pronouns are interchangeable in passives. They, however, differ in actives. "Ma" can be nominative whereas "Zama" is accusative and, therefore, occurs with the preposition "na." Consider the following examples.

       45. "Ma Sher Khan owakho." (I Sher Khan beat.") ما شېر خان اووهو

NP1   NP2   VP

زما (ما) نه دا پياله ماته شوه

45 (b). "Da payala zama na mata shwa." (This cup from me broken was.)"

NP2   NP1   VP

دا پياله زما نه ماته شوه

44 (a) and (b) show two different syntactic positions of the agent "from me." In 44 (a), the agent NP1 takes initial position while in 44 (b) it occupies middle position after the patient NP2. Both structures demonstrate the passivized status of NP1 undertaking the process of breaking the NP2 "the cup."

The two structures show difference in topicalization[10]: in 44 (a) the agent "zama" is the topic while in 44 (b) the patient "da payala" has been topicalized.

The syntactic tree for 44 (a) will be drawn as (xii).

(xii).
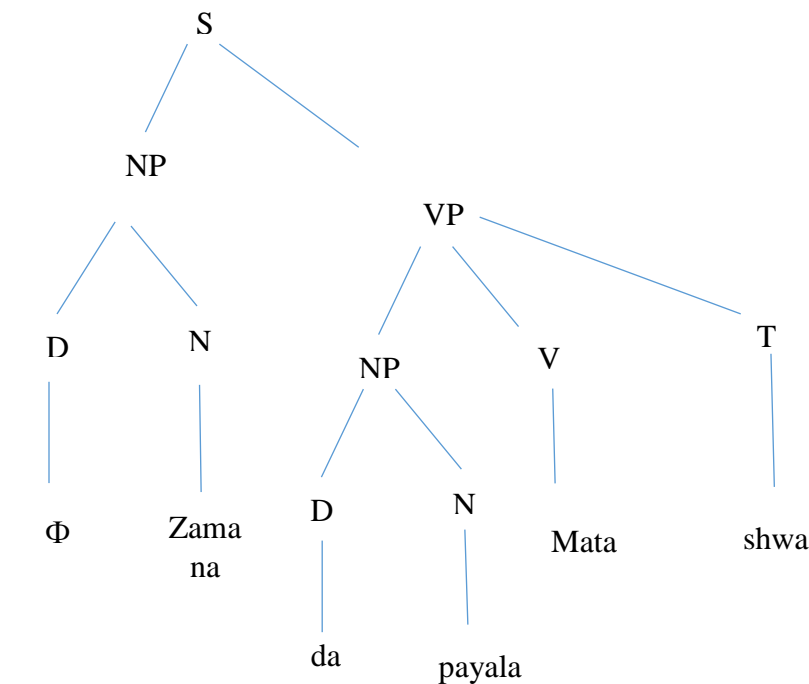
46. *"Zama Sher K̄han owakho." (Me Sher Khan beat.") زما شپږ خان ووهو*

The sentence (46) can be acceptable provided that it takes "na" as in (47).

47. "Zama na Sher Khan wakhal okharal." (Me from Sher Khan beaten was.)"

زما نه شپږ خان وهل اوخوړل

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[10] Topicalization, according to Chomsky (1965), is the preposing of a constituent and bringing it directly under "S" in the surface structure.

Similarly, sentence 37 (b) can also be written with an agent such as

48. "Ma da hagha na wakhal okharal." (Me from him beaten was.)"

<div dir="rtl">ما د هغۀ نه وهل اوخوړل</div>

The agent "da hagha na" is "from-PP" in such agentive structures because the postposition "na" shows the source and corresponds to the preposition "from" is in English.

The same applies to 42 (b) which can take agentive form as (49):

49. "Mung na dalta shezona patage." (Us from here things stolen were.)"

<div dir="rtl">مونږ نه دلته شیزونه پټېږي</div>

These examples show that passivization involves the demotion of the agent and the promotion of the non-agent in English. But, in Pashto, the patient is not promoted to the subject but is made to undergo the process of beating or breaking the cup as illustrated in examples 37 (b) and 43 (b). The agent is demoted in passive constructions but no concomitant promotion of the non-agent is carried out. Examples like 44 (a) and (47), however, indicate that Pashto passives can be agentive and the agent is "from-PP," not "by-PP." In English, suppression of agent happens in certain cases and this, according to Saeed (2003), shows the extreme form of agent demotion.

Agentive passives can also be observed in the following examples.

50 (b). "Sher Khan zama na wakhal okharal." (Sher Khan from me beaten was.")
       NP2   NP1   VP   NP2   NP1   VP

<div dir="rtl">شېرخان زما نه وهل اوخوړل</div>

The active structure of 51 (b) can be written as 51 (a).

51 (a). "Ma Sher Khan owakho." "(I Sher Khan beat.)"
        NP1   NP2   NP1   NP2

<div dir="rtl">ما شېرخان ووهو</div>

Bukhari (1983) considers passives those structures wherein the agent is missing and the patient undergoes the process of action. He calls such structures as "Majkhool" and the corresponding active "maghroof."For illustration, he gives the following examples.

52 (b). "Hagha owajale sho." "Him killed was."

<div dir="rtl">هغه اووژلې شو</div>

The active of this sentence will be written as 52 (a).

52 (a). "Cha /Gul Khan hagha owaja." ("Someone/Gul Khan him killed."

<div dir="rtl">چا / ګل خان هغه اووژۀ</div>

Similarly, he also gives the following example.

53 (b). "Khut olekale sho." ([11]The letter written was.")

<div dir="rtl">خط اولیکلې شو</div>

The active construction of 53 (b) will be

53 (a). "Asad khut oleko." (Asad the letter wrote.)"

<div dir="rtl">اسد خط اولیکو</div>

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[11] Pashto does not admit obligatory determiners in case of singular countable nouns. The addition of the determiner "the" has been done to make the structure compatible to English.

These examples show that a passive participle takes suffix "ye" and the addition of "sho." This latter verb can be taken as "Be." Also consider the following example.

54 (b). "Ghanam ghubul sho." (The wheat harvested was.)"

غنم غوبل شو
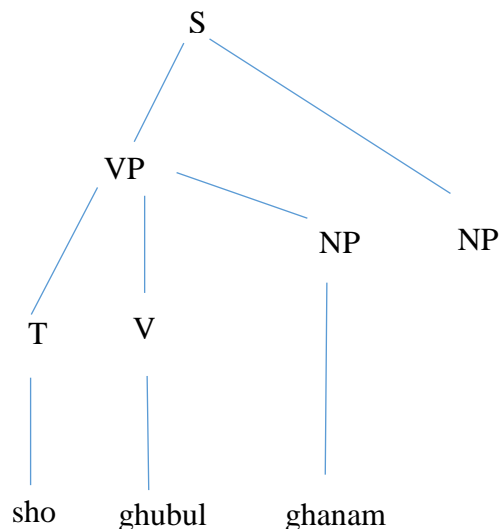
54 (a). "Zamindaro Ghanam ghubal kro." "(The farmers the wheat harvested.)"
        NP1   NP2   VP   NP1   NP2   VP

زمیندار غنم غوبل کړو

In 54 (b), NP1 is the agent while NP2 is the complement of VP. It is the patient and receives the effect of the V "harvesting." Since Pashto is a right-branching language, the complement NP2 "ghanam" will precede the head V "ghubal." Once the sentence undergoes passive transformation, the NP1 is transposed to the object slot and finds expression as a null NP. The complement of V "ghanam" moves to the subject slot in order to fill the subject slot. This movement is marked as A-movement as discussed in section (2). This NP "ghanam" features as an internal argument (as the complement of V), and due to empty subject slot, it moves to external argument position i.e., the subject of the sentence. This movement also lends a syntactic support to EPP in Pashto-- that is Pashto sentence must have a subject. Moreover, the T (auxiliary) "sho" in these examples appear to the right of the passive participle "ghubul." This means that the passive auxiliary appears as the constituent of the VP as shown in the tree diagram (xiii) below.

(xiii)

The figure (xiii) shows that the NP "ghanam" is the complement of V "ghubul." Being a right branching language, Pashto complements precede their heads, unlike English wherein the complements follow their heads. This different between the head word and complement has been illustrated below.

55. "The farmers harvested the wheat."
        NP1   VP   NP2

In (55), the complement NP2 "the wheat" follows the head word "harvested." This sentence will be written as (56) in Pashto.

   56. "Zamindaro ghanam ghubul kral." "(The farmers the wheat harvested.)"
          NP1   NP2   VP   NP1   NP2   VP

زمیندارو غنم غوبل کړل

In (56), the complement NP2 "ghanam" precedes the head word V "ghubul."

This parametric difference, as Chomsky (2006) calls it, leads to surface level differences between the two languages though they manifest similarities at the deep level.

   7. **Voice Neutrality**

A passive sentence is the semantic variant of the active. Both report the same happening in a given situation and describe the thematic relations of agent and patient. Postal (1974) calls it "truth-functional equivalence" (p. 359) and Palmer (1979) & (1988) uses the term "voice neutral" to describe this semantic equivalence. In 106 (a), John acts as the agent of carrying out the action of eating spinach and the same happens in its corresponding passive 106 (b) wherein spinach receives the same effect of eating carried out by John.

   57 (a). "John ate the spinach."
   57(b). "The spinach was eaten by John"

These sentences will be written as 58 (a) and 48 (b) in Pashto.

   58 (a). "Sher Khan palak okharal."   "(Sher Khan the spinach ate.)"

شېرخان پالک اوخوړل

   58 (b). "Palak okharal sho."   ("The spinach eaten was.")

پالک اخوړل شو

There are, however, situations where this does not happen as Chomsky (1957, p. 101) acknowledges in the following examples:

   59 (a). "Everyone in the room knows at least two languages."
   59 (b). "At least two languages are known by everyone in the room."

Whereas the two languages may be non-specific in active 59 (a), they are specific in the passive 59 (b). Maurice and Freeman (1999, p. 348) illustrates this difference with the following examples.

   60 (a). "Moles dig tunnels."
   60 (b). "Tunnels are dug by moles."

As it is evident, example 60 (a) illustrates the general property of moles whereas 60 (b) refers to the digging of all tunnels by NP1"moles" which makes it semantically unacceptable.

The validity of the mentioned examples can be tested in Pashto language in sentences 61-115.

   61 (a). "Kher yu kas pa kamra ka kam az kam dwa jabe wai." "(Everyone the room in[12] at least two languages spoke.)"

هر یو کس په کمره کښې کم از کم دوه ژبې وائي

   61 (b). "Kama az kam dwa jabe pa kamra k wayale kege." ("At least two languages the room in spoken are.)"

کم از کم دوه ژبې په کمره کښې وئيلې کېږي

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[12] Haegeman (1994) says that languages with OV have postpositions i.e., in them the complement precedes the head word. Being SOV language, Pashto has postpositions. Hence, "in the room" will be "Pa kamra ke" in Pashto. The complement "pa karma" (the room) of the word like "ke" (in) follows the head word.

A through reading of 61(a) and (b) suggests that the two languages seem definite in the passivized structure. This, however, will generally be determined by stress on the word "dwa" (two) because Pashto assigns great significance to tone in determining the intended meaning of the structure. Sentences 60 (a) and (b) will be translated as 62 (a) and (b) in Pashto.

62 (a). "Mangakan sowre kaane." "(Moles tunnels dig)."

منږکان سوړي کني

62 (b). "Sowre kanastale kege." "(Tunnels dug are.)"

سوړي کنستلي کېږي

Like 60 (a) and (b), 62 (a) denotes a characteristic property of moles while 62 (b) shows the general process of digging tunnels which cannot be restricted to moles only. This means that 62 (a) and (b) are semantically different even though 62 (b) is a syntactic variant of 62 (a).

Brame (1976) explains voice neutrality with the following two sentences. If John does something that Michael regards as an insult, in such a situation 63(b) is acceptable though the corresponding active 64 (a) is not.

63 (a). "John insulted Michael."

63 (b). (?) "Michael was insulted by John."

The corresponding Pashto structures of these sentences will be 64(a) and 64 (b).

64 (a). Sher Khan Gul Khan bezata kro." "(Sher Khan Gul Khan insulted)."

شېرخان ګل خان بې عزته کړو

64 (b). "Gul Khan bezata sho."   "(Gul Khan insulted was.)"

ګل خان بې عزته شو

The lack of voice neutrality that one can observe in 63 (a) and (b) is also evident in 64 (a) and (b). In 64 (a), the action on the part of Sher Khan is wilful whereas in 64 (b) it will be taken incidental.

8. Conclusions

Passive transformation is among those syntactic phenomena which offer enough materials for debate within linguistic circles. It is to be recognized that Pashto language has a very restricted use of passives. It is not as rich and vast as one finds in English. The syntactic frameworks, however, of the two languages have more similarities and less dissimilarities. Like English, Pashto passives are marked both syntactically and morphologically. The syntactic transposition of the agent and patient happen in both with this difference that Pashto passives are unmarkedly agentless and only markedly agentive. Morphologically, both take passive participle and an auxiliary which is characteristically "Shom" in Pashto corresponding to "Be" in English.

The difference in the syntactic configuration of the two languages is also evident in the structures of their sentences. English sentence is SVO whereas Pashto is SOV. These differences in sentence structures lead to different PPs in the two languages. Whereas English has prepositional phrases, Pashto has postpositional. This difference in PPs actuate the insertion of "-from PP," not "-by PP" as an agent in Pashto. Moreover, being a tonal language, Pashto also assigns great significance to tone in assigning a semantic dimension to certain structures as has been discussed in section (7).

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