

Passivization, reconstruction and edge phenomena: connecting English and Japanese nominalizations

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Abstract We establish surprising effects of scope freezing in English nominals that are unambiguously passive, and show parallels with scope freezing in Japanese *sa* ‘extent’ nominals. We argue that passive movement is an abstract operation inside these English nominalizations (*-able* plus *-ity* and *-ed* plus *-ness*, and optionally in *-tion*). In addition we contribute various arguments for a unified structure of English and Japanese nominalizations with two specifier positions—one A’-position and one A-position—with movement from the object position via the lower specifier to the higher specifier position. Our data lead us not only to extend the notion of edge features in Minimalism to nominalizations, but also to claim that these features are subject to (overt or covert) movement. Our analysis of passivization in nominalizations also pertains to passive clauses, as it reveals a more abstract nature of passive than the generally accepted theory of sentential passive claims. The motivation for passive movement is not simply to satisfy Case requirements. Rather, “focalization” of the Theme argument to the edge triggers movement in passive nominals and clauses alike.

Keywords Nominalization · Passivization · Scope freezing · Reconstruction · Covert movement · Quantifier scope · English · Japanese

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