Antipassive:
The golden jubilee

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Where it all started
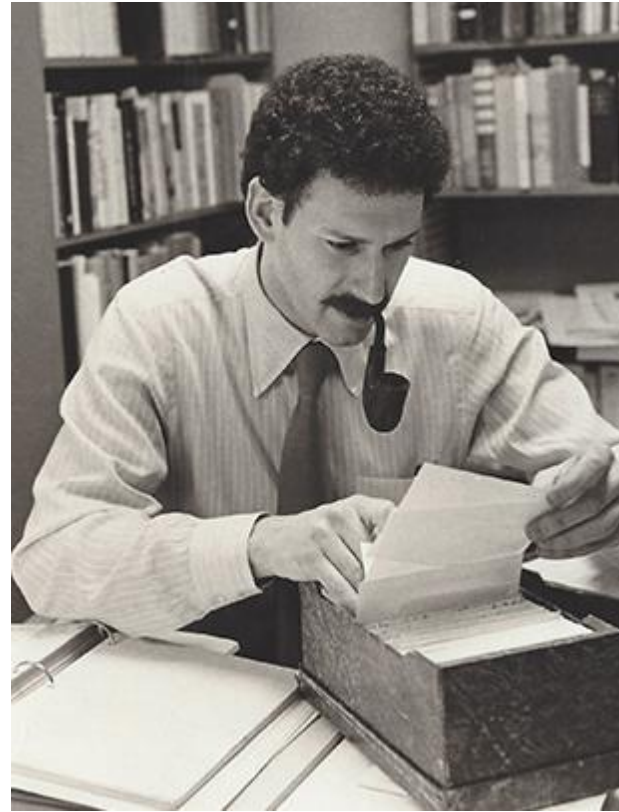
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Transitivity alternations in Chinook Jargon

(page references to Boas 1894):

(16) a-λk-λ-$\acute{u}$-$k\check{s}t$-$x̣$ λ-$k'asks$ k-a-$\lambda\acute{a}$-$k'auk'au$[43] (256)
he-looks-at-it-habitually child   murderer (one-who-'shot'-people)

(17) a-λ-ki-$k\check{s}t$ λ-$x̣at$ λ-$k^{w}a\lambda\acute{\imath}lxmk$ (218)
he-looked   one   person

Transitivity alternations in Chinook Jargon

CHINOOK JARGON, 1

(page references to Boas 1894):

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  he-looked one   person

In 16 the ergator is *k-a-λá-k'auk'au* and the non-ergator is *λ-k'ásks*; each has an inflectional pronominal in apposition in the verb—a transitive stem of course. However, when the *-u-* directional morpheme is replaced by *-ki-*, as in 17, the structure becomes intransitive in form, but 'active intransitive',[47] i.e. implying an object. I have termed this *-ki-* form the ANTIPASSIVE construction, playing upon its inverse equivalence to a passive of accusative languages, because the sense is clearly equivalent to a transitive, though the form is intransitive,

Goals for today

- Present and analyze main properties of antipassives

- Revisit Silverstein's original "inverse analogy" with respect to passives

basic facts

Antipassive, informally

- In the antipassive construction, the logical object of a transitive verb is "demoted": either suppressed or represented by an expression lower than the core argument on the grammatical hierarchy

subject > object > non-core argument > non-argument

CORE ARGUMENTS   [INDIRECT OBJECT]   PP/OBLIQUE

Antipassive, informally

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  CORE ARGUMENTS   INDIRECT ARG   OBLIQUES

- English analogy: conative alternation

  The gymnast grabbed [$_{DP}$ *the bar*]/*sipped* [$_{DP}$ *the beer*]
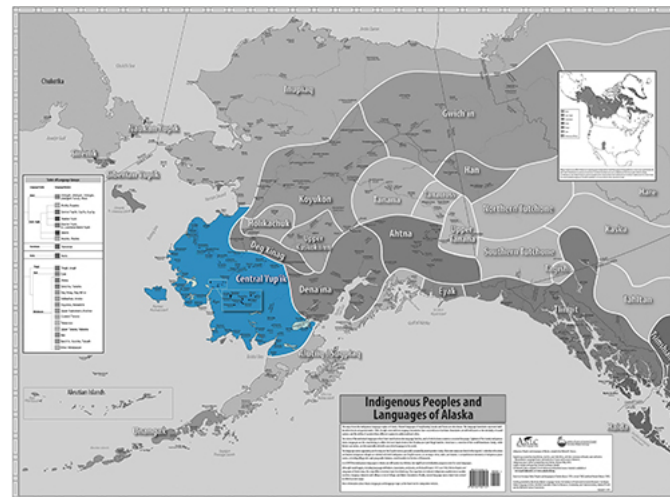 logical object & syntactic object
  The gymnast grabbed [$_{PP}$ *at the bar*]/*sipped* [$_{PP}$ *at the beer*]
  logical object & syntactic adjunct

Visible properties of antipassives

- Marking of object and subject different from the marking in a transitive construction:
    - Special (non-object) marking of the underlying object
    - Different encoding of the subject (in ergative languages)
- Verb marking indicative of valency decrease

Visible properties of antipassives: Central Alaskan Yup'ik

Angute-m   *sass'aq*   *navg-aa.*
man-ERG   watch.ABS   break-IND.3SG.SBJ.3SG.OBJ

Angun   *sass'a-mek*   *navg-i-uq.*
man.ABS   watch-INS   break-ANTI-IND.3SG.SBJ

'The man broke a/the watch.' (Miyaoka 2012)

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man.ABS   watch-INS   break-ANTI-IND.3SG.SBJ

'The man broke a/the watch.' (Miyaoka 2012)

What can be antipassivized?

	Antipassive OK
Regular transitive verbs	Yes
Regular unaccusatives	No
Dyadic unaccusatives	No
Unergatives	Some (varies across languages and within language)

How is the logical object expressed?

- Not expressed at all: *This dog bites*
- Expressed as a PP: *This dog bites at the bone*
- Compounded with the verb: *This dog bone-bites*
- Never a DP or a CP

Why do we know so little?

- Fixation on ergative languages (but see Postal's early paper "Antipassive in French")

- Fixation on side effects, not the core syntax, hence, unclear criteria of what counts as an antipassive

- Less common distribution than that of passives

There is something about antipassive…

- Silverstein 1972/1976: active intransitive construction implying an object, with the interpretation equivalent to that of a transitive

- Truth conditional equivalence?-–Not quite

Transitives and antipassives

- *Kim ate something/a sandwich/a tiny amount of dirt—Kim ate.*

No equivalence

- *Kim ate some apples—Kim ate some of apples.*
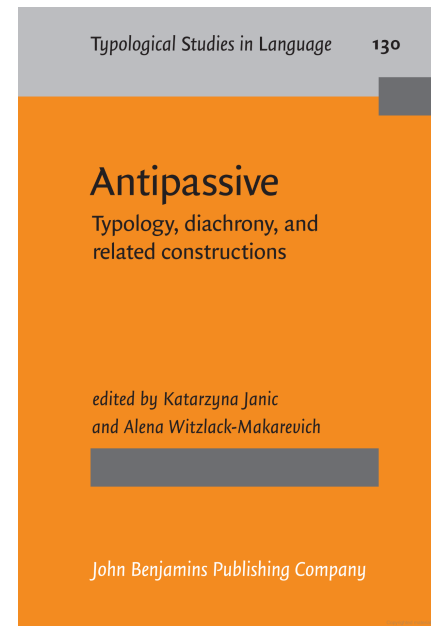
No equivalence or entailment

Passives and antipassives

	Passive	Antipassive
Truth conditional equivalence with active	(Yes)	No
Prevents the realization of X as a syntactic *argument*	External argument	Internal argument
Prevents the realization of X in syntactic structure	No	?

Explaining antipassive through a cluster of properties

Approaches to antipassive

- Silverstein 1972/1976: active intransitive construction implying an object, with the interpretation equivalent to that of a transitive

- Zeitgeist in the 1970-1980s: scales of transitivity, scales of antipassivity; lexicalism

- Later work: looking at symptoms of antipassive (visible properties, scalar comparisons with transitive), not directly at structure

Typological Studies in Language 130

Antipassive
Typology, diachrony, and related constructions

edited by Katarzyna Janic and Alena Witzlack-Makarevich

John Benjamins Publishing Company

Transitivity continuum

- Basic idea: transitive and antipassive constructions differ along several dimensions and should be placed on the transitivity continuum
  (Hopper & Thompson 1980; Tsunoda 1985; Heaton 2019)

- Transitivity continuum

  maximally   ……………….. maximally
  transitive   intransitive

Antipassive on a scale

Prototypical antipassives have a number of characteristics:

- the agent is realized as derived intransitive subject
- the patient is "implied": realized as the OBL, or is not realized at all
- the patient is backgrounded
- the clause shows a lower degree of transitivity than the corresponding transitive verb in terms of affectedness
(Tsunoda 1985; 1988; Heaton 2017, 2020; Janic & Witzlack-Makarevich 2021)

Dimensions of transitivity as signs of antipassives

- Change in verbal marking/verbal agreement
- Change in case marking
- Change in subject properties
- Change in aspectual value
- Change in object "affectedness"
- Change in object backgrounding/subject focusing

Change in verbal marking

- "Masked antipassive" (Postal's term):
  - In some languages, only a subset of verbs are overtly marked for antipassive

    Central Alaskan Yupik (Basilico 2018; Miyaoka 2012)
    Iñupiaq (Basilico 2018, Nagai 2006)
    Circassian (Arkadiev & Letuchyi 2021)

Variation in marking: Kabardian

a. *s-jə-q̇ʷeš'ə-m*   *s-jə-txəλə-r*   *jə-ž'ə-ne.*
    1SG.PR-POSS-brother-OBL 1SG.PR-POSS-book-ABS 3SG.ERG-read-FUT
    'My brother will read my book through.'

b. *s-jə-q̇ʷeš'ə-r*   *s-jə-txəλə-m*   *j-ew-ž'e.*
    1SG.PR-POSS-brother-ABS 1SG.PR-POSS-book-OBL DAT-DYN-read.ANTIP
    'My brother is reading my book.'

a. *λ̣ə-xe-m*   *ʁʷefə-r*   *ja-ve-n*   *xʷej.*
    man-PL-OBL field-ABS 3PL.ERG-plough-POT must
    'The men must plough the field.'

b. *λ̣ə-xe-r*   *ma-ve-xe.*
    man-PL-ABS DYN-plough(ANTIP)-PL.ABS
    'The men are busy ploughing.'

(Arkadiev & Letuchiy 2021: 491, 493)

	Marked AP	Unmarked AP
Kabardian (Arkadiev & Letuchiy 2021)	'ask (a favor; a question)', 'curse', 'cut', 'dig', 'drink', 'eat', 'give', 'hear', 'kiss', 'knead', 'knit', 'lick', 'look', 'measure weight', 'mow', 'pinch', 'push', 'read' , 'scold', 'scratch', 'sew', 'smell', 'sow', 'steal', 'sweep', 'think', 'touch', 'wash (clothes, hands, dishes)', 'wipe', 'write'	'bite', 'call', 'close', 'open', 'plough', 'reap', 'sell', 'speak'
Iñupiaq (Nagai 2006; Basilico 2018)	'bend', 'break', 'bust' 'chop', 'close, put board on (window/door)', 'close, lock' , 'cool', 'crack (glass)', 'cut (food) in two', 'dirty', 'finish making sth, 'fold', 'forbid', 'inflate', 'lengthen', 'let loose', 'open', 'praise', 'sell' , 'spill', 'stain', 'straighten', 'stretch', 'talk back to', 'thaw out', 'thicken', 'tie', 'twist (rope), 'tear', 'unfold'	'bathe', 'beat (drum), 'boil half dry', 'catch (fish) with a net', 'chew', 'comb hair', 'cut hair', 'drink', 'eat', 'forget', 'fry', 'gnaw', 'hammer', 'hear', 'smell', 'hunt', 'kiss', 'knead', 'lick', 'paint', 'pat (dog)', 'read', 'remember', 'ring (bell)', 'roast', 'scratch', 'see', 'shave', 'shout', 'smoke', 'suck', 'talk', 'touch', 'understand', 'whisper', 'wipe'

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No consistency in the distribution of marked and unmarked antipassives across languages

Change in verbal marking

- "Masked antipassive": In some languages, only a subset of verbs are overtly marked for antipassive, without clear semantic indications toward marking

- Syncretism: In quite a few languages, the antipassive marker is syncretic with other valency-altering markers, including passive, causative, and anticausative (Polinsky 2017)

- Subtractive marking: antipassive may appear less marked than transitive
(as in Tongan: stay tuned)

Change in verbal agreement

- Change from multiple-argument agreement to subject agreement only

- What if there is subject agreement only to begin with? Or no agreement? We end up with "masked antipassive" again

- Syncretism between antipassive marking and agreement marking ("spurious antipassive" in Chukchi)

Change in case marking

- Some ergative languages do not switch ERG to ABS (Polinsky 2017)

- In non-ergative languages, no surface change in the subject case happens, e.g., Soninke (Mande):

Sámáqqè-n   dà   lémínè-n qíñí.
snake-D   CMPL.TR DET   child-D   bite
'The snake bit the child.'

Sámáqqè-n   qíñí-ndí.
snake-D   bite-AP
'The snake bit (did the biting).' (Creissels 2021: 305)

Change in subject properties

- Syntactic ergativity (ergative extraction effect, Aissen 2017): In some languages, transitive subjects cannot undergo displacement or serve as syntactic controllers, while intransitive subjects are accessible to such operations

- Antipassive creates an intransitive subject, thus serving as a way-station for subject displacement or subject control

Tongan relativization

e   fefine$_i$ [na'e   alu ___$_i$ ki Tonga]   intr S

DET   woman PST   go   to Tonga

'the woman who went to Tonga'

e   fefine$_i$ ['oku   'ofa'i 'e   Sione   _$_i$]   DO

DET   woman PRS   love   ERG   S

'the woman whom Sione loves'

*e   fefine$_i$ ['oku 'ofa'i   ___$_i$ 'a Sione]   trans S

DET   woman PRS   love   ABS   S

('the woman who loves Sione')

e   fefine$_i$ ['oku   'ofa   ___$_i$ ki   Sione] antipass S

DET   woman PRS   love.AP   to   S

'the woman who loves Sione'

Change in subject properties

- Not all languages with antipassive have syntactic ergativity

- Antipassive is not the only way to circumvent restrictions on transitive subject
  - Other means include anti-agreement, agent focus, nominalization, resumption (as used in Tongan, alongside with antipassive)

Change in aspectual value/telicity

- Antipassive predicates are often construed as atelic/imperfective (as compared to the base predicate), see Cooreman (1994), Heaton (2017), Krämer & Wunderlich (1999), Polinsky (2017), a.o.

- Kabardian:

a. *s-jə-q̇ʷeš'ə-m*   *s-jə-txəλə-r*   *jə-ǯ'ə-ne.*
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'My brother will read my book through.'

b. *s-jə-q̇ʷeš'ə-r*   *s-jə-txəλə-m*   *j-ew-ǯ'e.*
1SG.PR-POSS-brother-ABS   1SG.PR-POSS-book-OBL   DAT-DYN-read.ANTIP
'My brother is reading my book.'

Change in aspectual value

- Although common, this property is not found with antipassives across all languages

- In fact, the original Chinook example had the opposite aspectual characteristics:
  - Active transitive: "The murderer habitually looked at the child"
  - Antipassive: "He took a look"

Change in aspectual value/telicity

- Although common, this property is not found with antipassives across all languages

- If antipassive were to de-telicize the verb, intended-result predicates should be expected to resist antipassivization since their meaning includes the entailment of end state
  - Recall Kabardian and Iñupiaq examples of intended-result antipassives
  - Will return to de-telicization later today (examples from NE Caucasian)

Change in object affectedness

- Object of the antipassive is less "affected" than the corresponding object of the transitive

Chamorro

Ha-panek si Juan este i lalahi
3SG.ERG -beat UNM J DEM DET men
'Juan beat up these men.'
Mam-anek si Juan nu este i lalahi
AP-beat UNM J OBL DEM DET men
'Juan pounded at these men.'
(Cooreman 1988)

Object affectedness

- No change in "affectedness" in Mayan
- What exactly is affectedness?

Tongan

na'e	hiva'i	'e	he	fānau	'a	e	fo'i hiva
PST	sing.TR	ERG	DET	children	ABS		DET song

na'e	hiva-Ø	'a	e	fānau	ki he	fo'i hiva
PST	sing.AP	ABS	DET	children	to DET	song

'The children sang a/the song.'

Backgrounding/placing something in focus

- Change in object backgrounding/subject focusing

- As with affectedness, it is difficult to operationalize backgrounding or the status "in focus", and especially to make sure cross-linguistic comparisons are reasonable

What do we learn from these observations?

- Overt signs of antipassivization may vary across languages and within a single language

Problems with scalar representation of structures

- Specific to antipassive:
  - Some properties (e.g. affectedness, being in focus) are hard to define and may vary
  - Some properties are on and off; now you see them, now you don't
  - Significant cross-linguistic variation in interpretive signs of antipassive

- General issues with a continuum model
  - The model captures symptoms, not the underlying structure

Continuum vs discrete representations

- Even when people are faced with categories that have strict definitions, they treat them in a similar way to categories whose membership seems more based on similarity
  see Armstrong, Gleitman & Gleitman (1983), Lupyan (2003) on even vs odd numbers

- Gradience in behavioral measures/individual instances does not translate into gradience in grammatical representations

What we have achieved

- Antipassives are characterized by a number of properties, all of them scalar

- Scalar properties are not exhaustive and all-inclusive

Antipassive as a morphosyntactic operation

Back to Silverstein's concept

- Passive: morphosyntactic operation that prevents the realization of the external argument as an argument

- Antipassive: morphosyntactic operation that prevents the realization of the internal argument as an argument

Both operations target thematic positions that would otherwise be occupied by noun phrases (DPs) or dependent clauses (CPs)

What happens to the "unrealized" argument?

Passive:

- the external argument is missing, and is interpreted as an existential (*he was misled*)

- the external argument can be realized as an adjunct (*he was misled by the senator's aide*)

- the external argument is syntactically realized even when not present
The ship was sunk [PRO *to collect the insurance*]
The reporter was misled on purpose

Diagnosing unrealized arguments

- General assumption: unrealized arguments should have the same distribution and co-occurrence properties as those of expressed arguments in that same position

Italian and English

This leads (people) to the following conclusion. Eng

Questo conduce (la gente) alla seguente conclusione. It
this   leads   the people to.the following conclusion
'This leads (people) to the following conclusion.'

Missing (null) objects in Italian can control, bind, and be modified by adjuncts; missing (null) objects in English lack these properties (Rizzi 1986)

English and Italian missing objects

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'This leads (people) to the following conclusion.'

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This leads [PRO to conclude]

Avedon photographed [dressed glamorously]
[the sitters were glamorous]

Existential unrealized object

#John steals and it is very expensive

#John steals and they are very expensive

Transitives and antipassives: Depictive modification

Q'anjob'al (Mayan)

Transitive

Q'axan   Ø-s-**loh**-on   heb'   (s-pat).
warm   A3S-E3S-eat-SS   they   E3S-tortilla
'They eat (their tortillas) warm.'

Antipassive

*Q'axan Ø-**lo**-waj   heb'
warm   A3S-eat-AP   they

('They eat something warm.')

Transitives and antipassives: Adjunct control

Tongan (Polynesian)
Transitive

'Oku faitaa'i   'e Sione ('a e kakai)
PRS   photograph.TR   ERG S   ABS DET people
'i   he 'enau   tu'uta   mai
at   DET POSS   go   DIR

'Sione photographs (people) **upon arrival**.'

Antipassive

'Oku faitaa   'a   Sione   (ke he kakai)
PRS   photograph.AP   ABS S   to DET people
*'i he 'enau   tu'uta mai
at DET POSS   go   DIR
'Sione photographs (people) *****upon arrival**.'

Transitives and antipassives: Object control

- Chukchi

Transitive

t-ə-re-winret-ɣat=ʔəm   əŋel-ək
1SG-EP-FUT-help-2SG-EMPH   collect.firewood-INF
'I will help you collect firewood.'

Antipassive

ənqen   ine-winret-gʔe   (*əŋel-ək)
DEM.ABS   AP-help-AOR.3SG   collect.firewood-INF
('This thing helped collect firewood.')

Transitives and antipassives: Discourse reference

Q'anjob'al

[context: The old man bought a bag at the market.]

Transitive

Max-ø	s-**man**	naqach'ej	b'ay	txomb'al	junelxa.
COMPL-ABS3	ERG3-buy	CLF youth	PRP	market	again

'The young man bought it at the market again.'

Antipassive

Max-ø	**man**-waj	naq	ach'ej	b'ay	txomb'al	junelxa.
COMPL-ABS3	buy-AP	CLF	youth	PRP	market	again

'The young man bought something at the market again.'
NOT: 'The young man bought it at the market again.'

Transitives and antipassives: Existential objects & discourse reference

Kaqchikel (Ranero 2021: 70)

Transitive

x-Ø-in-löq'=pe pa k'ayib'äl. Ta-wla achike!
COMP-3SG.ABS-1SG.ERG-buy=DIR at market IMP-guess what
'I bought (something) at the market. Guess what!'

Antipassive

x-i-loq'-on=pe pa k'ayib'äl. *Ta-wla achike!
COMP-1SG.ABS-buy-AP=DIR at market IMP-guess what

'"I bought at the market." #Guess what!'

Transitives and antipassives: Picking up a discourse referent

Inuktitut (Branigan & Warren 2019)

Transitive

Darryli-up itluujak iga-ppauk, Alice
D.-ERG seaweed(ABS) cook-COND.[+TR].3SG.ERG.3SG.ABS A.(ABS)
nigi-qatta-ngit-tanga.
eat-HAB-NEG-PART.[+TR].3SG.ERG.3SG.ABS
i. #'When Darryl cooks seaweed, Alice doesn't eat (anything).'
ii. 'When Darryl cooks seaweed, Alice doesn't eat it.'

Antipassive

Darryli-up itluujak iga-ppauk, Alice
D.-ERG seaweed(ABS) cook-COND.[+TR].3SG.ERG.3SG.ABS A.(ABS)
nigi-Ø-qatta-ngit-tuk.
eat-AP-HAB-NEG-PART.[–TR].3SG.ABS
i. 'When Darryl cooks seaweed, Alice doesn't eat (anything).'
ii. #'When Darryl cooks seaweed, Alice doesn't eat it.'

Transitives and antipassives

	Transitive	Antipassive
Adjunct modification of implicit object	yes	no
Object control clauses	yes	no
Discourse reference	yes	no
Binding	yes	no
Paycheck pronouns (not shown here)	yes	no

Antipassive implicit object

- The existential unrealized argument is simply an entailment of the verb

- It does not correspond to a silent element in the syntax

Passive/antipassive asymmetry

- Personal and impersonal passives:

  External argument is projected, but not in the subject position;
  internal argument moves to the subject position or stays in situ, with an expletive in the subject position

- No personal/impersonal analogy with antipassives:

  Internal argument is never projected, no room for variation

Silverstein was (almost) right

	Passive	Antipassive
Prevents the realization of an argument	External	Internal
The subject argument is different from the subject of the base construction	Yes	No
Missing argument syntactically projected	Yes	No
Resulting predicate	Transitive	Intransitive

Properties that follow

- Change in verbal agreement: no object, no multiple agreement

- Change in case licensing:
  - no case competition between subject and object, subject is assigned default case (ABS, NOM)
  - If a given functional head can still assign quirky case, it will be preserved

- Change in subject properties: this is visible only if a language has morphosyntactic differences between intransitive and transitive subjects

- Change in aspectual value: a non-syntactic effect (object helps "measuring out" some events)

- Change in object "affectedness": associated with semantic entailments of a given verb

Antipassives and de-telicizing operations

Bezhta (Comrie et al. 2021)

kib-ba   łic'o   nizā-yo
girl-ERG   clothes.ABS   wash-PST
'The girl washed the clothes.'

kid   łic'o-li-d   niza-lā-yo
girl.ABS   clothes-OBL-INS   wash-"AP"-PST
'The girl was busy washing the clothes.'

(similar data in Godoberi, Hinuq)

Antipassives and de-telicizing operations

	Modifying adjunct clauses	Binding	Scope ambiguity
missing object, transitive telic	yes	yes	yes
missing object, de-telicized construction	yes	yes	yes

(data from Godoberi and Bezhta)

De-telicizing operation and lexical restrictions

- Predicates whose lexical specification includes the end state (intended result) should be compatible with antipassive but not with de-telicizing marking ('break', 'open', 'give birth', 'fall asleep')

- Godoberi, Hinuq, Bezhta (NE Caucasian) do not have productive antipassives, but have de-telicizing morphology (Tatevosov 2010), erroneously identified as antipassive (Comrie et al. 2021); this morphology is incompatible with intended-result predicates

Taking stock

- Antipassive: A construction that prevents the syntactic realization of the internal argument; the predicate of the antipassive construction is syntactically intransitive

- Silverstein was (almost) right in the characterization of the operation

- We were wrong in that it took us so many years to model it—instead of looking at its structure, we have been fascinated by its side effects

Thank you!

Acknowledgments: