Recursive Passivization: A Causative Coercion Account
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1. Introduction

Various theories of affix ordering, be they articulated within formal (e.g., Baker’s 1985 Mirror principle) or functional (e.g., Bybee’s 1985 relevance theory) frameworks, aim at reducing the observed ordering patterns to mechanisms underlying syntactic or semantic scope-taking. For instance, the universal tendency for tense grammatical morphemes to occur outside aspectual morphemes can be accounted for on the assumption that it is temporal operators (which locate the reference time with respect to the speech time) that take scope over aspectual operators (which establish temporal relations between the reference time and event time), but not vice versa.

Relative ordering of different pieces of morphology is thus thought of as reflecting hierarchical relations between linguistic categories, apparent deviations from this pattern being subject to various intricate restrictions (see, e.g., den Dikken 2003 on Atapaskan verbal morphology).

A trivial consequence of this view is that the output of an operation merging a piece of morphology must be a suitable input to a subsequent merge of the next piece of morphology. But the matter becomes less trivial when it comes to a recursive application of the same grammatical morpheme. The prediction is that we only find recursive derivations, where the structure created by the first instance of a morpheme can feed an application of a second instance of the same morpheme. Consider a double causative in Japanese:

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References

Syntactic and Semantic Ordering


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*Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 2: 45–90.
Chapter 2

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