

**PASSIVES IN SOME SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES:
A COMPARATIVE INVESTIGATION**

ANINDITA SAHOO



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI
AUGUST 2015**

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PASSIVES IN SOME SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES: A COMPARATIVE INVESTIGATION

by

ANINDITA SAHOO

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Submitted

in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

to the



Indian Institute of Technology Delhi
August 2015

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **“Passives in Some South Asian Languages: A Comparative Investigation”**, being submitted by **Ms. Anindita Sahoo** to the **Indian Institute of Technology Delhi**, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a record of original bona-fide research carried out by her under my guidance and supervision. I am satisfied that the thesis presented by Anindita Sahoo is worthy of consideration for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**.

The results of this thesis have not been submitted to any other University or Institute for award of degree or diploma.

Anindita Sahoo has completed necessary course work and put in the required attendance in this department.

Dr. Pritha Chandra

Associate Professor

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

Dated:

New Delhi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey of this dissertation, which started with ‘passives’ on board, has finally reached its destination. This journey has offered me an opportunity to understand what passives really are. No doubt there is a lot more that I have not been able to uncover. Indeed passives have certain linguistic intricacies I have not fully understood. This dissertation is rather an ode to the immense richness that passives offer.

I have travelled this far successfully only because of my supervisor Dr. Pritha Chandra and it is a privilege to be a student under her supervision. Right from the beginning of my career as a PhD candidate at IIT Delhi, she has been extremely patient with me, and has encouraged me at every step throughout this journey. Her contribution to this thesis is enormous, and without her this piece of work would never have been accomplished.

I am grateful to my committee members Prof. Ayesha Kidwai and Dr. Paroma Sanyal for their constant support and very insightful comments.

Many people have helped me in the data collection. Some of my informants who deserve a special mention are Bijoy Soreng, Amulya Nayak, Eugene Soreng, Maheswata Alice Tigga for Kharia, Hima, Robin EJ and P R Manoj for Malayalam and Dr. Paroma Sanyal, Basanta Kumar Sahoo, Bibhudatta Sahoo and Bimalendu Sahu for Odia.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Gurmeet Kaur and Usha Udaar for their co-operation and efforts.

I am grateful to Prof. Ambuj Sagar and Dr. Vigneswara Ilavarasan for their constructive comments and warm encouragement during my research plan presentation.

I am thankful to Prof. B. N. Patnaik for the discussions that we had during the initial days of my PhD research. Parts of the dissertation, more specifically the Odia section, have also benefitted greatly from his talks and suggestions.

My thanks are due for Prof. Collins, Prof. Ian Roberts, Prof. M.H. Abrahams and Late Prof. Anna Siewiereska who shared their papers which have been extremely relevant to this dissertation.

My heartfelt thanks go to my friends Chhoton and Tassy for taking pain to proofread and copy-edit the entire dissertation. Their expertise in the language saved a lot of time and money of mine.

My friends Hima at JNU and Neha at IIT Delhi deserve a special credit for all their help and support. My colleagues in the English Department at Galgotias University have also been extremely supportive to me during my need.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the authorities of CIIL Mysore and Galgotias University as I got financial benefits from these academic organizations while I was working on the dissertation. I am especially grateful to Sri G D P Sastry for giving me an opportunity to work in his project entitled ‘Dimensions of Endangered Languages’ sponsored by CIIL Mysore.

I am also thankful to my family for their help and support. I am indebted to my husband Bimalendu, who has supported me selflessly and stood by my side keeping my spirit high in order that I achieve my goal and my son Aadyant who has been a child uncomplaining and accepting. This helped me to sail through this journey without much stress. My parents and my brothers, Bibhudatta and Debadatta, have always been the pillars of my emotional strength. I also thank my parents-in-laws for believing in my strengths and making things less difficult than it would have been for me by keeping me free from many worries. This dissertation speaks of the unconditional love and care of all of them.

If I have still got something wrong, or forgot to mention anybody or anything, then I alone am responsible for this—the errors are completely mine.

I dedicate this dissertation to my supervisor Dr. Pritha Chandra, who accepted me as a student when I was clueless as to where to start, what to do and how to proceed for the PhD.

Anindita Sahoo

ABSTRACT

Passives are generally understood as structures where the predicate is detransitivized forcing it to realize its external argument as an adjunct (Prepositional Phrase/PP). Consequently, an internal argument occupies the subject position of the construction. In this thesis, I show through a detailed study of passives in three South Asian Languages/SALs (Odia, Malayalam and Kharia) that these canonical properties- external argument suppression and object promotion- do not necessarily define all passive-like constructions in every language. Some SALs exhibit constructions with optionally manifested agentive phrases (appearing as PPs), which *prima facie* resemble English kind canonical passives. However, on closer inspection, the optional agentive phrases turn out to have argument like properties. The agentive *by*-phrases bind anaphors, show anti-subject orientation and control into complement clauses. Internal arguments, on the other hand, remain surface objects and display none of the subjecthood properties. Based on these facts, I claim that while some languages like English construct passives which necessarily suppress their external arguments due to feature (uninterpretable phi-features and Edge Feature (EF)), retention on the Voice head, others like SALs which include Odia and Kharia, have a double vP layered structure in which a phi-defective v-2 inherits features from a phi-complete v-2. In Malayalam, the phi-defective v inherits features from phi-complete Asp. As a consequence, these languages host external arguments and case-value their internal arguments. Further, I highlight the featural composition of v-1 and v-2 in Odia and Kharia, and Asp and v in Malayalam in the three different domains- transitive, intransitive and ditransitive- to capture interesting similarities and differences between passives of the three languages under study.

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ABBREVIATIONS:

1	:	1 st person
2	:	2 nd person
3	:	3 rd person
acc	:	Accusative case
conj prt	:	Conjunctive Participle
cop	:	Copula
dat	:	Dative case
def	:	Definite
erg	:	Ergative case
fem	:	Feminine
fut	:	Future
gen	:	Genitive case
impf	:	Imperfective aspect
inf	:	Infinitive
instr	:	Instrumental case
loc	:	Locative case
N	:	Noun
neg	:	Negation
nom	:	Nominative case
obl	:	Oblique case
Part	:	Participial Clause
pass	:	Passive voice
pfv	:	Perfective aspect
pl	:	Plural
prst	:	Present tense

pst	:	Past tense
refl	:	Reflexive
rel	:	Relativizer
sbjv	:	Subjunctive mood
sg	:	Singular
soc	:	Sociative case
V	:	Verb