

Ling 566
Nov 8, 2022
Passive Construction

Overview

- Midterm!
- Passive
 - Arguments for lexicalist account
 - Details of our analysis
- Reading Questions

The Passive in Transformational Grammar

- Passive was the paradigmatic transformation in early TG.
- Motivations
 - Near paraphrase of active/passive pairs.
 - Simplified statement of cooccurrence restrictions.
 - E.g. *devour* must be followed by an NP, *put* by NP-PP
 - Such restrictions refer to pre-transformational (“deep”) structure.
 - Intuition that active forms were more basic, in some sense.
- Its formulation was complex:
 - Promote object
 - Demote subject, inserting *by*
 - Insert appropriate form of *be*, changing main verb to a participle.

But transforming whole sentences is overkill

- Passive sentences look an awful lot like some actives:

The cat was chased by the dog VS

The cat was lying about the dog

- Passives occur without *be* and without the *by* phrase:

Cats chased by dogs usually get away.

My cat was attacked.

So a lexical analysis seems called for

- What really changes are the verb's form and its cooccurrence restrictions (that is, its valence).
- There are lexical exceptions
 - Negative:
 - Pat resembles Bo* but **Bo is resembled by Pat*
 - That look suits you* but **You are suited by that look*
 - Positive
 - Chris is rumored to be a spy* but
 - *They rumor Chris to be a spy*

We posit a lexical rule

- Why not just list passive participles individually?
 - To avoid redundancy
 - To capture productivity (for example?)
- We make it a derivational (lexeme-to-lexeme) rule.
Why?
 - Our constraints on lexeme-to-word rules wouldn't allow us to make Passive one.

W

Newly coined verbs that the Passive Lexical Rule can apply to

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Text **EMB** to **22333** once to join



W When was the first fax machine invented?

1843

1880

1924

1948

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W When was the verb fax first attested, per the OED?

1869

1899

1949

1979

The Passive Lexical Rule

$$\left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{INPUT} \\
 \text{OUTPUT}
 \end{array} \right.
 \begin{array}{l}
 \left. \left\langle \boxed{1}, \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{tv-lxm} \\
 \text{ARG-ST} \langle [\text{INDEX } i] \rangle \oplus \boxed{A} \end{array} \right] \right\rangle
 \right. \\
 \left. \left\langle F_{PSP}(\boxed{1}), \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{part-lxm} \\
 \text{SYN} \quad \left[\text{HEAD} \quad [\text{FORM } \text{pass}] \right] \\
 \text{ARG-ST} \quad \boxed{A} \oplus \left\langle \left(\begin{array}{l}
 \text{PP} \\
 \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{FORM} \quad \text{by} \\
 \text{INDEX} \quad i
 \end{array} \right] \right) \right\rangle
 \end{array} \right] \right\rangle
 \right.
 \end{array}
 \right.
 \end{array}
 \left. \right]$$

Questions About the Passive Rule

$$\left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{d-rule} \\
 \text{INPUT } \left\langle \boxed{1}, \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{tv-lxm} \\ \text{ARG-ST } \langle [\text{INDEX } i] \rangle \oplus \boxed{A} \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \\
 \text{OUTPUT } \left\langle F_{PSP}(\boxed{1}), \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{part-lxm} \\ \text{SYN } \left[\text{HEAD } [\text{FORM } \text{pass}] \right] \\ \text{ARG-ST } \boxed{A} \oplus \left\langle \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{PP} \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{FORM } \text{by} \\ \text{INDEX } i \end{array} \right] \right) \right\rangle \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \right\rangle
 \end{array} \right]$$

- Why is the morphological function F_{PSP} ?
- Why do we have a separate FORM value pass? Why not say the output is [FORM psp]?
- What kind of a PP is the *by*-phrase (that is, argument-marking or predicational)?

More Questions

$$\left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{d-rule} \\
 \text{INPUT} \left\langle \boxed{1}, \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{tv-lxm} \\
 \text{ARG-ST} \langle [\text{INDEX } i] \rangle \oplus \boxed{A}
 \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \\
 \text{OUTPUT} \left\langle \text{F}_{PSP}(\boxed{1}), \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{part-lxm} \\
 \text{SYN} \quad \left[\text{HEAD} \quad [\text{FORM } \text{pass}] \right] \\
 \text{ARG-ST} \quad \boxed{A} \oplus \left\langle \left(\begin{array}{l}
 \text{PP} \\
 \left[\begin{array}{l}
 \text{FORM} \quad \text{by} \\
 \text{INDEX} \quad i
 \end{array} \right] \right) \right\rangle
 \end{array} \right] \right\rangle
 \end{array} \right]
 \end{array} \right]$$

- What makes the object turn into the subject?
- Why is the type of the input *tv-lxm*?
- What would happen if it were just *verb-lxm*?

Intransitives have passives in German

In der Küche wird nicht getanzt.

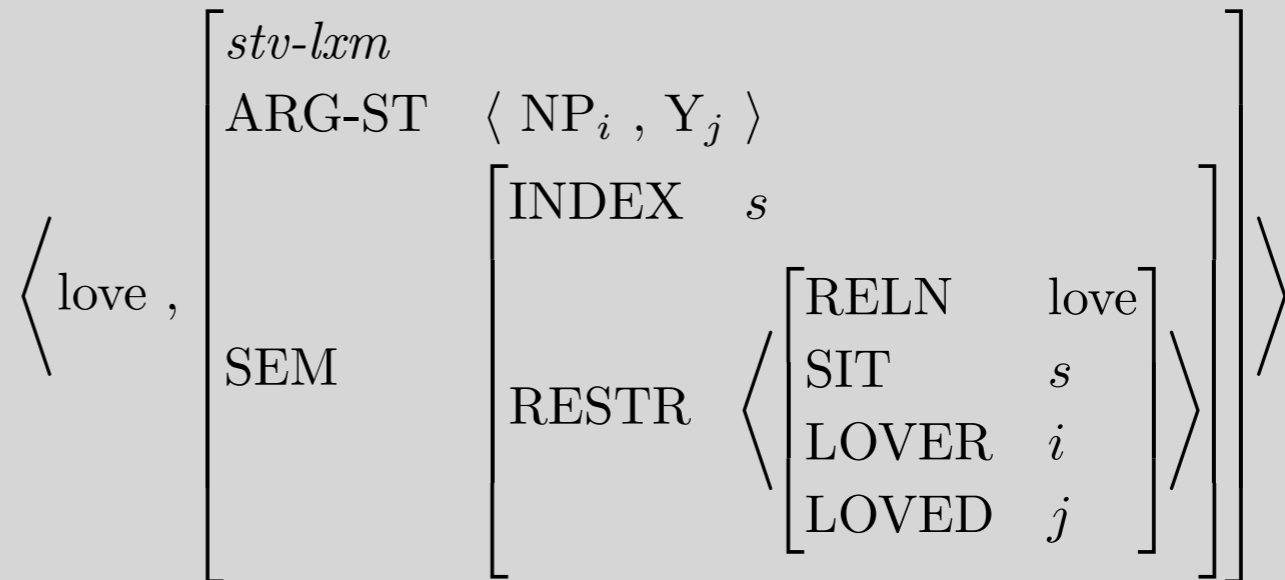
in the kitchen is not danced

‘There is no dancing in the kitchen.’

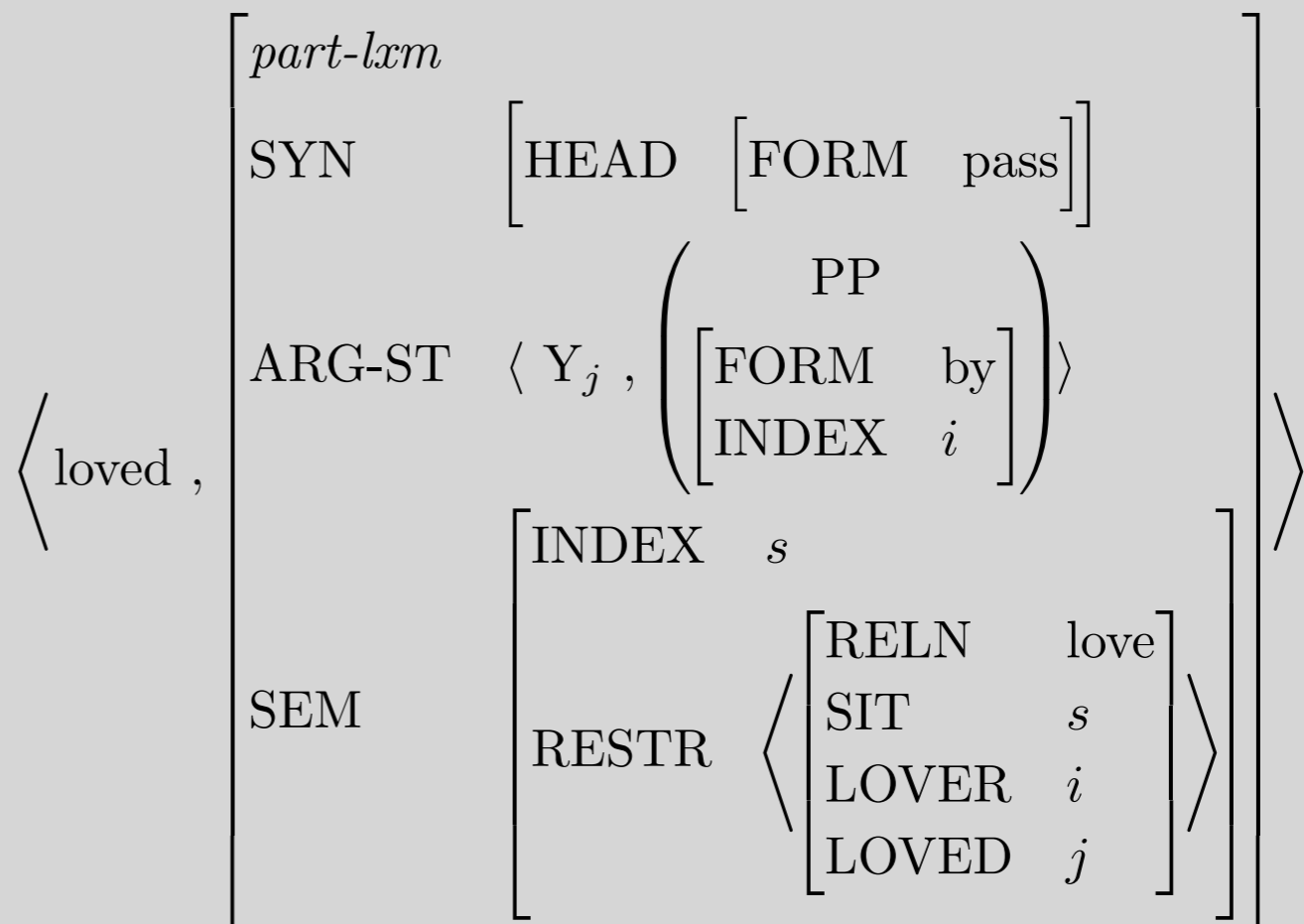
NB: The exact analysis for such examples is debatable, but German, like many other languages, allows passives of intransitives, as would be allowed by our analysis if the input type in the Passive LR is *verb-lxm*.

Passive Input & Output

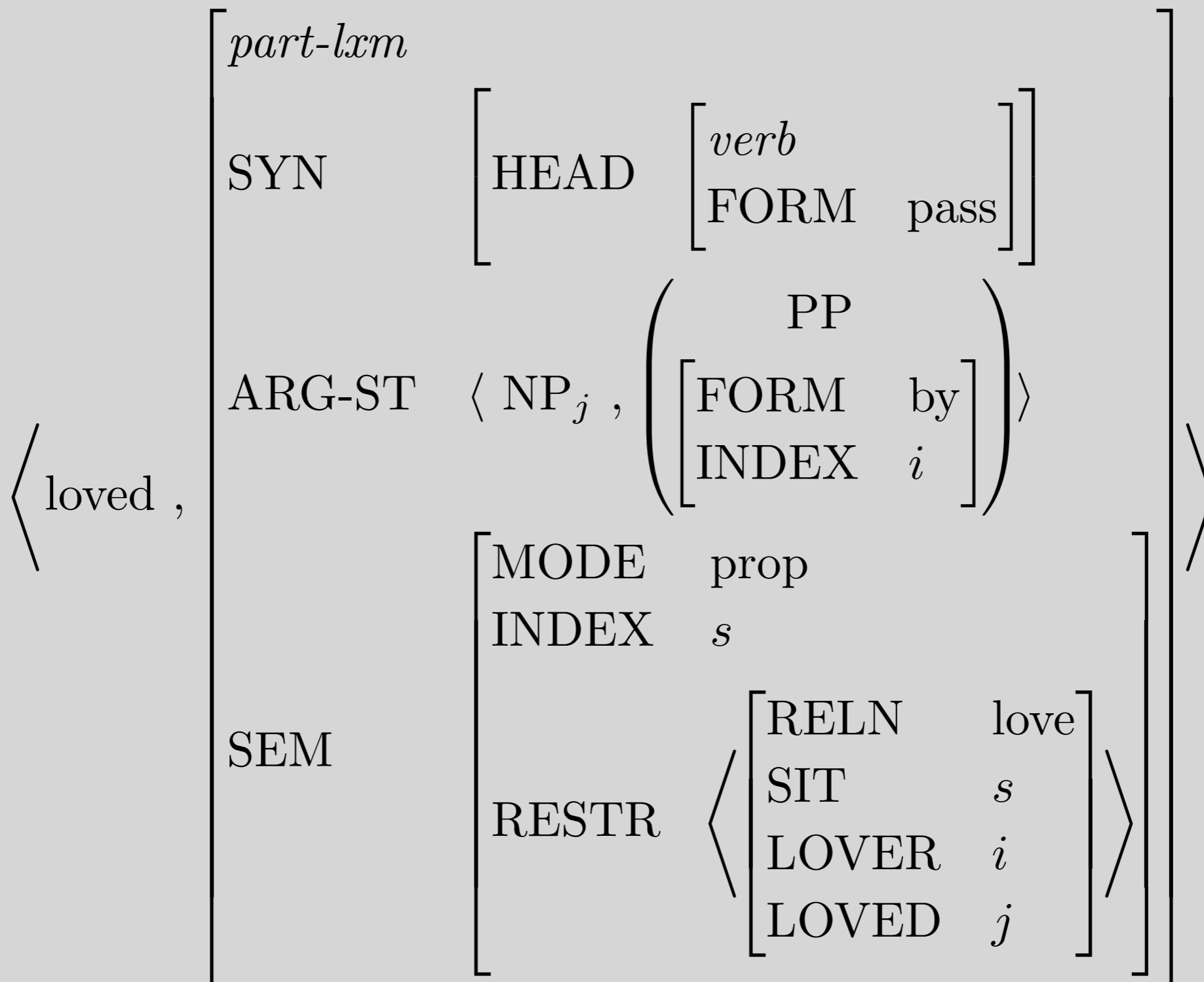
If you have one of these....



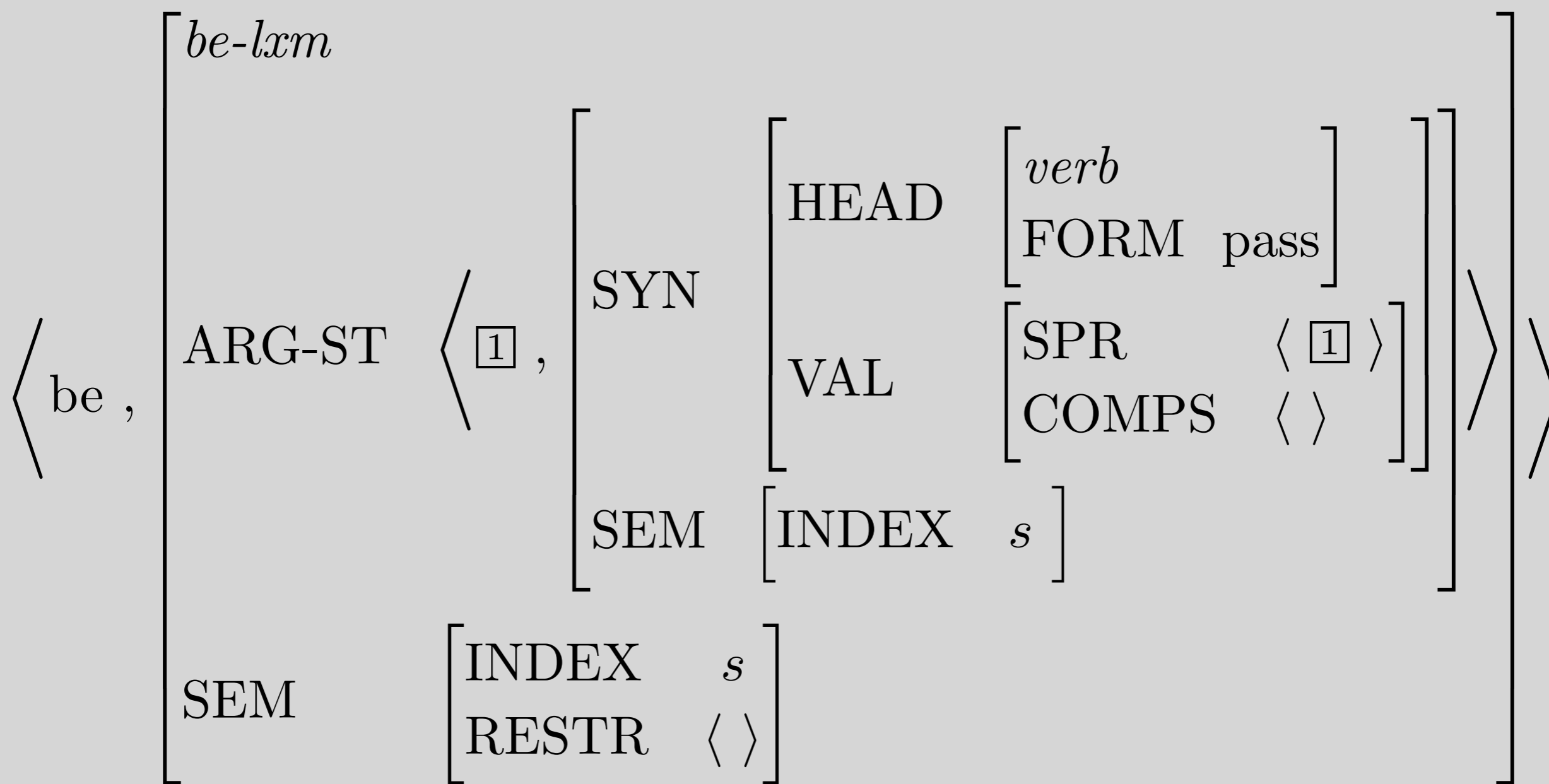
Then you also get one of these....



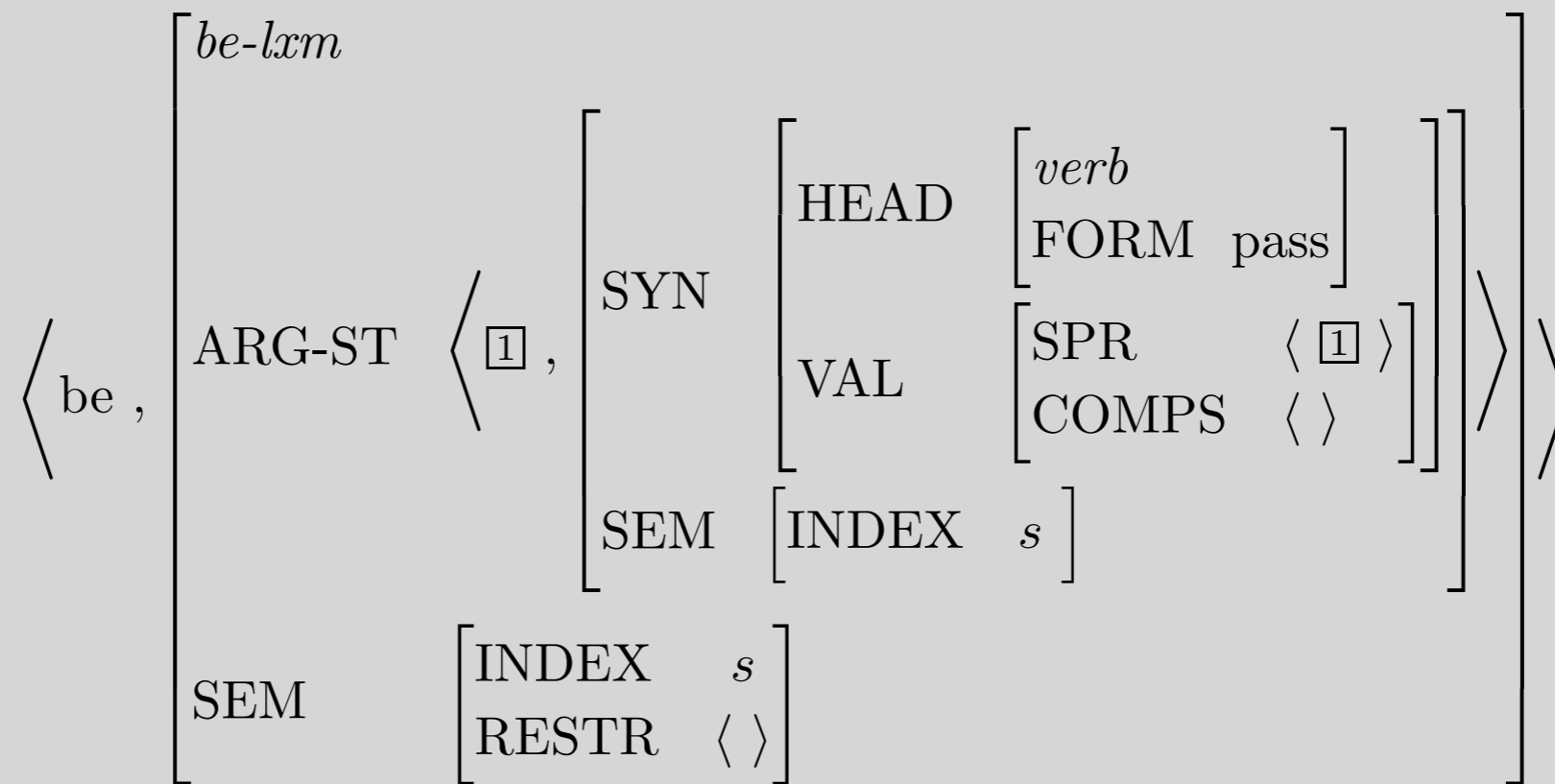
In a bit more detail...



The *be* that Occurs with Most Passives



Questions About the Entry for *be*



- Why doesn't it include valence features?
- What is the category of its complement (i.e. its 2nd argument)?
- What is its contribution to the semantics of the sentences it appears in?
- Why is the first argument tagged as identical to the second argument's SPR value?

Passive tree

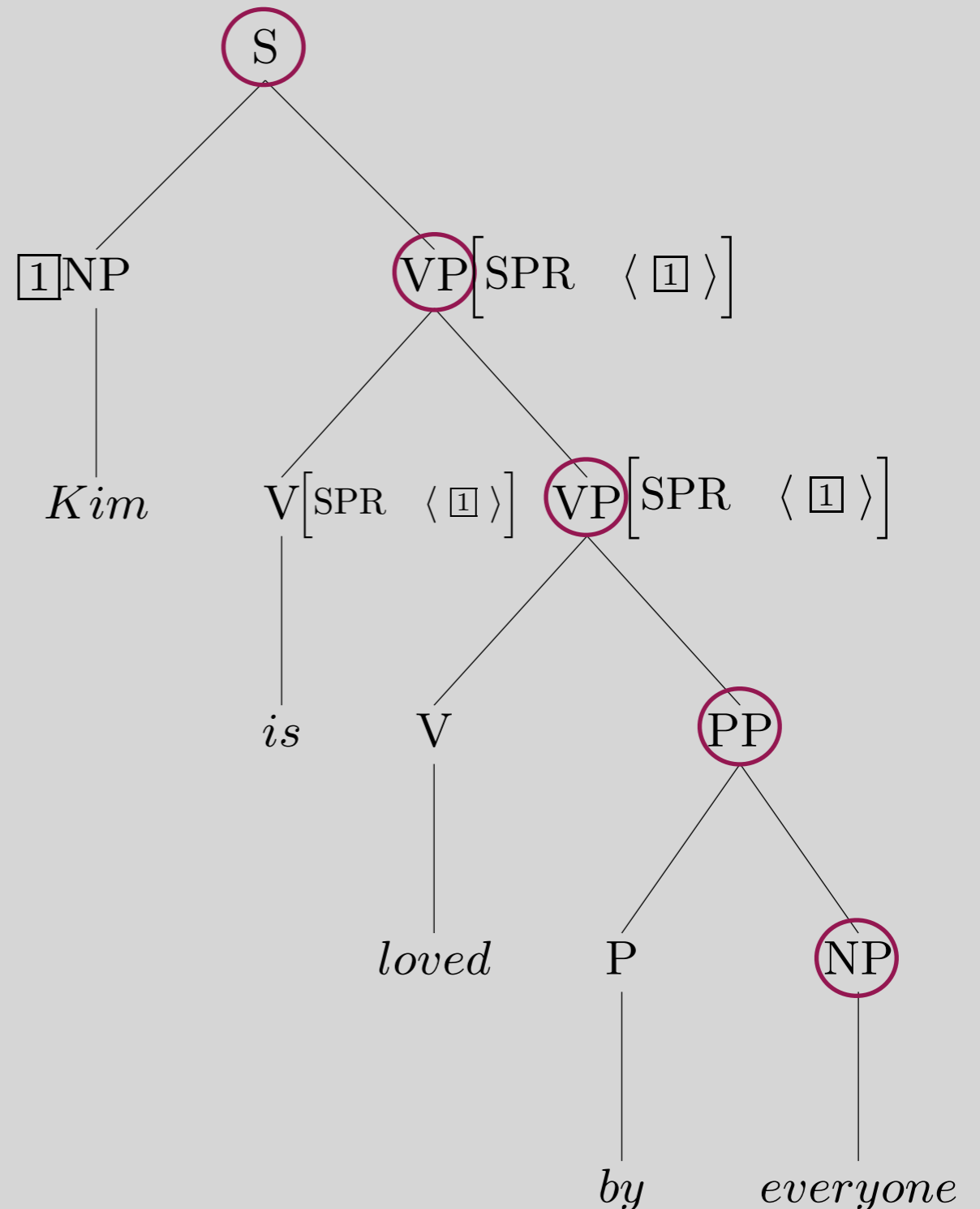
Which rule licenses each node?

What is the SPR value of the upper VP?

What is the SPR value of the lower VP?

What is the SPR value of *is*?

Any questions?



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W The verb be just does away with the SPR of it complement and I think that's:

Sneaky!

Unfair! The verb needed
that SPR!

Confusing! How can a
requirement just go away?

Subtle! I can see it works,
but it's still surprising

Elegant!

More Questions

- Why do we get
They are noticed by everyone
and not
**Them are noticed by everyone?*
- Why don't we get
**They is noticed by everyone?*
- What would facts like these entail for a transformational analysis?

Overview

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 - Arguments for lexicalist account
 - Details of our analysis
- Reading Questions

Reading Questions

- We have a "Passive Lexical Rule"; do we need some kind of "Active Lexical Rule"? Or since there's not really an order for application of rules, is this not an issue?

Reading Questions

- As far as I understand, *I am honored*, the POS of *honored* can be considered an adjective that's functioning as a predicative complement in a copular clause, or it could be considered to be a past-participle verb of a passive clause. How do we show this kind of ambiguity in our passive lexical rule?

Reading Questions

- My question is also about the case of possible passive intransitives that others have brought up:
- 1. He_i relaxed his_i body.
- 2. His_i body was relaxed (??by him_i).
- It seems like "relaxed" in the second case might not be a product of passing "relax" through the Passive Lexical Rule, since the coindexing of "him" and "his body" is much more awkward (and even unacceptable?) compared to the first case. So maybe there's another derivational rule that transforms the base form into the past participle form, but for a purpose entirely different from the passive voice. In that case, is there a more abstract rule/intuition that addresses for this descriptive property of the past participle form, as demonstrated by both the passive form and the maybe-not-exactly-passive form?

Adjective v. passive participle

- From Huddleston & Pullum
- Only adjectives can be modified by *very*
- Only adjectives can take *un-* as negation (rather than reversal)
- Only adjectives can be the complement of *seem, look, remain*
- Adjectives always have a stative interpretation
- PP[*by*] not possible with adjectives if corresponding verb is not stative

Reading Questions

- These words usually take a variety of prepositions other than the by-phrase to express emotional states. For example,
 - I am exhausted from too much work.
 - She is excited about the opportunity to work with the Professor.
 - He is tired of the same food.
- Is it correct that the underlined PP's all serve as modifiers (predicative)?

Reading Questions

- I understand why, based on the constraints of the i-rule and the d-rule, the d-rule was chosen as the type of l-rule for the Passive Lexical Rule. But I kind of got the impression that this selection was more out of convenience rather than it being based on the idea that the transition to passiveness is actually derivational. Outside of HPSG, is the active/passive alternation considered derivational?

Reading Questions

- Why is it so important that the ARP applies to words and not lexemes?
- The authors note that “the passive rule must specify either different SPR and COMPS values or different ARG-ST values on the INPUT and OUTPUT” (pg 313). Is there any reason to express preference for one option over the other? Moreover, can you specify for both SPR and COMPS as well as ARG-ST values?

Reading Questions

- Also, the Passive Lexical rule mentions a list in the Argument structure (box A) aside from the subject. Why is that? Why don't we just mention the arguments directly. Will there be cases where there can be more than 3 arguments in the ARG-ST? Can you give an example?

Reading Questions

- In the first paragraph of 10.3, the last bullet points mentions making the appropriate morphological change in the form of the verb to go from active to passive. Is the preceding be in passive forms considered morphological? The way the Passive Lexical Rule and lexical entry for be interact results in a verb be which seems to have no real semantic or valence effects on the *part-lxm*.

Reading Questions

- Since there can be passive constructions with verbs other than “be”, as illustrated in examples 20 a, b and c, should our grammar include special lexemes for the verbs that stand in for “be” in these sentences?

Reading Questions

- In the absolute construction, for example, "Dumped by his girlfriend, he feels sad", is the word dumped treated as the passive form as well? I think on the lexeme level, dumped can be a passive form derived by the d-rule in this chapter, but on the structure level, how do we treat the absolute construction as a constituent? There is no be-lexeme requiring the VP dumped by his girlfriend as its complements. Here do we still take it as a VP?

Reading Questions

- I'm curious if there are other verbs like "be" that require a special type of lexeme?
- The equivalent of "be" has very similar behavior in at least one other language I know. Is this common/universal?

Reading Questions

- Are passives one place where to be fully thorough we would need to not only specify the PP complement as FORM by, but also that its argument-marking?
- Why is by argument-marking rather than predicative?

Reading Questions

- My main question is that are we only considering argument marking prepositions in this case? Do we assign the same Form value for *on* and *upon* which will be [FORM on] in a passive sentence?

Reading Questions

- My previous understanding of FORM was that it handles categorization based on Syntactic features like tense and case.
- By the usage of FORM by/FORM to it seems that FORM can also be used to change semantic meaning, based on the PP we use.
- Confused about why the usage is acceptable, and if it is then why do we include form in HEAD which is part of SYN?

Reading Questions

- I know footnote 34 in chapter 8 mentions some potential solutions to be's differences from other verbs in the past tense, but we haven't actually adopted any particular approach yet, right? For example, (25) on page 322 requires was to take a 3sing subject, but there isn't actually anything currently in the grammar that would prevent was from taking a non-3sing subject more generally?

Reading Questions

- In generative grammar I learned that in English the subject of the passive uses movement to get nominative case and satisfy the case filter since the passive verb is -acc. This conflicts with this chapter where evidence is shown that introducing a passive verb should leave the subject's case unspecified. Are linguists in conflicting views whether the subject of passives verbs always receive nominative case or only sometimes receive it based on the grammatical context, as stated in the chapter?

Reading Questions

- How does this apply to instances where the subject of the passive verb is [CASE poss]?
- "His being arrested by the police upset many people."
- Do we have enough to license such sentences now given the above?

Reading Questions

- Does this approach of handling the passive construction with a lexical rule for verbs align with psycholinguistic evidence for how we might form passive sentences (if there have been studies on this)?

Transformations seem much more intuitive to the way we think about forming passive sentences, which probably explains the allure of transformational grammars in cases like these.

Reading Questions

- Can d-rules select based on generic sem values? For example, if I wanted to write a d-rule that applies only to verbs that have some generic type of semantic values, e.g. they all relate to moving from one place to another, would I constrain that input via semantics, restr values?

Reading Questions

- Is there any other way to tell if a linguistic phenomenon is systematic aside from judging if it is applied to recent coinages / novel expressions by native speakers of a language?