
Alison Biggs, Georgetown University

Recent studies observe that by-phrases occur with adjectival passives in circumscribed contexts (Kratzer 2001, Anagnostopoulou 2003, Meltzer-Asscher 2011). Much work has consequently concluded that Voice is embedded in the structure realized by stative participles (McIntyre 2013, Bruening 2014, Alexiadou, Gehrke, & Schäfer 2014), eliminating a classic difference between stative and eventive passive syntax. This paper brings new data to bear on this claim. I argue do[-ne] V-ing] as in (1) is a hitherto unrecognized type of stative passive: a stative of a present participle. I provide a syntactic analysis of (1). I argue that comparison of the argument structure of (1) with that of statives discussed in previous work provides new reason to return to the traditional view that the structure realized by stative participles lacks argument-introducing syntax, including Voice.

The string do[-ne] V-ing] in (1) expresses a complex stative. The stative is semantically ambiguous, with both Target and Resultant state readings (as in Kratzer 2001). On one interpretation, (1) expresses a complex stative eventuality, in which Chapter 3 is in a complete, result state that follows from a writing event, paraphrasable by a deverbal adjective stative in (2). This is a Target State reading, where the state of the object Chapter 3 is identifiable with (and the result of) the event denoted by the lexical predicate/stem. On a second reading (1) says the Agent/Subject is in a (weak) state that follows from ceasing participation in the writing event; a key difference is that the object Ch.3 is not in a result state. A number of modifiers distinguish the two readings, including gradable modifiers (3), which coerce the Target State reading. On either interpretation, (1) is a ‘complex stative’, implicating the state’s etiology (4b/2), and not a “pure” state (4a) (in the terminology of Kratzer 2001, Embick 2004).

The Target State (TS) interpretation of (1) presents a particular puzzle at first blush, because present participles like writing typically describe incomplete (no result) action. Further, (1) is phrasal, but lacks an aspectual verb like finish (the lexical meaning of ‘do’ by itself has no lexical aspectual contribution).

**A Syntactic Analysis**

I argue (1) has a stative syntactic substructure realized by the stative participle, which embeds a substructure realized by the present participle (5).

The main claim is that (1) realizes the same stative syntax as in (2) (modulo considerations of underspecification), predicting (correctly; see below) that (1)-(2) have the same morphosyntactic (as well as semantic) properties. The stativizing XP is labelled Asp in (5) (Anagnostopoulou 2003, Embick 2004, Alexiadou et al. (2015)). (1) involves ‘high’ merge of Asp, and (2) ‘low(er)’ merge.

The TS (and, presumably, the Resultant State) is the interface interpretation of this syntactic relation (following Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 2008). (Evidence from lexical semantics shows the TS interpretation of (1) is the TS of the present participle, not just the root or vP). (1) is thus a new example of a phrasal stative passive (Kratzer 2001, Anagnostopoulou 2003, Embick 2004, i.a.).
Evidence that (1) has the syntax (as well as semantics) of stative passives includes: auxiliary selection, as only be is possible (6a); done can be the complement of appear, seem, etc.; done is compatible with degree modifiers of statives (all completely half almost, etc.). Notably, (do-)ne does not license an Agent by-phrase, so there is no reason to believe it is an eventive passive participle (6b). The surface subject is the State Holder argument of done (merging in the neutrally labelled XP in (5)).

(6a) *I’ve done writing Chapter 3.  (6b) *I’m done [writing Chapter 3] by Mary/ by committee.

I further argue do in (5) is an auxiliary, “supporting” an aspectual head (that would otherwise be “stranded”) (cp. British do-support (7)). Evidence do is an auxiliary (not ‘lexical do’) includes: auxiliary selection/ no have, as in (6a); do cannot license a by-phrase (6b); do cannot occur in other TMA syntax (8). (8) further demonstrates that stative syntax is required to embed a V-ing under done, not do. Nothing rests on the theory of auxiliaries chosen; (5) assumes a syntactic, locality account of do-support, with little v attaching to the aspectual syntactic head, pronounced do (cp. Embick & Noyer 2001 on Finite T do-support).

(7) I’ve se-en it, and Mary has done too.  (8) *Mary does/ is doing/ has done writing Chapter 3.

Against alternative analyses (I) The participle -en is not perfect; evidence includes modifiers, reduced relative clauses, perfect semantics. (II) done is not an aspectual verb like I’ve finished writing Ch.3: do is not aspectual; the -ing complement of finish is the gerund; finish can occur in all TMA contexts (contrast (8)). (III) (1) is not I’m done (with) writing Ch3 with a null P; done in (1) does not license Accusative (9) (so the complement of (1) must be verbal) (contrast Fruehwald & Myler 2015 on dialectal I’m done [dp my homework], which licenses Acc). (IV) done is not a lexical adjective, as in I’m happy writing Ch.3: happy clauses have no complex eventuality like a Target State; the happy complement can be fronted (10) (etc.).

(9) *I’m done the writing of Ch.3.  (10) Writing Chapter 3, I’m happy/ *done.

Implications Recent work on adjectival passive argument structure argues limits on argument structure in statives (sortal/ State Relevance restrictions on by-phrases (Bruening 2014, Alexiadou et al. 2014), no applied arguments (Bruening 2014)) are only effects of stative semantics, not the syntactic structure underlying the participle. In particular, it is argued that the structure realized by stative passive participles includes Voice (11), licensing an exceptional set of by-phrases like (12), so that only category syntactically differentiates stative/ eventive passives. (A weaker semantic view is that TS participles lack Voice, because of semantic incompatibility between (Target) States and Voice (Alexiadou et al. 2015)).

(11) [Pass Adjectival/Verbal [ Voice [ v √ ] ] ]

(12) The road remained supported by pylons/ *by Mary.  (McIntyre 2013)

However, invoking stativizing semantics to explain effects like (12) makes incorrect predictions about the argument structure of (1). In particular, (1) has stative passive semantics (including a Target State) but is compatible with a full range of argument structure syntax. First, (1) can include (active) Voice specification, given that (1) is Agentive, and licenses Accusative on the embedded object; this is implemented in (5) with an embedded null PRO (Agent) DP, coreferent with the State Holder surface subject. Second, the embedded Voice in (1) can be passive, licensing a by-phrase, with no sortal/ State Relevance restrictions on the DP (13) (data from Google). Finally, the embedded verbal substructure in (1) does not obey the Sole Complement Generalization (Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1986) (space does not permit the data here).

(13) a. (My 3 year old had a blast […] ) once it was done [being built by my oldest].
   b. (I installed OBS on a laptop […] for now) until my PC is done [being built by a buddy].

(1) therefore shows that an embedding stativizer, as in (11), does not by itself explain limitations on argument structure in contexts like (12), especially given the evidence that the stative passive substructure in (1) has the same syntactic and semantic properties as stative substructures as in (2). Rather, the argument structure of the stative substructure in (1) (e.g., the stative substructure does not license a by-phrase in (6)) supports the traditional view that structures realized by (at least Target) stative participles lack argument introducing XPs (as in Alexiadou et al. 2015, roughly) (cp. also Kratzer 2001, Embick 2004). On this view, by-phrases as in (12) are exceptionally syntactically licensed external of the structure realized by the stative participle, and it is with this external composition that its exceptional semantics are established.