

# NON-SPECIFIC OBJECTS IN THE PSEUDOPASSIVE

The Syntax and Semantics of English Pseudo-Incorporated Pseudopassives

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis introduces a special form of pseudopassive that differs from previously discussed forms in that it includes a direct object adjacent to the verb. It is shown that the direct object position in this construction is restricted to NPs that lack D(eterminer)-level projections. As a result, the direct object can only receive a non-specific interpretation, resists certain types of modification, extraction, and scope interactions. Due to its lack of D-level, I argue, the direct object also cannot check the EPP feature on T and therefore cannot raise to subject of the passive sentence. T, then, must probe instead into the PP, agreeing with the PP-object and raising it to its specifier.

I posit that the syntactic machinery which allows pseudopassivization is the availability in English of selecting prepositions from the lexicon that are unvalued for tense – as such, these prepositions must depend on the c-commanding verb to value their tense features and in turn assign case to their objects. When the verb itself is unvalued for tense, the PP's nominal object must raise to a higher project to value its tense features (i.e., to be case-licensed); this is the situation in passives, namely in pseudopassives. The solution I argue for draws heavily from the recent research and framework of Pesetsky & Torrego (2004, 2006, 2007).

On the semantic side, the direct objects in these pseudopassives are compared to similarly behaving non-specific nominals in Hindi, Chol, Tongan, Inuktitut, Nez Perce, among others (Dayal 2003, Coon *to appear*, Ball 2005, Wharram 2003, Deal 2007). The researchers who identified such nominals in these languages have referred to them as *pseudo-incorporated*, and claim that pseudo-incorporated NPs are interpreted not as individuals (type *e*) but as properties (type *<et>*). Following their lead, I have coined the term *pseudo-incorporated pseudopassive* (PIPP) for the special form of pseudopassive that includes these reduced, non-specific direct objects. In order to semantically combine the passive predicate with these non-specific property-type arguments, I adopt Wharram (2003) and Deal's (2007) proposal for a morpheme, ANTIP, that adjoins to the verb root and yields a property-taking function in place of an individual-taking one.

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