



Chapter 10

# The Passive Construction

# The Phenomenon

- Sentences with an object NP have rough paraphrases in which that object is the subject, the verb is preceded by a form of *be*, and the subject appears (optionally) as the object of *by*

- Some examples

*Pat saw Chris*

*Chris was seen (by Pat)*

*Andy gave Sandy a book*

*Sandy was given a book (by Andy)*

*Alex put the wine on ice*

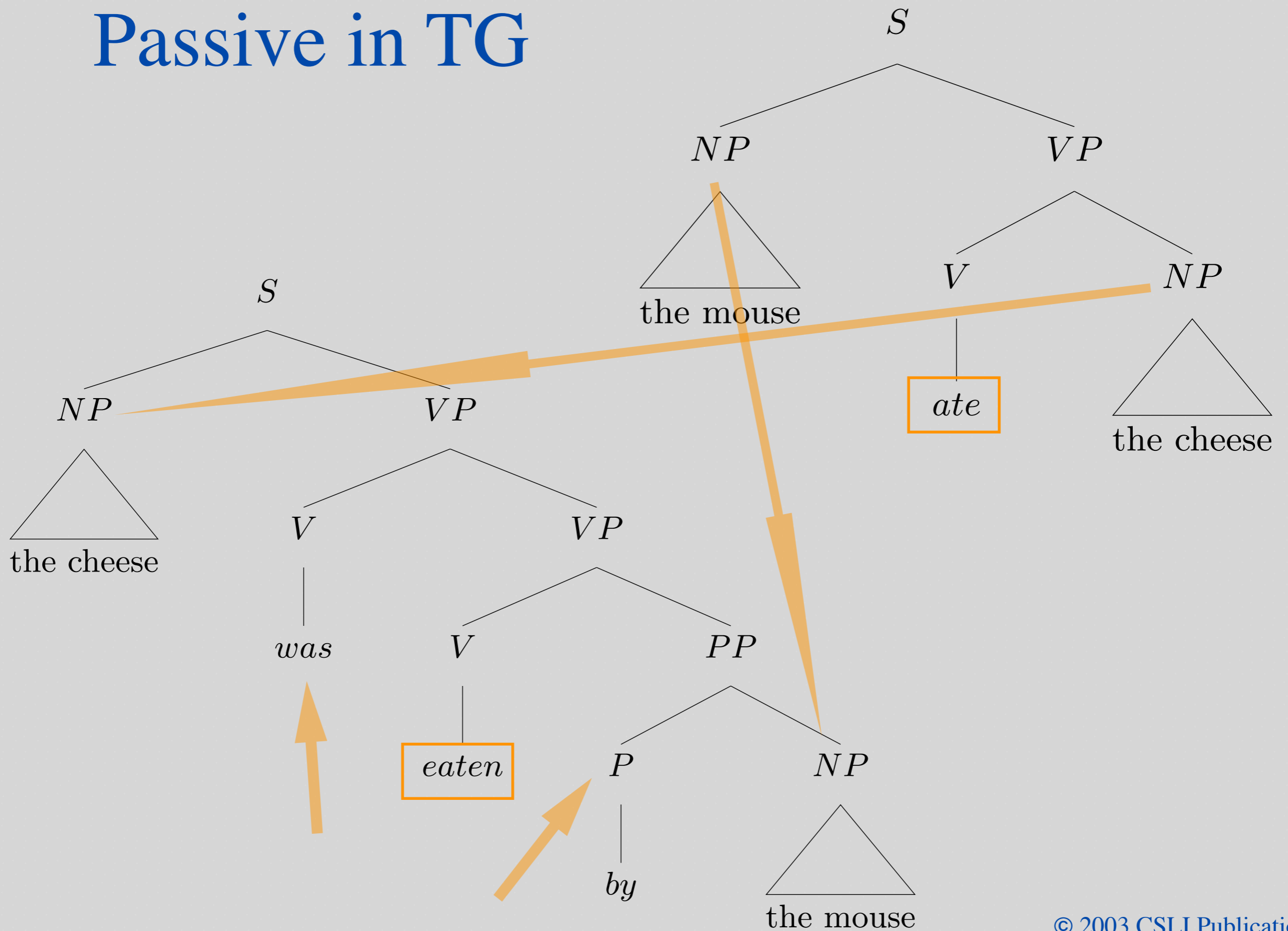
*The wine was put on ice (by Alex)*

- The grammar should capture this relationship (Why?)
  - The intuitive relatedness of the active/passive pairs
  - The productivity of the relationship (example?)
  - Relating them by rule reduces stipulation in the grammar

# 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.

# Passive in TG



# 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 by the door*

- 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*

*Mourning becomes Electra* but

*\*Electra is becomed by mourning*

- Positive

*Chris is rumored to be a spy* but

*\*They rumor Chris to be a spy*

## We posit a lexical rule

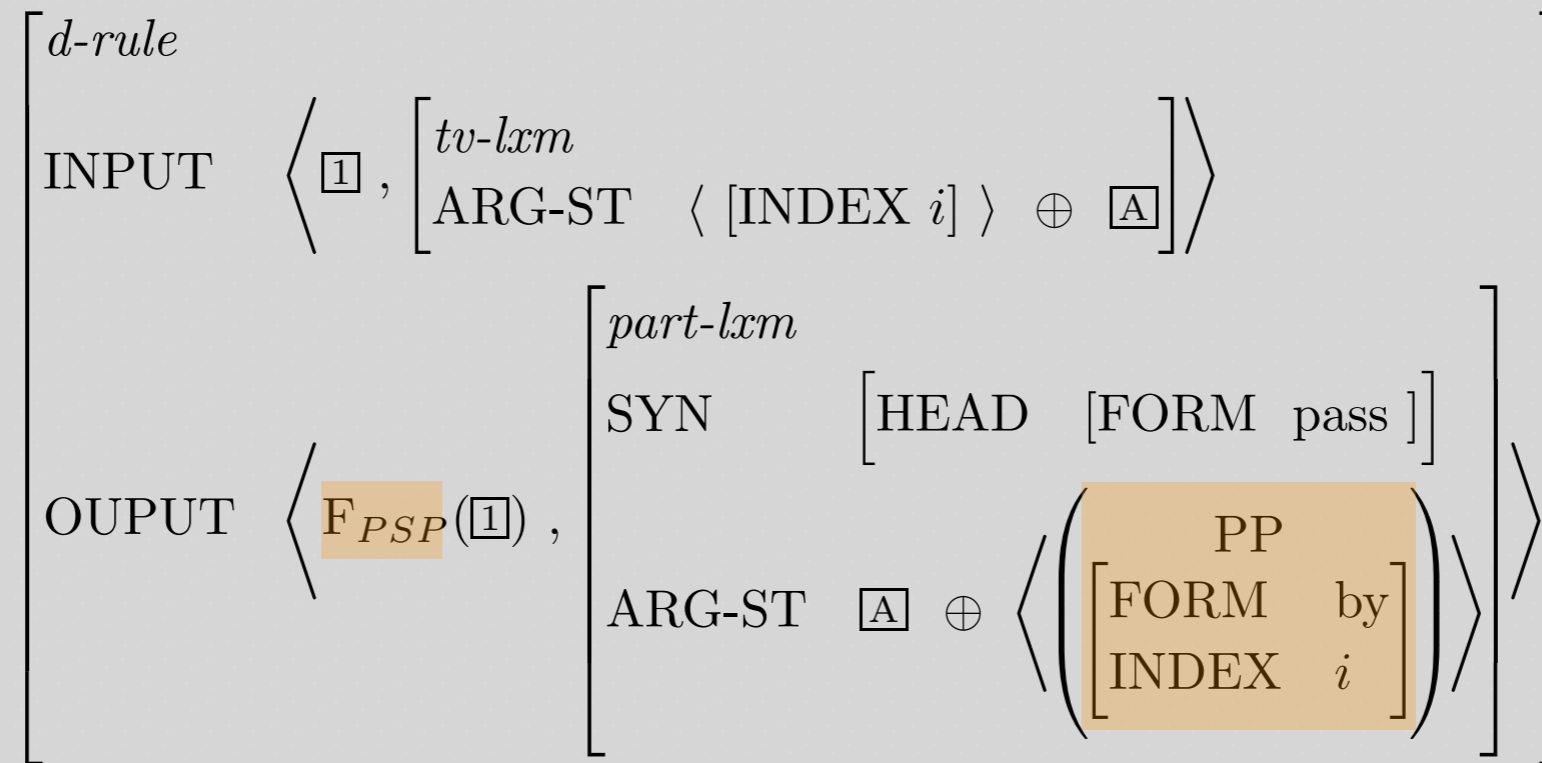
- Why not just list passive participles individually?
  - To avoid redundancy
  - To capture productivity
- We make it a derivational (lexeme-to-lexeme) rule.  
Why?
  - Our constraints on lexeme-to-word rules wouldn't allow us to make Passive one.
  - In some languages, further inflections can be added to passive verb forms.

# The Passive Lexical Rule

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



# Questions About the Passive Rule



- Why is the morphological function  $F_{PSP}$ ?
- What kind of a PP is the *by*-phrase (argument-marking or predicational)?

# More Questions

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

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

# Intransitives have passives in German

What is the relevant difference between English and German?

*In der Küche wird nicht getanzt.*

in the kitchen is not danced

‘There is no dancing in the kitchen.’

# The *be* that Occurs with Most Passives

