Overview

A puzzle: passive verbs in Hebrew have no infinitival, nominalized or imperative forms.

Assuming that only T can license Pass, it automatically follows that passive nominalizations and imperatives are rare (if they exist at all).

Something else can be said about infinitives, because infinitival passives do exist in many languages. We relate the lack of passive infinitival forms to the peculiarity of Hebrew implicit external arguments.

Specifically, implicit external arguments in Hebrew are more referential than in languages like English:

- The external argument of a passive verb must be an Agent (Doron 2003, 2013).
- Implicit arguments in Hebrew are sensitive to the [animate] feature (Landau 2010).

Our analysis: the more features the implicit external argument carries, the more referential it becomes, and the more likely it is to interfere with control of PRO.

Some facts about periphrastic passive constructions fall out naturally. Our account predicts that the periphrastic passive forms in Hebrew do not have implicit external arguments. In other words, they are adjectival passives.

Analysis

- Only T can license Pass.
- Hebrew infinitival passives are ruled out by intervention.

Infinitives: an intervention account.

Argument PRO is typically controlled by an animate DP (see Landau 2013 for discussion).

[Diagram]

In an infinitival passive clause, the implicit agent (external argument, EA) intervenes between PRO and its antecedent.

Hebrew implicit arguments are specified for [animate] (Landau 2010).

Periphrasis

It is possible to create a periphrastic passive by using an auxiliary (the copula) and the participial form.

[Diagram]

- DISJUNCTIVE: Danny will be combinated
- 'Danny will be comb'-ed.' (agent ≠/≠ theme)
- Passive imperatives are odd pragmatically and rare crosslinguistically.
- Idioms are only possible in periphrastic passives.

Conclusions

Since adjectival/periphrastic passives do not have implicit agents (Embick 2004, Mehler-Asscher 2011), nothing intervenes between PRO and its antecedent in adjectival/periphrastic passives.

Analyses of periphrastic gaps in languages such as Latin suggested that the missing forms can be filled in by periphrastic structures (Kiparsky 2004). Such an analysis would not work for Hebrew, and may need to rely on stipulation of certain features as marked (Borkin 2011).