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Parameterizing Passive Participle Movement*

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Parameterizing Passive Participle Movement

Burzio (1986: 154–158) observes the contrast in word order between the associate DP and the participle in expletive passives in English (1) versus passives with postverbal subjects in Italian (2).

(1) a. There've been some men arrested.

b. *There've been arrested some men.

(2) a. *Sono stati alcuni uomini arrestati.

are been some men arrested

b. Sono stati arrestati alcuni uomini.

are been arrested some men

This contrast cannot be due to a pervasive structural difference between expletive constructions in English and postverbal subject constructions in Italian, because the very same constructions no longer show such a contrast with active unaccusative participles:

(3) a. *There have many typhoons arisen in the Pacific this year.

b. There have arisen many typhoons in the Pacific this year.

(4) a. *Sono molti tifoni comparsi quest'anno nel Pacifico.

are many typhoons appeared this year in-the Pacific

b. Sono comparsi molti tifoni quest'anno nel Pacifico.

are appeared many typhoons this year in-the Pacific

Therefore, the contrast in (1)/(2) must depend on the different behavior of passive participles in the two languages. (In §3.1 we show that (1a) is indeed a sentential passive and not just a reduced relative clause.)

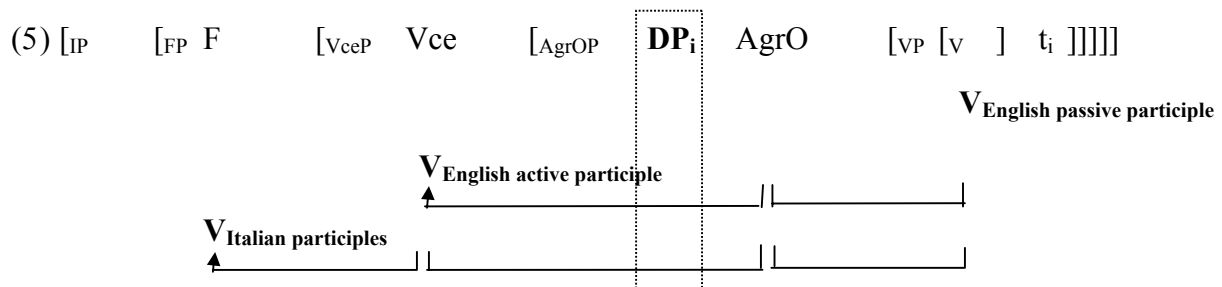
Lasnik (1995) suggests a Minimalist account of this contrast in terms of feature strength. He proposes that the difference is due to English having a strong DP feature on the participle, forcing the associate DP to raise overtly to its Specifier, such that (1a) is derived from a sequence “participle+associate DP” like (1b) by an additional step in which the associate DP

some men moves over the participle *arrested*.¹ The corresponding feature is weak in Italian, so the associate DP remains in its θ -position at Spell-Out (2b) and cannot raise (2a).

In this squib, we argue for a different account. In our analysis, the sequence “participle+associate DP” in (2b) is derived from a sequence “associate DP+participle” like (2a) by an additional step in which the participle *arrestati* head-moves over the DP *alcuni uomini*.² That is, the contrast involves extra V-raising in Italian rather than extra DP-raising in English. Independent evidence for a difference in the height of passive participles in the two languages will come from adverb placement. (3) contrasts with (1) because active unaccusative participles are higher than passive participles in English, as will again be shown by adverb placement.

Our account has the advantage that it analogizes the pattern in (1) versus (2) to other well-known differences between English and Italian concerning the position of nonfinite verbs (cf. Pollock 1989 and Belletti 1990, 1994, developing ideas from Emonds 1985). It also accounts for differences in adverb placement with respect to participles within English and between English and Italian, about which Lasnik’s DP-raising proposal makes no predictions.

Our proposal is schematized in (5); we will say more about the details of the structure below in §2.



We are in agreement with Lasnik that (1)/(2) can and should be analyzed using the machinery of core syntax; in this regard, we disagree with Chomsky’s recent remarks. Chomsky considers English sentences like (1a) to be “formed outside the system” of narrow syntax (Chomsky 2000:143), “idiosyncratic constructions” that are derived by an operation of the phonological component (Chomsky 2001:20–21). Likewise, we disagree with Chomsky when he asserts that

unaccusatives like (3b) in English are “barred” (Chomsky 2001:20) and assigns them the same status as (1b); we believe they too should be generated by the core syntax of English.

1. Participle raising and adverb placement

We are arguing that the different orderings of participle and associate DP in (1) vs. (2) and (3) are due to differences in participial head movement. In this section, we show that facts about adverb placement give independent support to this claim.

1.1. *Passive participles raise higher in Italian than in English*

Assuming that adverb positions are universal (Cinque 1999), adverb placement shows that passive participles raise higher in Italian than in English. The adverb *always* can only precede the passive participle in English ((6a) vs. (7a)), while the most natural position for the corresponding Italian adverb *sempre* is immediately following the passive participle ((6b) vs. (7b)).³ To our knowledge, this contrast has not previously been noted.⁴

(6) a. Ever since then, our invitations have no longer always been accepted by your parents.

b. ??/*Da quella volta in poi, i nostri inviti non sono più sempre stati accettati
from that time in then, the our invitations not are any-longer always been accepted
 dai tuoi genitori.
by-the your parents

(7) a. ??/*Ever since then, our invitations have no longer been accepted always by your parents.

b. Da quella volta in poi, i nostri inviti non sono più stati accettati sempre
 dai tuoi genitori.

1.2. *Active participles raise higher in Italian than in English*

If we apply to active participles in English and Italian the adverb placement test we just applied to passive participles, we obtain similar results: active participles raise higher in Italian than in English:

(8) a. Ever since then, your parents have no longer always complained about my behavior.

b. ??Da quella volta in poi, i tuoi genitori non si sono più sempre lamentati

from that time in then, the your parents not 3sg.CL are any-longer always complained

del mio comportamento.

of-the my behavior

(9) a. ?*Ever since then, your parents have no longer complained always about my behavior.

b. Da quella volta in poi, i tuoi genitori non si sono più lamentati sempre

del mio comportamento.

1.3. *Active participles raise higher than passive participles in English*

Blight (1999) has observed that there is a small class of adverbs discussed by Bowers (1993), known as degree of perfection adverbs, that can precede passive participles but not active verbs in English⁵; we add the observation that active participles pattern with finites:

(10) a. The house was poorly built.

b. *They (have) poorly built the house.

c. They (have) built the house poorly.

(11) a. The flute was beautifully played.

b. *She (had) beautifully played the flute.

c. She (had) played the flute beautifully.

Blight offers this as evidence that active verbs raise from their base positions in English while passive participles do not.⁶ In order to exclude the possibility that (10a)/(11a) are grammatical only as copular sentences with an AdjP predicate, rather than verbal passives, Blight observes that the progressives (12a)/(13a) are also grammatical, while adjectives are generally incompatible with the progressive (12b)/(13b).⁷

(12) a. The house was being poorly built (by the inexperienced workers).

b. *The house was being old.

(13) a. The flute was being beautifully played (by the soloist).

b. *The flute was being shiny.

We therefore take (10)/(11) as evidence that English passive participles are lower than finite active verbs and active participles.

1.4. *Active participles raise as high as passive participles in Italian*

Cinque (1999) claims that passive participles can stay lower than active participles in Italian. The evidence he offers is that passive but not active participles can occur to the right of *tutto* ‘all’ and *bene* ‘well’. Cinque considers both *tutto* and *bene* to be adverbs. However, *tutto* behaves more like a floating quantifier: for instance, it agrees in gender and number with overt subjects. As such, it can be stranded or pied-piped, but not moved above the DP it quantifies over. Thus, *tutto* can no longer precede passive participles if the subject is postverbal and not dislocated ((14a) vs. (14b)).

(14) a. Le stanze sono state tutte ridipinte.

the rooms have been all repainted

b. Che cosa è successo all’appartamento? Sono state (*tutte) ridipinte le stanze.

what thing is happened to-the apartment? are being (all) repainted the rooms

‘What happened to the apartment? The rooms have all been repainted.’

Bene, in contrast, is clearly an adverb. However, the first author and the other native Italian speakers we consulted do not agree with Cinque’s judgments about *bene*: passive participles yield acceptable results only when they follow the truncated form *ben* (which is lexically restricted), not following *bene* ((15a) vs. (15b)). *Ben* can also precede active participles and is likely to be incorporated into the verb (16), as Cinque himself recognizes (1999:211, fn. 70).

(15) a. Questo genere di spettacoli è sempre stato <*bene> recensito <bene> dalla critica.

this kind of shows is always been well reviewed well by-the critics

‘This kind of show has always been reviewed positively by the critics.’

b. Questo genere di spettacoli è sempre stato <ben> recensito <*ben> dalla critica.

(16) La critica ha <ben> recensito <*ben> questo spettacolo.

the critics has well reviewed well this show

‘The critics have reviewed this show positively.’

We therefore have no reason not to conclude that active and passive participles occupy the same position(s) in Italian.

2. Analysis

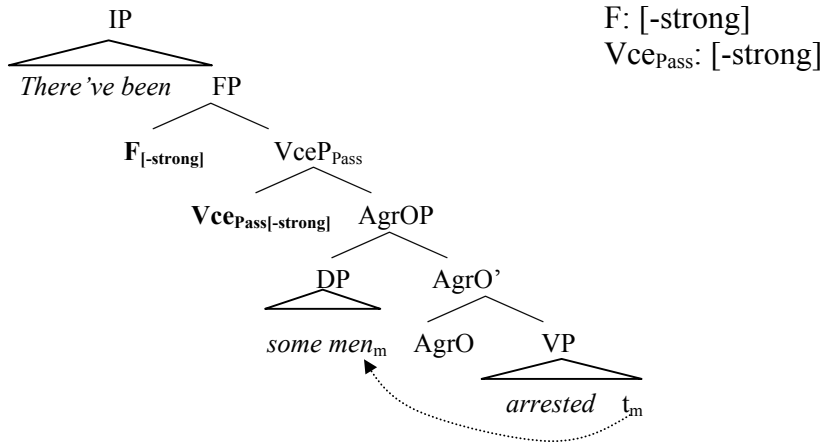
The data concerning adverb placement has led us to the following conclusions, schematized in (17): 1) passive participles raise higher in Italian than in English (§1.1); 2) similarly, active participles raise higher in Italian than in English (§1.2); 3) active participles raise higher than passive participles in English (§1.3); and, 4) active and passive participles in Italian, in contrast, do not seem to differ with respect to their syntactic position (§1.4).

(17) Italian active and passive part. >> English active part. >> English passive part.

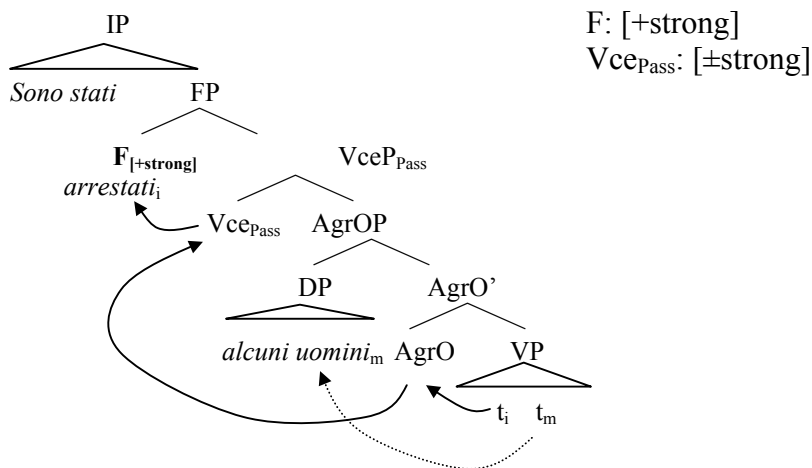
The pattern in (17), derived purely from adverb placement, is all that we need to motivate the head movements in (5), which in turn will account for (1)-(4). But we first need to justify one other property of the structure in (5), namely the overt movement of the associate DP. We concur with Lasnik (1995) that an associate DP requires its own Case and cannot “inherit” Case from an expletive. In this regard, it is like a canonical object. We further adopt the position that all objects in English must raise overtly for Case checking, following Johnson (1991), Koizumi (1993), Runner (1995), Tanaka (1999) and Lasnik (1999), contra Lasnik (1995) and Chomsky (1995); we assume the same is true of objects in Italian. For the sake of familiarity, we refer to the projection that licenses Case for these DPs as AgrOP. Taken together, these two postulates entail that associate DPs must raise overtly to Spec-AgrOP.

With that in place, the (1)/(2) contrast follows from the different heights of the passive participles, on the assumption that AgrOP is in the same position below Voice in both languages, as shown in the trees in (18).

(18) a. *English passive participles* (cf. (1a))

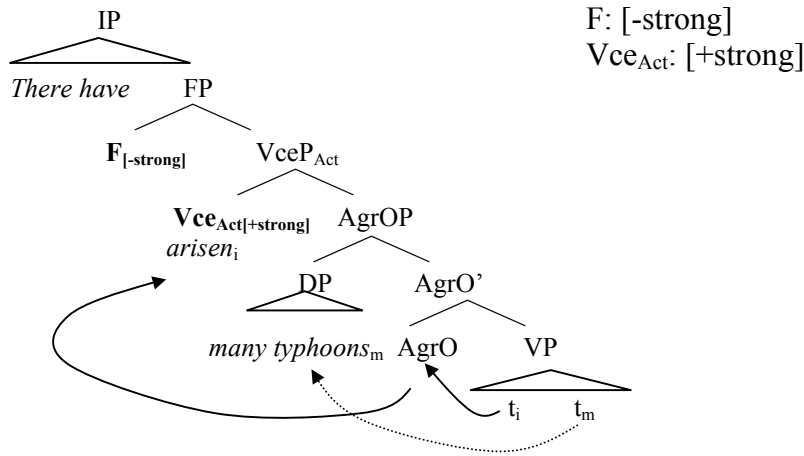


b. *Italian passive participles* (cf. (2b))

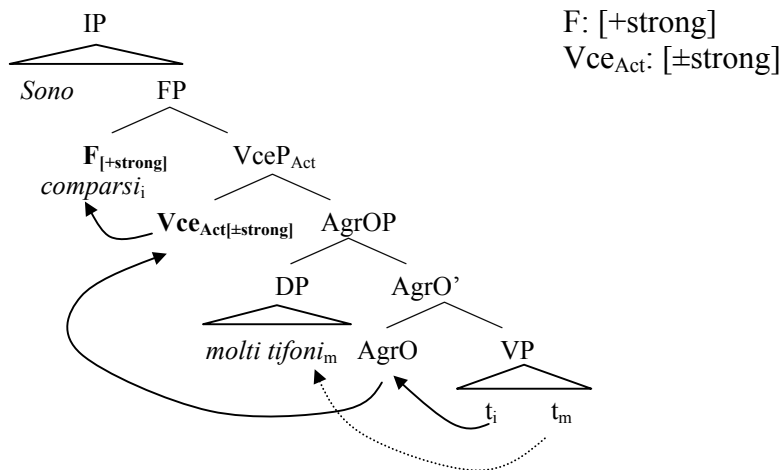


The symmetry in (3)/(4) follows from the fact that active participles raise in both languages, as shown in the trees in (19).

(19) a. *English active participles* (cf. (3b))



b. *Italian active participles* (cf. (4b))



The difference in the order of V and DP in (1a) vs. (3b) follows from the fact that English active participles are higher than their passive counterparts ((18a) vs. (19a)). Finally, the symmetry in the order of V and DP in (2b) and (4b) follows from the fact that all participles raise in Italian (cf. (18b) and (19b)).

Under Minimalism, the difference between Italian and English will be encoded in terms of feature strength on heads above AgrO; we have labeled the relevant heads Voice (cf. Rivero 1990, Hung 1988, Kratzer 1994, Cinque 1999) and F. Voice is a functional head that can be instantiated as one of two variants (implicit in Rivero's formulation): Active and Passive (cf. Chomsky's (2001) treatment of Tense as \varnothing -complete vs. defective). In English, the Active

variant of Voice (V_{ceAct}) has a [+strong] V–feature, requiring another head to raise to it, while the Passive variant (V_{cePass}) has a [-strong] V–feature; F is uniformly [-strong]. In Italian, F is always [+strong]; the strength values of lower heads are indeterminate.

Although the true content of Voice is orthogonal to the other issues in this squib, some evidence for this choice can be offered. In English, all active verbs, including participial main verbs, surface to the left of a direct object (*We have been visiting the relatives*) or, in the case of an active expletive unaccusative, to the left of the associate (*There had arisen a violent storm*). On the simplest assumption about the position of these postverbal DPs, namely that it is the same in all instances something must drive all active verbs to a head higher than AgrOP (cf. Pesetsky 1989, Jaeggli and Hyams 1993, Collins 1997, etc.); since English passive verbs never raise this high, it is reasonable to think that the implicated head reflects an Active/Passive Voice contrast. The relevant structure for a simple transitive would thus be the same as that for an expletive unaccusative, namely (19a). It is therefore crucial for our analysis are that *all* active clauses require the presence of Active Voice. This makes it unlikely that Voice is responsible for introducing external arguments, in contrast to Hung’s higher V, Kratzer’s Voice, or Chomsky’s original use of little *v*.⁸

As for F, its identity remains unclear, as does the question of whether other projections intervene between it and VoiceP, but Cinque’s (1999) structure makes many possibilities available. One thing we do know is that F is separate from (and lower than) the position of the auxiliary even in Italian, as shown in (20), where the adverb *mai* intervenes between the auxiliary and the participle:⁹

(20) Non sono mai bruciate molte case.

not are ever burnt many houses

‘Many houses have never burnt.’

As far as we have determined there is no difference in the surface position of different types of participles in Italian, so we hypothesize that $F_{[+strong]}$ is what drives all of them to raise. We might speculate that this is related to the morphological properties of Italian participles, which show

obligatorily morphological agreement in gender and number with their subjects (passives and unaccusatives) or their clitic objects (transitives).

3. Support for key assumptions

Our analysis has relied on certain key assumptions about the constructions in (1) and (2). In this section, we provide support for those assumptions, and show that some *prima facie* alternative ways of viewing the data are not tenable. We address one issue in English (§3.1) and two issues in Italian (§3.2).

3.1. English

As Lasnik (1995) notes, English sentences like (1a), repeated below as (21a), are potentially structurally ambiguous: in addition to the structure of interest here—a true sentential passive,¹⁰ differing from (21b) only in the choice of Merging an expletive rather than Moving the DP theme to subject position—(21a) could also have a structure in which the matrix predicate is simply an existential and the DP associate contains a reduced relative clause, as in (21c).

- (21) a. There've been some men arrested.
b. [Some men]_i have been [_{VP} arrested *t*_i].
c. There've been [_{DP} some men [_{Op}_i arrested *t*_i]].

In order for (1) and (2) to be comparable, we need to ensure that we are not dealing with the structure in (21c). By analogy to an argument in Lasnik (1995), we can observe that the goodness of the extraction in (22) would be unexpected if (21c) were the only available structure for (21a).

- (22) (?)How were there some men arrested?

We can also apply arguments from Milsark (1974), who proposed rendering a reduced relative reading nonsensical using aspectual manipulations. The contrasts between (23) and (24) show that (21a) does not behave as if the passive participle were within a DP headed by a non-event denoting noun, i.e. the (21c) structure.

- (23) a. *There's just been a frog.
b. *There was a frog just now.

- (24) a. There've just been some men arrested.
 b. There were some men arrested just now.

3.2. Italian

Given our claim about the obligatory raising of passive participles in Italian, we need to address the analysis of sentences like (25), where the expletive clitic *ci* is followed by the copula, an indefinite DP and what may look like a participial form.

- (25) Ci sono molte case bruciate.
there are many houses burnt

Although (25) looks similar to *There were many houses burnt* in English, it is not: it does not have the structure we are positing for passives with postverbal subjects (18b), but something closer to the reduced relative in (21c). This is shown by the following observations. First, *case bruciate* forms an NP-like constituent: it can undergo *ne*-cliticization (26a). Second, *bruciate* can be replaced with an adjective (26b), but not with a non-attributive passive participle (26c).

- (26) a. Ce ne_i sono molte e_i.
 'There are many (of them).'
- b. Ci sono molte case rosse.
 'There are many red houses.'
- c. *Ci sono molte case comperate.
there are many houses bought

Finally, the meaning of (25) is not passive, but rather something close to the meaning of *There are many burnt houses* in English. In other words, what is asserted is not an event of house burning which started in the past, but the existence of burnt houses in the present. *Ci* is completely unacceptable with genuine passives (27a) and unaccusatives (27b).

- (27) a. *Ci sono stati arrestati alcuni uomini. (cf. (2b))
there are been arrested some men
- b. *Ci sono comparsi molti tifoni quest'anno nel Pacifico. (cf. (4b))
there are appeared many typhoons this year in-the Pacific

The second point we must address concerning the Italian sentence in (2b) is the possibility that the DP is not in an A-position but has undergone obligatory right-dislocation. In that case, the contrast in (1)/(2) could be explained without reference to leftward movement (of the participle or the DP). However, there is evidence that this is not so.

A constituent can occur right-dislocated in Italian if it is heavy ((28a) vs. (28b)). This is also possible if the sentence-final argument, which must be presupposed, is deaccented and separated from the clause by an intonational break, indicated by a comma ((29a) vs. (29b)) (Cardinaletti 2001). In this situation, the element preceding the break is focused and receives a pitch accent (e.g. *GENOVA* in (29a)).

(28) a. Sono stati arrestati senza motivo ieri a Genova [dei ragazzi
are.3pl been arrested without reason yesterday in Genoa some young-people
 che avevano preso parte alla manifestazione pacifica contro il G8 il giorno prima].
that had taken part in-the demonstration peaceful against the G8 the day before
 ‘There were arrested with no reason in Genoa yesterday some young people
 who had taken part in the peaceful demonstration against G8 the day before.’

b. ??Sono stati arrestati senza motivo ieri a Genova [molti ragazzi].¹¹
are.3pl been arrested without reason yesterday in Genoa many young-people

(29) a. Sono state arrestate la notte scorsa a GENOVA, le mie amiche.
are.3pl been arrested the night last in GENOVA, the my friends
 ‘My friends were arrested in GENOVA last night.’

b. *Sono state arrestate la notte scorsa a Genova le mie amiche.
are.3pl been arrested the night last in Genoa the my friends

None of the above restrictions hold for the postverbal subjects with passives that we have been looking at. They neither induce special prosody nor need to be heavy:

(30) Sono state arrestate molte persone.
are.3pl been arrested many people
 ‘There have been many people arrested.’

4. Conclusions

We have provided an account of English expletive passives and unaccusatives and their Italian counterparts with postverbal subjects, arguing that three distinct head positions are implicated by the four sentence types in (1)-(4): all Italian participles are higher than English active participles, which are higher than English passive participles. Independent evidence for the differing extent of participle raising within and between the two languages comes from adverb positioning. The analysis invokes parameterization of the [\pm strong] values of V-features on two functional heads, F and Voice; a single fixed DP position can then be maintained across the four sentence types. This position is the same as the object position in canonical active transitives in both languages. Our head-raising analysis thus accounts for English expletive passives and unaccusatives by means of the tools of core grammar (unlike Chomsky's). It also unifies two differences between English and Italian: the position of participles with respect to DPs, and the position of adverbs with respect to participles. By comparison, Lasnik's DP-raising account of the former difference is of no help in understanding the latter.

Notes

¹ Blight (1997) makes essentially the same proposal, apparently independently. In earlier work Lasnik (1992) also identified the contrast in (1)/(2) with the amount of DP raising but for a different reason, proposing that the Italian passive licenses (partitive) Case on its complement, allowing the associate to stay to the right of the participle, whereas the English passive does not, forcing the associate to raise to receive Case from *be*. Blight proposes movement of the associate in expletive passives, but unlike our proposal it is to a position higher than that of direct objects and associates of expletive unaccusatives.

² This idea was proposed independently by Boeckx (1999) and Schütze (1999, 2000), neither of whom presented any independent evidence for it.

³ *Sempre* seems to be able to occupy more than one position. It can surface immediately to the right of active and passive participles, but it can also occur right after the (first) auxiliary. The latter option is blocked by the co-occurrence of a negative polarity item like *più* ‘any longer’. This is why the examples in (6)/(7) have both *più* and *sempre*.

⁴ As observed by an anonymous referee, (6) and (7) also show that the participial auxiliary *stati* is higher than its counterpart *been*, since *stati* must precede the adverb *sempre*, while *been* must follow *always*. This fact is not special to passives, as can be seen in the copular sentences in (i).

- (i) a. Ever since then, our parents have no longer <always> been <?*always> happy with our decisions.
- b. Da quella volta in poi, i tuoi genitori non sono più <?*sempre> stati <sempre> *from that time in then, the your parents not are any-longer <always> been <always> contenti delle nostre decisioni.*
- happy of-the our decisions*

We take the null hypothesis to be that *stati/been* in (i) and (6)/(7) are the same elements. We therefore assume that their position in (6)/(7) is established in the same way as in (i) and thus is independent of passive participle raising. The general issue of where and how auxiliaries are introduced into the clause is beyond the scope of this squib.

⁵ See Ernst (2002) for some possible complications to the picture.

⁶ As independent support, Blight points out that this explains the effect of adverbs blocking pseudopassive while being compatible with their active counterparts:

- (i) a. John voted eagerly for the proposal.
- b. The proposal was <eagerly> voted <?*eagerly> for.

The result follows if the passive participle surfaces below the position of such adverbs, while an active verb raises over that position; “restructuring” need not be invoked.

⁷ An anonymous referee points out a corroborating fact: the switch to progressive removes the possibility of questioning the sequence Adverb–Participle, suggesting that these two words can optionally form an Adjective Phrase in (10a) but not in (12a).

- (i) a. How poorly built was the house?
- b. *How poorly built was the house being?

⁸ An anonymous reviewer asks how our analysis would extend to progressive participles in English, noting the sort of paradigm in (i) and (ii).

- (i) a. There was a ship sinking.
- b. *There was sinking a ship.
- (ii) a. *We were a ship sinking.
- b. We were sinking a ship.

The tests we use in §3.1 to show that (1a) has a sentential reading and not just a reduced relative structure are not usefully applicable to (ia); we are not aware of compelling evidence that (ia) can have a main clause progressive interpretation. Furthermore, in this squib, we focus on the placement of participial verb forms that are found in both English and Italian, while the kinds of participial constructions in (i) and (ii) have no syntactically relevant counterparts in Italian.

These caveats aside, the kind of approach we would suggest for (i)/(ii) would involve the observation that while there is no passive/active contrast here, unlike in (1) versus (3), there is a contrast in absence versus presence of an external argument, a closely related notion. However, pursuing this issue would call for a more comprehensive empirical and theoretical investigation of the Infl domain, which exceeds the bounds of this squib.

⁹ Contra Boeckx (1999:63), who suggests that “Italian offers us a nice example of overt past participle [head] movement to the auxiliary” in sentences like (2b).

¹⁰ McNally (1992/1997) has argued, following Williams (1984) and Postal (1986), that there are no genuine expletive passives in English. However, there are alternative interpretations of the facts she presents that are compatible with the kind of passive structure reflected in (5).

¹¹ The sentence is unacceptable if no special prosody is applied: it cannot be uttered as an answer to a wide focus question like *Che cosa è successo di recente in Italia?* ‘What happened in Italy recently?’.

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