

〈特集「受動表現」〉

## Passive construction in IsiZulu (S42) ズールー語 (S42) の受動表現

Mfundo Didi<sup>1</sup>, Seunghun J. Lee<sup>2,3</sup>  
ンフンド ディディ, 李 勝勲

<sup>1</sup> Department of African Languages, University of KwaZulu-Natal  
クワズールー・ナタル大学アフリカ言語学科

<sup>2</sup> School of Liberal Arts, International Christian University  
国際基督教大学教養学部

<sup>3</sup> Department of African Languages, University of Venda  
ヴェンダ大学アフリカ言語学科

**要旨**：本稿は、語研論集 14 号(2009)所収の調査票にもとづいて収集したズールー語(バントゥ系；南アフリカ共和国)の受動表現に関する記述的資料を提供するものである。

**Abstract**: This article presents descriptive data on various passive constructions in IsiZulu, a southern Bantu language spoken in South Africa. The data was collected through the questionnaire “Passive expressions” designed in *Journal of the Institute of Language Research* 14, 2009.

**DOI**: <https://doi.org/10.15026/0002001062>

**キーワード**：ズールー語, 受動表現, バントゥ系

**Keywords**: IsiZulu, passive, Bantu

### 1. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to describe passive constructions in IsiZulu (S42), a Southern Bantu language of the Nguni branch spoken in South Africa. It is one of the eleven official languages with over 12 million speakers (Ethnologue, 2022). IsiZulu belongs to the larger Niger-Congo language family, being mutually intelligible with related languages like Xhosa, Ndebele, and Swati as well as a number of other regional dialects (Childs, 2003; Maho, 2009). The passive morpheme is  $-(i)w-$ , which attaches to the verb stem.

### 2. Basic patterns

The basic structure of passive constructions is the inversion of the arguments whereby the theme occupies the subject position of the sentence, and the agent follows the verb. The passive morpheme  $-w-$  is attached to the verb root as shown in (1a), and the agent is introduced by the morpheme  $ng-$ . The  $ng-$  morpheme is the equivalent of the “by” preposition in English. The corresponding active sentence is shown in (1b).



本稿の著作権は著者が保持し、クリエイティブ・コモンズ 表示 4.0 国際ライセンス (CC-BY) 下に提供します。  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.ja>

(1) Basic passive and active patterns [Item 1-1]

a. Passive

U-phuthu      lu-phek-w-a      ng-u-thandi.  
 AUG-11.pap   11.SM-PASS-FV   by-AUG-1a.Thandi  
 ‘The pap is cooked by Thandi.’

b. Active

U-Thandi      u-phek-a      u-phuthu.  
 AUG-1a.Thandi   1.SM-cook-FV   AUG-11.pap  
 ‘Thandi is cooking pap.’

The contrast between the two sentences above is marked by structural factors. The agent and the theme are inverted in passive sentences. In (1a), for example, the theme (i.e., the receiver of the action) occupies the canonical subject position and the agent occupies the postverbal position. This is a direct inverse of what is seen in active sentence (1b). In the passive construction, the agent is also prefixed with the “by” head. Furthermore, the suffix *w-* marks the verb in the passive form.

In isiZulu passives, the agent phrase is not required (2a), meaning, passive verb can occupy the sentence final position. In the absence of the agent phrase, the sentence must have a disjoint verb form. The conjoint verb in (2b) is not acceptable.<sup>1</sup> However, it should be noted that the ungrammaticality of (2b) is not triggered by the absence of the agent. Instead, the ungrammaticality is triggered by the fact that the verb, in its conjoint form, generally, cannot be sentence final and the presence of the passive cannot rescue the sentence either.

(2) Optionality of the agent phrase

a. U-phuthu      lu-ya-phek-w-a.

AUG-11.pap   11.SM-DJ-cook-PASS-FV  
 ‘The pap is being cooked.’

b. \*U-phuthu      lu-Ø-phek-w-a.

AUG-11.pap   11.SM-CJ-cook-PASS-FV  
 Intd: ‘The pap is cooked.’

The contrast in (2) above reveals that the agent in the postverbal position does not play a grammatical role in the passive sentence. Instead, it behaves more like an adjunct rather than an argument. This adjunction of the agent is similar to the general case of *by-phrases* in English and related languages.

Passives with an inalienable noun ‘foot’ in (3a) or an alienable noun ‘bag’ in (3b) are possible. The base sentence of these passives is shown in (3c).

(3) Non-animate subject in passives

a. U-n-yawo      luka-Sipho      lu-nyathel-w-e      ng-u-Jabu

AUG-9-foot   11.of-1.Sipho   11.SM-step-PASS-FV   by-AUG-1.Jabu  
 ‘Sipho’s foot was stepped on by Jabu.’ [Item 1-2]

<sup>1</sup> The reader is referred to works such as Buell (2006); Van der Wal & Hymann (2017) among others for discussion about the conjoint/disjoint verb alternation.

- b. I-si-khwama sika-Sipho si-ntshontsh-w-e ng-u-Jabu  
 AUG-7-bag 7.of-1.Sipho 7.SM-steal-PASS-FV by-AUG-1.Jabu  
 ‘Sipho’s bag was stolen by Jabu.’ [Item 1-3]
- c. U-Sipho u-shay-w-e ng-u-Jabu  
 AUG-1.Sipho 1.SM-hit-PASS-FV by-AUG-1.Jabu  
 ‘Sipho was hit by Jabu.’

Intransitive verbs such as ‘to cry’ in IsiZulu can be passivized as in (4). It should be noted, however, that in order for a sentence like the ones in (4) to be possible the passive morpheme is ought not to directly attach to the verb (4b). Instead, the passive suffix attaches to the applicative morpheme which marks the “for” reading on the verb “cry” as in (4a).

(4) Passive of intransitive verbs [Item 1-4]

- a. Izolo, ngi-khal-el-w-e y-i-n-gane. A-ngi-lal-a-nga.  
 Yesterday, 1SG-cry-APP-PASS-FV by-AUG-9-baby. NEG-1SG-sleep-FV-NEG  
 ‘Last night, to me the baby was cried. So, I couldn’t sleep at all.’
- b. \*Izolo, ngi-khal-w-e y-i-n-gane.  
 Yesterday, 1SG-cry-PASS-FV by-AUG-9-baby  
 Lit: ‘Yesterday, I was cried by the baby.’

The ungrammaticality of (4b) confirms the claim made above that the passive needs to attach to another verbal extension when it occurs with intransitive verbs such as *cry*, *die*, *fall*, *etc.* An analysis of the interaction between the passive and other verbal extensions is well beyond the scope of this short paper.

A temporary action can be expressed with a passive as in (5). The agent phrase is not obligatory (cf. examples in (2) above).

(5) Temporary action [Item 1-5]

- I-bhilidi e-li-sha la-kh-iw-e (ng-u-thandi)  
 AUG-5.building 5.REL-be-new 5.SM-build-PASS-FV by-AUG-1a.Thandi  
 ‘A new building was built (by Thandi).’

The example (6) shows that the generic information where no specific agent is not concerned is expressed using passives. This particular example shows that the optional agent can be replaced by other adjuncts. This strengthens the argument that the agent in passive construction becomes a complement of an adjunct head. In other words, the verb in passive constructions takes an adjunct as a complement rather than an argument.

(6) General information [Item 1-6]

- I-si-Frentshi si-ya-khuluny-w-a e-Khanada  
 AUG-7-French 7.SM-DJ-speak-PASS-FV LOC-Canada  
 ‘French is being spoken in Canada.’

The passive in (7) displays a situation in which the owner of the ‘wallet’ is affected by the action of the agent.

In (8), the passive shows where the subject is the result of the passivized action.

(7) Passive of intransitive verbs [Item 1-7]

I-si-khwama sa-nsthontsh-w-a ng-u-Sipho  
 AUG-5-bag 7.SM-steal-PASS-FV by-AUG-1.Sipho  
 ‘The wallet was stolen by Sipho.’

(8) Results expressed by passive [Item 1-8]

I-si-thombe si-bek-w-e o-dong-eni  
 AUG-7-picture 7.SM-put-PASS-FV LOC-11.wall-LOC  
 ‘A picture is put on the wall.’

Verbs such as ‘to love’ can also be passivized as in (9).

(9) Results expressed by passive [Item 1-9]

U-Sipho u-thand-w-a ng-u-Jabu  
 AUG-1.Sipho 1.SM-like-PASS-FV by-AUG-1.Jabu  
 ‘Sipho is loved by Jabu.’

The example in (10) shows how the message verb ‘to tell’ is passivized. The quotation can intervene between the passive sentence and the agent expressed in *ngu*-phrase.

(10) Passive of ‘to tell’ verb [Item 1-10]

U-Sipho u-tshel-w-e ukuthi “Funda!” ngu-Jabu.  
 AUG-1.Sipho 1.SM-tell-PASS-FV that study by-1.Jabu  
 ‘Sipho was told “Study!” by Jabu’

The examples in (11) show that the subject of the passive can also be the subject of an active sentence in the following clause (11a). The object of an active clause is repeated in the subject of the following clause (11b). The absence of Sipho in the second clause generates an unacceptable sentence as in (11c).

(11) Passive and multiple clauses

- a. U-Sipho u-biz-w-e ng-u-Jabu,  
 AUG-Sipho 1.SM-call-PASS-FV by-AUG-1.Jabu  
 futhi u-se-ndi-ini ka-Jabu manje  
 and 1.SM-LOC-9.room-LOC 9.of-1.Jabu now  
 ‘Sipho was called by Jabu, and is in Jabu’s room now.’ [Item 1-10a]
- b. U-Jabu u-biz-e u-Sipho,  
 AUG-Jabu 1.SM-call-FV AUG-1.Sipho  
 futhi u-Sipho u-se-ndi-ini ka-Jabu manje  
 and AUG-1.Sipho 1.SM-LOC-9.room-LOC 9.of-1.Jabu now  
 ‘Jabu called Sipho, and Sipho is in Jabu’s room now.’ [Item 1-10b]

- c. \*U-Jabu u-biz-e u-Sipho,  
AUG-Jabu 1.SM-call-FV AUG-1.Sipho  
futhi u-se-ndi-ini ka-Jabu manje  
and Ø 1.SM-LOC-9.room-LOC 9.of-1.Jabu now  
'Jabu called Sipho, and Ø is in Jabu's room now.' [Item 1-10b]

### 3. Conclusion

This short paper has shown the passive patterns in IsiZulu. The morpheme *-(i)w-* is used for the passive, and it shows patterns that were reported in other languages.

### Abbreviations

- 1, 2, 3, ...: Noun class numbers  
1SG, 2PL, ...: Person and Number  
AUG: Augment (initial vowel prefixed to a noun class prefix)  
CJ: Conjoint (a verbal form obligatorily followed by a post-verbal constituent)  
COMP: Complementiser  
DJ: Disjoint (a verbal form usually not followed by a post-verbal constituent)  
FV: Final Vowel (default inflectional suffix of the finite verb)  
INF: Infinitive  
LOC: Locative  
NEG: Negative marker  
OM: Object Marker  
PASS: Passive  
PERF: Perfect  
POSS: Possessive pronoun  
SM: Subject Marker

### 参考文献

- Buell, Leston. 2006. The Zulu conjoint/disjoint verb alternation: focus or constituency. *ZAS Papers in Linguistics*. doi: 10.21248/zaspil.43.2006.283  
Van der Wal, Jenneke. & Hyman, Larry. (2017). The Conjoint/Disjoint Alternation in Bantu. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110490831>

### 謝辞

This work was mainly supported by JSPS KAKENHI Promotion of Joint International Research (Fostering Joint International Research (B)) 21KK0005. This study was also supported by JSPS KAKENHI (B) 23K25319, and the ILCAA joint research project 'Diachronic Perspectives on Language Description and Typology in Bantu (jrp000292).

執筆者連絡先 : didim@ukzn.ac.za, seunghun@icu.ac.jp

原稿受理 : 2024 年 11 月 21 日