

# **On the Development of Passives in Philippine Languages**

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## **ABSTRACT**

A number of Philippine languages, while clearly morphologically ergative, and typically showing a variety of antipassive structures, have developed passive constructions as well. These constructions differ from agent-less stative constructions, which have been called passives in some descriptions, and are distinguished by their retention of the so-called “voice” morphology of their source transitive constructions, even though the passive derivations are clearly intransitive.

This paper will outline the types of construction that have been called passive in Philippine languages, and argue that traditional uses of the term, while still appearing in some descriptions, are inappropriate, in that even though the undergoer may appear as the grammatical subject, the actor is in no way down-graded, and the verbs are clearly two-place transitive constructions. More recent descriptions of these structures as transitive constructions distinguished by “focus” or “voice” affixation are also inappropriate, in that the affixation is not limited to transitive verbs, but appears also on derived intransitive constructions, including stative and passive constructions.

Some recent descriptions characterize the new passive constructions as “inverse”, because (optional) down-graded actors appear following the undergoer, rather than preceding it, which is the word order that typically occurs in transitive constructions. The historical development of these constructions will be discussed and possible influence from the passive constructions of English will be considered.