Voice

"...the role of the subject in the action expressed by the verb" (Schachter) e.g., active, passive.

Japanese, (from Jordan, *Japanese: The Spoken Language*)

(1) a. Sensei ga tomodati o
teacher SUBJ friend OBJ
yobi-masi-ta. **active**
call-FORMAL-PAST
The teacher called (my) friend.

b. Tomodati wa sensei ni
friend TOP teacher DAT
yob-are-masi-ta. **passive**
call-PASS-FORMAL-PAST
(My) friend was called by the teacher.

Passive Across Languages

Nitinaht, (Wakashan, British Columbia). From Perlmutter and Postal.

```
ch'ixwatsa?p ?a   ox    bowach
frighten     aux  case  deer

?aq ?oyoq Ralph.
the case  Ralph

''The deer frightened Ralph.''

ch'ixwatsa?ab't  ?a  ox   Ralph
frighten-pass    aux case Ralph

?oxwit    bowach ?aq.
case-pass deer   the

''Ralph was frightened by the deer.''
```

Mandarin. From O'Grady et al.

```
Zhu laoshi    piye le wode kaoshi.
Zhu professor marked  my   test
''Professor Zhu marked my test.''

Wode kaoshi bei   Zhu laoshi    piye le.
my   test   prep. Zhu professor marked
''My test was marked by Professor Zhu''
```

Malagasy. Austronesian, Madagascar. From Perlmutter and Postal.

```
Nividy ny  vary  ho  an'ny ankizy
bought the rice  for the  children

ny  vehivavy.
the woman

``The woman bought the rice
for the children.''

Novidin'    ny  vehivavy
bought-pass the woman

no  an'ny ankizy   ny  vary.
for the   children the rice

``The rice was bought
for the children by the woman.''
```

Latin. From Perlmutter and Postal.

```
Magister    puero:s    laudat.
teacher-nom boys-acc   praise
''The teacher praises the boys.''

Pueri:    a:    magistro:   laudantur.
boys-nom  prep. teacher-abl praise-pass
''The boys are praised by the teacher.''

a:    magistro:   pueri:    laudantur.
prep. teacher-abl boys-nom  praise-pass
''The boys are praised by the teacher.''
```

Tzotzil, Mayan, Mexico. From O'Grady et al.

```
La' sna'kan ti  vi˜nike ti  xpe'tule.
seated      the man     the Peter
''Peter seated the man.''

Ina'kanat  ti  vi˜nike yu?un ti  xpe'tule.
seat-pass  the man     prep. the Peter
''The man was seated by Peter.''
```

West Greenlandic Eskimo. From Perlmutter and Postal.

```
Gimmi-p  miiraq    kiivaa.
dog-erg  child-abs bite
''The dog bit the child.''

Miiraq    gimmi-mik  kiitsippuq.
child-abs dog-instr  bite-pass
''A child has been bitten by a/the dog.''
```

Icelandic, a Germanic language. From Zaenen and Maling.

```
Logreglan   tok  Siggu     fasta.
police-nom  took Sigga-acc fast-acc
''The police arrested Sigga.''

Sigga     var tekin fost     af logreglunni.
Sigga-nom was taken fast-nom p. police-the-dat
''Sigga was arrested by the police.''
```

Cross Linguistic Generalization

If all of the constructions illustrated above are so different, why do we call them all passives? In other words, what do all of the passives have in common? Is it possible to explain what they have in common in terms of verb morphology, word order or case marking?

Uses of Passive

- Focus on a participant other than the agent.
- Make the sentence impersonal (doesn't matter who the agent is). (Some languages have passives of intransitive verbs.)
- Other uses, e.g., adversitive in Japanese.