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PECULIARITIES OF PASSIVES OF REFLEXIVES IN GERMAN

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ABSTRACT

Cross-linguistically unusual though it is for active clauses with reflexive pronouns as objects to be passivizable, German does permit such passives. Passives with reflexives, widely neglected in German grammar, are examined against the backdrop of purportedly general constraints on the control of reflexive pronouns and on relational interchanges in passivization. As to control, reflexive pronouns in passives appear to be under split control, with semantic and morphosyntactic controllers (active subjects and passive dummy subjects, respectively) not coinciding. As to relational interchanges, passives with reflexive pronouns are prone to lack exemplary subjects despite the presence of potentially subjectivizable objects in corresponding active constructions, with case marking and verb-agreement not necessarily operating in tandem.

1. Grammars of contemporary German, of whatever vintage, do not usually pay much attention to passives containing reflexive pronouns. Often such passives are ignored; sometimes it is denied that active constructions with a verb accompanied by a reflexive pronoun can be passivized; sometimes such passives are admitted as a marginal possibility, most likely to be used in colloquial speech with the illocutionary force of a strong request despite being in the indicative mood.

A typical example of a reflexive passive is (1b), corresponding to the active construction (1a), with the 3rd person reflexive pronoun *sich* occurring in both:¹

- (1) a. *Man wäscht sich hier täglich! Das ist ein Befehl.*
One washes oneself here daily! This is an order.
b. *Hier wird sich täglich gewaschen! Das ist ein Befehl.*
Here is oneself daily washed! This is an order.

Of thirty informants (university students of German, English, or Linguistics) which were asked to grade such passives on a four-point scale (1=perfectly normal, 4=totally ungrammatical, 2=closer to 1 than to 4, 3=closer to 4 than to 1), twenty-four (or 80.0%) found (1b) perfectly normal, four (or 13.3%) opted for grade 2, two for grade 3, and none for grade 4, yielding an average grade of 1.3.² Notwithstanding the obvious limitations of such an exploratory inquiry, I take its results as strong evidence that the status of passives of reflexives is not all that dubious. Contrary to what has occasionally been claimed, such passives, furthermore, are not only used to convey requests; they also occur in ordinary declaratives as well as in interrogatives (cf. (2)), and are found in subordinate (cf. (3)) as well as in main clauses.³

- (2) *Wird sich hier täglich gewaschen?*

Is oneself here daily washed?

- (3) *Es ist erstaunlich, daß sich hier täglich gewaschen wird.*

It is surprising that oneself here daily washed is.

Although hitherto neglected, passives of reflexives, thus, represent a kind of construction which needs to be accounted for in the grammar of German.⁴ My aim here is to offer such an account, casting some glances also at a few other languages which have or do not have this construction. As will emerge in the course of this paper, the interest of reflexive passives, however, extends beyond language-particular grammar: having properties which must seem fairly unusual in the light of widely accepted general constraints on the control of reflexive pronouns and on permutations of grammatical relations in passivization, they represent a formidable challenge to syntactic theory.

2. A first peculiarity of passives of reflexives in German is their very existence. There are many languages, including English, which prohibit such constructions. (Hence the oddity of the literal semi-English translations.)

Since passives of verbs with reflexive objects tend to resemble those of intransitive verbs (cf. (4)) — which is not so surprising since the transitivity of a clause may be considered to be reduced if its object is coreferential with its subject rather than to be referentially autonomous —, one might expect all languages which, unlike English, permit passives of intransitives also to permit passives of reflexives.

- (4) *Hier wird täglich getanzt.*
Here is (3SG) daily danced.

This, however, is not the case: Dutch, for instance, while passivizing (some) intransitives, does not passivize reflexives. On the other hand, it is probably true to say that if there are passives of reflexives, there will also be passives of plain intransitives. While I am currently unaware of any language having passives in the first place that would be at odds with this implication, I am not aware of a great many languages clearly confirming it in the way German does, either. Lithuanian is one of them (cf. Geniušienė 1987: 142f.), although its reflexive passive lacks certain quirks of its German counterpart (to be discussed in 4.1).

3. Passives of clauses with a reflexive pronoun and no further direct, indirect, or oblique object are structurally curious in two respects, concerning the relationship between passives of transitive and intransitive clauses (3.1) and the control of the reflexive pronoun (3.2).

3.1 Even though the accusative and dative case forms of the 3rd person reflexive pronoun *sich* coincide (cf. *Er rasiert mich/sich* 'he shaves me/himself (ACC)' — *Er mißtraut mir/sich* 'He mistrusts me/himself (DAT)'), there can be little doubt that the grammatical relation of the reflexive pronoun in examples such as (1a) is that of an accusative direct object. Unlike verbs such as *benahmen* 'behave', verbs such as *waschen* 'wash' denote a two-participant relationship,⁵ and the two referents involved in such a relationship may be distinct; if *waschen* takes an object with distinctive case marking, it is seen to govern the accusative. However, while accusative direct objects of active constructions normally show up as subjects in passives, being in the nominative case and controlling verb-agreement in person and number (cf. (5)), reflexive-pronoun objects of verbs governing the accusative in the active remain unchanged if these verbs are passivized, as was seen in (1).

- (5) a. *Man wäscht den Wagen hier täglich.*
One washes the (ACC) car here daily.
b. *Hier wird der Wagen täglich gewaschen.*
Here is (3SG) the (NOM) car daily washed.

Although it is cross-linguistically not very surprising that there are no subject reflexive pronouns in German, the possibility of passivizing active clauses with reflexive direct objects entails a complication of passivization

insofar as they require that direct objects be treated differently depending on whether they are reflexive or non-reflexive. If they are reflexive, corresponding passives are impersonal clauses, with the finite verb being 3rd person singular, as is the rule in all such constructions, active and passive alike.

Reflexive pronouns also occur with verbs governing indirect objects in the dative:⁶

- (6) a. *Man schmeichelt ihm hier zuviel.*
One flatters him (DAT) here too much.
b. *Hier wird ihm zuviel geschmeichelt.*
Here is (3SG) him (DAT) too much flattered.
- (7) a. *Man schmeichelt sich hier zuviel.*
One flatters oneself here too much.
b. *Hier wird sich zuviel geschmeichelt.*
Here is (3SG) oneself too much flattered.

Since non-accusative objects normally remain unchanged in passives instead of becoming nominative and agreement-determining subjects (6b), impersonal passives of such dative reflexives (7b) do not differ from passives of the same verbs with non-reflexive objects.

The differential treatment of reflexive and non-reflexive direct objects, then, is the second peculiarity to be noted. It is hardly one causing great wonder, though. Owing to the coreferentiality of subject and direct object, reflexive transitives would generally be considered less transitive than non-reflexive ones; and one would therefore not be surprised if reflexive transitives were found to be aligned with intransitives rather than with non-reflexive transitives for purposes of passivization. And passives of transitive verbs with reflexive direct objects in German indeed are structurally analogous to passives of intransitives, which are also impersonal (cf. (4)). This analogy is perhaps even less surprising in a language such as Lithuanian, where reflexivity, as seen in (8), may be morphologically marked on the verb itself by an invariable clitic, since verb-bound reflexive markers are commonly assumed to differ from independent reflexive pronouns in not to be referring at all.⁷

- (8) a. *Petr-as ap-si-reng-ė.*
Peter-NOM:SG Prefix-REFL-dress-3:IND:PAST
'Peter dressed himself.'

b. *Petr-o buvo ap-si-reng-ta.*

Peter-GEN:SG be:3:IND:PAST PREFIX-REFL-dress-PARTIC:NEUT

'By Peter was himself dressed.'

(The passive auxiliary is 3rd person and the passive past participle is neuter, which are the default options in the absence of an overt subject.) Lithuanian in fact also has an independent reflexive pronoun, inflecting for case (e.g. *save* ACC, *sau* DAT) but, like verb-bound *-si-/s*, neutral as to person, number, and gender; and this seems to be barred from passives.

3.2 One expects an independent reflexive pronoun to be coreferential with a single controller (a nominal or a pronominal noun-phrase), and one expects the range of syntactic relationships potentially holding between a reflexive pronoun and its controller to be rather narrowly defined. Reflexive pronouns in passives threaten to undermine such expectations.

3.2.1 Since the noun-phrase which the reflexive pronoun is coreferential with in the active construction (1a), the indefinite pronoun *man* in subject relation, is absent in the passive (1b), the reflexive pronoun here lacks any overt controller. If an agent is retained in such passives, it is this prepositional phrase in a peripheral adverbial relation which, semantically, controls the reflexive pronoun, there being no other argument of the verb which a reflexive pronoun could possibly be coreferential with:

(9) *Hier wird sich von niemandem/allen täglich gewaschen!*

Here is (3SG) himself/themselves by nobody (SG)/all (PL) daily washed!

It is peculiar for the control over a reflexive pronoun to be exerted by a referent (possibly lacking overt expression) in a peripheral syntactic relation.⁸

To be sure, such a control configuration could in principle be accommodated in multistratal syntactic theories such as Relational Grammar. Control over reflexive pronouns in passive clauses would have to be assigned to initial (i.e. active) subjects, by requiring reflexive coreference relationships to be sanctioned at the initial stratum, or some kind of record would have to be kept enabling final "chômeurs" to be related to their initial grammatical relation of subject.⁹ But while verb-agreement in passives or other non-active constructions has occasionally been argued to be controlled by initial rather than final or current subjects, this would seem to be

the first instance on record of an analogous pattern involving reflexive pronouns. The present pattern would also necessitate an extension of the widely accepted typology of controller-reflexive relationships (as recently summarized by Levinson 1991: 119), which only permits controller and reflexive (a) both to be subcategorized arguments of the verb, (b) to be within the same clause but with the reflexive in an adjunct phrase, or (c) to be in different clauses. Here, reversing (b), it would be the controller which is in an adjunct phrase of the same clause as contains the reflexive, if the reflexive is bound by an overt controller at all. And this pattern would be difficult to reconcile with the Government-Binding condition requiring reflexive and reciprocal pronouns (called Anaphors) to be "bound", or co-indexed with a c-commanding noun-phrase, in their minimal governing category.

But is the syntactically peripheral, potentially unexpressed agent really the only possible candidate for controller of the reflexive pronouns of passives?

Reflexive pronouns in German come in an inflectional paradigm, partially reproduced here (including only accusative forms; only *mich* and *dich* have distinct datives, viz. *mir* and *dir*), from which the syntactically appropriate form is normally chosen depending on the person and number, and with 2nd person also the formality level, of their controllers.

	singular	plural
1st person	<i>mich</i>	<i>uns</i>
2nd person		
informal	<i>dich</i>	<i>euch</i>
formal	<i>sich</i>	<i>sich</i>
3rd person	<i>sich</i>	<i>sich</i>

For 1st and informal 2nd person the ordinary personal pronouns do duty also as reflexives; it is only in 3rd and formal 2nd person that we find exclusively reflexive pronouns — and indeed only a single one, *sich*, since number and also gender distinctions of controllers are neutralized. Now, if the peripheral agent in (9) were the controller, the reflexive pronoun ought to show a formal contrast corresponding to the difference between 3rd person (singular and plural here being neutralized in reflexives) and 1st person plural agents. But it does not, the 3rd person form being obligatory here:

- (10) *Hier wird sich/*uns nur von uns täglich gewaschen!*

Here is (3SG) themselves/*ourselves only by us daily washed!

To judge by the uniformity of the reflexive, it looks as if its controller uniformly were 3rd person, too.

There actually are various circumstances, such as co-ordinate controllers consisting of 1st and non-1st person conjuncts or infinitival clauses preceding the main clause with the controller of the reflexive, which encourage the generalization of the 3rd person reflexive pronoun *sich* to 1st and 2nd person, as is illustrated in (11) and (12).

- (11) *Meine Frau und ich würden uns/sich freuen ...*
 My wife and I would ourselves/themselves amuse ...
 ('would be glad to ...')
- (12) *Mich/Sich täglich zu rasieren, fällt mir schwer.*
 Myself/Himself daily to shave is hard for me.

Impersonal passive constructions might be assumed to be another kind of context where the 3rd person reflexive *sich* is generalized. What argues against this, however, is that in passives, unlike in all other generalizing contexts, *sich* is obligatory rather than merely optional.

Comparable to other impersonal constructions, passives of reflexives require the usual dummy subject *es* 'it', i.e. a personal pronoun which is 3rd person singular neuter, if there is no other constituent present that would ensure that the finite verb is in second position in declarative main clauses (cf. (1b')), but reject this dummy otherwise, for instance after the main-clause finite verb (cf. (1b'')) or in subordinate clauses (cf. (3')).

- (1) b'. *Es wird sich hier täglich gewaschen!*
 It is oneself here daily washed!
- b''. *Hier wird (*es) sich täglich gewaschen!*
 Here is (*it) oneself daily washed!
- (3') *Es ist erstaunlich, daß (*es) sich hier täglich gewaschen wird.*
 It is surprising that (*it) oneself here daily washed is.

This dummy *es* has exactly the morphosyntactic properties which would make it an ideal controller of passive reflexives: it is 3rd person (hence the invariability of *sich*) and it is subject (the relation most characteristic of reflexive controllers). Its fault is that it is overtly present only under one particular circumstance, viz. if needed in order to get the finite verb into second position in declarative main clauses; one therefore hesitates to posit some abstract representation of *es* in all impersonal passives.¹⁰ A further drawback of an analysis along such lines is that it makes little semantic

sense to let dummy *es* control reflexive *sich*; semantically its controller is clearly the noun-phrase that would be subject in the corresponding active.¹¹

It seems, then, that passive reflexives are peculiar in that their semantic controllers do not function as their morphosyntactic controllers. The invariability of 3rd person *sich* possibly indicates that passive reflexives are not subject to morphosyntactic control at all or that morphosyntactic control over them is transferred to non-coreferential (dummy) surface subjects.

3.2.2 This control behaviour of reflexives in passives is sufficiently peculiar for us to pause and re-examine our basic assumption, viz. that the *sich* that we are dealing with really is an element that needs to be controlled or "bound" in the way an independent reflexive pronoun typically must be. An alternative suggested by mere formal identity would be to take it for essentially the same kind of marker as is employed in middle constructions, such as (13b) corresponding to active (13a).¹²

- (13) a. *Man schläft hier gut.*
 One sleeps here well.
 b. *Es schläft sich hier gut.*
 It sleeps self here well.
 ('Here is a good place to sleep.')

In the middle voice the subject of the active is omitted (its retention in a peripheral syntactic relation, as in the passive, would be highly unusual); if there is a direct object in the active, it is promoted to subject status; and if there is none, the middle, like the passive, is an impersonal construction. The middle has active verbal morphology and no passive auxiliary, and requires a marker (*sich* in (13b)) which resembles a reflexive pronoun but is more appropriately interpreted as a marker of detransitivization since it is difficult to see what it might be coreferential with.

What would have to be assumed, then, is that the passivization of verbs with a reflexive pronoun as direct object in the active voice involves the reanalysis, or perhaps rather misanalysis, of the reflexive pronoun as a mere marker of detransitivization, with which it is homonymous. German, after all, would not be the only language where reflexive pronouns, especially of 3rd person, are formally similar or even identical to middle markers — or, diachronically, are the source of markers indicating reduced transitivity in middle or also in passive constructions.

In order to determine whether the assumption of a reanalysis or misanalysis, a measure rendering passive reflexives less peculiar, is justified, we need to examine how middle markers actually differ from reflexive pronouns in respect of control.

On the evidence of formal contrasts middle markers in German do **not** differ from reflexive pronouns in **not** being subject to control. In fact, middle markers are formally indistinguishable from reflexive pronouns, showing exactly the same inflectional paradigm. Middle constructions are typically limited to non-volitional subjects, the main point of this voice being the attribution of responsibility to a referent whose involvement is non-volitional (typically a patient). Thus, if subject referents are potentially volitional, and in particular human, as in (15) as opposed to (14), they are normally interpreted as responsible agents and *sich* is interpreted as a 3rd person reflexive pronoun, provided the verb can be used transitively.

- (14) *Diese Hemden waschen sich schnell.*

These shirts wash self (*themselves) quickly.

- (15) *Diese Kinder waschen sich schnell.*

These children wash themselves (*self) quickly.

It needs some interpretive effort and also some contextual support to get a middle reading when subjects refer to humans or even are 1st or 2nd person pronouns. Unusual though such circumstances are, the middle marker here turns out not to be invariable, but to agree with the subject in person and number, just like an ordinary reflexive pronoun:

- (16) *Du ziehst ?dich/*sich schwieriger an als dein Bruder.*

You (SG) dress (2SG) ?yourself/*self harder than your brother.

(Intended meaning: 'You are harder to dress than your brother.')

Taking into account admittedly rare middle constructions with 1st or 2nd person subjects, the middle marker is seen to be inherently no less responsive than reflexive pronouns normally are to person and number distinctions of subjects, with *sich*, the most frequent choice, contrasting with *mich/uns* and *dich/euch*.

In the case of middle markers, however, control appears to be purely morphosyntactic and not to be based on coreference. When there are overt subjects, as in (14) and (16), it makes little **semantic** sense to construe middle markers as being coreferential with them, notwithstanding their agree-

ing with them in person and number. It would presumably be straining the notion of coreference to relate middle markers to the subjects of corresponding active constructions instead (such as *man* in (13a)). If there is a case to be made for the recognition of genuine coreference in middle constructions, it would have to be rested on transformed actives with a reflexive pronoun as direct object:

- (17) a. *Man wäscht sich hier gut.*
 One washes oneself here well.
 b. *Es wäscht sich hier gut.*
 It washes self here well.
 ('Here is a good place to wash [oneself].')

We should actually expect two *sich*'s in such examples, one being the reflexive pronoun inherited from the active (unable to become subject), and the other the middle marker.¹³ One, however, appears to be suppressed — haplogically, as it were — under such circumstances,¹⁴ and the question is which. If it is the reflexive pronoun that survives, such middles would create control problems analogous to those encountered above for passives, with *sich* being semantically controlled by an active subject, virtually prohibited from appearing in a peripheral relation in the middle voice. If the single *sich* in examples such as (17b) is the middle marker, this would confirm the hypothesis that middle markers need no coreferential semantic controllers. Unambiguous identification is probably impossible here. But what the very existence of such potential ambiguities attests to is that in middle constructions the need for semantic control of their marker is not very urgent, should there be such a need in the first place.

In impersonal middle constructions such as (13b) and (17b), lacking an overt referential subject and thus precluding control relationships based on coreference within the normal limits, the obvious controller or "binder" of the middle marker is the dummy subject *es* or some abstract representation of it. Although an analogous possibility was tentatively suggested above for passive-reflexive *sich*, there is a further difference here between middle markers and reflexive pronouns. Dummy *es* behaves somewhat differently in middle and in reflexive-passive constructions insofar as middle constructions show a tendency to retain dummy subjects in circumstances where reflexive passives obligatorily discard them:

- (9') *Hier wird (*es) sich gern gewaschen.*
 Here is (*it) self gladly washed.

- (13) b'. *Hier schläft (es) sich gut.*
 Here sleeps (it) self well.

Middle *sich* is, thus, more intimately bound up with dummy *es* than passive-reflexive *sich* is, which latter permits such dummy subjects only on condition that there is no other surface constituent present in declarative main clauses for the finite verb to follow.

Summing up this comparison, reflexive pronouns differ, albeit subtly, from middle markers in being less intimately associated with a dummy subject, in case a referential subject is unavailable; and on this criterion the *sich*'s occurring in passives must be considered reflexive pronouns. The reanalysis or misanalysis of reflexive pronouns in passives as middle markers would, thus, at best be partial, consisting in the disregard of coreference and the readiness to let control be determined morphosyntactically. Nonetheless, the assumption that passive reflexives are indeed mimicking middle markers in this single respect does not seem implausible.

First, the overt consequences of this masquerade are almost negligible. The only disguise a passive reflexive would need to assume is to pretend not to be morphosyntactically controlled or "bound" by its syntactically peripheral coreferent, should this happen to be a 1st or 2nd person personal pronoun. And 1st and 2nd person peripheral agents (as in (10) above) are exceedingly rare in passives, in comparison with 3rd person ones, which do not create a manifest conflict between semantic and morphosyntactic control, *sich* being the right choice from both points of view.

Second, considering that a dummy subject *es* is required in impersonal passives at least sometimes, it is perhaps understandable that reflexive pronouns mimicking middle markers, which require such dummies a little more urgently, would seize on it as an ersatz "binder", despite the absence of referential links.

Third, for the reasons given above, the 3rd person form *sich* is by far the most frequent one of the middle markers; and *sich* would also be the most likely reflexive pronoun to occur in passives if semantic control were decisive, since the omitted or peripheral agents, the appropriate semantic controllers, will normally be 3rd person, given the known aversion of 2nd and especially 1st person agents to being demoted in passives. The sharing of an inflectional paradigm and the tendency to over-use the same member of this paradigm may also be factors contributing to the blurring of the syntactic distinction between reflexive pronouns and middle markers.

Lastly, there is a fairly good motive why reflexive pronouns should mimic middle markers, if at all possible. Conceivably it is this mimicry which enables them to appear in passive constructions in the first place, where they would not be properly controlled or locally "bound" otherwise, rendering such passives ungrammatical.

And the theory that it is their being partly reanalysed or misanalysed as semantically uncontrolled middle markers which is the real peculiarity of reflexive pronouns in passives in German, has the additional advantage of being cross-linguistically rather intriguing. Its implication is that passives of reflexives are only possible if reflexive markers are sufficiently similar to middle markers to, as it were, deceive the general constraints on permissible relationships between controllers and reflexives. This condition is met in German. It is also met in Lithuanian, where bound *-si-/s* has both reflexive and middle function; the independent reflexive, *save*, being exclusively reflexive and dissimilar from middle *-si-/s*, is barred from passives. Dutch would seem to be similar to Lithuanian insofar as there is an independent reflexive pronoun partly distinct (with added *-zelf*) from a clitic reflexive also performing the function of a middle marker. But it is dubious whether the clitic reflexive here really qualifies as a genuine coreferential pronoun in the first place; and if these doubts are well-founded, there would only be a two-way contrast of forms and functions between *-zelf*-less middle markers and reflexive pronouns with *-zelf* (as opposed to the three-way contrast in Lithuanian between middle *-si-/s*, bound reflexive *-si-/s*, and independent reflexive *save*), whose formal distinctness would then account for the non-occurrence of passives containing a reflexive pronoun.¹⁵ English clearly does not meet this condition since middle marking is zero whereas reflexive pronouns normally have overt expression.

4. It is occasionally mentioned in the literature that clauses may even passivize if the reflexive pronoun is accompanied by a non-accusative object. (18b) is a relevant example, culled from Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Grammatik*, with (18a) as the corresponding active.

(18) a. *wobei man sich auch des ahd. cha und griech. γε erinnern kann*

where one oneself also of the Old High German *cha* or Greek *γε* remind may

('where one may remind oneself also of OHG *cha* or Greek *γε*')

- b. *wobei sich auch des ahd. cha und griech. γε erinnert werden kann*
 where oneself also of the Old High German *cha* or Greek *γε*
 reminded be may
 ('where one may be reminded also of OHG *cha* or Greek *γε*')

As is to be expected, **non-accusative** objects of active constructions—in (18) the noun-phrase object is genitive—are retained unaltered in the passive, and despite their greater complexity such passives thus offer nothing new vis-à-vis those dealt with in Section 3.

4.1 What is one to expect, now, if a reflexive pronoun with indirect object or similar function is accompanied by an **accusative** direct object?

4.1.1 Such passives are easily constructed according to the standard procedure of passivization, which has the direct object of the active turned into the (nominative) subject of the passive, which then controls verb-agreement:

- (19) a. *Zum letzten Mal: Hier wäscht man sich täglich den Hals!*
 For the last time: Here washes one oneself daily the neck
 (ACC)!
 b. *Zum letzten Mal: Hier wird sich täglich der Hals gewaschen!*
 For the last time: Here is (3SG) oneself daily the neck (NOM)
 washed!

Of my twenty-nine informants (one of the thirty failed to respond to this question), twenty-two (or 75.9%) found (19b) perfectly normal, six (20.7%) opted for grade 2, one (3.4%) for grade 3, and none for grade 4. This is about the same result, and the very same average grade (1.3), as that obtained for passives of simple reflexives.¹⁶

I also asked my informants to judge an alternative to (19b), where the accusative direct object was retained in the passive, contrary to the standard rule of passivization, and the construction thus came out subjectless, like that of simple reflexive passives:

- (19) b'. *Hier wird sich täglich den Hals gewaschen!*
 Here is (3SG) oneself daily the neck (ACC) washed!

Two (or 6.7%) found (19b') perfectly normal, three (10.0%) opted for grade 2, seven (23.3%) for grade 3, and eighteen (60.0%) for grade 4. The average grade of 3.4 reflects the very marginal status of subjectless passives with a retained accusative direct object.¹⁷ Nonetheless, there were two informants (Nos. 07 and 28) who actually preferred (19b') to (19b) by one grade (1 vs. 2, and 2 vs. 3), and one (No. 02) who judged them to be equally perfect.

When such reflexive passives occur as subordinate clauses, the average grade drops, not very dramatically, to 1.9, with active accusative becoming passive nominative (20a), and to 3.8, with active accusative staying accusative in the passive (20b).¹⁸

- (20) *Unsere Umfrage hat ergeben, daß sich von 78% der BILD-Leser täglich (a) der Hals / (b) den Hals gewaschen wird.*

Our survey has shown that themselves by 78% of the readers of BILD daily the neck ((a) NOM / (b) ACC) washed is (3SG).

For seven individuals, however, the difference between (19b) and the nominative version here, (20a), is considerable, with grades dropping from 1 to 3 (Nos. 01, 30), 2 to 4 (No. 07), or four times even from 1 to 4 (Nos. 26, 24, 23, 10).

A similarly slight drop in average grades to 1.8 (21a) and 3.7 (21b) was caused by moving the patient noun-phrase, in nominative or accusative form, into clause-initial position:¹⁹

- (21) (a) *Der Hals / (b) Den Hals wird sich täglich gewaschen!*

The neck ((a) NOM / (b) ACC) is (3SG) oneself daily washed!

Again, for five individuals (Nos. 26, 16, 27, 06, 30) the difference in the position of the nominative noun-phrase relative to the finite verb and reflexive pronoun was not negligible, with their grades of the nominative version here, (21a), being lower than those of (19b) by two or three grades.

Thus, in the presence of a reflexive pronoun there seems to be a tendency, at least for some speakers, to deviate from the norms of passivization regarding the necessity of subjects and/or to be responsive to factors (such as the main-subordinate clause distinction and the relative linear order of certain clause constituents) which otherwise do not exert any manifest morphosyntactic influence on passivization. This impression is confirmed when number marking and number agreement is also taken into consideration.

4.1.2 In (22) the patient noun-phrase is plural rather than singular, and plural noun-phrases never distinguish nominative and accusative; nonetheless, since subjects are not only recognizable by their nominative case marking but also by their ability to control verb-agreement, (22b) would seem to be the analogue of (19b), with the patient noun-phrase functioning as the subject of the passive construction on the evidence of verbal agreement.

- (22) a. *Zum letzten Mal: Hier wäscht man sich nicht die Hände!*
 For the last time: Here washes one oneself not the hands!
- b. *Zum letzten Mal: Hier werden sich nicht die Hände gewaschen!*
 For the last time: Here are (3PL) oneself not the hands washed!

(22b), however, is not judged as good as (19b) was: its average grade is only 2.2, as opposed to 1.3 for (19b).²⁰ Thirteen informants (or 43.3%) here opt for grade 1, five (16.7%) for grade 2, and six each (20.0%) for grades 3 and 4.

Even more surprisingly, (22b'), where the verb is singular and thus appears to show the patient noun-phrase not to be subject — or else it would require plural agreement — fares much better than its supposed subjectless analogue (19b').

- (22) b'. *Zum letzten Mal: Hier wird sich nicht die Hände gewaschen!*
 For the last time: Here is (3SG) oneself not the hands washed!

(22b') in fact gets a slightly better average grade than (22b), viz. 2.0,²¹ which compares rather favourably with that of (19b'), which was 3.4. The breakdown here is twelve times (or 40.0%) grade 1, ten times (33.3%) grade 2, four times each (13.3%) grades 3 and 4.

The present evidence, provisional though it may be, suggests that there are three dialects with regard to the passivization of examples such as (22). First, there are speakers (nine in my group of informants — the middle section in the second table of the Appendix) who find the agreeing and non-agreeing versions equally good (or, in one case, No. 27, equally bad, deserving grade 3). All of them express a preference, mostly a decided one, for the subjective over the subjectless version of the passive of (19). Second, there are speakers (also nine in my group — the top section in this table) who more or less clearly prefer (22b), with agreement, to (22b'),

without agreement. With a single exception (No. 07) they also clearly prefer the subjective over the subjectless version of the passive of (19). Third, there are speakers (twelve in my group — the bottom section in this table) whose — mostly clear — preference in (22) is for non-agreement. Of these, six rank the subjective above the subjectless version of the passive of (19) by two or three grades (Nos. 30, 10, 19, 11, 20, 29); three find the former marginally better than the latter (Nos. 09, 14, 25); one sees no difference between them (No. 02), and one indeed marginally prefers the subjectless version to the subjective one (No. 28).²²

The majority of the speakers of the third dialect, and less markedly also those of the first, could thus appear to be peculiarly inconsistent in their attitude towards passives of reflexives. If there is a direct object in the active construction which overtly distinguishes the nominative from the accusative, it must for them acquire virtually all characteristics of a subject in the corresponding passive, including in particular nominative case marking and control of verb-agreement (and presumably, morphosyntactically though not semantically, of reflexive pronouns). If the direct object in the active construction, on the other hand, lacks this morphological case distinction, it is for them optionally (first dialect) or obligatorily (third dialect) prevented from taking control of verb-agreement, and in this respect does not behave like a typical subject. A small minority of the speakers of the third dialect is consistently reluctant to, or does not mind not to, assign any of these subject properties to patient noun-phrases in passives of reflexives in general.

4.1.3 What has been characterized as a peculiar inconsistency of the third and first dialect hinges on the notion of subject: a patient noun-phrase that behaves like a subject in one reflexive passive clause (19) does not, or at least not obligatorily, behave so in another clause that is structurally entirely parallel (22), except that the noun-phrase that was direct object in the active is plural (22) rather than singular (19). However, instead of branding such speakers as inconsistent, one might also question the global viability of the notion of subject, as so far utilized here.

It has become commonplace²³ to conceive of subject as a composite notion, with a constituent being more or less “subjecty” depending on the number of subject properties it assembles. In a way passives of reflexives in German appear to confirm this conception, insofar as they may sometimes show subjects not possessing the full complement of properties of

exemplary subjects, lacking nominative case marking or control over verb-agreement. Arguably,²⁴ however, it is these purported "properties" themselves, and not the relations of which they are commonly said to be "properties", which are the primary structural notions; subjecthood is a secondary notion, definable — or, as the case may be, not definable — in terms of the patterning of such primaries. On the present evidence from reflexive passives it is not implausible to conclude that individual properties whose combination defines exemplary subjects have enough autonomy, for a fair number of speakers of German, to be distributed separately and to interact with one another directly, without involving any notion of subject to begin with.

Those approving of (22b') and of (19b), while disapproving of (19b'), might well be operating on elementary principles such as the following:

- (A) A noun-phrase marked by the accusative case in an active construction receives nominative case marking in the corresponding passive.
- (B) The finite verb agrees in person and number with the noun-phrase in the distinctively nominative case.
- (C) If there is no noun-phrase with distinctively nominative case marking, the finite verb is marked 3rd person singular by default rather than to agree with a noun-phrase in a non-distinctive nominative if the potential agreement controller lacks further properties such as (a) semantic control of a reflexive pronoun if the clause contains one, (b) position preceding the items controlled, (c) topicality or thematic foregrounding, (d) semantic independence from the verb, and (e) occurrence in a basic-voice construction.

The noun-phrase *die Hände* in (22b/b'), whose case marking is non-distinct between nominative and accusative, which renders (B) inapplicable, lacks all the further properties listed in (C), and for some speakers is accordingly unable to control verb-agreement. Accusative *den Hals* in (19a) is converted to unmistakably nominative *der Hals* in (19b) by (A), and the verb is made to agree with it by (B), which precludes (C) from being taken into consideration. Operating on principles such as (A)-(C), it is unnecessary for speakers ever to determine whether the patient noun-phrases in reflexive passives are subjects or perhaps rather direct objects retained from the corresponding active constructions. As long as the noun-phrases present can

be case-marked and the finite verb be inflected — which they can, relying on principles such as (A)-(C) —, nothing much depends on unambiguous relational identifiability in such instances, since derived constructions of this kind will rarely undergo further syntactic transformations altering grammatical relations (such as raising to superordinate clauses) or constrained in relational terms (such as deletions under referential and relational identity).²⁵

The general, rather than merely dialectal, reliance on principle (C) is confirmed when (22b) and (22b') are modified so as to increase the chances of the active direct object to take control of verb-agreement in passives.

- (23) *Wir mußten leider feststellen, daß sich in dieser Kompanie nicht die Hände gewaschen (a) werden / (b) wird.*

We had unfortunately to notice that oneself in this company not the hands washed (a) are / (b) is.

- (24) *Die Hände (a) werden / (b) wird sich hier nicht gewaschen!*

The hands (a) are / (b) is oneself here not washed!

In (23) the potential agreement-controller, *die Hände*, is able to precede the finite verb because this is in final position in the subordinate clause. In (24) the potential agreement-controller is itself in initial position, followed by the finite verb in its typical main-clause second position, and, contrastively emphasized independently of the verb, is also thematically foregrounded. Unlike for instance English, German does not limit subjects, or nominatives and agreement-controllers, to initial position in declarative clauses; their preverbal position is nonetheless the preferred one, and, especially in conjunction with referential autonomy, enables them to do things — such as to control verb-agreement — which otherwise they might not do. At 2.1 and 1.8, the average grades of agreeing (23a) and (24a) are slightly better than that of agreeing (22b), which was 2.2. More remarkably, the average grades of non-agreeing (23b) and (24b) are, at 3.1 and 3.3, far worse than that of non-agreeing (22b'), which was 2.0.²⁶ Thus, the slight general preference for non-agreement if the patient noun-phrase, not distinctively nominative, follows the finite verb is reversed to a marked preference for agreement if these two items are in opposite order. Most remarkably, most speakers of the third dialect, which were primarily responsible for the general non-agreement preference in (22), are much in favour of agreement in (23) and (24), with only Nos. 28, 20, 29, and partly No. 02, continuing their non-agreement preference. I would suggest that those altering

their attitudes here are not once more being inconsistent; more likely, they are consistently guided by principles (A)-(C) above, with factors (Cb) and (Cc) sufficing to tip the scales in favour of a non-distinctively nominative noun-phrase acting as controller of verb-agreement.

Properties like those mentioned in (C) are, individually and in particular in combination, capable of preventing a noun-phrase from controlling verb-agreement also in passive constructions without reflexives. Speakers of our third and first dialects, who are especially sensitive to them, should thus be the most likely to produce and accept passives such as those in (25), sometimes encountered in particular in colloquial speech.

- (25) *Heute wird Karten gespielt und morgen wird Teppiche geklopft.*
 Today is (3SG) cards (PL) played and tomorrow is (3SG) carpets
 (PL) beaten.

Karten and *Teppiche* show no overt nominative-accusative case distinction, follow the finite verbs which might be expected to agree with them (versions of (25) where verbs do agree are also acceptable, but the acceptability difference is hardly considerable), are neither topical nor thematically foregrounded nor semantically independent from their verbs (there is not much that is habitually done with cards and carpets other than playing and beating respectively), and occur in a non-basic construction (i.e. the passive). It is even possible for principle (A) to be overridden for noun-phrases which do overtly distinguish nominative and accusative: if the incentives of converting them to nominative are not sufficiently strong in terms of properties such as those listed in (C), they may stay in the accusative in the passive — as in the following examples collected from newspapers.

- (26) a. *Darauf wird zumindest von offizieller Seite großen bis über-
 großen Wert gelegt.*
 On this point is at least on the part of the officials great or
 even too great stress (ACC) laid.
- b. *Deshalb dürfe auch keinen Druck auf diejenigen ausgeübt
 werden, die ...*
 Therefore is no pressure (ACC) to be applied on those who ...
- c. *Es wird aber fortgeführt und erweitert den Arbeitsbereich, den
 Herr Habermas in Starnberg aufgenommen hat.*
 It is however continued and extended the activity (ACC)
 which Herr Habermas has begun at Starnberg.

- d. *1794 ist einen starken Erdbebenstoß verspürt worden.*
 1794 has a strong earth tremor (ACC) noticed been.

Although hard and fast evidence is presently lacking, middle constructions too would seem to permit deviations from the norms of nominative case marking and verb-agreement analogous to those observed with reflexive passives. If anything, I would expect the following (b)-examples, where an active accusative is retained (27) or the finite verb does not agree with a non-distinctive nominative (28), to be judged better than the corresponding passives.

- (27) a. *Mit kaltem Wasser wäscht sich der Hals am besten.* (=19b)
 With cold water washes (3SG) self the neck (NOM) best.
 b. *Mit kaltem Wasser wäscht (es) sich den Hals am besten.*
 (=19b')
 With cold water washes (3SG) (it) self the neck (ACC) best.
- (28) a. *Mit kaltem Wasser waschen sich die Hände am besten.* (=22b)
 With cold water wash (3PL) self the hands (PL) best.
 b. *Mit kaltem Wasser wäscht (es) sich die Hände am besten.*
 (=22b')

With cold water washes (3SG) (it) self the hands (PL) best.

An additional feature of such non-standard middles is the optional dummy subject *es* accompanying retained accusatives or non-distinct nominatives, clearly seen to control verbal number agreement in (28b) — which such dummies do not when merely displacing subjects or other constituents from clause-initial position (cf. *Es waschen sich die Hände am besten mit kaltem Wasser* It wash (3PL) self the hands (PL) best with cold water).

Obviously, the more of the properties enumerated under (C) above a potential controller of verb-agreement is lacking, the likelier it is not actually to control agreement. A necessary condition for its failure to control verb-agreement is its occurrence in a non-basic voice construction; in active constructions postverbal, non-thematic, semantically verb-related noun-phrases with non-distinctive nominative case marking — as in (29) — never fail to govern verb-agreement.²⁷

- (29) a. *Es weht-en Wind-e.*
 it:3SG blew-3PL wind-PL
 'Winds were blowing.'

- b. *Es zeigt-en sich Anzeichen, daß ...*
 it:3SG showed-3PL themselves indication:PL that ...
 'There were indications that ...'

For speakers sensitive to such distinctions, the lack of semantic control over a reflexive pronoun — the hallmark of reflexives in passives — appears to carry so much weight individually that reflexive passives are probably the likeliest clause type (together with middles, also lacking semantic control of markers agreeing in person and number) not to show standard verb-agreement. In our previous examples the body-part direct objects of actives were arguably not thematically foregrounded and semantically not very independent from the verb 'to wash' (in languages practising noun-incorporation such objects would be the likeliest to be incorporated), and the reflexive pronoun moreover could have been associated with the body-part noun-phrase as a possessive (*sich die Hände waschen* 'to wash oneself the hands' — *seine Hände waschen* 'to wash one's hands'). But there is a temptation in reflexive passives not to let the verb agree with a potential agreement-controller even in the absence of any such facilitating circumstances — as for instance in (30), which was, however, not tried out on my original group of informants.

- (30) *Diese zwei Goldfische werden/wird sich sofort gekauft.*

These two goldfishes (PL) are (3PL) / is (3SG) [for] oneself immediately bought.

When the reflexive pronoun is replaced by a personal pronoun, not semantically governed in the way a reflexive ordinarily is, even the most sensitive agreement-resisters would not succumb to this temptation again:

- (31) *Diese zwei Goldfische werden/*wird dir sofort gekauft.*

These two goldfishes (PL) are (3PL) / *is (3SG) [for] you immediately bought.

Summing up and putting it uncontroversially, German is, thus, one of the languages permitting passives and also middles to lack subjects (other than a dummy one, in the case of middles), or at any rate noun-phrases without the nominative case marking of exemplary subjects and without control over verb-agreement, despite the presence of objects in the corresponding active constructions which are potentially subjectivizable in non-basic voices but are not especially subjectworthy.²⁸ Significantly, such unorthodox passives (and presumably middles) do not find favour with all

speakers alike. They should be especially popular among those liable to give free rein to their tongue or pen, while grammatical conformists should not be expected to use or condone them gladly, taking scrupulous care instead to make sure that whatever can be in the nominative case and control verb-agreement in a non-basic voice will.

In this respect Lithuanian appears to side with the more restrained version of German. Active clauses with a direct object in the accusative and a reflexive non-direct object, expressed by verb-bound *-si/-s*, can be passivized (example from Geniušienė 1987: 143):

- (32) a. *Mes ĭ-si-veža-me prek-es*
 we:NOM PREFIX-REFL-bring-1PL:IND:PRES good-ACC:PL
iš visur.
 from everywhere
 'We import [for ourselves] goods from everywhere.'
- b. *Prek-ės [yra]*
 good-NOM:PL [be:3:IND:PRES]
ĭ-si-veža-mos iš visur.
 PREFIX-REFL-bring-PARTIC:NOM:PL:FEM from everywhere
 'Goods are imported [for ourselves] from everywhere.'

Such passives, however, are orthodox insofar as the accusative direct object of the active is converted to nominative and assumes control over the agreement (a) of the passive present participle in case, number, and gender (*prekės* 'goods' being feminine) and presumably also (b) of the (optional) passive auxiliary in person and number, although this is strictly speaking indeterminate since verbs do not distinguish numbers in the 3rd person and 3rd person is also the default option taken in the absence of a subject.

4.2 A final peculiarity of reflexive passives is seen when the accusative direct object accompanying an indirect-object reflexive pronoun is a 1st or 2nd person personal pronoun. Although this is a rare sight since few ditransitive verbs admit such a configuration, it is an instructive one, confirming once more that passivization does not necessarily consist, among other things, in a blanket, mechanical conversion of active direct objects into subjects.

Like *den Hals* in (19a) and unlike *die Hände* in (22a), the 1st person plural personal pronoun has a nominative form, *wir*, clearly distinct from the accusative (and dative) form *uns*, as found in the active clause (33a).

- (33) a. *So ohne weiteres verleibt man sich uns nicht ein.*
 Willy-nilly incorporates one [into] oneself us (ACC) not.
 ('One does not absorb us willy-nilly.')

Moreover, referring to the speaker (and others), this personal pronoun is in the thematic foreground, and it is semantically independent from the verb. Of the two passive alternatives of (33a) the one with the accusative converted to nominative and with the finite verb agreeing in person and number with this nominative (33b), accordingly ought to outrank the one with the accusative unconverted and with non-agreement (33b').

- (33) b. *So ohne weiteres werden sich wir / wir sich nicht einverleibt.*
 Willy-nilly are (1PL) oneself we (NOM) / we (NOM) oneself not incorporated.
- b'. *So ohne weiteres wird sich uns / uns sich nicht einverleibt.*
 Willy-nilly is (3SG) oneself us (ACC) / us (ACC) oneself not incorporated.

As it happens, both versions sound and read awkward — but, surprisingly, (33b'), especially with the sequence *sich uns*, noticeably less so than (33b).²⁹ In fact, (33b) and (33b') are not the only passives of (33a) conceivable. Two further alternatives have the reflexive pronoun morphosyntactically controlled by the personal pronoun, agreeing with it in person and number:

- (33') b. *So ohne weiteres werden uns wir / wir uns nicht einverleibt.*
 Willy-nilly are (1PL) ourselves we (NOM) / we (NOM) ourselves not incorporated.
- b'. *So ohne weiteres wird uns uns / uns uns nicht einverleibt.*
 Willy-nilly is (3SG) ourselves us (ACC/DAT) / us (ACC/DAT) ourselves not incorporated.

I have yet to find a speaker of German who would interpret these further passives as roughly synonymous with (33a); to most of my informants they seemed garbled and could only be made sense of after some deliberation, if at all.

What accounts for the different degrees and perhaps kinds of oddness of such passives?

As shown earlier, reflexive pronouns in passives are morphosyntactically controlled by non-coreferential surface subjects (or are 3rd person by default in the absence of a surface subject), arguably mimicking middle markers, rather than by their syntactically peripheral semantic controllers.

Semantic control of the reflexive pronoun and position in front of the agreeing auxiliary are virtually the only properties of an exemplary subject which *wir* is lacking in (33b); in particular, it is distinctively nominative and controls verb-agreement. In the manner of a middle marker the reflexive, thus, ought to agree with *wir* in person and number. Since it does not, being 3rd person instead, the relatively low marks for (33b) should not come as a surprise.

Now, (33'b) improves on (33b) in precisely this point: *uns* is the (non-distinct accusative/dative) form of the reflexive pronoun agreeing in person and number with 1st person plural *wir*. Yet it fares even worse, at least if intended as the passive of (33a). It is this condition which is crucial here. In discussing middle constructions above (3.2.2), we saw that strong contextual clues are necessary to prevent active reflexive readings when 1st or 2nd person pronouns are subjects and morphosyntactically control what could be a middle marker as well as a reflexive pronoun. This same preference for coreferential readings whenever they are morphologically, syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically feasible, rules out (33'b) as an ideal passive of (33a). If ditransitive verbs such as *einverleiben* are passivized, they retain two arguments, a patient and a recipient. In the role of patient, taking the accusative case in the active and normally expected to be nominative in the passive, are the things or beings incorporated; in the role of recipient, taking dative case and filled by a reflexive pronoun if coreferential with the incorporating body, are the bodies, understood literally or metaphorically, into which these things or beings are incorporated. If patient and recipient are both pronouns which can only refer to beings (or bodies, in the sense of groups of people), viz. 1st or 2nd person ones, and they agree in person and number, the strongly preferred reading is to take these two arguments as coreferential whenever this is compatible with the context. A coreferential reading is not in fact at odds with the meaning of verbs such as *einverleiben* since, with a little imagination, it is conceivable for the incorporated being to be incorporated into itself. Accordingly, those able to make sense of (33'b) will be inclined to read it as the passive of (33'a), with the subject possibly also coreferential with the two objects.

- (33') a. *So ohne weiteres verleiben wir uns uns (selbst) nicht ein. / ... verleibt man uns uns (selbst) nicht ein.*

Willy-nilly we do not / one does not incorporate us [into] ourselves.

Most ditransitive verbs preclude such coreferential readings. With verbs such as *waschen* 'to wash', figuring in previous examples, indirect (beneficiary) and direct (patient) object cannot be coreferential for semantic reasons; at best the direct-object referent can be a part of the body of the indirect-object referent. And if the indirect object is reflexive, the direct object cannot have human reference, excluding 1st or 2nd person pronouns from this position, to begin with.

Since the imposition of the "wrong" coreference relationships on (33'b) renders this correctly formed passive unsuitable as the passive of (33a), and since (33b) violates the rule of morphosyntactic control of reflexives in passives, those hell-bent on passivizing (33a) — and there are no a priori reasons why such ditransitive actives should not be passivizable — will have to settle for second best.

Simply not turning the accusative personal pronoun of the active construction into passive nominative and not letting it control verb-agreement, as in (33b'), resolves the dilemma reasonably well. If a noun-phrase lacks these crucial properties of exemplary subjects, the reflexive pronoun can hardly be expected to be morphosyntactically controlled by it, and in the absence of any better candidate for subjecthood the reflexive will, as usual, assume the 3rd person form *sich*. Since unchanged accusative *uns*, 1st person plural, and 3rd person singular/plural reflexive *sich* do not agree in person, no coreferential reading can be imposed.

Letting the reflexive pronoun agree in person and number with unchanged *uns* as in (33'b'), as if this active direct object had become a sub-verb-agreement, would again invite the coreferential reading. In a sequence of two *uns*'s one could be taken for a dative personal pronoun and the other for an accusative reflexive pronoun, since *uns* does not distinguish these two cases. And since datives, whether indirect objects or subjects in disguise, are potential semantic controllers of (accusative) reflexive pronouns, nothing about the meaning of verbs such as *einverleiben* would preclude the preferred reading of (33'b') as the passive, if an unorthodox one, of (33'a).

Attempts to derive middle constructions from (33a), for those who dare make any, yield essentially similar results.

- (34) a. *So ohne weiteres verleiben sich wir / wir sich nicht ein.* (=33b)
 Willy-nilly incorporate (1PL) self we (NOM) / we (NOM) self
 not.

- b. *So ohne weiteres verliebt (es) sich uns / uns sich nicht ein.*
(=33b')
Willy-nilly incorporates (3SG) (it) self us (ACC) / us (ACC) self not.
- c. *So ohne weiteres verleiben uns wir / wir uns nicht ein.* (=33'b)
Willy-nilly incorporate (1PL) self we (NOM) / we (NOM) self not.
- d. *So ohne weiteres verliebt (es) uns uns / uns uns nicht ein.*
(=33'b')
Willy-nilly incorporates (3SG) (it) self us (ACC/DAT) / us (ACC/DAT) self not.

In (34a) the middle marker does not agree in person and number with the noun-phrase, *wir*, which on the evidence of its nominative case marking and its controlling verb-agreement is subject, which violates the normal rule for middle constructions. With the 1st person plural middle marker *uns*, (34c) conforms to this rule, but is open to the interpretation of *uns* as a reflexive pronoun coreferential with the subject of what, owing to the absence of any indications to the contrary, can be taken for an active clause ('We don't incorporate ourselves [into ourselves]'). Not converting the active accusative direct object *uns* to nominative and not letting it control verb-agreement enables the middle marker not to agree with it, securing the relatively best marks for (34b), especially when the dummy subject *es* is added. Unlike (34b), (34d), with subject *es* added, invites a coreferential active reading ('It doesn't incorporate us into ourselves') since the two *uns*'s can be taken for a dative personal pronoun and an accusative reflexive pronoun respectively.

To sum up, we have previously seen that active direct objects may resist promotion to subjecthood, or at any rate decline the honours of being in the nominative case and of controlling verb-agreement, in passives when they are not especially subjectworthy. The present section has added a different motive for not seeking the relational limelight: although in principle eminently subjectworthy, pronominal direct objects are not eager to acquire nominative case marking and to take control of verb-agreement in non-basic voices if their doing so would mark them out as semantic and morphosyntactic controllers of reflexive pronouns.

This second motive may in fact also contribute to the general disinclination of direct objects other than 1st or 2nd person personal pronouns to

convert to nominative and to control verb-agreement in passives containing reflexives. No matter how marginal and contextually unlikely, there would always be the residual potential for 3rd person *sich* to be interpreted as coreferential with an orthodox 3rd person subject, or at least the temptation to be processed as such.

5. What did we learn and where do we go from here? (Asks one reviewer, perhaps not unreasonably.)

We have learned that German permits passives containing reflexive pronouns, which was not widely known before. We have learned why it is against the odds for a language to have such constructions, considering widely accepted constraints on the control of reflexive pronouns and widely shared assumptions about the direct-object/subject interchange in passivization. We have learned how the resources of the grammar of German may be exploited to form reflexive passives against all the odds. And we have learned a little about why a few other languages might or might not be able to form reflexive passives as well.

Much more might yet be learned about these few other tongues and four thousand or so more before the book can be closed on reflexives, middles, and passives.

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Appendix: Results of questionnaire study*Table 1. Number of informants (and percentages) awarding grades 1-4*

Example	Grades				Average Grade
	1	2	3	4	
(1b)	24 (80.0%)	04 (13.3%)	02 (06.7%)	00 (00.0%)	1.3
	01	02	02	00	2.2
(19b)	22 (75.9%)	06 (20.7%)	01 (03.4%)	00 (00.0%)	1.3
	01	02	02	00	2.2
(19b')	02 (06.7%)	03 (10.0%)	07 (23.3%)	18 (60.0%)	3.4
	00	02	02	01	2.8
(20a)	15 (50.0%)	07 (23.3%)	03 (10.0%)	05 (16.7%)	1.9
	03	02	00	00	1.4
(20b)	00 (00.0%)	01 (03.3%)	04 (13.3%)	25 (83.3%)	3.8
	00	02	02	01	2.8
(21a)	17 (56.7%)	04 (13.3%)	06 (20.0%)	03 (10.0%)	1.8
	02	00	03	00	2.2
(21b)	01 (03.3%)	01 (03.3%)	03 (10.0%)	25 (83.3%)	3.7
	00	01	01	03	3.4
(22b)	13 (43.3%)	05 (16.7%)	06 (20.0%)	06 (20.0%)	2.2
	02	01	01	01	2.2
(22b')	12 (40.0%)	10 (33.3%)	04 (13.3%)	04 (13.3%)	2.0
	00	02	03	00	2.6
(23a)	13 (43.3%)	07 (23.3%)	03 (10.0%)	07 (23.3%)	2.1
	02	01	01	01	2.2
(23b)	02 (06.7%)	08 (26.7%)	04 (13.3%)	16 (53.3%)	3.1
	03	00	01	01	2.0
(24a)	17 (56.7%)	06 (20.0%)	03 (10.0%)	04 (13.3%)	1.8
	02	01	02	00	2.0
(24b)	02 (06.7%)	03 (10.0%)	09 (30.0%)	16 (53.3%)	3.3
	00	02	00	03	3.2

Notes

- (a) Numbers in first line of each example are for native speakers, in second line for non-native speakers.
- (b) Order of examples in questionnaire:
(22b'), (22b), (1b), (19b'), (19b), (24b), (24a), (23a), (23b), (21a), (21b), (20a), (20b).

Table 2. Grades awarded to individual examples by individual informants

Informant	Examples													Average Grade
	1b	19b	19b'	20a	20b	21a	21b	22b	22b'	23a	23b	24a	24b	
15	1	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	2.6
12	1	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	3	1	4	1	4	2.5
21	1	1	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	1	4	2.7
07	1	2	1	4	2	1	4	1	3	2	3	1	4	2.2
26	1	1	3	4	4	4	2	2	4	1	4	1	4	2.9
24	1	1	4	4	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	2.8
04	1	1	3	1	4	1	4	1	2	1	2	1	2	2.0
17	1	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	2	4	4	1	4	2.6
18	1	1	3	1	4	1	4	1	2	4	4	3	3	2.7
.....														
16	1	2	3	1	3	4	4	2	2	4	4	1	1	2.6
03	1	1	4	1	4	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1.9
05	1	1	4	2	4	1	4	1	1	1	1	2	3	2.2
23	1	1	4	4	4	2	4	1	1	4	4	3	4	2.8
27	2	1	3	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	2.9
06	1	1	4	1	4	3	4	1	1	1	2	1	2	2.2
01	1	1	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1.8
08	1	1	4	2	4	1	4	1	1	1	4	1	4	2.4
13	2	1	4	1	4	1	4	2	2	2	4	1	4	2.5
.....														
28	1	3	2	2	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	4	3	2.9
02	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	3	1	3	1	1	3	1.9
09	2	1	2	1	4	1	4	2	1	2	4	2	3	2.4
14	1	2	3	1	4	2	4	3	2	2	3	2	4	2.5
25	3	2	3	3	4	3	4	4	2	2	2	2	4	2.9
30	2	1	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3.3
10	1	1	4	4	3	1	3	3	1	3	4	1	3	2.4
19	1	1	4	1	4	1	4	3	1	1	3	4	4	2.7
11	1	1	4	1	4	1	4	4	2	1	4	1	4	2.4
20	1	2	4	2	4	2	4	4	2	3	2	3	2	2.7
22	1	-	4	1	4	3	4	4	2	1	4	2	4	2.8
29	3	2	4	2	4	3	4	4	1	4	2	4	3	3.1
31	1	1	2	2	4	1	4	1	3	1	1	1	2	1.9
33	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	1	2	1	4	1	2	2.3
34	3	2	3	2	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	3	4	2.9
.....														
32	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	3	3	2	1	2	4	2.3
.....														
35	3	3	4	1	3	3	4	4	2	3	1	3	4	2.9

Notes

- (a) Informants Nos. 01-30 were native speakers of German, Nos. 31-35 were not.
 (b) Dotted lines separate the three dialects distinguished in 4.1.2.

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Two anonymous reviewers deserve thanks for confirming my own suspicion that a few things were still wrong in the July 1991 version of this paper, and for suggesting various improvements. I don't blame them for not anticipating the full extent to which this previous version turned out to admit of improvement. I'm also grateful to my German Syntax class at the 1979 Summer Institute of the Linguistic Society of America at Salzburg (Austria) for following my lectures on this subject with polite interest, flawed though they must have been, considering that my lecture notes had to age for over a decade to mature.

NOTES

1. Fairly literal translations of German examples into semi-English ought to suffice to convey their meaning as well as their relevant structural properties.
2. The questionnaire study on which part of this paper (especially Section 3) is based is fully documented in the Appendix. Five non-native speakers with a fairly good command of German also filled in the questionnaire, and of these only one (native language: English, informant No. 31) assigned grade 1, with two each opting for grades 2 (Italian, No. 32; Czech, No. 33) and 3 (Thai, No. 34; English, No. 35), the average grade thus being 2.2. Their results are mentioned here because some of the problems at issue have been broached in studies on second-language acquisition, in particular Jördens (1980).
3. Although Brinker (1971: 67f.) repeats the claim that passives of reflexives are used almost exclusively as strong requests, the only two examples in his corpus are from subordinate clauses.
4. What is being claimed here for reflexives also holds, by and large, for reciprocals, as in *Hier wird einander täglich gewaschen!* Here is each-other daily washed!, corresponding to (1b).
5. Or possibly even a three-participant relationship, when a beneficiary is added (see below, 4.1).
6. There is no genitive case of the reflexive pronoun *sich*; the normal personal pronouns are used in the genitive instead (*seiner* for masculine and neuter singular, and *ihrer* for feminine singular and all genders plural).
7. See van der Leek (1991) for a recent examination of differences between dependent and independent reflexives, especially in languages where both varieties coexist.
8. On the basis of a couple of literary examples — such as *Da kein Platz auf den Bänken zu finden ist, wird [sich] in einer Ecke des Hauses niedergesetzt* Since no seat is to be found on the benches, is [oneself] sat down in a corner of the house — it has been suggested by Behaghel (1924: 215) that there is a tendency simply to omit reflexive pronouns in the passive. This strategy of getting rid of a peculiarly controlled reflexive seems, however, very unusual, and few of the people I asked would condone it.

9. Aissen's (1988) Secondary Agreement Controller Law would in fact seem to permit control configurations like those at issue here, on the grounds of the peripheral passive agent being relatable to the subject relation, subjects being "primary agreement controllers" of reflexives.
10. In Relational Grammar dummy subjects have been posited for impersonal passives of languages such as Italian (cf. Perlmutter 1983), where, by virtue of being characterizable as "brothers-in-law" of such dummies, noun-phrases syntactically connected with them have been assumed to be able to retain control of (verbal) agreement although they are not themselves subjects. In reflexive passives in German, on the other hand, there is no particular syntactic connection between dummy *es* and the noun-phrase coreferential with the reflexive pronoun; and it is the dummy itself, rather than that noun-phrase, that would have to be assumed to take control of the agreement of reflexive pronouns.
11. Alternatively, one might assume that a reflexive pronoun takes its maximally unmarked form when uncontrolled by a surface subject—and 3rd person and singular (and neuter) are the unmarked categories of person and number (and gender). However, this does not eliminate the problem that, semantically, reflexive pronouns in passives **are** controlled, although not by surface subjects.
12. In the following examples middle markers are invariably translated into semi-English as 'self', even though they are not formally invariable in German, as is explained presently.
13. (17b) is in fact ambiguous, with its other reading, 'Here is a good place to wash [something]', corresponding to an active where the verb is without an object (*Man wäscht hier gut* One washes here well). On this interpretation *sich*'s status as a middle marker is unequivocal.
14. If non-adjacent and once accompanied by a contrastive intensifier (here translated as 'SELF') two *sich*'s may indeed co-occur, albeit very marginally:
Sich selbst wäscht sich hier gut, die Kinder aber nicht.
 Oneself SELF washes self here well, the children however not.
 ('Here is a good place to wash oneSELF, though not the children.')
15. Van der Leek (1991) defends the view that clitic reflexives, like independent ones, refer and that the events which their referents are involved in are two-participant rather than one-participant events. Her position is that clitic reflexives signal **inferred** coreference, with independent reflexives signalling **asserted** coreference. On this view Lithuanian would differ from Dutch in that its bound reflexives may, like independent ones, signal asserted coreference.
16. The judgments of my five non-native informants were likewise the same as for example (1b).
17. At 2.8 the average grade of the five non-native informants was slightly better, with two each opting for grade 2 and 3, and only one for grade 4.
18. The non-native informants had slightly better average grades here, viz. 1.4 and 2.8.
19. The non-native informants had 2.2 and 3.4 here.
20. The non-native informants repeat the average grade of 2.2.

21. Non-native informants average at 2.6 here.
22. Among non-native informants the second of these dialects is the most popular one.
23. Largely owing to Keenan (1975).
24. For my own arguments to this effect see, for instance, Plank (1979, 1984, 1985, 1990).
25. "Personal" passives of ditransitives in English, such as *He was given a book*, are in a way comparable constructions, insofar as the relational identity of what has variously been categorized as a genuine direct object or as a no-longer-direct, or "retained" or "chômeur", object (*a book*) is also largely immaterial for all ordinary syntactic purposes.
26. The non-natives' average grades are 2.2 for (23a) and 2.0 for (23b), and 2.0 for (24a) and 3.2 for (24b).
27. The alternation between an impersonal (non-agreeing) and personal (agreeing) active construction that is possible with verbs such as *frieren* 'to be cold' (*Uns friert* us is:freezing — *Wir frieren* we are:freezing) is a different matter.
28. According to Jordens (1980), American and Dutch learners of German tend to accept and produce such "faulty" passives with non-initial patient noun-phrases marked accusative. My non-native informants do not confirm this so far as reflexive passives are concerned; perhaps their German is too advanced for this kind of "mistake". The only significant dislike they show is for initial accusative patient, which earns example (21b) the average grade 3.4, and for initial plural patient co-occurring with a singular verb, earning (24b) the average grade of 3.2.
29. Had they been included in the questionnaire, (33b) and (33b') would probably have received average grades of 3.8 and 2.8 respectively. Unfortunately, or fortunately, they weren't.

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