

Changing valency Case studies in transitivity

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7 Valency-changing derivations in K'iche'

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1 Introduction

In this chapter the principal valency-changing derivations in K'iche' are described, following Dixon and Aikhenvald's (1997) framework. K'iche', spoken by 658,000 in highland Guatemala, is a Mayan language of the K'ichean subgroup.¹ It is particularly relevant for those interested in valency-changing derivations, since it has two distinct passive constructions, two separate anti-passive constructions, and an 'instrumental voice' applicative construction, among other things.² These various constructions have a range of functions, and some exhibit idiosyncrasies that have proved vexing to formal theories (see, for example, Davies and Sam-Colop 1990; Hale and Storto forthcoming; Larsen 1987; and Trechsel 1982, 1993). In this attempt to characterize K'iche' valency-changing derivations, I present each of these constructions in turn, considering their morphology, basic meaning, syntactic functions and some of the peculiarities that are relevant to understanding them.

2 Transitivity

A grasp of K'iche' verb classes and their morphology is necessary in order to understand the valency-changing constructions; therefore, I begin with a brief

¹ K'iche' is also spelled 'Quiché'; 'K'iche'' is the official spelling now used in Guatemala, but 'Quiché' was the general spelling before the 1980s. I gratefully acknowledge helpful feedback on an earlier version of this chapter from Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R.M.W. Dixon, though of course they are innocent of any misuse I may have made of their comments.

² It should be pointed out that while there is a reasonably large literature on these constructions of K'iche', much of it relies on Mondloch's work, particularly his 1981 dissertation, which is an excellent and extremely thorough treatment of the topic. I have utilized all this literature liberally in this paper, but feel it important to point out Mondloch's special position and unique contribution to these studies.

Figure 7.1. K'iche' cross-referencing Ergative and Absolutive verb prefixes

S/O function (Absolutive, traditionally called 'set B'):

<i>-in-</i>	1sg.ABS	<i>-ox-</i> (or <i>-ux-</i>)	1pl.ABS ³
<i>-at-</i>	2sg.ABS (familiar)	<i>-iš-</i>	2pl.ABS (familiar)
<i>lah</i>	2sg.ABS (reverential) ⁴	<i>alaq</i>	2pl.ABS (reverential)
<i>-Ø-</i>	3sg.ABS	<i>-e:(b')-</i>	3pl.ABS ⁵

A function (Ergative, traditionally called 'set A') pronominal markers have two variants, depending on whether the root they are attached to begins in a consonant or a vowel:

C-initial	V-initial	
<i>in-</i>	<i>w-/(inw-)</i>	1sg.ERG
<i>a-</i>	<i>aw-</i>	2sg.ERG (familiar)
	<i>lah</i>	2sg (reverential)
<i>u-</i>	<i>r-</i>	3sg.ERG
<i>qa-</i>	<i>q-</i>	1pl.ERG
<i>i-</i>	<i>iw-</i>	2pl.ERG (familiar)
	<i>alaq</i>	2pl (reverential)
<i>ki-</i>	<i>k-</i>	3pl.ERG

overview of transitivity in K'iche'. K'iche' is an ergative language, where ergative alignment is signalled through cross-referencing pronominal prefixes on the verb, shown in figure 7.1.

K'iche' exhibits none of the split ergativity characteristic of some ergative languages. Moreover, while basically morphologically ergative, most of its

³ There is variation in the literature about how the 1st person plural absolutive prefix is written. The independent 1st person plural pronoun is invariably *ox*; however, the absolutive prefix seems to vary between *-ox-* and *-ux-*. The dialect represented in Mondloch's work is Nahualá, where it is *-ux-*, and therefore this is the form given in much of the literature on K'iche'. Here, I make no attempt to regularize one or the other of these, but rather simply repeat the variant presented in the sources utilized.

⁴ K'iche' has (in most dialects, not all) two sets of 2nd person pronouns; those which I call 'reverential' (*lah* '2sg.REV' and *alaq* '2pl.REV') are sometimes also called 'formal' and 'honorific' in the linguistic literature on the language. Their function is more honorific, reverential, deferential than the typical formal/informal contrast such as in Spanish *tú/usted*; that is, while in European languages the semantic attributes of power and social distance are associated with the formal 2nd person pronouns and solidarity with the informal, in K'iche' the power/solidarity dimension is less important and thus the reverential pronoun may be freely used, for example, with friends and family in ceremonial settings where reverence is in order, with an older person, and with people who are charged with high responsibility in the rotating civil-religious hierarchy. Since the reverential pronouns are never cross-referenced on the verb in any way, but are always present in full form in the sentences which contain them (unlike other independent pronouns, which are optional), they are not represented with a *-Ø-* in the verbal morphology. Since they have no cross-referencing and appear in the same form in A, O, S and oblique contexts, in a few cases it is difficult to determine clearly their role in the clause.

⁵ The 3pl.ABS varies in the dialects, with *eb'* (its oldest form) alternating with *e?* or *e:*. In the better-known dialects, it is most frequently *e:*, but shows up also as *eb'* sometimes, for example before vowel-initial morphemes in some cases.

syntactic rules are not sensitive to ergativity, although we will see that it does have a syntactic pivot which gives it a degree of syntactic ergativity (see below).

Some seemingly minor features of the pronominal system are significant for understanding valency-changing derivations in K'iche', and therefore it is necessary to bear three of these in mind.

First, in modern K'iche', *in-* marks 1sg in both Absolutive and Ergative functions, though in Colonial K'iche', 1sg.ERG was *nu-*, which has since shifted to *in-*, making the 1sg.ERG and 1sg.ABS homophonous. This homophony motivates the use of valency derivations to avoid ambiguities in some cases (discussed below). The set of ergative prefixes is identical to the set of possessive pronominal prefixes, except for *nu-* 'my' which occurs with consonant-initial roots; both the Ergative set and the possessives have the two variants, one used with consonant-initial forms and the other with vowel-initial forms (seen in figure 7.1), as illustrated in:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) | <u>Consonant-initial</u> | |
| (a) | qa-ts'i:ʔ
1pl.POSS-dog
our-dog | (b) š-Ø-qa-ts'ib'-a:x
ASP-3sg.ABS-1pl.ERG-write-TR
We wrote it |
| | <u>Vowel-initial</u> | |
| (c) | q-ik
1pl.POSS-chili
our-chili | (d) š-Ø-q-il-oh
ASP-3sg.ABS-1pl.ERG-see-TR
We saw it |

Second, K'iche' has reverential 2nd person pronouns (sg and pl), which are distinct from the 2nd person familiar forms (seen in figure 7.1). The reverential 2nd person forms differ from other K'iche' pronouns in that they take no cross-referencing affixes in the verb, neither in S/O function nor in A function (that is, they are marked the same way in transitive and intransitive verbs – i.e. they lack any overt marking). Numerous examples of these are seen throughout this chapter.

Third, it is essentially only human nouns which can bear overt morphological plurals in K'iche', though plurality of a noun can be shown by the 3rd person plural pronominal affixes on verbs which cross-reference a nominal (which itself may bear no formal distinction between singular and plural). However, sometimes singular agreement is also used with semantically plural (but morphologically unmarked) NPs, in which case plurality is determined by context rather than by explicit grammatical marking. For example, in (2) and (3) *le: ts'iʔ* 'the dogs' / 'the dog' has the same form, where the plurality

in (2) and singularity in (3) is conveyed by the difference, not in the NP, but in the verb between the plural (*-e:-*) and singular (*-Ø-*) prefixes:

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|-----------|
| (2) | š-e:-kam | le: ts'iʔ |
| | ASP-3pl.ABS-die the dog | |
| | The dogs died ⁶ | |
| (3) | š-Ø-kam | le: ts'iʔ |
| | ASP-3sg.ABS-die the dog | |
| | The dog died | |

Notice in (4) that *le: ačix-a:b'* 'the men', with an overtly marked morphological plural (*-a:b'*), and *le: ts'iʔ* 'the dogs', with no visible marker of plurality, are nonetheless each cross-referenced with 3rd person plural agreement markers in the verb:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| (4) | š-e:-ki-kam-isa:-x | le: ts'iʔ | le: ačix-a:b' |
| | ASP-3pl.ABS-3pl.ERG-die-CAUS-TR the dog | | the man-pl |
| | The men killed the dogs | | |

2.1 Verb classes

K'iche' has three classes of verbs, TRANSITIVES, INTRANSITIVES and POSITIONALS, each with its own set of morphological markers.

2.1.1 Intransitive

Intransitive verbs are characterized morphologically by (1) pronominal prefixes in the S function (absolutive) and (2) an 'intransitive' suffix, *-ik*, which occurs only when the verb is phrase-final (before a pause), but is not present when the verb is followed by another word, as seen in the comparison of (5) with (6):

⁶ It may be helpful to point out that K'iche' articles and demonstratives have a visible / not visible distinction; thus *le:* 'the.visible', *ri* 'the.not.visible'. Note also that *are:* 'this, he' is *are?* in isolation but *are:* before other words in many K'iche' dialects, though it is *are?* everywhere in a few. This word also functions as a focus marker and is translated by many as 'Focus' (FOC) in cleft and similar constructions. In this chapter, I cite the examples taken from other sources by transliterating those written in the practical orthography into linguistic symbols and give the morpheme-by-morpheme glosses in the same format throughout. In some cases, the vowel length of K'iche' comes out inconsistently, though I have tried to make it consistent in these examples, since in a few dialects cited by some linguists (see, for example, Sam-Colop 1988, and Davies and Sam-Colop 1990), most of the long vowels have merged with corresponding short vowels. With respect to articles and demonstratives, sources cite vowel length and presence or absence of glottal stop with considerable variation and often inconsistency, some of it conditioned by legitimate variation within the variety described. A particular difference is that very few forms in K'iche' end in a vowel, though final *h* is difficult to hear and variable, and is often transcribed by non-linguists as absent or as length on the preceding vowel. I have restored the *h* in these forms.

- (5) š-at-war-ik
ASP-2sg.ABS-sleep-INTR
You slept
- (6) š-at-war xela:ʔ
ASP-2sg.ABS-sleep there
You slept there⁷

2.1.2 Transitive

Transitive verbs divide into two subclasses, each with its own set of suffixes: root (or non-derived, 'monosyllabic') transitives, traditionally abbreviated 'RTV' in Mayan linguistics, and derived (also called 'polysyllabic'), abbreviated 'DTV'. It is important to keep these two kinds of transitives and their associated morphology in mind in order to understand the valency-changing processes discussed in this chapter. DTVs end in *-x* 'transitive' (both phrase-finally and non-phrase-finally); RTVs take *-oh* (or *-uh* if the vowel of the verb root is *u*) when the verb occurs phrase-finally (as in (7a)), but nothing when the verb is followed by another word in the clause (as in (7b)):

- (7) (a) š-Ø-ki-k'uš-uh
ASP-3sg.ABS-3pl.ERG-chew-TR
They chewed it
- (b) š-Ø-ki-k'uš le: ats'yaq le: č'oh
ASP-3sg.ABS-3pl.ERG-chew the clothes the mouse
The mice chewed the clothes

⁷ One interesting oddity in several Mayan languages is the type of intransitive sentence which seems to exhibit higher transitivity than would be expected of intransitive verbs, sentences which in semantic effect have an A-role NP – albeit signalled obliquely – acting on an S-role NP as though it were an underlying O. These are used quite frequently in Jakalteko, Mam and other Mayan languages of the Huehuetenango region, but somewhat less frequently in K'iche'. Two K'iche' examples are:

- (1) š-Ø-ul le: wu:x w-uma:l
ASP-3sg.ABS-arrive the book 1sg.POSS-by
The book arrived by me/I brought the book
(Larsen and Norman 1979: 349; Kaufman 1990: 77)
- (2) š-Ø-b'e:h le: wu:x r-uma:l
ASP-3sg.ABS-go the letter 3sg.POSS-by
The letter went by her / She sent the letter
(Trechsel 1982: 80)

These are in effect causative sentences in which the intransitive verb exhibits no derivational causative morphology (though K'iche' has a productive causative suffix, *-(i)sa-* (see §5), which could have occurred), but which nevertheless appear to take an agent in an oblique 'by' phrase. The *-uma:l* phrase means 'by, through, because of' (and is used to express the 'by' phrase of real passives – see §3.1), and sentences such as these have the feel of being on their way from an ordinary 'because of' sense towards a grammaticalization of a causative of intransitive verbs.

One constraint on transitive clauses is that a 3rd person A (sg or pl) and a 2nd person reverential O (sg or pl) cannot co-occur; sentences such as (8) and (9) are ungrammatical:

- (8) *k-u-to? lah ri ačih
ASP-3sg.ERG-help 2sg.REV.ABS the man
The man helps you
- (9) *k-ki-to? alaq ri išoq-i:b'
ASP-3pl.ERG-help 2pl.REV.ABS the women
The women help you

The simple passive is often used to avoid this problem (see below).

A related constraint is that transitive clauses which would have combinations of 1st person singular *-in-* (ERG or ABS) and 2nd person reverential (sg or pl) as core arguments are avoided and the absolutive antipassive is preferred instead (see below). Thus, (10a) is avoided, generally given instead in the absolutive antipassive counterpart, as shown in (10b) (Mondloch 1979: 173–5):

- (10) (a) ?š-in-tsuku-x lah
ASP-1sg.ERG-look.for-TR 2sg.REV.ABS
I looked for you
- (b) š-in-tsuku-n č-e:h lah
ASP-1sg.ABS-look.for-ABS.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to 2sg.REV
I looked for you

These two constraints are seen more clearly in table 7.1 (where '+' means 'can co-occur' and '-' means 'does not co-occur').

Table 7.1. Constraints on transitive clauses

	1O	2Osg.REV	2Opl.REV	3O
1Asg		(-)	(-)	
1Apl		+		+
2A	+		+	+
3Asg	+	-	-	+
3Apl	+	-	-	+

2.1.3 Positionals

The third class of verbs, positionals, are verbal/adjectival roots whose meaning has to do with positions and shapes. They are distinguished from other verb classes in that: (1) they typically have the semantic property of referring

to positions or qualities of objects (e.g. 'sit', 'stand', 'squat', 'lie face up', 'lie face down', 'duck down', etc.); (2) by means of special suffixes which occur only with positional roots, positionals can be derived to form adjectives, intransitive verbs or causatives; (3) all positional roots have the shape CVC; and (4) they do not occur as simple inflected stems without derivational affixes (Norman 1973, Mondloch 1976). Some of the derivational morphology used uniquely with positionals is illustrated in the following:

-V_il positional adjectives:

ts'uy-ul 'seated/sitting' (adjective)
tak'-al 'standing'

-i? intransitive inchoative ('to assume position or state X'):

š-Ø-ts'uy-i?-ik 'she sat'
š-Ø-tak'-i? lah 'you (REV) stood'

-V_i-b'a? causative:

k-Ø-u-ts'uyu-b'a? 'he seats it'
k-Ø-u-tak'a-b'a? 'he stands it up'

2.1.4 Some categories which K'iche' doesn't have

Given that K'iche' clauses are clearly marked either transitive or intransitive morphologically, surface ambitransitives (verbs used in both intransitive and transitive clauses) are essentially unknown, though the same root can undergo derivational processes whereby it can be encountered in clauses of different valency.⁸ K'iche' also has no specific marking for extended transitives; arguments which are not core A, O or S arguments are generally present only in oblique constructions. The oblique constructions in Mayan languages are based on possessed noun roots (possession shown by possessive pronominal prefixes). These constructions are called relational nouns in Mayan (and Mesoamerican) linguistic literature; relational nouns signal the sort of locations and relations that are shown by prepositions in English. A typical example is *č(i)r-e:h* 'to/for him, her, it', made up of *či* 'in, at' + *r-* '3sg.POSS' + *-e:h* 'to' (etymologically from **e:h* 'tooth'; *č(i)r-e:h* is often contracted – unlike most other relational nouns – to *če:h*). In Mayan languages these relational nouns are obligatorily possessed. In the case of underlying core NP arguments of verbs which are placed in oblique phrases through various derivations, 'the nominal that bears the grammatical relation acts as the

⁸ There is a minor class which is related to the notion of ambitransitives, but to understand its characteristics, it is necessary first to have in mind the valency derivations, especially the antipassives; for that reason, we come back to this topic later.

possessor of the relational noun and is cross-referenced by the appropriate morpheme from the set of ergative [*sic*, read 'possessive'] agreement markers' (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 525).

2.2 Constituent order

Constituent order in K'iche' is variable but far from entirely free. Much has been written on K'iche' word order; aspects of it are well understood and yet there are differences of opinion concerning some matters. One thing that is clear is that constituent order in K'iche' on the whole is a poor indicator of the semantic roles of NP arguments in transitive clauses. While it is generally agreed that VOA is the most common and most neutral, constituent order is relatively flexible, and all the other logical orders do occur (under conditions of focus and topicalization; see Nik'te' and Saqijix 1993: 131–2; Larsen 1987; Sam-Colop 1988: 8–11).

In reality, transitive clauses with two overt core arguments (overt NPs) are rare. Mondloch (1978b) found only 20 transitive sentences containing both an A and an O nominal NP in 1,380 lines of transcribed narrative, and while VOA was in the lead (7 instances), examples of all the other logically possible orders also occurred (AVO, AOV, OVA, OAV, VAO). Larsen (1987: 40) characterizes K'iche' as both a 'pro-drop' or 'null-subject' and 'null-object' language, since A, S and O can be missing, indicated solely by pronominal cross-referencing prefixes in the verb. This being the case, sentences with external NPs very often are not in the most neutral order (VOA), but reflect processes of focussing or topicalization (see below). Moreover, VOA is not the most frequent order in elicitation, either, but this sort of elicitation creates a discourse context suggestive of emphasis, in which it is necessary to introduce a discourse topic, which tends to appear in preverbal topic position. This, then, often brings forth AVO, which reflects this focus/emphasis (cf. Larsen 1987; more details below). There may be an important fieldwork lesson in this for studies of constituent order (word order) based on direct elicitation, namely, that caution in interpreting data collected in this way is called for.

In sum, constituent order is too flexible to be a reliable gauge for distinguishing A from O in transitive clauses. In most of Mondloch's 20 cases, semantics or context left the sentences clearly unambiguous, but some ambiguous cases are possible – whenever both A and O are 3rd persons of the same number. This is an important point for our interest in valency changing, since one significant function of the antipassives and passives in K'iche' is to disambiguate sentences where the role of the A and O participants is not otherwise clear (see below). Some examples of this ambiguity are:

- (11) š-Ø-u-kuna-x ri ačih ri išoq
ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-cure-TR the man the woman
(1) The woman cured the man
(2) The man cured the woman (Mondloch 1978b: 11)
- (12) š-Ø-pe: ri ačih ri š-Ø-u-kuna-x ri išoq
ASP-3sg.ABS-come the man REL ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-cure-TR the woman
(1) The man whom the woman cured came
(2) The man who cured the woman came (Mondloch 1978b: 6)
- (13) xači:n š-Ø-u-kuna-x ri ačih
who ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-cure-tr the man
(1) Whom did the man cure?
(2) Who cured the man? (Mondloch 1978b: 6)

After we have seen how the valency derivations work, we will come back to such ambiguous sentences to see how they are typically disambiguated through the use of one of the other valency devices. Also, we will see that there are constraints against some of these possibilities.

In cases where both the A and O person markers in the verb are 3rd persons of the same number and there is a single external NP, this NP is generally interpreted as O, as in (Mondloch 1979: 168):

- (14) š-e:-ki-to? ri ačix-a:b'
ASP-3pl.ABS-3pl.ERG-help the man-pl
They helped the men / (rather than 'the men helped them')

This is consistent with the general claim that new information is introduced through NPs in O (and S) roles, and usually not through A-role NPs.

Finally, K'iche', unlike some languages, is not at all timid about having inanimate As, e.g.:

- (15) k-Ø-u-yak nu-xolo:m le: puqla:x
ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-irritate 1sg.POSS-head the dust
The dust irritates my head [my nose and mouth]
- (16) š-Ø-u-qax-isa:-x ri ab'i:š ri saqb'ač
ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-descend-CAUS-TR the cornfield the hail
The hail knocked down the corn

3 Derivations which remove an argument from the core

3.1 Simple passive

The simple passive is signalled by the morphological markers: -š with DTVs, and vowel length in RTVs. Note that the lengthened vowel which marks the

passive in the root transitives comes historically from an infix -h- in Proto-K'ichean (and Proto-Mayan). A few examples of RTV active/passive pairs are: *b'it/b'i:t* 'tear / be torn', *b'an/b'a:n* 'do, make / be done, made' *k'ut/k'u:t* 'show / be shown' and *loq'/lo:q'* 'buy / be bought'. (In some dialects, the length is no longer visible before a root-final /ʔ/, *ya?* (or *ya:ʔ*) 'give'.) The passive is intransitive in form, permitting only one core argument, S (absolutive), which is interpreted as the underlying O (underlying patient / transitive direct object), and the underlying A is either omitted (as in (17a)) or demoted to an oblique 'by' phrase signalled by the relational noun *-uma:l* 'by' which bears possessive prefixes which indicate the person and number of the underlying A, as in (17b). These two are compared with an active transitive version in (17c):

- (17) (a) k-ox-to:ʔ-ik
ASP-1pl.ABS-help.PASS-INTR
We are helped
- (b) k-ox-to:ʔ k-uma:l
ASP-1pl.ABS-help.PASS 3pl.POSS-by
We are helped by them
- (c) k-ox-ki-toʔ-oh
ASP-1pl.ABS-3pl.ERG-help-TR
They help us

As for the function/meaning of the simple passive, 'the emphasis is placed on the object with the emphasis on the action done to the object' (Mondloch 1978a: 62). The passives are marked as intransitives by taking S (absolutives) as the only permitted core argument and by the intransitive suffix, phrase-final *-ik*, as in (18) and (19):

- (18) š-Ø-ča:p-ik [RTV]
ABS-3sg.ABS-grab.PASS-INTR
She was caught
- (19) k-e:-šib'i-š-ik [DTV]
ASP-3pl.ABS-scare-PASS-INTR
They were frightened

Compare the active (the (a) sentences) and passive (the (b) sentences) in the following examples:

- (20) (a) š-Ø-u-loq' xun k'a?a:m r-ule:w ri w-ika:n
ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-buy one cord his-land the my-uncle
My uncle bought a measure of land (Nik'te' and Saqijix 1993: 135)

- (b) š-Ø-lo:q' xun k'a?a:m ule:w r-uma:l ri w-ika:n
 ASP-3sg.ABS-buy.PASS one cord land 3sg.POSS-by the my-uncle
 A measure of land was bought by my uncle (Nik'te' and Saqijix 1993: 136)
- (21) (a) š-e:-ki-q'alu:-x ri ak'al-a:b' ri tixonel-a:b'
 ASP-3pl.ABS-3pl.ERG-hug-TR the child-pl the teacher-pl
 The teachers hugged the children (Nik'te' and Saqijix 1993: 136)
- (b) š-e:-q'alu-š ri ak'al-a:b' k-uma:l ri tixonel-a:b'
 ASP-3pl.ABS-hug-PASS the child-pl 3pl.POSS-by the teacher-pl
 The children were hugged by the teachers (Nik'te' and Saqijix 1993: 136)

The simple passive is used also when the speaker wishes to ignore the underlying A (transitive subject) or to give it only secondary importance. Compare the following active-passive contrasts illustrated in (22a-c):

- (22) (a) š-Ø-u-ti? ri ak'a:l ri ts'i?
 ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-bite the child the dog
 The dog bit the child
- (b) š-Ø-ti:? ri ak'a:l r-uma:l ri ts'i?
 ASP-3sg.ABS-bite.PASS the child 3sg.POSS-by the dog
 The child was bitten by the dog
- (c) š-Ø-ti:? ri ak'a:l
 ASP-3sg.ABS-bite.PASS the child
 The child was bitten

There is an important constraint on the simple passive: if the underlying A (logical transitive subject) is not a 3rd person, the clause cannot be passivized with this construction. That is, for the simple passive, the argument in A role cannot be a 1st or 2nd person form (sg or pl). For example, (23a) has no corresponding simple passive as shown by the ungrammaticality of (23b):

- (23) (a) š-Ø-in-č'a:b'e-x ri ačih
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-speak-TR the man
 I spoke to the man
- (b) *š-Ø-č'a:b'e-š ri ačih w-uma:l
 ASP-3sg.ABS-speak-PASS the man 1sg.POSS-by
 *The man was spoken to by me (Mondloch 1979: 208-9)

(There is no such constraint on the completive passive, see below.) This is not an uncommon constraint; many languages have passives which cannot apply to underlying 1st or 2nd person As. Since this passive emphasizes underlying Os, and since in the animacy hierarchy 1st and 2nd persons are more frequently As, this constraint is typologically plausible.

Above (§2.1.2), the constraint was pointed out whereby an active transitive clause with a 3rd person A (sg or pl) cannot have a 2nd person reverential (sg or pl) as O. Frequently the simple passive is used to express the equivalent of these clauses. In these instances, the 3rd person A is presented in the oblique 'by' phrase. Compare the following pairs, where the (a) sentences are the acceptable simple passive version, and the (b) sentences are the expected but prohibited and ungrammatical active transitive version:

- (24) (a) k-to:? lah r-uma:l ri ačih
 ASP-help.PASS 2sg.REV.ABS 3sg.POSS-by the man
 You are helped by the man
- (b) *k-u-to? lah ri ačih
 ASP-3sg.ERG-help 2sg.REV.ABS the man
 *The man helps you
- (25) (a) k-to:? alaq k-uma:l ri išoq-i:b'
 ASP-help.PASS 2pl.REV.ABS 3pl.POSS-by the woman-pl
 You are helped by the women
- (b) *k-ki-to? alaq ri išoq-i:b'
 ASP-3pl.ERG-help 2pl.REV.ABS the woman-pl
 *The women helps you

Finally, the simple passive is in no way like the constructions known in some languages – which are sometimes called passive – which are used specifically to keep any A role NP out of the picture (like the Finnish 'impersonal' passive, for example). Rather, it is claimed that K'iche' speakers seem always to have a 'someone' in mind as involved in the action in these passive sentences even when no *-uma:l* 'by' phrase is present to specify the underlying A participant (see Mondloch 1979). This can be seen in the passivized versions of verbs which contain directional prefixes. K'iche' verbs can take the directional prefixes *-ul-* 'hither' (historically from *ul* 'arrive') and *-e:-* 'thither' (historically from *b'e:h* 'go'). In the case of passivized verbs containing these directionals, the 'coming hither' or 'going thither' is attributed to an agent whether or not one is specified overtly in the clause. For example, in (26) it is some unspecified agent who is 'going' in order to get the bench, and not 'the bench' which is cross-referenced with the 3sg.ABS *-Ø-* marked on the verb that is 'going' (Mondloch 1979: 221). (Note in the following examples, that the directionals require the verb to bear the suffix used in other contexts for dependent clauses (here labelled DEP): *-oq* phrase-finally and its allomorph *-ah* non-phrase-finally.)

- (26) š-Ø-e:-k'a:m-ah ri te:m
ASP-3sg.ABS-DIR.go-get.PASS-DEP the bench
Someone went to get the bench
Not: *The bench goes to be gotten
- (27) k-in-ul-sik'i-š-oq
ASP-1sg.ABS-DIR.come-call-PASS-DEP
Someone comes to call me (i.e. I get called and someone comes to do that)
Not: *I come to be called

3.2 *Completive passive*

The completive passive (which has also been called 'the inchoative-stative passive': Mondloch 1978b) is very different from the simple passive in a number of ways. It is formed by the suffix *-(V)tax* on both RTVS (*-k'ut-utax* 'get shown', *-mes-tax* 'get swept') and DTVS (*-tsuku-tax* 'get looked for', *-kamisa-tax* 'get killed'). The verb is intransitivized, with the underlying O promoted to S and the underlying A-role participant either deleted or demoted to an oblique 'by' phrase. When in phrase-final position, the completive passive verb can take the intransitive morpheme *-ik*, but this is optional (it is not optional with other intransitive roots and derived intransitive verb forms). The completive passive conveys the meaning of the completion of an action (– more *Aktionsart* than 'aspect'). The primary function of the completive passive is to emphasize 'the result of the activity and/or its termination' (Dayley 1981: 24; see also Sam-Colop 1990: 136). Mondloch (1978a: 62) defines it in the following way:

the spotlight [is] focused on the object of the verb phrase, but now we are not concentrating so much on the action done to it [as in the simple passive] as we are on emphasizing the condition or state of the object, resulting from the action done to it. Therefore, . . . [k-Ø-k'ayi-tax-ik [ASP-3sg.ABS-sell-CMPL.PASS-INTR]] means 'it will get sold', or 'it will finish being sold'. [Completive passive] here emphasizes the 'becoming' (coming-to-be in a state). [Emphasis in the original.]

Sentences (28–30) illustrate this passive:

- (28) š-Ø-kam-isa-tax le: utiw q-uma:l
ASP-3sg.ABS-die-CAUS-CMPL.PASS the coyote 1pl.POSS-by
The coyote got killed by us
- (29) k-kuna-tax lah
ASP-cure-CMPL.PASS 2sg.REV.ABS
You will get cured

- (30) š-Ø-pili-tax xun ak' r-uma:l le: išoq
ASP-3sg.ABS-butcher-CMPL.PASS one chicken 3sg.POSS-by the woman
A chicken got butchered by the woman

As seen in (28) and (29), with the completive passive there is no constraint against an underlying A (logical transitive subject) which is not a 3rd person, as there is with the simple passive (cf. §3.1). Here, the completive passive has no constraint against 1st and 2nd person agents appearing in the *-uma:l* 'by' phrase, as the simple passive does; agents in any person may optionally be expressed in the *-uma:l* 'by' phrase, whether 1st, 2nd or 3rd person, illustrated further in (Mondloch 1979: 240):

- (31) š-Ø-mes-tax le: u-pa: xa:h w-uma:l
ASP-3sg.ABS-sweep-CMPL.PASS the 3sg.POSS-interior house 1sg.POSS-by
The inside of the house got swept by me
- (32) š-ux-tixo-tax iw-uma:l
ASP-1pl.ABS-teach-CMPL.PASS 2pl.POSS-by
We got instructed by you

Compare the following, where (33a) is the completive passive and (33b) is the simple passive counterpart, which is ungrammatical:

- (33) (a) š-in-č'ay-tax aw-uma:l
ASP-1sg.ABS-hit-CMPL.PASS 2sg.POSS-by
I got hit by you
- (b) *š-in-č'a:y aw-uma:l
ASP-1sg.ABS-hit.PASS 2sg.POSS-by
*I got hit by you

As seen in (34), the S cross-referencing affix, *-e:-* 3pl.ABS agrees in person and number with the surface subject (underlying O) of the clause, *ri ak'ala:b'* 'the children (plural)' in this case, and not with the demoted A, *ki-ta:t* 'their father', underlyingly singular in this case:

- (34) š-e:-tsuqu-tax ri ak'al-a:b' r-uma:l ki-ta:t
ASP-3pl.ABS-feed-CMPL.PASS the child-pl 3sg.POSS-by their-father
The children got fed by their father

Also, as with the simple passives, speakers interpret the completive passive clauses as having an underlying agent even where none is specified by an *-uma:l* 'by' phrase. Thus, just as with the simple passives, when the directional affixes are present in the verb, they are attributed to an agent, to 'someone' or 'somebody', and not to the surface S (underlying object) of the

clause, as seen in the comparison of the following two sentences (Mondloch 1979: 249):

- (35) š-in-e:-riqi-tax-oq
 ASP-1sg.ABS-DIR.go-find-CMPL.PASS-DEP
 Someone went to get me found (I got found and someone went to do that)
 Not: *I went to get found
- (36) š-iš-ul-kuna-tax-oq
 ASP-2pl.ABS-DIR.come-cure-CMPL.PASS-DEP
 Someone came to finish curing you (You got cured and someone came to do that)
 Not: *You came to get cured

3.3 Agent-focus antipassive ('agentive voice')

As will soon be clear, this first K'iche' antipassive construction has a rather extensive literature of its own. In form, it has different morphological markers, *-ow* (or one of its allomorphs) for root transitive verbs (RTVs) and *-n* for derived transitive verbs (DTVVs). Like the passives, both antipassive constructions are marked intransitively by (1) taking the absolutive pronominal affixes to signal the single cross-referencing personal pronominal affix (though see the important complications discussed below) and (2) by taking the phrase-final intransitive marker *-ik*. The purpose of the agent-focus antipassive is to place emphasis on the A (Mondloch 1978a: 71). The agent-focus antipassive can apply without restriction to transitive verb roots; as we will see below, this is not the case with the 'absolutive' antipassive, where not all transitive verbs permit it. This agent-focus antipassive is employed also when the A-role NP is 'extracted' (and therefore by default focussed) in constructions where it is questioned, relativized or placed in focus (clefted) by preposing: 'Rules such as WH-Questions, relativization and focus may be collectively characterized as extraction rules, since they extract a constituent from its position and move it over an indefinite number of other constituents without however altering its grammatical relation', and in several of the Mayan subgroups these extraction rules must be 'constrained from applying to ergative subjects [A-role NPs]' (Larsen and Norman 1979: 357). In many Mayan languages, an ergative NP cannot be questioned, relativized or clefted (though absolutive NPs can be). Sentences with an underlying A trigger instead a shift to antipassive in these instances (Larsen and Norman 1979: 357; Dayley 1981: 10; see below). Tom Smith-Stark calls this the 'inert ergative constraint' (reported in Dayley 1981: 10). In K'iche' in these extractions, the

verb is made intransitive and the underlying A, when it is cross-referenced (see below for conditions), is represented by an absolutive pronominal affix in the verb. Transitive clauses with extracted surface As ordinarily do not occur in the language (Mondloch 1979: 172; see below for exceptions). This is characterized in the following ways: 'The focused subject [underlying A] is always expressed before the verb as a noun or independent pronoun (or some substitute for them)' (Mondloch 1978b: 10); 'In this construction [agent-focus antipassive] the agent (or actor) must be extracted, i.e. it must be focussed . . . the agent OBLIGATORILY precedes the verb' (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 525); 'Each of these three types [WH-questions, relativization and focus (clefted)], is characterized by the obligatory presence of an NP or other sentential constituent in the "focus" position immediately preceding the verb and by the obligatory presence of a gap or "empty" constituent in some position following the verb [the NP is no longer there, but preposed]' (Trechsel 1993: 41). Thus, in the agent-focus antipassive construction, the A is demoted to an S in order to participate in pivot combinations. In order for underlying A arguments of transitive clauses to be questioned, relativized or focussed, A-role arguments ordinarily must first be made accessible by converting them into S (absolutives) by means of the agent-focus antipassive. This is described in some detail in this section.

However, in these extraction constructions, though the verb is morphologically intransitive in form, the grammatical relations between A and O do not typically change, as they do in the passives and the absolutive antipassive. Though with the agent-focus antipassive the verbs are intransitive morphologically, syntactically they can have two core arguments – this will become clearer as we go along.⁹ That is, A-role participants (ergative, transitive subjects) generally cannot be extracted, and therefore the agent-focus antipassive – which makes underlying A a surface S – is used when A-role arguments are questioned, relativized or focussed; however, neither the A-role nor the O-role NP appears in an oblique construction. (Thus, not every instance of an agent-focus antipassive necessarily results in valency reduction, though most

⁹ There is some disagreement about whether the agent-focus antipassive is a true antipassive construction or not. Since in general it has the forms, meanings and functions that correspond to antipassives found in other languages, it is considered an antipassive. Like other languages' antipassives, it plays up the role of the agent (A) and eliminates or plays down the role of the object (O), and it shows up as intransitive in form. The hesitation some have in allowing this to be considered a 'true' antipassive is due to the fact that in these extraction contexts (emphatic focus, relative clauses and content questioning of A), only one situation of several in which it occurs, it appears at times also to be associated with two core arguments, rather than one, neither of which is oblique or optional. (See Larsen 1987, Hale and Storto forthcoming, for different opinions.)

do.) Larsen and Norman (1979: 360) speak of an accessibility hierarchy for these extraction rules (WH-questions, relativization, focussing [clefing]): 'transitive subjects [A] are less accessible . . . than either intransitive subjects [S] or direct objects [O]'. We look at each of these extraction environments in turn.

3.3.1 Agent-focus antipassive with questions

Generally in WH-questions (content questions), the questioned NP is 'extracted' and placed in preverbal position, and this applies freely to S (as seen here in (37)) and O (in (38)) with no morphological changes in the verb:

(37) xači:n k-Ø-q'ab'ar-ik [S questioned]
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-get.drunk-INTR
 Who gets drunk? (Mondloch 1979: 176)

(38) (a) xači:n š-Ø-u-č'ay le: ačih [O questioned]
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-hit the man
 Whom did the man hit? (Larsen and Norman 1979: 357)

However, an A-role NP normally cannot be questioned in this same way, as seen in (38b) and (39):

(38) (b) *xači:n š-Ø-u-č'ay le: ačih *[A questioned]
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-hit the man
 *Who hit the man? (cf. Larsen and Norman 1979: 357)

(Note that (38b) is grammatical in the meaning 'whom did the man hit?', as seen in (38a).)

(39) *xači:n š-in-r-il-oh *[A questioned]
 who ASP-1sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-see-TR
 *Who saw me? (Mondloch 1979: 176)

When an A-role NP is to be questioned, the questioned NP is preposed, but also the verb is normally placed in the agent-focus antipassive:

(40) xači:n š-Ø-č'ay-ow le: ačih
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-hit-AF.ANT the man (cf. Larsen and Norman 1979: 358)
 Who hit the man?

(Contrast (40) with (38b).)

(41) xači:n š-in-il-ow-ik
 who ASP-1sg.ABS-see-AF.ANT-INTR
 Who saw me? (Mondloch 1979: 176)

(Contrast (39).)

(42) xači:n k-Ø-loq'-ow r-e:č ri wi?č
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-buy-AF.ANT 3sg.POSS-GEN the chick
 Who buys the chicks?¹⁰

3.3.2 Agent-focus antipassive with relatives

In K'iche', nearly any argument can be relativized.¹¹ The relative clause follows its head and is introduced by a relative marker which is in effect the same as the determiners, *le:*, *ri* and *we:* (though the marker is optional in some very rare circumstances). Just as with WH-questions, the verb form undergoes no special changes in relative clauses when an NP in S or O role is extracted, as in (43) and (44a):

(43) š-Ø-inw-il ri išoq ri š-Ø-q'ab'ar-ik [S relativized]
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-see the woman REL ASP-3sg.ABS-get.drunk-INTR
 I saw the woman who got drunk

¹⁰ In some WH-questions where the agent-focus antipassive is normally required, it is sometimes not used if no ambiguity would result; for example, both (1) and (2) are possible:

- (1) xači:n š-at-u-č'ay-oh
 who ASP-2sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-hit-TR
 Who hit you?
- (2) xači:n š-at-č'ay-ow-ik
 who ASP-2sg.ABS-hit-AF.ANT-INTR
 Who hit you? (Larsen 1987)

(This varies across dialects; other similar examples are discussed later in the chapter.)

¹¹ The only NP that seems inaccessible to relativization is the A NP in a 'by' phrase of the simple passive, as in the following, neither of which is grammatical:

- (1) *le: axkun le: š-Ø-kuna-š ri ala r-uma:l
 the curer REL ASP-3sg.ABS-cure-PASS the child 3sg.POSS-by
 *the doctor that the child was cured by . . . (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 534)
- (2) *le: axkun le: š-Ø-kuna-š ri ala
 the curer REL ASP-3sg.ABS-cure-PASS the child
 *the doctor that the child was cured by . . . (cf. Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 534)

The S (underlying O-role NP), however, can be relativized in such passive constructions, as in (3):

- (3) ri ala ri š-Ø-kuna-š r-uma:l le: axkun
 the child REL ASP-3sg.ABS-cure-PASS 3sg.POSS-by the curer
 The child who was cured by the doctor (cf. Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 534)

It is possible that this restriction on relativization of the NP from the 'by'-phrase of passives has to do with the function of passive versus relativization. A function of the passive is to play down the underlying A and to emphasize the underlying O, whereas, in K'iche', relativization emphasizes an NP; to relativize the A-role NP of the oblique 'by'-phrase of the passive would highlight that NP, seemingly conflicting with the passive's demotion of that same element. The two processes, relativization and passivization, would seem to have opposite purposes to one another.

- (44) (a) š-Ø-inw-il le: išoq le: š-Ø-u-č'ay
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-see the woman REL ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-hit
 le: ačih [O relativized]
 the man
 I saw the woman whom the man hit (Larsen and Norman 1979: 357)¹²

However, when an A-role NP is relativized, this same construction, with a regular transitive verb, is not normally possible. Davies and Sam-Colop (1990: 534) report that 'ergative arguments [As] that never bear the absolutive relation [i.e. that do not go through a demotion to S, absolutive case] cannot be relativized in K'iche'. They offer the 'functional perspective' that relates to our pivot (see below): that 'the agentive [agent-focus] antipassive makes the agent accessible to relativization (and extraction in general) by making it an absolutive'. Some examples showing these relations are:

- (44) (b) *š-Ø-inw-il le: išoq le: š-Ø-u-č'ay
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-see the woman REL ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-hit
 le: ačih *[A relativized]
 the man
 *I saw the woman who hit the man (cf. Larsen and Norman 1979: 357)

(Note that (44b) is grammatical in the meaning 'I saw the woman whom the man hit', as in (44a).) When an A-role NP is extracted in a relative clause, the agent-focus antipassive construction is used:

- (44) (c) š-Ø-inw-il le: išoq le: š-Ø-č'ay-ow le: ačih
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-see the woman REL ASP-3sg.ABS-hit-AF.ANT the man
 I saw the woman who hit the man (cf. Larsen and Norman 1979: 358)

- (45) š-Ø-q-il le: išoq le: š-Ø-q'o?-(o)w
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1pl.ERG-see the woman REL ASP-3sg.ABS-embroider-AF.ANT
 le: a-po?t
 the 2sg.POSS-huipil
 We saw the woman who embroidered your huipil (native blouse)¹³

¹² No sexism is intended by the repetition of these examples involving women and men and hitting – these examples were presented before non-sexist guidelines were prepared and are repeated here only because they are now part of the history of argumentation in Mayan linguistics.

¹³ This formation extends also to existential clauses, which have no overt relative marker (note that the relative marker is sometimes optional in other cases):

- (1) Ø-k'o: k-Ø-b'an-ow le: ča:k
 3sg.ABS-there.is ASP-3sg.ABS-do-AF.ANT the work
 There is someone who will do the work
- (2) e:-k'o: k-e:-kuna-n le: yawa:b'
 3pl.ABS-there.is ASP-3pl.ABS-cure-AF.ANT the sick.one
 There are those who will cure the sick (person)

In fact, the constraint against extracted As (which are not demoted to S in an agent-focus antipassive construction) is general, but not absolutely required all the time in all the dialects. Some speakers accept sentences such as (46) (Trechsel 1993: 75):

- (46) š-Ø-pe: ri išoq ri š-Ø-u-pil
 ASP-3sg.ABS-come the woman REL ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-butcher
 ri ak' [A relativized]
 the chicken
 The woman who butchered the chicken came

In (46), the verb *-pil* is a regular transitive, not the expected *-pil-ow* agent-focus antipassive; in this case, while the head NP (*ri išoq* 'the woman') plays the role of A in the relative clause, rather than the O role that would be expected with the fully active transitive verb form, the semantics make the expected reading, 'the woman whom the chicken butchered', highly unlikely (Mondloch 1978b, Trechsel 1993: 75). The example in (47) is even clearer (Nik'te' and Saqijix 1993: 136):

- (47) ri ts'i? ri š-Ø-u-tix ri ti?i:x
 the dog REL ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-eat the meat
 š-Ø-r-oqata:-x ri me?s [A relativized]
 ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-chase-TR the cat
 The dog that ate the meat chased the cat

Since the meat cannot eat the dog, even though the sentence is in the regular active transitive form with an A as head of the relative clause, the agent-focus antipassive is not absolutely required in this instance. Nevertheless, speakers who accept (46) and (47) as grammatical also accept sentences which they do find ambiguous, such as the following:

- (48) xači:n š-Ø-r-il ri ačih
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-see the man (Trechsel 1993: 75)
 (1) Whom did the man see?
 (2) Who saw the man?
- (49) š-Ø-q-il le: ak'al le: š-Ø-r-oqata:-x
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1pl.ERG-see the child REL ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-chase-TR
 le: ts'i?
 the dog
 (1) We saw the child who chased the dog [A relativized]
 (2) We saw the child whom the dog chased [O relativized] (Trechsel 1993: 75)

- (50) (a) k-Ø-tseʔn ri ala ri š-Ø-u-ts'uma:-x ri ali
 ASP-3sg.ABS-smile the boy REL ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-kiss-TR the girl
 (1) The boy who kissed the girl smiles [A relativized!]
 (2) The boy whom the girl kissed smiles [O relativized] (Sam-Colop 1988: 44)

To avoid the ambiguity of (50a), it is normally put in the agent-focus antipassive, as in (50b), where the second reading is now impossible:

- (50) (b) *k-Ø-tseʔn ri ala ri š-Ø-ts'uma-n ri ali
 ASP-3sg.ABS-smile the boy REL ASP-3sg.ABS-kiss-AF.ANT the girl
 (1) The boy who kissed the girl smiles [S relativized]
 *(2) The boy whom the girl kisses smiles *[O relativized] (Sam-Colop 1988: 45)

3.3.3 Focus function

The focus (cleft) construction is similar to WH-questions and relativization in that in it an underlying A-role argument is taken from its normal neutral position after the verb and preposed, and the verb is placed in the agent-focus antipassive form. Sentences (51–2) show focussed S and O, which require no change in the verb:

- (51) are: ri ačih š-Ø-q'abar-ik [S focussed]
 FOC the man ASP-3sg.ABS-get.drunk-INTR
 It was the man who got drunk
- (52) are: le: išoq š-Ø-u-č'ay le: ačih [O focussed]
 FOC the woman ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-hit the man
 It was the woman that the man hit (Larsen and Norman 1979: 357)

In fact in K'iche' virtually any constituent in the sentence can be focussed (preposed before the verb) in this construction (with the exception of the demoted agent of a passive, see below). However, A cannot be focussed in exactly the same way, as seen in the ungrammaticality of (53a) (Larsen and Norman 1979: 357):

- (53) (a) *are: le: ačih š-Ø-u-č'ay le: išoq [A focussed]
 FOC the man ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-hit the woman
 *It was the man that hit the woman

Rather, the verb must be put in the agent-focus antipassive construction in order for an A-role NP to be focussed (clefted) in this way:

- (53) (b) are: le: ačih š-Ø-č'ay-ow le: išoq [A focussed]
 FOC the man ASP-3sg.ABS-hit-AF.ANT the woman
 It was the man that hit the woman (Larsen and Norman 1979: 358)

- (54) (a) la at š-at-kuna-n le: axkun
 Q 2sg.INDEP.PN ASP-2sg.ABS-cure-AF.ANT the curer
 Was it you who cured the doctor? (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 523)
- (b) la are: le: axkun š-at-kuna-n-ik
 Q FOC the curer ASP-2sg.ABS-cure-AF.ANT-INTR
 Was it the doctor who cured you? (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 523)

3.3.4 Syntax

In the agent-focus antipassive construction, the A (underlying transitive subject) is first demoted to an S (intransitive subject, absolutive) in order to participate in pivot combinations. In order to question, relativize or focus underlying A arguments of transitive clauses, A-role arguments ordinarily must first be made accessible by being converted into S (absolutives) by means of the agent-focus antipassive. Thus, while on the whole K'iche' is morphologically ergative and most of its syntactic rules are not sensitive to ergativity, we could say that to some degree K'iche' has syntactic ergativity (Mondloch 1979: 58). As Larsen (1987: 44) put it:

one could claim that Quiché is syntactically ergative by Dixon's criteria. The syntactic rules which form *wh*-questions, relative clauses, and cleft constructions operate in a straightforward way on S and O, but not on A. In order for such rules to apply to A, a NP in underlying A function must first be put into derived S function by means of the [agent-]focus antipassive ... Thus, it appears that these rules operate on an S/O pivot in Quiché.

A main function of the agent-focus antipassive in these extraction constructions is to convert an underlying A-role NP into a derived S so that it will be accessible for rules which operate only on S and O. In the case of questions, the WH-constituent appears in preverbal position, the focus position, rather than postverbally which is the typical location of non-questioned/non-focussed NPs. The same is true of the relative clauses and the focus construction (clefts – by definition in the case of the clefts).

3.3.5 Disambiguating function

Since *-in-* '1sg', *lah* '2sg.REV' and *alaaq* '2pl.REV' are the same (do not have distinct markers) in both ergative and absolutive environments, ambiguities involving combinations of these as participants could arise, but such combinations are avoided (as mentioned in §2.1.2). For example, *kinkunax lah* is ambiguous, meaning either 'I cure you' or 'you cure me'. The structure of the two is as follows, where *-X-* is not intended as either an absolutive or an ergative morpheme, but is employed only to show where such a morpheme would be expected if some other person bearing overt marking were involved.

- (55) (a) k-X-in-kuna-x lah
 ASP-X.ABS-1sg.ERG-cure-TR 2sg.REV.ABS
 I cure you
- (b) k-in-X-kuna-x lah
 ASP-1sg.ABS-X.ERG-cure-TR 2sg.REV.ERG
 You cure me

In such instances, if context is unable to disambiguate the sentence, it will be put into another voice, as in (56a) and (56b), where the unambiguous equivalents of (55a) and (55b) are shown in the focussed construction with the agent-focus antipassive:

- (56) (a) in k-in-kuna-n lah
 1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-1sg.ABS-cure-AF.ANT 2sg.REV
 It is I who cure you / I myself cure you / I am the one who cures you
- (b) la:l k-in-kuna-n lah
 2sg.REV.INDEP.PN ASP-1sg.ABS-cure-AF.ANT 2sg.REV
 It is you who cure me / You yourself cure me / You are the one who cures me

3.3.6 Difficulties for formal theorists

A major problem for some formal theories is encountered in two aspects of the agent-focus antipassive. These complications have been addressed, always with discomfort, in the following theoretical orientations: CATEGORIAL GRAMMAR by Trechsel (1982); GOVERNMENT AND BINDING by Hale and Storto (forthcoming) and Larsen 1987; HPSG by Trechsel (1993); and RELATIONAL GRAMMAR by Davies and Sam-Colop (1990) and Sam-Colop (1988). The first complication stems from the fact that the agent-focus antipassive construction, though it appears morphologically to be intransitive, in certain circumstances behaves syntactically as if it were a transitive clause. 'It is this apparent "mismatch" between the morphological intransitivity of these verb forms and their syntactic and semantic transitivity that presents the most interesting and difficult challenges to linguistic theory' (Trechsel 1993: 33–4). That is, sometimes the clause has both an A (agent) and an O (direct object) as core arguments, even though only one is signalled in the cross-referencing affixes on the verb (an absolutive prefix). Linguists have disagreed over whether these agent-focus antipassive forms are to be considered intransitive or transitive constructions (see Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 530–1 for a survey of some of the opinions found in the literature).

Let me hasten to add here that, in pointing out the difficulties caused for treatments in various formal approaches by the K'iche' facts discussed in this

section, I by no means imply any anti-theoretical bias. Just the opposite: it is facts such as these which drive us to formulate more adequate theories which should help to explain both these facts and others of a similar nature that may show up in other languages.

The problem of a verb marked morphologically as intransitive sometimes syntactically bearing two core arguments is compounded by the second serious complication. The single pronominal affix (always absolutive) sometimes cross-references the A-role NP and sometimes the O-role NP: 'These verbs exhibit an unusual pattern of agreement. In some instances, they agree with the agent; in others, they agree with the patient [O]' (Trechsel 1993: 33). Davies and Sam-Colop (1990: 523) call this 'nonregular agreement in K'iche''. A major issue in theoretical treatments of K'iche' is what determines which of the two arguments – A or O – will be cross-referenced by the single absolutive affix permitted in the agent-focus antipassive verbs (see below). It is generally acknowledged that 'the agreement cannot be accounted for simply by the general agreement rules . . . that are at work elsewhere in the language' (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 531; see Mondloch 1979: 319–20). Norman and Campbell (1978) presented a hierarchy for the treatment of these antipassive 'nonregular agreements' found in several Mayan languages:

The verb which appears in the antipassive construction must by definition be intransitive. For Mayan languages, this entails that only one NP may be cross-referenced on the verb, the other NP remaining as a prepositional [oblique] phrase or a constituent which has no grammatical relation in the clause (a *chômeur*, in the terminology of relational grammar). Again, from the definition of antipassive one would expect that the verb would be marked for agreement with the NP which represented the deep syntactic [underlying] subject (the formerly ergative NP).

This does not always turn out to be the case in Mayan . . . In languages such as Quiche, which permit one of the NPs in the antipassive to be non-third person, the rules of verb–subject agreement are quite complex . . . :

- [1] Are: ri in š-in-č'ay-ow le: ačih
 FOC the 1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-1sg.ABS-hit-AF.ANT the man
 I hit the man / It was me that hit the man
- [2] Are: ri ačih š-in-č'ay-ow-ik
 FOC the man ASP-1sg.ABS-hit-AF.ANT-INTR
 The man hit me / That's the man who hit me

In both [1] and [2], the verb agrees with the first person constituent, even though that constituent represents an underlying subject [A] in [1] but an underlying object [O] in [2]. In the Quiche antipassive, verb agreement is controlled not by syntactic relations of NPs but by their position on the

hierarchy: *non-third person* > *third person plural* > *third person singular*, with special provisions for the second person formal pronoun, which behaves like third person in this case.

To account for the details of K'iche' (rather than Mayan languages generally), this statement needs to be slightly more specific: at least one of the participants must be either a 3rd person (-Ø-) or a 2nd person reverential (*lah*, *alaq*, which take no overt cross-referencing affix) – that is, two overtly marked (non-null) pronominal affixes (i.e. combinations of 1st person (sg or pl) and 2nd non-reverential person (sg or pl) forms) are not permitted to co-occur in this construction. As Mondloch (1978a: 71) puts it, with agent-focus antipassive:

at least subject [A] or object [O] must be a third person (singular or plural) or *lāl* [la:l] or *alak* [alaq]. In the event that both subject and object are other than third person or other than *lāl* [la:l] or *alak* [alaq], then this voice *cannot be used* for emphasizing the subject. [Emphasis in the original.]

Compare the following pairs of agent-focus antipassive sentences, where in the (a) sentences the A-role argument is cross-referenced by the absolutive prefix in the verb, but in the (b) sentences it is the O-role which is cross-referenced:

- (57) (a) at š-at-riq-ow le: ak'al-a:b' [-at- = A]
2sg.INDEP.PN ASP-2sg.ABS-find-AF.ANT the child-pl
You found the children / It was you who found the children (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 531)
- (b) e: are: le: ak'al-a:b' š-at-riq-ow at [-at- = O]
pl FOC the child-PL ASP-2sg.ABS-find-AF.ANT 2sg.INDEP.PN
It was the children who found you (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 531)
- (58) (a) ri ak'al-a:b' š-e:-tsuqu-w ri a lu? [-e:- = A]
the child-pl ASP-3pl.ABS-feed-AF.ANT the HON Peter
The children fed Peter / It was the children who fed Peter (cf. Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 531)
- (b) ri a lu? š-e:-tsuqu-w ri ak'al-a:b' [-e:- = O]
the HON Peter ASP-3pl.ABS-feed-AF.ANT the child-pl
Peter fed the children / It was Peter who fed the children
(cf. Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 531)

These examples, (57a–58b), illustrate Norman and Campbell's (1978: 150) hierarchy. They propose that the usual K'iche' agreement rule is suspended in

this construction: 'verb agreement is controlled not by syntactic relations of NPs but by their position on the [participant] hierarchy' (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 524). Larsen (1987: 44) characterizes this as: 'There is a restriction on the focus antipassive construction such that (roughly) either the underlying A or the underlying O or both must be third person.' The following pair of sentences contrasts the focus construction with agent-focus antipassive (in (59a)) with the active transitive counterpart (in (59b)):

- (59) (a) are: le: w-a:ts š-in-to?-ow-ik
FOC the my-elder.brother ASP-1sg.ABS-help-AF.ANT-INTR
It was my elder brother who helped me
- (b) š-in-u-to? le: w-a:ts
ASP-1sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-help the my-elder.brother
My elder brother helped me

This constraint against cross-referencing two non-null arguments (1st or 2nd non-reverential forms) comes into question only in the focus (cleft) construction, since all the WH-question words are 3rd person and the nouns modified by relative clauses in K'iche' are also 3rd person. In principle it would logically be possible to violate the constraint in the focus construction, which can have two arguments, both non-3rd persons (and non-2nd person reverentials), but this is avoided either by utilizing active voice (with transitive morphology), as in (60a), or by placing the O-role NP in an oblique phrase, as in (60b–61):

- (60) (a) in š-at-in-č'ay-oh
1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-2sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-hit-TR
I am the one who hit you (Trechsel 1993: 47)
- (b) in š-in-č'ay-ow aw-e:h
1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-1sg.ABS-hit-AF.ANT 2sg.POSS-GEN
I am the one who hit you (Trechsel 1993: 47)
- (61) are: š-Ø-elaq'a-n q-e:h
FOC ASP-3sg.ABS-steal-AF.ANT 1pl.POSS-GEN
He is the one who robbed us (Trechsel 1993: 48)¹⁴

¹⁴ Works on K'iche' focus nearly all contain a note pointing out that examples such as this, with both the agent-focus antipassive morphology and the oblique O, are not found in all K'iche' dialects; they are found in Nahualá, however, the dialect area represented in Mondloch's works, and since Nahualá is a central and typical dialect and because most scholars rely heavily on Mondloch's discussion of these phenomena in K'iche', the literature generally reports these then as relatively unproblematic.

In (60b) the possessed relative noun *aw-e:h* is formally now a 3rd person (in structure a noun), and thus this sentence does not violate the constraint against two non-3rd or non-2nd reverential person NPs, so that the agent-focus antipassive typically used with focus (cleft) is possible (cf. Trechsel 1993: 47).

Ultimately, in spite of the difficulties for various theories which some syntacticians have expressed over the fact that it is sometimes the A-role NP and other times the O-role NP which is cross-referenced by the single absolutive affix in the agent-focus antipassive construction, there is, nevertheless, usually no problem of interpretation because the A-role NP is focussed (clefted) and preposed before the verb (cf. Dayley 1981: 26, 56). That is, we should not lose sight of the help in processing these sentences which this special non-neutral constituent order provides us with in this case. In fact, Dayley, speaking of Mayan languages in general, sees the use of the agent-focus antipassive morphology as specifically fulfilling the role of disambiguating topicalized sentences which have both an A and an O (Dayley 1981: 56):

if the normal order is V A P [VAO] (or V P A [VOA], for that matter), when one of the NPs is fronted via topicalization[,] the result is NP V NP, and therefore it may not be clear which NP, the agent or the patient [O], has been fronted. The [agent-]focus antipassive may be used to disambiguate in this situation because it explicitly indicates that the NP immediately preceding the verb is the agent.¹⁵

Given the possibility of two core arguments, A and O, but only one cross-referencing affix (which can sometimes refer to the A argument and sometimes to the O argument in these agent-focus antipassive sentences), it is very important to be able to determine which person-cross-referencing affix will occur and which argument (A or O) it will signal. Which one will occur is easy: whichever of the arguments, A or O, has a non-null absolutive form (not $-\emptyset$) is the one which will be cross-referenced in the verb. The combinations permitted are shown in figure 7.2.

¹⁵ Trechsel's (1982, 1993) approach to the problem begins with the assumption that transitive sentences in K'iche' assign the patient role to subjects [A] and the agent role to objects [O], 'analyzing absolutive NPs as "subjects" and ergative NPs as "objects"' (1993: 62) (though Trechsel does not insist on this 'inverse' analysis; p. 64). He asserts that 'there is absolutely no reason, other than prejudice and/or convention, to assume that natural languages always and everywhere assign the agent [A] and patient [O] roles in transitive sentences to the subject and object NP, respectively' (p. 64). In spite of the arguments he presents in support of this position, I do not accept it but also do not attempt to present counterarguments, since the typological perspective which maintains a constant A-[Transitive]Subject and O-Object association cross-linguistically – as articulated, for example, by Dixon (1994) and many others – is thoroughly convincing.

Figure 7.2. Permitted A–O combinations in agent-focus antipassive verbs

A	O
1sg/pl (-in-/-ux-)	2REV.sg/pl (- \emptyset -/ \emptyset -) 3sg/pl (- \emptyset -/ \emptyset -)
2sg (-at-)	3sg/pl (- \emptyset -/ \emptyset -)
2.REV.sg/pl (- \emptyset -)	1sg/pl (-in-/-ux-) 3sg/pl (- \emptyset -/ \emptyset -)
3sg/pl (- \emptyset -/ \emptyset -(-e:-))	1sg/pl (-in-/-ux-) 2sg/pl (-at-/-iš-) 2REV.sg/pl (- \emptyset -/ \emptyset -) 3sg/pl (- \emptyset -/ \emptyset -(-e:-))

As seen from figure 7.2, A–O combinations of 1sg/pl and 2sg/pl (non-reverential) are excluded. The constraint against two persons with non-null cross-referencing affixes in the focus construction is not an insurmountable problem. If an A is to be extracted for emphasis in an instance where any of these combinations would occur, the active transitive verb forms (and not the agent-focus antipassive) are used, as illustrated in:

- (62) are: ri at š-in-a-č'ay-oh
 FOC the 2sg.INDEP.PN ASP-1sg.ABS-2sg.ERG-hit-TR
 You were the one who hit me (Larsen 1987: 44)
- (63) in k-at-in-to?-oh
 1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-2sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-help-TR
 I myself will help you

In an A-extraction clause, in order to maintain this constraint against the simultaneous occurrence of two non- \emptyset pronominal affixes, if a 3rd person plural occurs either as A or O (where *-e:-* '3pl.ABS' would normally be expected in the agent-focus antipassive) in combination with any other non- \emptyset pronominal affix (anything other than 3sg or 2nd Reverential (singular or plural)), then $-\emptyset$ is used instead. Examples (64a–c) show *-e:-* 3pl.ABS where there is no clash which would lead to the suppression of the plural pronominal affix:

- (64) (a) are: š-e:-riq-ow-ik
 FOC ASP-3pl.ABS-find-AF.ANT-INTR
 He is the one who found them
- (b) e: are: š-e:-riq-ow ri ak'a:l
 pl FOC ASP-3pl.ABS-find-AF.ANT the child
 They are the ones who found the child
- (c) e: are: š-e:-riq-ow ri ak'al-a:b'
 pl FOC ASP-3pl.ABS-find-AF.ANT the children
 They are the ones who found the children

The following pair of sentences shows the ordinary presence of 3rd person plural *-e:-* (in (65a)) contrasted with 3rd person singular *-Ø-* for agreement with the extracted 3rd person singular A NP (in (65b)) (Sam-Colop 1988: 65):

- (65) (a) are: le: ts'i? (le:) š-e:-riq-ow le: čix
 FOC the dog (REL) ASP-3pl.ABS-find-AF.ANT the sheep
 It was the dog that found the sheep (plural)
- (b) are: le: ts'i? (le:) š-Ø-riq-ow le: čix
 FOC the dog (REL) ASP-3sg.ABS-find-AF.ANT the sheep
 It was the dog that found the sheep (singular)

In contrast to these sentences, (66) illustrates an instance in which the 3rd person plural pronominal affix is suppressed, overridden by the presence of another argument represented by a non-null non-3rd person affix:

- (66) in š-in-riq-ow ri ak'al-a:b'
 1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-1sg.ABS-find-AF.ANT the child-pl
 I am the one who found the children

In (66), the plurality of the O-role argument is not marked in the verb. Since the A-role argument is a non-3rd person singular, the O argument (though underlyingly plural, so that *e:-* would be expected) is treated morphologically as though it were a 3sg.ABS marker (i.e. *-Ø-*) (Mondloch 1979: 322).

Since the 2nd person reverential forms (*lah* and *alaq*) are not cross-referenced by prefixes in the verb, the problem of two non-Ø pronominal markers with the agent-focus antipassive does not arise with the reverential forms. Therefore, the 2nd person reverentials can occur as A or O in combinations with any 1st or 3rd person form, as seen in the following examples:

- (67) in š-in-č'a:b'e-n alaq
 1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-1sg.ABS-speak-AF.ANT 2pl.REV
 I am the one who talked to you
- (68) la:l š-e:-kuna-n lah
 2sg.REV.INDEP.PN ASP-3pl.ABS-cure-AF.ANT 2sg.REV
 You are the one who cured them
- (69) alaq š-ux-to?(o)w alaq
 2pl.REV.INDEP.PN ASP-1pl.ABS-help-AF.ANT 2pl.REV
 You are the ones who helped us

3.3.7 O-demotion to oblique with agent-focus antipassive

There is one further construction which employs the agent-focus antipassive. In this one, the verb bears the agent-focus antipassive morphology (and is

thus intransitive) and cross-references only one argument – the underlying A in this case – with the absolutive verb prefixes, but differs from the extraction constructions above in that the underlying O is demoted to an oblique with the relational noun *-e:h/-e:č* 'genitive/possessive',¹⁶ as in the following pairs of sentences, where the (a) example is basic and the (b) member of the pair is derived, illustrating the demoted oblique O:

- (70) (a) š-Ø-u-čoy ri če:? ri axča:k pa ri k'iče?la:x [Basic]
 ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-cut the tree the worker in the forest
 The worker cut the tree in the forest (Nik'te' and Saqijix 1993)
- (b) are: ri axča:k ri š-Ø-čoy-ow r-e:č ri če:?
 FOC the worker REL ASP-3sg.ABS-cut-AF.ANT 3sg.POSS.GEN the tree
 pa ri k'iče?la:x [Derived]
 in the forest
 It was the worker who cut the tree in the forest
- (71) (a) k-e:b'-u-loq' ri wi?č ri w-ika:q' [Basic]
 ASP-3pl.ABS-3sg.ERG-buy the chick the my-nephew
 My nephew buys the chicks (Nik'te' and Saqijix 1993)
- (b) are: ri w-ika:q' k-Ø-loq'-ow r-e:č ri
 FOC the my-nephew ASP-3sg.ABS-buy-AF.ANT 3sg.POSS-GEN the
 wi?č [Derived]
 chick
 It is my nephew who buys the chicks¹⁷

¹⁶ Mayanists typically call this relational noun the 'genitive', since it is used for possession, *w-e:č* '(it is) mine', *r-e:č* '(it is) his/hers/its', but it also has the semantic functions of 'dative', 'source', 'instrument' and some other non-core argument notions (cf. Sam-Colop 1988: 18). It is composed of the relational noun root *-e:h* or *-e:č*, which are free variants, with no difference in meaning or privilege of occurrence. Etymologically, *-e:h* comes from the noun root meaning 'tooth' and is used to mean 'to, at'. The locative use usually occurs in the compound form, *č(i)* 'to, at, on, in, for' (from the noun root meaning 'mouth'), + possessive pronominal prefixes + *-e:h/-e:č*, as in *či-k-e:h* 'to/for them', *č-w-e:h* 'to/for me'. In the 3rd person singular, *č-r-e:h* alternates with *č-e:h*, though the latter is more frequent. Not all valency-derivation constructions which utilize the possessed *-e:h/-e:č* without the preceding compounding *či* are 'genitive'/'possessive' in nature, as seen where it functions to signal oblique NP roles; nevertheless, I continue to translate these as 'genitive' (GEN), following the tradition in the literature.

¹⁷ There is some variation across K'iche' dialects concerning the general acceptability of this agent-focus antipassive with underlying O demoted to an oblique phrase (see Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 539).

Also, in some dialects this construction offers another way around the constraint against two non-null pronominal affixes (3rd person or 2nd person reverential forms) with the agent-focus antipassive, where the O-role argument can be demoted to an oblique, though this option is not normally possible in these extractions with other persons:

- (1) in š-in-č'ay-ow aw-e:h
 1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-1sg.ABS-hit-AF.ANT 2sg.POSS-GEN
 I am the one who hit you

3.4 'Absolutive' antipassive

The second antipassive is traditionally called the 'absolutive antipassive' (see Smith-Stark 1978). It has the form *-n* with DTVS and *-on* with RTVS (or predictable allomorphs: *-un* if the vowel of the verb root is *u*; *-an* if the root's vowel is *a*). With the absolutive antipassive, unlike in the agent-focus antipassives, the single pronoun, S (absolutive), cross-references the underlying A of an intransitivized verb form, and the underlying O is either demoted to an oblique construction or is omitted. On the whole, it is much more straightforward than the agent-focus antipassive. For example, in (72a) and (72b) the demoted O NP has been omitted, while it is present, but demoted to an oblique phrase, in (73a):

- (72) (a) uts k-at-b'iša-n
good ASP-2sg.ABS-sing-ABS.ANT
You sing well
- (b) k-Ø-mes-on č-qa-naqa:x
ASP-3sg.ABS-sweep-ABS.ANT to-1pl.POSS-near
She sweeps near us (Trechsel 1982: 60)
- (73) (a) k-at-yoq'-on č-e:h ri a-na:n
ASP-2sg.ABS-mock-ABS.ANT to.3sg.POSS-GEN the your-mother
You mock your mother

(Footnote 17 continued)

- (2) iš š-iš-il-ow q-e:h
2pl.INDEP.PN ASP-2pl.ABS-see-AF.ANT 1pl.POSS-GEN
You are the ones who saw us (Mondloch 1979: 323-8)

The agent-focus antipassive also serves to signal what has been called (inappropriately) 'noun incorporation' in K'iche'. An antipassive construction is employed with noun incorporation in many languages, understandably so, since the antipassive characteristically signals that the verb is formally intransitive (see Mithun 1984). However, the cases which have been called 'noun incorporation' in K'iche' are odd in two ways. (a) They do not actually incorporate a noun into a verb, but rather bear an independent word, albeit a bare nominalization juxtaposed to the verb. (b) They are much more limited than those reported in other languages, even in other Mayan languages such as Yucatec: they are limited essentially to an 'incorporated' nominalization with a few semantically 'light' verbs, like 'do, make', as in (3), where, in this interpretation, the nominalization *č'ax-oʔn* 'washing' is 'incorporated' in the verb *k-Ø-b'an-ow* 'do':

- (3) xun q'i:x k-Ø-b'an-ow č'ax-oʔn le: a-na:n
one day ASP-3sg.ABS-do-AF.ANT wash-NOMZR the 2sg.POSS-mother
Your mother (clothes)washes all day long (lit. all day your mother does washing)

As seen above, an agent-focus antipassive verb in the focus construction is intransitive in form but can have two core arguments associated with it, so that in this case, the so-called incorporation of the nominalization fits this construction in K'iche'. Moreover, since the NP in O role in the focus construction need not be non-referential (as the objects incorporated in noun-incorporation constructions in general must be; see Mithun 1984), it is not possible to solve the vexing problem of the two core arguments with an intransitively marked verb through any general appeal to noun-incorporation.

The active counterpart of (73a) is (73b):

- (b) k-Ø-a-yoq' ri a-na:n
ASP-3sg.ABS-2sgERG-mock the your-mother
You mock your mother

In (73a), underlying O has been demoted to an oblique dative construction, *č-e:h ri a-na:n*, the verb is intransitivized, and the underlying A is cross-referenced on the verb by an absolutive affix, *-at-* '2sg.ABS'.

The meaning of the regular active transitive and the absolutive antipassive with underlying O in an oblique construction, while basically the same, is felt to be different by native speakers, with reduced transitivity for the latter. Consider the following pair of sentences:

- (74) (a) š-Ø-u-č'ay ri a lu? ri a šwa:n
ASP-1sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-hit the HON Peter the HON John
John hit Peter
- (b) ri a šwa:n š-Ø-č'ay-on č-e:h ri a lu?
the HON John ASP-3sg.ABS-hit-ABS.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to the HON Peter
John hit Peter

Some speakers prefer to translate (74b) as 'John was fighting with Peter' to show less direct effect by the agent on the derived demoted O – that is, to reflect its lessened transitivity (cf. Larsen 1987).

Unlike the agent-focus antipassive (where sometimes the single absolutive prefix in the verb cross-references either the A-role or the O-role argument), with the absolutive antipassive the single absolutive prefix always unambiguously marks S, the absolutive subject of the intransitivized clause, as in:

- (75) š-ux-tsix-on iw-u:k'
ASP-1pl.ABS-talk-ABS.ANT 2pl.POSS-with
We spoke with you
- (76) k-e:-q'oxoma-n le: ala-b'o:m
ASP-3pl.ABS-play.music-ABS.ANT the boy-pl
The boys play (a musical instrument)

Unlike the agent-focus antipassive which in effect can have two core arguments, neither of which need visibly be relegated to an oblique phrase, the absolutive antipassive construction can have an underlying O-role NP present only if it is demoted to an oblique. Contrast the following pairs of equivalent sentences, containing agent-focus antipassives (the (a) examples) and absolutive antipassive sentences (the (b) examples), which are contrasted below with ungrammatical counterparts in (77c) and (77d) (Sam-Colop 1988: 95):

- (77) (a) le: axčak-i:b' k-e:-tik-ow le: ab'i:š
 the worker-pl ASP-3pl.ABS-plant-AF.ANT the cornfield
 The workers plant the cornfield
- (b) le: axčak-i:b' š-e:-tik-on č-e:h le: ab'i:š
 the worker-pl ASP-3pl.ABS-plant-ABS.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to the cornfield
 The workers planted the cornfield
- (78) (a) le: axčak-i:b' š-e:-to?(o)w le: ala
 the worker-pl ASP-3pl.ABS-help-AF.ANT the boy
 The workers helped the boy
- (b) le: axčak-i:b' š-e:-to?b'-an č-e:h le: ala
 the worker-pl ASP-3pl.ABS-help-ABS.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to the boy
 The workers helped the boy

Note that (77c), agent-focus antipassive with the underlying O in an oblique phrase, and (77d), absolutive antipassive where the underlying O is not in an oblique phrase, are both unacceptable, at least in the major dialects:

- (77) (c) *le: axčak-i:b' š-e:-to?(o)w č-e:h le: ala
 the worker-pl ASP-3pl.ABS-help-AF.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to the boy
 *The workers helped the boy
- (d) *le: axčak-i:b' š-e:-to?b'-an le: ala
 the worker-pl ASP-3pl.ABS-help-ABS.ANT the boy
 *The workers helped the boy

Moreover, in the absolutive antipassive, the oblique phrase (in the relational noun) can optionally be omitted (as in (79a)), but only when it involves a 3rd person singular; compare the following sentences, both of which are grammatical, although the oblique phrase would have been expected also in (79a):

- (79) (a) xači:n š-Ø-čap-an le: ts'unun
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-capture-ABS.ANT the hummingbird
 Who caught the hummingbird?
- (b) xači:n š-Ø-čap-an č-e:h le: ts'unun
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-capture-ABS.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to the hummingbird
 Who caught the hummingbird? (Sam-Colop 1988: 98)

Compare these with the corresponding agent-focus antipassive sentences, where the presence of the oblique makes the sentence (80b) ungrammatical (Sam-Colop 1988: 97, 98):

- (80) (a) xači:n š-Ø-čap-ow le: ts'unun
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-capture-AF.ANT the hummingbird
 Who caught the hummingbird?

- (b) *xači:n š-Ø-čap-ow č-e:h le: ts'unun
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-capture-AF.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to the hummingbird
 *Who caught the hummingbird?

Absolutive antipassive sentences with 3rd person plurals which lack the oblique are not fully grammatical, though sometimes tolerated by some speakers (as in (81a)), contrasted with grammatical (81b). These are contrasted with the agent-focus antipassive in (81c) and (81d), where (81d) shows the ungrammaticality with the dative oblique:

- (81) (a) ?xači:n š-Ø-čap-an le: ak'al-a:b'
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-capture-ABS.ANT the boy-pl
 Who caught the boys? (Sam-Colop 1988: 98)
- (b) xači:n š-Ø-čap-an č-i-k-e:h le: ak'al-a:b'
 who ASP-3sg.ABS-capture-ABS.ANT to-3pl.POSS-to the boy-pl
 Who caught the boys? (Sam-Colop 1988: 98)
- (c) xači:n š-e:-čap-ow le: ak'al-a:b'
 who ASP-3pl.ABS-capture-AF.ANT the boy-pl
 Who caught the boys? (Sam-Colop 1988: 98)
- (d) *xači:n š-e:-čap-ow č-i-k-e:h le: ak'al-a:b'
 who ASP-3pl.ABS-capture-AF.ANT to-3pl.POSS-to the boy-pl
 Who caught the boys? (Sam-Colop 1988: 98)

3.4.1 Functions

The absolutive antipassive has several functions. One is 'to delete or demote an indefinite, obvious, or insignificant transitive object [underlying O] . . . A speaker at times . . . chooses to use the absolutive [antipassive] rather than the active [transitive] voice because he does not consider the direct object as important as the action and the subject/agent who performs it' (Mondloch 1979: 275). Some additional examples of absolutive antipassive with omitted underlying Os are:

- (82) k-Ø-loq'-on ri w-ika:q'
 ASP-3sg.ABS-buy-ABS.ANT the my-nephew
 my nephew buys
- (83) sib'alax k-iš-yax-an-ik
 very.much ASP-2pl.ABS-scold-ABS.ANT-INTR
 You really scold a lot

In some cases the omitted O-role NP is a predictable or prototypical O, as 'song' for the verb 'sing' in (84) (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 525):

- (84) k-e:-b'iša-n le: ak'al-a:b' pa xa:h
 ASP-3pl.ABS-sing-ABS.ANT the child-pl in house
 The children sing indoors

3.4.2 Disambiguating function

As seen above (§2.2), sometimes when both the A and O are 3rd persons of the same number (both singular or both plural), the active transitive sentence is ambiguous. Also, where one of the arguments is *-in-* '1st person singular' (which does not distinguish between 1sg.ABS and 1sg.ERG) and the other participant is a 2nd person reverential form (sg or pl), the active transitive sentence would be ambiguous (see above). In these situations, K'iche' prefers the absolutive antipassive as one mechanism for disambiguating these. Thus, for example, (85a) and (86a) would be ambiguous:

- (85) (a) k-in-to? lah
 (1) ASP-1sg.ERG-help 2sg.ABS.REV
 I helped you
 (2) ASP-1sg.ABS-help 2sg.ERG.REV
 You helped me
- (86) (a) š-in-kuna-x alaq
 (1) ASP-1sg.ERG-cure-TR 2pl.ABS.REV
 I cured you
 (2) ASP-1sg.ABS-cure-TR 2pl.ERG.REV
 You cured me

These are shifted to absolutive antipassive to disambiguate them:

- (85) (b)
 (1) k-in-to?b'-an č-e:h lah
 ASP-1sg.ABS-help-ABS.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to 2sg.REV
 I helped you
 (2) k-to?b'-an lah č-w-e:h
 ASP-help-ABS.ANT 2sg.REV.ABS to-1sg.POSS-to
 You helped me
- (86) (b)
 (1) š-in-kuna-n č-e:č alaq
 ASP-1sg.ABS-cure-ABS.ANT to-to 2pl.ABS.REV
 I cured you
 (2) š-in-kuna-n alaq č-w-e:h
 ASP-1sg.ABS-cure-ABS.ANT 2pl.REV.ABS to-1sg.POSS-to
 You cured me

3.4.3 Hierarchy-linked function

In K'iche', there is a constraint (mentioned above, see §2.1.2) on transitive clauses: 'a third person subject [A] and a second person formal [reverential] object [O] cannot co-occur in an active [transitive] clause . . . such a combination will frequently be expressed in an absolutive antipassive construction'. This constraint is linked to the pronoun/animacy hierarchy. To accommodate the hierarchy restriction, sentences such as the unacceptable (87a) and (88a) are put in the absolutive antipassive, as in (87b) and (88b), to make them acceptable:

- (87) (a) ?k-ki-to? lah
 ASP-3pl.ERG-help 2sg.ABS.REV
 ?They help you
 (b) k-e:-to?b'-an č-e:h lah
 ASP-3pl.ABS-help-ABS.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to 2sg.REV
 They help you¹⁸
- (88) (a) *k-u-tsuku-x lah
 ASP-3sg.ERG-look.for-TR 2sg.REV.ABS
 *He looks for you
 (b) k-Ø-tsuku-n č-e:h lah
 ASP-3sg.ABS-look.for-ABS.ANT to.3sg.POSS-to 2sg.REV
 He looks for you

3.5 *Ambitransitive-like matters and semantic wrinkles*

Let us now return to the topic of ambitransitives – verbs which can be used in both transitive and intransitive clauses. While strictly speaking these do not occur in K'iche', there is a related phenomenon involving unexpected semantic and syntactic outcomes of some verbs when they occur with the 'absolutive' antipassive suffix. In a very few cases, the transitive verb root in antipassive form has a meaning more like a medio-passive than the antipassive, where the single core argument (absolutive) seems to function more as underlying O (or reflexive), rather than as an underlying A, as in:

- (89) (a) š-Ø-wuli-n le: xa:h
 ASP-3sg.ABS-collapse-ABS.ANT the house
 The house fell down (Mondloch 1979: 273, 289)
 (b) š-Ø-wuli-n le: čoma:l aw-uma:l
 ASP-3sg.ABS-collapse-ABS.ANT the meeting 2sg.POSS-by/because
 You wrecked the meeting (lit. The meeting came apart because of you / on your account) (Mondloch 1979: 273, 289; *-wuli* is translated variously as 'to crumble, collapse, dismantle, take apart, wreck')

¹⁸ In this case, *-to?* and *-to(?)b'-* are merely allomorphs of the verb 'to help'.

Contrast this with the fully active transitive in (89c) (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 529):

- (89) (c) le: kab'raqan š-Ø-u-wuli-x le: xa:h
 the earthquake ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-collapse-TR the house
 The earthquake crumbled the house

Sentence (89a) does not mean 'the house collapsed/crumbled something', as would normally be expected if it were derived from an active transitive form, illustrated in (89c). Some other examples of such seemingly medio-passive verbs are seen in the following pairs which compare the sentences which have antipassive morphology (in the (a) examples) with the active transitive sentences (in the (b) examples):

- (90) (a) k-Ø-raqi-n le: pu:puh
 ASP-3sg.ABS-break-ABS.ANT the balloon
 The balloon will break [explode] (Mondloch 1979: 273, 289)

- (b) le: q'a:q' š-Ø-u-raqi-x le: pu:pux
 the fire ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-break-TR the balloon
 The fire broke the balloon (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 537)

- (91) (a) š-Ø-ts'api-n le: u-či? xa:h
 ASP-3sg.ABS-close-ABS.ANT the 3sg.POSS-mouth house
 The door closed (Trechsel 1982: 65)

- (b) le: išoq š-Ø-u-ts'api-x le: u-či? xa:h
 the woman ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-close-TR the 3sg.POSS-mouth house
 The woman closed the door (Trechsel 1982: 65)

- (92) (a) k-Ø-č'ax-an le: po?t
 ASP-3sg.ABS-wash-ABS.ANT the huipil
 The huipil (native blouse) runs (is not colour-fast) (Mondloch 1979: 273, 289)

- (b) k-Ø-u-č'ax le: po?t le: ali
 ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-wash the huipil the girl
 The girl washes the huipil (native blouse)

- (93) (a) la k-e:-tix-ow le: raqantiš
 Q ASP-3pl.ABS-eat-AF.ANT the elephant
 Are elephants eaten? (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 527)

- (b) la k-e:-ki-tix le: raqantiš le: ačix-ab'
 Q ASP-3pl.ABS-3pl.ERG-eat the elephant the man-pl
 Do the men eat the elephants?

The verbs of these (a) sentences have been variously called 'pseudopassives', 'inactives' and 'middles' (Davies and Sam-Colop 1990: 527; cf. Mondloch

1979, Norman and Campbell 1978). Norman's and Campbell's (1978: 151-2) discussion of these is frequently cited; they say:

Apparently these suffixes [antipassive suffixes in Mayan languages] can occur in simple intransitive sentences which have no relation to antipassive constructions. To take an example, both *-Vn* and *-ow* are employed in Quiche antipassive constructions, but they may also derive verb stems which occur in simple intransitive clauses. It is interesting that the verbs derived with these suffixes include both actives and inactives. Examples of actives are plentiful (cf. *kinxojowik* 'I dance' [k-in-šox-ow-ik [ASP-1sg.ABS-dance-AF.ANT-INTR]], *kintz'iib'anik* 'I write' [k-in-ts'i:b'a-n-ik [ASP-1sg.ABS-write-AF.ANT-INTR]]); examples of inactives include *katijowik* 'it is eaten' [k-Ø-tix-ow-ik [ASP-3sg.ABS-eat-AF.ANT-INTR]], *kayub'uwik* 'it is spongy' [k-Ø-yub'-uw-ik [ASP-3sg.ABS-extinguish/tighten-AF.ANT-INTR]], *katz'inowik* 'it is silent' [k-Ø-ts'in-ow-ik [ASP-3sg.ABS-be.silent/desolate-AF.ANT-INTR]], *kawulinik* 'it collapses' [k-Ø-wuli-n-ik [ASP-3sg.ABS-fall.apart-AF.ANT-INTR]], *kajat'inik* 'it is too tight' [k-Ø-xat'i-n-ik [ASP-3sg.ABS-be.tied-AF.ANT-INTR]], *karich'inik* 'it tears' [k-Ø-rič'i-n-ik [ASP-3sg.ABS-tear-AF.ANT-INTR]].

In Quiche . . . one could argue that *-Vn* . . . and *-ow* . . . are neutral voice suffixes which derive a class of neutral intransitive stems whose subjects could be active or inactive, depending on the syntactic construction and the semantic features of the subject and the verb root.

Davies and Sam-Colop, in their relational grammar account of K'iche' antipassives, stress these cases where 'antipassives and "inactives" take the same voice morphology' (1990: 527); they analyse the 'inactives' as 'unaccusatives' (that is, lacking underlying A so that underlying O shifts to surface S; 1990: 535; cf. Sam-Colop 1988: 136). They also argue that K'iche' has 'a small number of bivalent verbs' (1990: 537; as illustrated by the (a-b) pairs in the sentences above: (90a-93b)). However, I agree with Dayley (1981: 25) in treating these as 'a few derived I[ntransitive] V[erb]s that are formally like absolutive antipassives; however, they have been lexicalized so that their Ss refer to the P[atient, i.e. O] of the underlying T[ransitive] V[erb], not the A'.¹⁹

¹⁹ A few verbs have special unexpected meanings, some of which vary from dialect to dialect, when put in the absolutive antipassive, e.g.:

č'ax 'to wash'	č'axa-n 'to wash oneself, for colours to run'
elesa-x 'to remove, take out' (from <i>e:l</i> 'leave' + <i>-sa-</i> 'causative')	elesa-n 'to take after (a chip off the old block)'
k'am 'to get, receive'	k'am-on 'to receive, become habitual'
tix 'to eat'	tix-on 'to eat people' (Proto-K'ichean *tix 'eat meat')
tsaq 'to drop (let fall)'	tsaq-an 'to abort'
ts'uma-x 'to kiss'	ts'uma-n 'to nurse, suckle'

(Mondloch 1979: 291-2; Trechsel 1982: 64)

It should also be noted that a few RTVs can form alternative simple passive forms, either as expected with lengthened root vowel or through suffixing *-ow*:

4 Reflexives

Reflexives are rather straightforward and do not change the valency of the sentence. K'iche' reflexives consist of a regular transitive verb followed by the relational noun *-i:b'* 'self' as the O-role argument, with no argument-transferring derivations. They are unambiguously transitive in structure, with *-i:b'* 'self' following the verb and agreeing in person and number with the A-role verb marking, signalled by the possessive prefixes; since this reflexive word is an external NP, it is cross-referenced by 3sg.ABS in the verb:

(94) *š-Ø-qa-kuna:-x* *q-i:b'*
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1pl.ERG-cure-TR 1pl.POSS-REFL
 We cured ourselves

(95) *k-Ø-a-tixo-x* *aw-i:b'*
 ASP-3sg.ABS-2sg.ERG-teach-TR 2sg.POSS-REFL
 You teach yourself

One interesting fact about the reflexives is that they are an exception to the general rule that A-role participants (ergative, transitive subjects) cannot be extracted when questioned, relativized or focussed in normal transitive verbs but must be cast in the agent-focus antipassive as absolutes (above). With reflexives, the A (ergative, transitive subject) can readily be extracted in order to be relativized, questioned or focussed with no voice change in the verb necessary:

(96) (a) *š-Ø-w-il* *ri ačih ri š-Ø-u-sok*
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-see the man REL ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-wound
r-i:b'
 3sg.POSS-REFL
 I saw the man who wounded himself

(Footnote 19 continued)

č'i:x/č'ix-ow 'to be tolerated/withstood'
q'i:(?)q'i?ow 'to be tolerated/withstood'
ti:x/tix-ow 'to be eaten'
k'i:s/k'is-ow 'to be finished/ended'
ri:q/riq-ow 'to be reached'
ko:l/kol-ow 'to be defended/rescued/saved'

The *-ow* suffix marks the agent-focus antipassives; however, here these are taken to be passives and not antipassives, since they occur with passive meaning and syntax. For example (1a) and (1b) show the two passive alternatives, with the same meaning and with the 'by' phrase:

(1) (a) *š-Ø-k'is-ow* *xuntir le: wah k-uma:l*
 ASP-3sg.ABS-finish-PASS whole the tortilla 3pl.POSS-by
 The tortillas were completely finished off by them
 (b) *š-Ø-k'i:s* *xuntir le: wah k-uma:l*
 ASP-3sg.ABS-finish.PASS whole the tortilla 3pl.POSS-by
 The tortillas were completely finished off by them

If it were a non-reflexive external NP in A role in the subordinate clause being relativized, we would expect the agent-focus antipassive, which in this case turns out to be ungrammatical:

(96) (b) **š-Ø-w-il* *ri ačih ri š-Ø-sok-ow*
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-see the man REL ASP-3sg.ABS-wound-AF.ANT
r-i:b'
 3sg.POSS-REFL
 *I saw the man who wounded himself

The same is true of the focus (cleft) sentences, where those with agent-focus antipassive and reflexive together are ungrammatical (Trechsel 1993: 48):

(97) (a) **in* *š-in-sok-ow* *w-i:b'*
 1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-1sg.ABS-wound-AF.ANT 1sg.POSS-REFL
 *I am the one who wounded myself

(b) **in* *š-Ø-sok-ow* *w-i:b'*
 1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-3sg.ABS-wound-AF.ANT 1sg.POSS-REFL
 *I am the one who wounded myself

This must be expressed with regular active transitive morphology (Trechsel 1993: 49):

(97) (c) *in* *š-Ø-in-sok* *w-i:b'*
 1sg.INDEP.PN ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-wound 1sg.POSS-REFL
 I am the one who wounded myself²⁰

²⁰ Mondloch (1981) and Trechsel (1993: 49) report that the constraint against agent-focus antipassives with reflexives may be more general, since the agent-focus antipassive is also not permitted when the focussed NP is coreferential with the possessor of a NP in O role, as seen in the following:

- (1) **are: le: a šwa:n š-Ø-k'at-ow* *r-aqan*
 FOC the HON John ASP-3sg.ABS-burn-AF.ANT 3sg.POSS-foot
 *John_i is the one who burned his_i foot
 (2) **e: xač'i:n š-e:-tsaq-ow* *ki-xasta:q*
 pl who ASP-3pl.ABS-lose-AF.ANT 3pl.POSS-thing
 *Who_i are the ones who lost their_i things?
 (3) **š-Ø-in-č'ab'e-x* *le: ačih le: š-Ø-xač-ow*
 ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-speak-TR the man REL ASP-3sg.ABS-divorce-AF.ANT
r-išoqi:l
 3sg.POSS-wife
 *I talked to the man_i who divorced his_i wife (Trechsel 1993: 49)

The only way to express these grammatically is with an active transitive verb inflected with both ergative and absolute affixes.

Another somewhat odd piece of behaviour in the K'iche' reflexive is the fact that reflexive clauses can be passivized in the completive passive:

- (98) k-Ø-č'ax-tax w-i:b' w-uma:l
ASP-3sg.ABS-wash-CMPL.PASS 1sg.POSS-REFL 1sg.POSS-by
I will finish washing myself (lit. Myself gets washed by me, i.e., I get washed by myself)
- (99) š-Ø-kuna-tax aw-i:b' aw-uma:l
ASP-3sg.ABS-cure-CMPL.PASS 2sg.POSS-REFL 2sg.POSS-by
You finished curing yourself (lit. Yourself got cured by you, i.e., You got cured by yourself)²¹

Reciprocals are straightforward and essentially like reflexives, as seen in:

- (100) Ø-ki-tere-b'a-l-o?m k-i:b'
3sg.ABS-3pl.ERG-follow-CAUS-Rapid.action-PERF 3pl.POSS-REFL
They are following one after another

One reciprocal construction – an indefinite 'they' – used only for indefinite persons, is essentially merely a passivized version of the transitive reflexive clause, though with no possessive prefixes on the relational noun *i:b'* 'self', which otherwise normally does not occur unpossessed, and with the verb ordinarily only in incomplete aspect (*k-*):

- (101) k-Ø-to:? i:b'
ASP-3sg.ABS-help.PASS REFL
They (indefinite) help each other (lit. self is helped)
- (102) k-Ø-loq'o-š i:b'
ASP-3sg.ABS-love-PASS REFL
They (indefinite) love each other (lit. self is loved) (Mondloch 1979: 211)

²¹ However, according to Ayres (1980: 56), 'the relational noun [*r-uma:l* 3sg.POSS-by] may not be used in conjunction with the reflexive in such passives', as seen, as he reports, in grammatical (1) and (2), but ungrammatical (3) with completive passive and the 'by'-phrase:

- (1) š-Ø-č'ax-tax r-uma:l le: ačih
ASP-3sg.ABS-wash-CMPL.PASS 3sg.POSS-by the man
It got washed by the man / The man finished washing it
- (2) š-Ø-č'ax-tax r-i:b' le: ačih
ASP-3sg.ABS-wash-CMPL.PASS 3sg.POSS-REFL the man
The man finished washing himself (lit. himself got washed by the man)
- (3) *š-Ø-č'ax-tax r-i:b' r-uma:l le: ačih
ASP-3sg.ABS-wash-CMPL.PASS 3sg.POSS-REFL 3sg.POSS-by the man
*The man finished washing himself (lit. himself got washed by the man)

Essentially it is A-role NPs (transitive subjects) which control reflexivization (oblique NPs do not control reflexivization in K'iche'; Larsen and Norman 1979: 349), but the statement of the constraint must be refined to take into account the reciprocal construction in (101) and (102) in which the reflexive can be passivized. Here it would appear that the former O-role reflexive relational noun has been placed in S-role (subject of the intransitivized passive verb); however, in this case the reflexive *i:b'* is unusual, since relational nouns characteristically bear a possessive pronominal prefix reflecting the person and number of the controlling A-role NP, but in this reciprocal construction lack this prefix.

5 Adding an argument to the core: causatives

Causative morphology in K'iche' is rather straightforward and reasonably productive. The suffix *-(i)sa-* derives transitive verbs from intransitives, as seen in the following pairs of sentences:

- (103) (a) š-e:-kam-ik
ASP-3pl.ABS-die-INTR
They died
- (b) š-e:-qa-kam-isa:-x
ASP-3pl.ABS-1pl.ERG-die-CAUS-TR
We killed them
- (104) (a) š-Ø-atin-ik
ASP-3sg.ABS-bathe-INTR
He bathed
- (b) š-Ø-r-atin-isa:-x
ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-bathe-CAUS-TR
She bathed him

The causative of positional stems is signalled by the suffix *-b'a?*, as in:

- (105) š-qa-t'uyu-b'a? lah
ASP-1pl.ERG-sit-CAUS 2sg.ABS.REV
We seated you
- (106) ri tina š-Ø-u-q'oyo-b'a? ri r-a:l pa ri č'a:t
the Tina ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-lie.down-CAUS the 3sg.POSS-child in the bed
Tina lay her child in the bed

6 Argument-manipulating derivation

K'iche' has only one argument-manipulating derivational construction, which is called instrumental voice (but is in fact an instrumental applicative, in the terms of Dixon and Aikhenvald 1997). In the construction Mayanists call 'instrumental voice' or 'instrument advancement', transitive verbs take the suffix *-b'e-*, which promotes the underlying instrument to a derived O (direct object), and the logical O (underlying direct object) is marked obliquely with a relational noun (*-e:h/-e:č*) 'possession' [GEN]). Compare the following pairs of sentences, where the (a) example is a regular active transitive and the (b) example is in instrumental voice:

- (107) (a) *š-Ø-u-rami-x* le: *če:ʔ* le: *ačih č-e:h* xun *č'i:č*
 ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-cut-TR the tree the man to.3sg.POSS-to a metal
 The man cut the tree with a machete
- (b) *č'i:č'* *š-Ø-u-rami-b'e-x* le: *ačih r-e:h* le: *če:ʔ*
 metal ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-cut-INSTR-TR the man 3sg.POSS-GEN the tree
 The man used a machete to cut the tree / A machete is what the man used to cut the tree
- (108) (a) *š-at-in-č'ay* *či* *če:ʔ*
 ASP-2sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-hit with wood
 I hit you with a stick
- (b) *če:ʔ* *š-Ø-in-č'aya-b'e-x* *a:w-e:h*
 wood ASP-3sg.ABS-1sg.ERG-hit-INSTR-TR 2sg.POSS-GEN
 I used a stick to hit you

In (108b), *če:ʔ* 'wood, tree, stick' is promoted to O (direct object) and is cross-referenced in the verb by *-Ø-* '3sg.ABS', while 'you' (the underlying O, as in (108a)) is relegated to an oblique, here as *a:w-e:h* (Sam-Colop 1988: 70).

The NP promoted by the instrumental voice need not 'be a "pure instrument" [though usually it is], but a means of doing something. Thus, it can be a person, an adverb, or a sentence' (Sam-Colop 1988: 104; see Mondloch 1981: 296). For example (Sam-Colop 1988: 121):

- (109) *e: are: q-axa:w k-Ø-ki-toq'i-b'e-x* *r-e:h* *ri pwaq*
 pl FOC our-lord ASP-3sg.ABS-3pl.ERG-ask.for-INSTR-TR 3sg.POSS-GEN the money
 They used God to ask for money

The *-b'e-* instrumental suffix can also be used with intransitive verb stems to make a non-A/non-O NP (i.e. instrument, locative) into a core argument of the verb, as, for example, in:

- (110) *le: ačih le: b'o:la:x* *š-Ø-u-t'uy-uli-b'e-x*
 the man the block.of.wood ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-sit-POSI-INSTR-TR
 The man sat on a block of wood / The man used a block of wood to sit on
- (111) *Ø-tak'-al* le: *ačih č-u-wa* *xa:h*
 3sg.ABS-stand-POSI the man to-3sg.POSS-before house
š-Ø-r-oki-b'e-x le: *ts'iʔ pa xa:h*
 ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-enter-INSTR-TR the dog in house
 (While) the man (was) standing in front of the house, the dog entered the house / (The dog used the man's standing before the house to enter the house) (Kaufman 1990: 79)

It is possible with the *-b'e-* instrumental voice also to topicalize another NP which is not the underlying instrument, as seen in (Kaufman 1990: 79):

- (112) *le: ačih xukub' k-Ø-u-waʔoq-isa-b'e-x* *r-e:h*
 the man trough ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-eat-CAUS-INSTR-TR 3sg.POSS-GEN
le: a:q
 the pig
 As for the man, a trough is what he used to feed the pigs

A NP advanced in the instrumental construction can also be relativized and questioned (Kaufman 1990: 100):

- (113) *le: mu:ruh le: š-Ø-u-rami-b'e-x* le: *če:ʔ* le: *ačih*
 the machete REL ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-cut-INSTR-TR the tree the man
 The machete with which the man cut the wood . . .
- (114) *xa:čike: mu:ruh š-Ø-u-rami-b'e-x* le: *če:ʔ* le: *ačih*
 which machete ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-cut-INSTR-TR the tree the man
 With which machete did the man cut the wood?

Otherwise, K'iche' has no special derivational properties for non-A and non-O participants; all other clauses which in some languages mark a valency of more than two core arguments mark non-A and non-O obliquely as relational nouns in K'iche', as seen in the three-place predicate of (115):

- (115) *le: alah š-Ø-u-ya:* le: *ya:k č-e:č* le:
 the youth ASP-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-give the fox to.3sg.POSS-to the
r-ačiʔil
 his-companion
 The boy gave the fox to his friend / The boy gave his friend the fox

7 Summary

Figure 7.3 summarizes some of the verbal morphology involving transitivity, verb class and valency derivation:

Figure 7.3. Verb-class morphology in K'iche'

	INTRANS	DTV	RTV	POSI
active	-ik (phrase-final)	-x (phrase-final)	-oh (phrase-final)	-iʔ(-ik)
simple passive		-š	V: (in root)	
completive passive		-(V)tax	-(V)tax	
AF.ANT		-n	-ow	
ABS.ANT		-(o)n	-n	
causative		-(i)sa-	-(i)sa-	-b'a-

Figure 7.4 summarizes the choices involved in determining voice markers and valency derivations in K'iche':

Figure 7.4. Voice markers and valency derivation decisions

CLAUSE WITH BOTH A AND O? No = intransitive (-ik phrase-final markers)

Yes:

FOCUS ON RESULT? Yes = -(V)tax completive passive

No:

1ST AND 2ND PERS INFORMAL ARGUMENTS? Yes = active TR (-x/-oh phrase-final markers)

No:

AGENT FOCUS? Yes = -n/-ow agent-focus antipassive

No:

O FOCUS? Yes = V/-š: simple passive

No:

ACTION FOCUS; REDUCED TRANSITIVITY? Yes = -(o)n/-n absolutive antipassive

No = active TR (-x/-oh phrase-final markers)

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