

LINGUIST 601
Assigned on December 12, 2008
Due on December 19, 2008

Assignment 10

For this final assignment, you are welcome to talk to each other, read relevant papers, and consult me or other faculty.

1 Prevent . . . From

Analyze the following set of sentences which all involve the expression *prevent . . . from*. You should find out what kind of complement *prevent . . . from* takes, who assigns case to what, who assigns θ -roles to what, what movements take place, and the overall structure of the *prevent . . . from* construction.

- (1) (all exs. except h and i are from the Wall Street Journal online corpus)
 - a. The law does not prevent witnesses from becoming plaintiffs.
 - b. This phobia prevents us from focusing on real food risks.
 - c. This rule prevents the company from being taken over at too low a price.
 - d. In the novelty filter, light reflected from a scene is passed through a photorefractive crystal that deflects it, preventing the scene from being registered by the systems video camera.
 - e. They say singers who want to prevent their performances from being imitated can simply buy the rights to the songs.
 - f. Philip is prevented from being the plays hero by his subservient position; John is stymied by his character.
 - g. The Hazelwood East High School students merely were prevented from being allowed to force another group, the school administration and ultimately the community to publish their views.
 - h. What can be done to prevent there from being more feral cats?
 - i. Second, there has not been one case of this disease in North America and every safety measure is in place to prevent there from being one.

Please supplement the above examples with any additional examples that you feel are relevant. Google is your friend. You should also feel free to examine closely related predicates such as *keep . . . from* and report on any idiosyncrasies that you might run into.

2 Complex Passives in Danish

This assignment is based on *Creating raising verbs: An LFG-analysis of the Complex Passive in Danish* by Bjarne Ørnsnes. The paper appears in the online proceedings of the LFG06 Conference, Miriam

Butt and Tracy Holloway King (Editors). You can look at the paper but it works with fairly different theoretical assumptions so it might be a good idea to first come up with your own analysis before going to the original.

Your goal is to construct an analysis of the following data using the formal apparatus that you have come across in this class - this could include machinery that we have used in class or machinery that you have seen in the assignments. You will most likely need to make at least one stipulation, most likely more. That is fine. Just be explicit.

While raising verbs do not passivise at all, control verbs in Danish allow two kinds of passives. Consider the examples below:

- (2) Peter forsøger at reparere bilen
Peter is.trying to repair the.car
- (3) a. at reparere bilen forsøges // der forsøges at reparere bilen
to repair the.car is.tried / there is.tried to repair the.car
- b. bilen forsøges repareret
the.car is.tried repaired

Example (2) shows the equi verb *forsøge* in the active construction. When the verb is passivised as in (3) two different kinds of passives are observed. The passive in (3a) follows the pattern of passivisation of transitive verbs: the (infinitival) complement raises to subject (the personal passive) or the (infinitival) complement retains its grammatical function and the passive matrix verb occurs with an expletive *der*/'there' (the impersonal passive).

The Complex Passive appears only to be observed in Danish and Norwegian. However it bears some resemblance to constructions in (dialects of) English and German.

- (4) the CD-player wants mended (Barron 1999)

The difference between this construction and the Danish Complex Passive is that the verb *want* appears in the active voice and that this verb is independently claimed to be a raising verb (in some readings). The matrix verb of the Complex Passive does not exhibit raising properties in the active

The Complex Passive further shows some resemblance to the German Remote Passive (a.o. Müller 2002, Wurmbrand) as exemplified in (5) below

- (5) weil der Wagen oft zu reparieren versucht wurde
because the car-NOM often to repair tried was
'because many attempts were made to repair the car'

The difference between this construction and the Complex Passive is that the verbal complement retains its morpho-syntactic shape as an active infinitive, whereas in the Complex Passive the verbal complement surfaces as a passive past participle. The Complex Passive is so to speak a mixture of the English and the German construction: it contains a passivised equi-verb like the German remote passive and a passive past participle as the Scottish/English raising construction.

2.1 Properties of the Complex Passive

Basic Schema:

- (6) SUBJECT V_{pass} (synthetic or periphrastic) $V_{perfpastpassive}^+$

Recursion:

- (7) bilen forsøges repareret
the.car is.tried repaired
- (8) bilen blev forsøgt repareret
the.car was tried repaired
- (9) bilen blev lovet forsøgt repareret
the.car was promised tried repaired
'a promise was made to try to repair the car'

2.2 Complex-Passive vs. ECM-Passive

The Complex passive has to be distinguished from the superficially similar construction of a passivised ECM-construction (subject-to-object raising). Consider the ECM example in (10). It has an active counterpart where the subject of the passive verb *forvente*/'to expect' surfaces as the object of the matrix verb followed by a passive participle. The relevant example of the active construction is given in (11).

- (10) forslaget forventes vedtaget
the.proposal is.expected adopted
- (11) man forventer forslaget vedtaget
you expect the.proposal adopted

The apparent Complex Passive in (10) may thus be derived by raising of the object to subject as in the canonical case of a passivised transitive verb. For this reason there is nothing special about the passivisation in this case. However, the true Complex Passive does not have an active counterpart where the subject of the Complex Passive surfaces as an object followed by a passive past participle as shown below.

- (12) * Peter forsøger bilen repareret
Peter tries the.car repaired
- (13) ??/* Peter lover bilen forsøgt repareret
Peter promises the.car tried repaired
'Peter promises to have the car repaired'

A Complex Passive is thus a syntactic construction conforming to the schematic characterization given in (6) for which there is no active counterpart where the subject surfaces as an object of the active matrix verb followed by a passive past participle.

2.3 Constraints on the matrix verb

- Obligatory control verbs

The matrix verbs forming the Complex Passive are obligatory control verbs in the sense of Jackendoff and Culicover (2005). The verbs select infinitival complements, denoting controlled actions. Both subject and object control verbs form the Complex Passive.

- Subject control verbs: *forsøge* /‘to try, *agte* /‘to intend’, *simulere* /‘to pretend’ ...
- Object control verbs *bede* /‘to ask to’, *pålægge* /‘to force to’, *forbyde* /‘to forbid’ ...
- Verbs that select an infinitival complement with the infinitive marker *at* /‘to’.

- (14) Peter forsøger at reparere bilen
Peter is.trying to repair the.car

There is one exception to the infinitive marker *at* /‘to’ requirement:

- (15) de beder ham flytte bilen
they ask him to.move the.car

- (16) bilen bedes flyttet
the.car is.asked removed

- Verbs selecting infinitival complements marked by prepositions are systematically excluded from occurring in the Complex Passive:

- (17) der satses på at gennemføre konkurrencen
it is.aimed at.PREP to complete the.contest
‘There was made an attempt to complete the contest.’

- (18) de advarer mod at forsøge at reparere bilen
they warn against to try to repair the.car
‘They warn against trying to repair the car.’

Note that the matrix predicate in (17) is a passive. Presumably the implicit agent of the passive functions as the controller.

- (19) * konkurrencen satses på gennemført
the.contest is.aimed at.PREP completed

- (20) * bilen advares mod forsøgt repareret
the.car is.warned against.PREP tried repaired

- Verbs with an agentive subject

Some verbs such as *glemme* /‘to forget’ select controlled actional complements when combining with an infinitival complement as in example (21a) below. In spite of this, they do not form the Complex Passive as shown in (21b)

- (21) a. han glemte at reparere bilen
he forgot to repair the.car
b. * bilen blev glemt repareret
the.car was forgotten repaired

2.4 Constraints on the infinitival complement

- Only embedded participles

It is a defining characteristic of the Complex Passive that the second passive form is a past participle. Infinitival complements are excluded even though the active verb selects an infinitival complement.

- (22) ??/* bilen forsøges at blive repareret
the.car is.tried to be repaired

- Only participles with a suppressed argument position

The Complex Passive is possible with passivised transitive verbs (23), passivised transitive verbs with expletive subjects (24), passive unergative verbs (25) and passive unergative verbs with prepositional complements (26).

- (23) en bil forsøges repareret
a car is.tried repaired

- (24) der forsøges repareret en bil
there is.tried repaired a car

- (25) der forsøges løbet
there is.tried run

- (26) der forsøges indrapporteret på en ikke-eksisterende medarbejder
there is.tried reported on a non-existing employee

Excluded from the Complex Passive are active past participles (27) and participles based on unaccusative verbs (28) (contrary to Norwegian).

- (27) * Peter forsøges læst bogen ACTIVE
Peter is.tried read the.book
'Someone tries to make Peter read the book'

- (28) * Peter forsøges omkommet
Peter is.tried died

- The subject of the matrix verb is the subject of the most embedded participle

- (29) bilen forsøges repareret
the.car is.tried repaired

- (30) a. der forsøges repareret en bil
there is.tried repaired a car

- b. * der forsøges repareret bilen
there is.tried repaired the.car

- The raised constituent cannot stop half-way

- (31) * der loves en bil forsøgt repareret
there is.promised a car tried repaired

3 Clausal expletive *it*

3.1 Subject Expletives

it in sentences like the following is often referred to as 'expletive'.

- (32) a. It is likely that John will leave.
b. It is probable that John will leave.
c. It seems that John will resign.

Is this necessary? Some but not all of the above could be taken as instances of extraposition.

- (33) a. That John will leave is likely.
b. That John will leave is probable.
c. *That John will resign seems.

Consider a range of other predicates that allow for clausal expletive *it* in subject position and discuss which ones allow for an extraposition analysis and which ones do not. What generalization emerges? Could the expletive analysis be an implementation of an extraposition analysis?

3.2 Object Expletives

It is often claimed that there is no such thing as an object expletive. Consider the following data and discuss if the claim that there are no object expletives can be upheld. Examine critically what the very notion 'object expletive' means - does it mean an expletive in a surface object position or an expletive that is merged as a sister to a verb?

- (34) a. Everyone would prefer it (for you) to come early.
b. I dislike it that he is so cruel.
c. I dislike it for him to be so cruel.
d. I dislike it very much that he is always late.
e. I didn't suspect it for a moment that you would fail.
f. They doubt it (very much) that you will go.
g. I regret it very much that we could not hire Mosconi.
h. I resent it greatly that you didn't call me.
i. I don't mind it very much that he did that.
- (35) a. They never mentioned it to the candidate that the job was poorly paid.
b. We can take it for granted that there will be an appeal.
c. I have it on good authority that the CIA was never informed.
d. We demand it of our employees that they wear a tie.
e. Don't bruit it about that their marriage is on the rocks.
f. Don't spread it around that I'm giving you this assignment.
g. I blame it on you that we can't go.

- h. They brought it to his attention that his daughter was sick.
- (36) You can depend on it that John will be late
- (37) a. They mentioned it immediately to the candidate that the job was poorly paid.
 b. *They mentioned immediately it to the candidate that the job was poorly paid.
 c. I take it then that you won't be joining us.
 d. *I take then it that you won't be joining us.
- (38) a. I consider it (to be) obvious that you should have done that.
 b. I prevented/kept it from being obvious that we were late.
- (39) a. I figured it out to be more than 3000 miles from here to Tulsa.
 b. I figured it out to be impossible for us to get there by noon.
 c. She made it out to be only 49% probable that we would get there on time.
 d. He reasoned it out to be incorrect to make that assumption.
- (40) a. I can prove it to your satisfaction to be impossible to construct all the parse trees in polynomial time.
 b. They reported it to the chief to be impossible to obtain useful concessions.
 c. I finally proved it to Bob to be possible to teach X' Theory to undergrads.
 d. I expected it, correctly, to be hard to teach that stuff.
 e. I can prove it easily to be impossible to solve that problem.