

LINGUIST 601
Assigned on December 5, 2006
Due on December 12, 2006

Assignment 12

1 The Assignment

This assignment is based on *Creating raising verbs: An LFG-analysis of the Complex Passive in Danish* by Bjarne Ørsnes. The paper appears in the online proceedings of the LFG06 Conference, Miriam Butt and Tracy Holloway King (Editors).

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.

2 Complex Passives in Danish

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

- (1) Peter forsøger at reparere bilen
Peter is.trying to repair the.car
- (2) 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 (1) shows the equi verb *forsøge* in the active construction. When the verb is passivised as in (2) two different kinds of passives are observed. The passive in (2a) 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.

- (3) 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 (4) below

- (4) 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.

3 Properties of the Complex Passive

Basic Schema:

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

Recursion:

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

3.1 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 (9). 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 (10).

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

The apparent Complex Passive in (9) 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.

- (11) *Peter forsøger bilen repareret
 Peter tries the.car repaired

- (12) ??/* 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 (5) 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.

3.2 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 selects an infinitival complement with the infinitive marker *at*/'to'.

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

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

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

- (15) der satses på at gennemføre konkurrencen
 it is.aimed at.PREP to complete the.contest

- (16) de advarer mod at forsøge at reparere bilen
 the warn against to try to repair the.car

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

- (18) * 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 (19a) below. In spite of this, they do not form the Complex Passive as shown in (19b)

- (19) a. han glemte at reparere bilen
 he forgot to repair the.car

- b. * bilen blev glemt repareret
 the.car was forgotten repaired

3.3 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.

(20) ??/* 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 (21), passivised transitive verbs with expletive subjects (22), passive unergative verbs (23) and passive unergative verbs with prepositional complements (24).

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

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

(23) der forsøges løbet
there is.tried run

(24) 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 (25) and participles based on unaccusative verbs (26) (contrary to Norwegian).

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

(26) * Peter forsøges omkommet
Peter is.tried died

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

(27) bilen forsøges repareret
the.car is.tried repaired

(28) 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

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