
The borrowed auxiliary. On the periphrastic passive in Danish and Swedish

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The periphrastic passive voice construction in modern Danish and Swedish is formed with auxiliary *bli* ‘become/stay’ and past participle. It has evolved from a formally identical construction with auxiliary *varda* ‘become’, which originally was a mutative construction (Toyota 2009). Further developments lead to its grammaticalisation as a periphrastic passive and to suppression of *varda* by *bli*. The latter is a loanword from Middle Low German (MLG), introduced to Danish and Swedish in early 1300s in time of a highly intensive, asymmetrical contact between the languages, in which MLG had a dominant position and which took place in Scandinavia as well as outside its borders. The verb was originally used in the lexical meaning ‘to stay’ (Skrzypek 2020). Gradually, *varda* and *bliva* converged in terms of meaning (Lundquist 2014) and constructional potential (Skrzypek in preparation).

The question we want to address is to what extent the MLG verb *bliven* was borrowed in Danish and Swedish with its constructional potential, i.e., whether it was used in the same array of constructions in Old Danish (ODa) and Old Swedish (OSw) as in MLG. The constructions are here understood as form-meaning pairings, and the study will be conducted within the framework of CxG. Based on a corpus of representative MLG, ODa and OSw texts we will establish the constructional potential of *bli* in all languages and analyse its dynamics between 1300 and 1550. We will further consider the circumstances which have led to its convergence with the indigenous *varda* and the resulting grammaticalisation of the periphrastic passive construction.

References: • Lundquist, Björn. 2014. *Bliva and varda. Nordic Atlas of Language Structures (NALS) Journal* 1:270–79. • Skrzypek, Dominika. 2020. The Swedish *bli*-passive in a diachronic perspective. *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow* V(2):301–34. • Skrzypek, Dominika. *Variation and change in passive auxiliaries. The history of the periphrastic passive in Swedish*. Ms in preparation. • Toyota, Junichi. 2009. Passive as a tense-aspectual construction revisited: the case of Germanic languages. *Groninger Arbeiten zur Germanistischen Linguistik* 49:200–14.