

Passive as a tense-aspectual construction revisited: the case of Germanic languages

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1. Introduction

The passive voice has received much attention from a number of researchers from a variety of theoretical backgrounds. In spite of the popularity of the topic, however, one important factor, in particular, is often overlooked, which characterises the general construction of the passive. The passive is indeed normally marked by an affix attached to a verb, as is often found in the formation of tense or aspect. Auxiliary verbs are also used in the languages of Europe and South–East Asia, although the status of auxiliaryhood in some of them is open to questioning (see Toyota 2008: 164–167). What is unique in these languages is that tense-aspectual features seem to be related to the periphrastic passive voice. This relationship is not normally found in the morphological passive, with the exception of languages such as Nimboran (Indo–Pacific) or Mwera (Niger–Kordofanian) (see Toyota and Mustafović 2006: 193–194). In this paper, an analysis of why this relationship can only be found in Indo–European languages will be proposed, and the manner in which the various degrees of passiveness are related to different stages in grammaticalisation will be assessed. Although the whole range of Indo–European languages is considered, the main argument will focus on Germanic languages. A review of previous research concerning various tense and aspect influences on the passive voice will also be presented. Such influence can best be exemplified by looking at the origin of the passive voice in Indo–European (IE) languages (and Proto–Indo–European (PIE)). A language–specific case study of Germanic languages concerning the relationship between passive and tense-aspect will be carried out. Language-internal analysis shows that English behaves in a slightly different way from other Germanic languages, especially with regards to the passive voice, which will subsequently be highlighted, along with tokens of Anglocentricism in grammatical analysis.

It should be noted that only periphrastic constructions relevant to the passive are studied herein and that morphological forms have not been included, despite the fact that some Germanic languages use a specific suffix to form the passive. For instance, some Northern Germanic languages have the suffix *-s*, as shown in example (1) from Swedish. This structure has a different developmental path, and it is not related to the periphrastic form at any stage in its evolution. The suffix is derived from the older Scandinavian reflexive marker *-sk*, which is believed to occasionally express reflexiveness (see Steblin–Kamenskij 1953: 239, cited in Geniušienė 1987: 245). Its grammaticalisation is assumed to have originated in Old Scandinavian.

- (1) Swedish
Té servera–s inte på rummen
tea serves–REF NEG in rooms.the
'Tea is not served in the rooms.'

2. *Tense-aspect and the passive*

The late 80s and early 90s witnessed an active debate concerning the passive as an aspectual construction. Scholars like Beedham (1981, 1982, 1987) and Andersen (1991: 92–95) regard the English passive as a grammatical construction which expresses a perfective aspect. In Beedham's words, for instance: "the passive sentence portrays both the occurrence of an event and the state that arises from the event" (Beedham 1982: 45). Thus, the argument is that examples like (2) would mean 'John has read the book' rather than 'John read the book'. In other words, the meaning is closely connected to a current state resulting from a past event. This assumption, however, was criticized by scholars such as Palmer (1994: 139) who argues that the resulting state can be gained from the perfective passive (*viz. The book has been read by John*), whereas (2) should correspond to the meaning of 'John read the book.'

- (2) *The book was read by John.*

Considering that both *be* and *have* existed as perfective auxiliaries from OE, it is difficult to imagine that the grammaticalisation of *be* used in the passive may have occurred prior to ME. In this respect, Denison (1993: 426) notes the following:

Main verb [*be*] has never formed a perfect with auxiliary [*be*], but rather – since very late [OE] – always with [*have*]. A syntagm consisting of grammaticalised passive [*be*] + past participle, on the other hand, would arguably have been a mutative intransitive, precisely the sort of syntagm liable to form its perfect with [*be*]; ... So perhaps passive [*be*] was still an ungrammaticalised main verb. By the time it was grammaticalised, perfect [*be*] was obsolete.

However, as stated earlier, the periphrastic construction started as a perfective construction, and in early English it was a perfective passive construction. For instance, PDE *My life has been ruined* used to be expressed without the perfective marker as in *My life is ruined*. One such instance from OE is shown in (3). Notice the absence of a perfective auxiliary. See also Visser (1963–73: §1909) for further examples.

- (3) Old English
Ða him ða ðæt sæd broth wæs, ...
when him then the seed brought was
'When the seed had been brought to him, ...' (*Bede* 4 29.366.30)

Some scholars like Rydén & Brorström (1987: 24) and Denison (1998: 183–184) observe that there is some syntactic overlapping in the perfective aspect and the passive, and that such an overlap lasted until the 19th century (Denison 1998: 183–184). Consider the later instance shown in example (4). However, the disappearance of the overlap suggested during this period of time has to be questioned. Toyota (2008: 15–28) argues that though this may be deemed to be the period during which the *be*-perfect with mutative verbs disappeared, it is nonetheless possible to find ambiguous examples between *be*-perfect and *be*-passive in PDE. The passive, in general, does not express the actor overtly, making the interpretation even more difficult in some cases. Consider the example in (5).

- (4) *Our hopes are again revived of seeing the Viceroy of Mexico.* (1797 Nelson, *Letters*, ed. Naish (1958) 190 p., 328 (30 Jun.))
- (5) *I was knocked out, but I bear Rossi no ill-will. The fight is finished.* (LOB N23 96-97)

If these are to be considered as instances of *be*-perfect, then no actor is implied, and the verbal phrase only refers to the current state of the subject. If presence of an actor is assumed, however, it is somehow considered to be related to the passive. Any claim as to which type of construction an example like (5) belongs to would be arbitrary, and the decision often depends on researchers' theoretical framework. We will return to a specific case in English later in Section 5, but example (5) indicates that there appears to be an intermediate stage between the dynamic and stative, even in PDE. Although the *be*-perfect more or less disappeared around the 19th century, ambiguous cases like (5) above still remain in the language to this day.

3. Origin of the IE periphrastic passive voice

As mentioned in the previous section, the periphrastic construction with the copula is the origin of the passive voice in IE languages. It was initially used for the perfective aspectual construction. What is unique in this construction is that the undergoer was used as the subject by default, and when the actor had to be expressed, it was expressed in an oblique case or in a prepositional phrase. The origin of this structure can be traced back to a PIE inactive construction (see Gamkrelidze and Ivanov 1995: 238–239): PIE divided nouns and verbs into two categories, active and inactive. The active type can initiate action on their own, while the inactive type lacks such ability. Thus, the default undergoer subject is a remnant of the earlier inactive structure where the subject was unable to initiate an action, since it was merely the recipient of an effect caused by an action. Earlier markings of the active-inactive distinction on the verb are no longer visible after the division of PIE into its daughter languages, but

some traces can be found, as in the origin of the periphrastic passive voice. One such case is shown in (6) from Gothic, where the undergoer *marei* ‘sea’ is in the nominative, but the actor *winds* ‘wind’ is in the dative. The alignment of arguments *winds* ‘wind’ in the nominative and *marei* ‘sea’ in the accusative was previously uncommon in the perfective aspect. So this aspect was expressed defectively.

- (6) Gothic
Iþ marei winda mikilamma waiandin
and sea.NOM wind.DAT great blowing
urraisida was
raised.MASC.NOM.SG was
‘and a great blowing wind raised/has raised the sea.’ (John 6.18)

This periphrastic structure has often been misunderstood by scholars as illustrating the passive voice, but one should be careful in dealing with such a case. This construction appears to be a passive in terms of structure when compared to the PDE periphrastic construction, as in (2). However, in the absence of alternative (i.e. actor-orientation) for the expression of the perfective aspect in Gothic, it is best to consider earlier periphrastic examples as illustrations of a split-ergative system conditioned by tense-aspect (see Dixon 1994: 97–101). The split-ergative system is known to be used among IE languages, such as Hindi, Kurdish (Indo-Iranian), Irish (Celtic), Serbian and other South Slavic languages (see Orr 1984, 1989, Toyota and Mustafović 2006, Toyota 2007b: 149), as exemplified below in examples from Irish (7) and Serbian (8). In these languages, the same aspect cannot be expressed with the actor as grammatical subject, just as in Gothic.

- (7) Irish
Tá mo t-obair na bhaile críochnaiegh
be.PRS my work the home finish.VN
‘I have finished my work.’ (Lit. ‘My home work is finished’)

- (8) Serbian
Dokaz je pronađen (od naučnika)
proof is find.PST.PRT.PASS of scientist
‘The scientist has found the proof.’ (Lit. ‘The proof is found (by the scientist)’)

The formation of the periphrastic passive is somehow accidental since changes in other constructions were required **to overtake the functional load of aspectual expression**. Only after the invention of other aspectual constructions without the copula could the periphrastic construction with the copula be re-analysed as a passive construction. A common strategy to turn the undergoer-oriented perfective aspect into the actor-oriented one is the use of *have* as an auxiliary instead of the copula (see argument by Benveniste 1952; Allen 1964; Peterson 1998; Bynon 2005 based on Indo-Iranian languages). What could be revolutionary in the introduction of *have* is

that the perfective aspect can be expressed with actor orientation. It is not an accident that *have* came to replace *be*. The most significant motivation was the change in orientation, but another motivation is that they are very similar to each other. For instance, both *be* and *have* can be deictic, in a sense that *have* has ‘take’ and ‘give’ as a sign of ‘towards the speaker’ and ‘away from the speaker’, respectively, concerning possession. *Be* has ‘go’ and ‘come’ in a similar fashion concerning locomotion (see Benveniste 1960: 121; Markey 1986: 8). Recall the example of the perfective aspect from Gothic in (6). The actor was expressed in the dative, and possession was expressed with the dative possessor in earlier Gothic, as shown in (9). This is not a coincidence, but shows that the actors in both examples are somehow considered identical, which in turn is shown by the same case marking. Note that Gothic used both a periphrastic construction (location schema in Heine 1993: 47) and a lexical verb to express possession.

- (9) Gothic
 Jah ni was im barne
 and not was they.DAT children.NOM
 ‘They had no children.’ (Luke 1.7) (Lit. ‘Children were not to them’)

The emergence of the *have*-perfective can vary among the various IE languages, but if this structure exists in modern languages, it is because it was already forming circa AD 700. The structure itself can be observed in languages older than this particular time period, but the actual function as an aspectual marker remains arguable. The late development of the *have*-perfective is partly due to the development of the verb *have* itself. Particularly amongst Germanic languages, its etymology has not been clearly identified, but there are several theories. For instance, Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995: 250–251) state that it developed from verbs meaning ‘hold’ in some IE languages, but various etymological dictionaries of English (see, for example, Onions 1966) state PDE *have* stems from *heave*. Interestingly, the OED does not provide much detail of earlier etymological information, and Lehmann (1986: 167, 1989: 237–238) states that the origin of Gothic *haban* ‘have’ is still disputable.

It is worth mentioning that even after the establishment of the *have*-perfective, the *be*-perfective remained in use exclusively with mutative verbs (univalent verbs denoting change of state or locomotion), and also that the copula structure always enforces agreement between the subject and the past participle, as exemplified in (10) from Old Scandinavian. The *be*-perfective with univalent verbs did not affect the status of the passive, since the passive requires both actor and undergoer in the argument structure. The *have*-perfective in its initial stage has a mixture of the actor-orientation and the morphosyntactic characteristics of the *be*-perfective, such as agreement. The copula structure always enforces agreement between the subject and the past participle (e.g. Gothic in (6) and Old Scandinavian in (10)). As for its *have* counterpart, agreement is not normally required, but there are some such cases in earlier examples. Both (11) and (12), also from Old Scandinavian, illustrate an earlier stage of the *have*-perfective. Notice the presence of agreement in (12) between the

subject (e.g. *Helgi*) and the past participle (e.g. *sendan*) although (11) does not exemplify the same feature.

Old Scandinavian (Faarlund 1994: 57)

- (10) *Nú er hér kominn Egill*
now is hither come.PST.PRT.SG.MASC.NOM Egil.NOM
'Egil has come hither.'
- (11) *Vér hofum fengit mikinn skaða*
We have.PRS.1PL suffer.PST.PRT much injury
'We have suffered a great injury.' (no agreement)
- (12) *mik hefir Helgi hingat sendan*
I.ACC have.3SG Helgi.NOM hither sent.PST.PRT.SG.MASC.ACC
'Helgi has sent me hither.' (with agreement)

Only after the establishment of the *have*-perfective (like example (11)) can the earlier periphrastic construction with a copula be re-analysed as the passive, since the new structure made the old one functionless, causing it to become stranded. Those languages that have a split-ergative system as shown in (7) and (8) either lack the verb *have* (as in the case of the Celtic languages which express the possession periphrastically, similar to (9)) or do not involve *have* in tense-aspectual constructions as in the case of Slavic languages in which there is a lexical verb *imati* 'have', but this verb is not used as an auxiliary except in Czech, Kashubian and Macedonian (See Toyota and Mustafović 2006: 203). It is because of the absence of *have* that the passive voice in IE languages is periphrastic, involving a copula verb. This type of historical development is rather rare outside of IE languages. As Dryer (1982: 55) claims, "the use of copula plus an adjective in passive clause is rare outside Indo-European. In most languages, the passive is formed by adding a passive suffix to the verb." Haspelmath (1990: 29) also expresses the same view. Aside from IE languages, one can potentially find a similar construction in the Finno-Ugric languages; but its passive status is questionable, and it could be related to other grammatical functions.

In comparison with the morphological passive as in (1), where the passive is formed with the addition of an-*s* suffix, it is not always easy to decide whether one is dealing with a periphrastic passive or an aspectual construction. This is due to its historical origin and its subsequent developmental path: the morphological passive had its own catalyst for change in the past, yet the periphrastic construction evolved seemingly as a result of coincidence, having turned into the passive after the establishment of the *have*-perfective. In other words, the periphrastic passive had to rely on other constructions for its existence, and this affects its degree of development as shown in the following sections.

4. Passiveness in the Germanic languages

Bearing in mind the basic developmental path explained in the previous section, let us examine a language-specific case of historical changes in Germanic languages. As already mentioned in the introduction, the morphological passive found in Northern Germanic languages is not discussed here, and only the periphrastic construction is analysed. In the history of Germanic languages, the earlier perfective construction expressed with two auxiliaries –*be* and *become*– is characteristic. The former overtly expressed state, and the latter, dynamic action. This dichotomy has been preserved in Germanic languages (see Table 1) except in English, where OE and ME *weorðan* ‘become’ died out during lME/eModE. Note, however, that the disappearance of this verb had little to do with the passive, although it may have accelerated the grammaticalisation process.

Table 1. Choice of passive auxiliaries in the Modern Germanic languages

	Language	Auxiliaries
NORTH	Danish	(<i>være</i> ‘be’), <i>blive</i> ‘become’
	Faroese	(<i>vera</i> ‘be’), <i>verða</i> ‘become’, <i>blíva</i> ‘become’
	Icelandic	(<i>vera</i> ‘be’), <i>verða</i> ‘become’
	Norwegian	(<i>være</i> ‘be’), <i>bli</i> ‘become’, <i>få</i> ‘get’**
	Swedish	(<i>vare</i> ‘be’), <i>bli</i> ‘become’
WEST	Dutch	<i>zijn</i> ‘be’*, <i>worden</i> ‘become’, <i>krijgen</i> ‘get’**
	English	<i>be</i> , <i>get</i>
	Frisian	<i>wêze</i> ‘be’*, <i>wurde</i> ‘become’
	German	<i>sein</i> ‘be’, <i>werden</i> ‘become’

Notes: () = auxiliary is used, but rarely; * = auxiliary is used, but under certain constraints (see (13)); ** = auxiliary is used in certain syntactic environments (see (15) and (16))

Haspelmath (1990: 38) claims that there is no direct relation between passives and states. His theory goes against the one proposed by Givón (1990: 567–572), who claims that the passive is used to describe the result of an event (i.e. stativisation). State may be related to the passive historically because the origin of the periphrastic passive is often stative, but state is not related through synchronic characteristics. Thus, Haspelmath’s statement is more valid from a cross-linguistic perspective. However, although the construction with the copula can now function as the passive, the structure seems to preserve still many of the characteristics of the perfective aspect. In some extreme cases, the *be*-periphrastic form is strictly tied to the perfective aspect. Dutch and Frisian, for instance, have an identical form to the English *be*-passive, but its aspect is always perfect (i.e. stative) as exemplified in (13) in Dutch. On the contrary, the English *be*-periphrastic structure is more dynamic, as exemplified in (14a). This contrast concerning English might be in some part due to the lack of a *become* counterpart as an auxiliary for about 300 or 400 years (between 1500 and 1800). The emergence of the *get*-passive is very recent, and it has had little effect on the development of the *be*-passive (see Toyota 2007a; Toyota 2008: Chap. 6). The English passive can be expressed in a specific syntactic structure in PDE as with the perfect auxiliary *have* as in (14b) and the progressive auxiliary *be* as in (14c).

Other languages do not have such syntactic environments to test dynamic readings, but the difference is made clear by the choice to use the auxiliary *become* in other languages. Although the frequency of the *be*-passive is in general lower than that of the *become*-passive, it seems that the choice of auxiliary is closely related to the aspectual distinction which goes against typological characteristics.

(13) Dutch

Jan is slecht behandeld
Jan is badly treat.PST.PRT
'Jan has been treated badly.'

- (14) (a) *The story was read by John.* (past)
(b) *The story has been read by John.* (present perfect)
(c) *The story was being read by John.* (past progressive)

Furthermore, the aspectual distinction concerning *be* and *become* is mainly due to the lexical aspect of the auxiliary since *be* is inherently stative and *become* is dynamic. Consequently, the status of auxiliaryhood of these verbs is questionable. Where grammaticalisation is concerned, it is generally stated that semantic bleaching is part of the process of forming an auxiliary from a lexical verb. Thus, if a verb functions as a true auxiliary, the overall aspectual interpretation should depend on the aspect derived from the past participle. For instance, *zijn* 'be' is used in the Dutch example (13), and the overall aspectual interpretation is stative, and there does not seem to be any sign of grammaticalisation as far as the aspectual distinction and the copula verb are concerned. In this specific case, it is possible to consider that *zijn* 'be' functions as a perfective auxiliary, but it is not a fully-grammaticalised passive auxiliary. This is a peculiarity of Germanic-based languages, in which dynamic aspect gained from the *become*-passive can be a perfective construction in disguise. These languages express the perfective aspect with *have*, and the structure with *be* and *become* makes a good candidate for the expression of the passive. The only exception in this respect is the English language, since the *be*-passive can be fully dynamic in terms of aspect, as in (14a) which can be considered an illustration of the grammaticalisation of *be* as a passive auxiliary.

Apart from *be* and *become*, some languages like Norwegian, Dutch and English use *get* as an auxiliary. The condition for the use of this auxiliary in Norwegian and Dutch is that the passive subject is derived from the indirect object, as exemplified in (15) and (16). English also has the *get*-passive, but the latter has no such syntactic restriction and the subject can be derived from both the direct and indirect object, as demonstrated in (17). Generally speaking, the use of *get* as an auxiliary is closely tied to a specific argument structure, and it is not used as freely as *be* or *become*. This is partly due to the origin of the construction as the *get*-passive is often derived from the causative. Thus, the two sides of the origin argument are the *get* + adjectival participle origin and the *get*-causative origin. The former appears to be structurally much closer to the *get*-passive, but its morphosemantic characteristics cannot be accounted for by this origin explanation. The latter case is explainable through the use of the reflexive in conjunction with the causative (i.e. causative reflexive), which

clarifies peculiar functions associated with the *get*-passive (see Toyota 2007, 2008: Chap. 6, for more examples and literature cited there).

(15) Norwegian (Askedol 1994: 246)

Han fikk tilsendt bøkene
he get.PST send.PST.PRT book.PL.DEF
'He was sent the books/The books were sent to him.'

(16) Dutch (De Schutter 1994: 471)

Ze kregen het uiteindelijk toch nog toegestuurd
they get.PST it finally nevertheless still send.PST.PRT
'In the end, they were sent it anyway.'

(17) (a) *John got punished.*
(b) *John got sent a book.*

The periphrastic structure in the Germanic languages has an undergoer subject, and the actor is optionally expressed in a prepositional phrase. Superficially, the structure itself looks like the passive. However, as we have seen, there are a couple of characteristics that militate against a passive reading. Aspect is one such instance. State is not supposed to be related to the passive, but the *be*-passive still seems to denote stative aspect occasionally, and dynamic aspect is exclusively expressed with the *become*-passive. These factors illustrate the fact that the grammaticalisation of *be* and *become* has not progressed much towards forming an auxiliary and that semantic bleaching has not yet happened. Furthermore, the lack of auxiliarisation makes the passiveness of the periphrastic construction less prototypical from a typological point of view. The increasing reliance on *become* indicates that its aspectual structure is becoming ever more like the passive, but the process is not yet complete. Except, that is, where the English language is concerned. As already demonstrated, the *be*-passive in English shows evidence of grammaticalisation, and can be considered as a full-fledged passive. Earlier studies focusing on the relationship between aspect and the passive were perhaps right in envisaging a possible aspectual influence on the periphrastic construction. However, this cannot be a generalisation pertaining solely to English. The following section addresses this in more detail.

5. Peculiarities of the English passive

The English passive, with both *be* and *get*, seems to be unique in exhibiting many different features particularly relevant to historical development. As illustrated in Table 1, there is clear uniformity in the choice of the auxiliary related to the periphrastic passive in Germanic languages except, of course, in English. Its passive has different historical developmental paths and synchronic characteristics.

The perfective aspectual implication is totally lost in the English *be*-passive. English is rather unique in the sense that there are certain syntactic environments such as the progressive or perfective aspects which indicate clearly that the structure is more dynamic, and one should note that the perfective passive was already

established during IME (Mitchell 1985: §753), even though there are sporadic cases in EME (19) and even in OE (18) (Visser 1963–73: §2161). Thus, one can see that the independence of the verb phrase ‘*be* + past participle’ as a cluster began reasonably early, at least in ME. It may be difficult to deduce the exact reason for the development of the ‘*be* + past participle’ cluster, **but this change only occurred** in English: *be* went through a full range of grammaticalisation, and its aspectual feature is now totally transparent after semantic bleaching. The overall aspectual interpretation of the passive clause is derived from the past participle of the main verb.

(18) Old English

Ic hæbbe on fulluhte beon gefullod
I have in baptism been baptised
‘I have been baptised in baptism.’ (LK (WSCp) 12.50)

(19) Early Middle English

& *forðatt Crist ær hæfde ben Fullhtnedd att*
and because Christ earlier had been baptised by
teʒʒre maʒʒstre
their master
‘and because Christ had been earlier baptised by their master.’ (c1180 *Orm.*
18232)

Both *be*- and *have*-perfective existed in the earlier written record (circa 700), but the *be*-perfective was initially more dominant and the *have*-perfective was restricted to verbs with direct objects. It is after *circa* 1100 that the *have*-perfective overtook the whole paradigm of the perfective aspect, although the *be*-perfective could occur with mutative verbs and in some sporadic cases such as (4) and (5) above. The passive-like constructions can even be found in OE, but they are most likely to be a case of split-ergative. After OE, which coincides with the development of the full-fledged *have*-perfective, earlier instances of the passive emerged, but there was a period when both the *be*-perfective and the *be*-passive co-existed for 300 to 400 years, and some can even be found in PDE (e.g. (5)). Nevertheless, the development of overt marking of the perfective aspect on the passive is one of the crucial signs of the grammaticalisation of the passive auxiliary, since earlier *be* seems to be considered both as a passive and a perfective auxiliary. In the *have*-perfect, the verbal cluster ‘*be* + past participle’ grammatically behaves more like a verbal, rather than an adjectival, phrase.

In the process of auxiliarisation of *be*, one may argue that the onset of the process could be due in part to the disappearance of the *become* counterpart in early English (i.e. *weorðan* ‘become’). However, other mutative verbs could have replaced *weorðan* ‘become’, and yet they did not. Synchronically, this may indicate that the *be*-*get* dichotomy in PDE establishes a similar aspectual distinction to the one found in other Germanic languages between *be* and *become*, but this cannot be the case, since both the *be*-passive and the *get*-passive express dynamic aspect. In addition,

the existence two auxiliaries is a mere coincidence, since the history of the *get*-passive is not related to aspect at all, but to the causative. Its frequency increased only after 1800, and historically speaking, *be* went through many different stages and existed as a sole auxiliary for the passive for about 400 years. As for *get*, it still retains many of the features as the lexical verb, and it has not shown any sign of grammaticalisation as an auxiliary.

Earlier in Section 2, it was shown that some cases like examples (4) and (5) are ambiguous in terms of aspectual interpretation, between a stative and dynamic reading. This kind of ambiguity is argued in Toyota (2008) to be due to the fact that many different constructions are involved in the periphrastic construction in English. In this work, three different constructions were identified in what appears to be the *be*-passive: namely verbal passive, adjectival passive and resultative. The deciding factors are twofold: orientation and aspect. Orientation can be made either towards an actor or undergoer, but these can also be absent. Undergoer-orientation is found in the verbal and adjectival passive, but it is absent in the resultative. As for aspect, the adjectival passive and the resultative are stative, but the verbal passive is dynamic. These characteristics are summarised in Table 2 along with the active voice to show a contrast, followed by examples for each type in Table 2. Resultative such as example (20c) is often regarded as the verbal passive within the traditional descriptive grammar of English, but the mutually exclusive features can normally create three distinctive constructions. However, one should be aware that there are intermediate stages, too, as already shown in example (5), between the verbal passive and the resultative.

Table 2. Characteristics of different periphrastic constructions

	Orientation	Aspect
Active	Actor	Dynamic/stative
Verbal passive	Undergoer	Dynamic
Adjectival passive	Undergoer	Stative
Resultative	No orientation	Stative

- (20) (a) *The window was broken by John.* (Verbal passive)
 (b) *I was surprised at the noise.* (Adjectival passive)
 (c) *The box is covered with dust.* (Resultative)

English has this particular distinction which cannot be found in other Germanic languages. An obvious reason is that there is only one fully grammaticalised auxiliary in English, *be*. Any historical change is known to leave traces because of the gradual process forming an amalgamation of old (the adjectival passive and the resultative) and new (the verbal passive) structures. It is noteworthy that both older existing structures are stative, while the newer one is dynamic. Another reason, which has not been discussed in earlier research, is that English does not have a construction encompassing the functions commonly expressed by the middle voice. As exemplified extensively in Kemmer (1993), the middle voice prototypically refers to spontaneous events without implying the presence of an actor. A specific case involving

spontaneity in the middle voice is perception, and for this specific function, English seems to cover the lack of the perception-related middle with the adjectival passive. The only difference is that the adjectival passive has a nonvolitional actor and a potentially lesser degree of spontaneity. Thus both the adjectival passive and the resultative seem to share similar functions with the middle voice. These constructions are normally expressed through reflexive constructions in other Germanic languages or the use of the *-s* suffix, as in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish (e.g. (1)), which originated from the reflexive-middle construction, but not from the *be* or *become* periphrastic construction.

6. *Anglocentricism in the passive voice*

Latin grammar was once used as a template for grammatical description, and various categories in Latin grammar were forcefully applied to the description of other languages. This often resulted in inaccurate descriptions, especially when the languages in question were not genetically closely related to Latin. It has been a practice for at least several decades to use English as a model language in linguistic analysis. An unforeseeable danger resulting from this practice is that PDE stands as the anomaly in the grammatical system of the IE languages. Historically, however, OE seems comparable to other languages of the same period such as Old-High German or Old Norse. Something happened in English, however, that forced its grammatical structure to change dramatically after OE (see McWhorter 2002, for a theory which suggests that contact with the Scandinavian languages via the Viking invasions is potentially responsible for this dramatic change), but this is beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, the peculiarities of English should be taken into consideration in describing the grammatical structure of the periphrastic passive. Excessive influence from English grammar, whether intentional or unintentional, is herein referred to as Anglocentricism.

It is rather obvious that the interpretation of the periphrastic construction in other languages has been influenced by descriptions of the English *be*-passive. Rather surprisingly, this has not often been commented upon. The periphrastic passive is not normally analysed in relation to the perfective aspectual structure (except, as mentioned above, in Benveniste 1952, Allen 1964, Peterson 1998, Bynon 2005 on Indo-Iranian languages, Orr 1984, 1989 and Toyota 2007b on Celtic languages, Toyota and Mustafović 2006 on Slavic languages). An analysis of the development of the perfective aspectual structure as a form originating in the PIE inactive aspectual structure, provides more accurate interpretation of the data. Anglocentricism is perhaps an unfortunate by-product in linguistic theories, but if one bears in mind how peculiar English grammar is in comparison with that of other languages, this unfortunate trend can be avoided.

7. *Summary*

In this paper, the periphrastic passive construction has been analysed in relation to tense and aspect. It was posited that the periphrastic passive was still closely related to its original form and function, perfective aspectual construction, which was

defectively expressed with only undergoer-orientation. This defective orientation became actor-oriented when the *have*-perfective was invented. In turn, the new structure made the older *be*-perfective functionless until re-analysis happened and it became the passive. A grammaticalisation process of this type has progressed at varying degrees in different languages, and the majority of IE languages still have partial aspectual implication. The only exception is English, whose passive has developed into a prototypical passive, with the semantic bleaching of auxiliary *be*. The same process has not taken place in other Germanic languages.

The analysis of the periphrastic construction with *be* is often influenced by the one found in PDE, but this is often misleading, and other IE languages with superficially similar structures are often believed to possess a passive. However, in some languages, such a structure is perhaps best contemplated as a case of split-ergative, representing the very initial stage of periphrastic construction. The resulting ambiguity is perhaps due to the fact that the development of the periphrastic construction requires other constructions to develop first and therefore it cannot evolve on its own. Moreover, it is essential to develop an historical comparative analysis to better understand the periphrastic passive construction.

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