

THE PASSIVE AND PASSIVIZABILITY IN DANISH AND GERMAN¹

OLE LAURIDSEN

The Aarhus School of Business

1. INTRODUCTION

Even though it has not been proved by linguistic research, it is a general and undoubtedly true assumption that the passive, that is, the grammaticalized passive, is more frequent in Danish than in German.² This assumption applies not least to the language of business and management including business correspondence, and the main reason for this seems to be a general tendency in German to use personal expressions such as *Wir teilen Ihnen hierdurch mit, daß .../Wir bitten Sie...* vs Danish *De meddeles herved, at .../De bedes ...*; an in other respects perfect business letter written by a native speaker of Danish may thus be confused by an extensive use of the passive, however genuine the German forms may be in isolation, and an analysis of the general norms for the use of the passive voice in the text type business letter is consequently an important area of research.

Another reason for the differences in frequency between Danish and German is the fact that the Danish language allows passivization to a much larger extent than does the German; it must therefore be taken for granted that a determination of the systematic conditions for passivization in the two languages would contribute to the elimination of the by far not rare and rather far-fetched passives in texts translated from Danish into German; an authentic example of this could be **diese Probleme werden in allen Branchen gekannt*, translated directly from Danish *disse problemer kendes i alle brancher*.

In other words, the divergences in the use of the passive in Danish and German as they are seen in business correspondence are thus due to text type specific as

¹ I want to express my sincere gratitude to my wife and colleague, Karen M. Lauridsen, The English Department, the Aarhus School of Business, for her help with the English version of this paper.

² Cf. Collin Eriksen, C. et al. 1984. *Tysk Grammatik*. 1st edition. Copenhagen: Gyldendal. p. 148ff; Poulsen, Sv.-O. 1981. *Grammatiske termer med eksempler og forklaringer*. Aarhus: Handelshøjskolen i Aarhus. p. 36; Rossen, A. 1982. *Tysk Grammatik*. Bearbejdet af P.V. Christiansen, Bendt Pedersen og Harald Pors. Copenhagen: Aschehoug. p. 110ff.

well as general, systematic factors. It should be apparent from the above that none of these have been the subject of thorough linguistic research so far, and I intend to make up for this in the near future, also because the results of such research would seem important in the teaching of German as a foreign language in Denmark. In the first phase of the project I have had to leave out the text type specific mechanisms, however; it is only possible to reach reasonable results in this area by analysing large text corpora which, at the moment, are not available, and so far I have therefore concentrated on the phenomenon passivizability and in this connection I have had to delve into the two language systems.

2. CRITICISM OF AVAILABLE LITERATURE (LAURIDSEN (1987:158–73))

As already mentioned, passivizability in itself has not at any time been the primary subject of research, and in the main part of the relevant literature the problems connected with passivizability are either not mentioned at all or are only dealt with on the basis of the description in various grammars. No language specific Danish or German work on the subject contains any useful suggestions and it therefore seems reasonable to speak about a *terra incognita*.

In the following the literature on the subject will not be dealt with in any detail; only a description of the general tendencies will be attempted by the incorporation of typical works and criticism of their weakest points. The first part of my investigations only comprises the polyvalent verbs, and in the following I shall concentrate on the works that deal with the *-s-* or *blive-* and the *werden-*passivizability of such verbs.

2.1. The Literature Concerning German Passivizability

Let us first concentrate on the literature concerning German passivizability. It is a characteristic feature of most of the works on the subject that they do not offer a really systematic evaluation of the problem of passivizability/non-passivizability, and instead they present lists either of accusative selecting verbs or of clauses that only occur in the active; attempts at possible explanations are sporadically added to such lists.

2.1.1. The Duden Grammatik (Lauridsen (1987:158–60))

An instructive example of such a primarily registering procedure is found in the 1972 and 1984 editions of the *Duden Grammatik*.

As far as the transitive verbs are concerned, that is, the verbs that require a dependent in the accusative, the 1972 edition lists the following ten clause types which lack passivizability:

- (1) Clauses with a nonreflexive verb (*unechtes reflexives Verbum*) as object (e.g. *sich waschen*)

- (2) Clauses in which the accusative object is a part of the body (e.g. *den Kopf schütteln*)
- (3) Clauses with a cognate object (e.g. *einen Tanz tanzen*)
- (4) Clauses in which the accusative object and the verb are closely connected (e.g. *Schritt halten*)
- (5) Clauses in which the accusative object indicates content or quantity (*etwas enthalten*)
- (6) Clauses in which the accusative object indicates instrument or placement (e.g. *Flöte spielen/Kopf stehen*)
- (7) Clauses the subject of which cannot act (e.g. *der Finger juckt mich*)
- (8) Clauses with neutralized subject (*es friert mich*)
- (9) Clauses that indicate a static situation (e.g. *Staub bedeckt die Bücher* [sein-passive is possible])
- (10) Clauses with verbs of the “haben-perspective” (e.g. *haben/besitzen/empfangen/erhalten etc.*) (*Duden Grammatik* (1972:493f)).

It should be mentioned in this connection that the *Duden Grammatik* considers the following cases possible: in (2) clauses of the type *die Hände werden von ihm zum Zeichen der Unterwerfung gehoben*, in (3) and (4) clauses of types *der erste Tanz wurde vom Brautpaar getanzt* and *es wird Schritt gehalten* respectively; the latter two cases will not be considered any further in the following as, strictly speaking, they are not polyvalent verbs; the former, however, will be briefly mentioned in another connection, cf. chapter 5 below.

The *Duden* list appears fairly chaotic and is actually an example of what may happen, or rather what invariably happens when language use and language system are kept apart, that is, when the analysis of language is limited to a mere collection of data: It is difficult to appreciate any difference in the connection between the verbs and their objects in (4) and (5); the confrontation of indications like *content/quantity* in (5) and *instrument/placement* in (6) is unmanageable, and it must be characterized as exaggerated to simulate a connection between the elements *instrument* and *placement*. (7) is further to be considered an overgeneralization as clauses like *er wurde von einem Auto von oben bis unten bespritzt* and *das Holz wurde von den kräftigen Wellen angeschwemmt* are fully acceptable even though they do not contain subjects which may act according to their own will; the demand concerning the ability to act on the part of the subject or the agent is a consequence of much too limited understanding of the passive voice, which, by the way, is seen in many other works on the passive.³ Syntax (4) and semantics, sometimes of the subject (7), sometimes of the object (5) and (6), and sometimes even of the verb itself (9) and (10) are included without taking the system into consideration – there is no systematic common denominator for the lack of passivizability of the accusative selecting verbs.

The passivizability of the intransitive polyvalent verbs is treated more uniformly, and here a common denominator is actually established: passivization is only

³ For the various definitions and conceptions of the passive, cf. Lauridsen (1987:4–95).

possible when the individual verbs may be considered “*Tätigkeiten der Menschen (oder doch lebender Wesen)*” (Duden Grammatik (1973:93)); *auf einem Irrtum wird von dieser Aussage beruht and *es wird von ihm gealtert vs es wird ihm [von mir] nachgeeffert (ibid.). It cannot be denied that passivizable polyvalent intransitive verbs are actional, but this is not the explanation of their passivizability, rather, it is a coincidence. As already mentioned, the agentive element does not have the influence traditionally attached to it. Methodologically speaking it is infelicitous that the passivizability/non-passivizability of the transitive and intransitive verbs is not considered together, but the former under “*Satzbaupläne*”, the latter in connection with the general description of the passive.

Under the headline “*Verben ohne Passivfähigkeit*”, the 1984 edition renders some main points on non-passivizability, once again registering rather than systematizing (Duden 1984:182f): mentioned are (i) verbs with body parts as object, (ii) verbs with measures/amounts as object, (iii) verbs of the “*haben*-perspective”, (iv) the expressions *es gibt/es setzt*, (v) *kennen/können/wissen*, (vi) verbs with particularly closely connected objects, and (vii) reflexive verbs. As it was the case in the 1972 Duden, a more detailed account is given under the “*Satzbaupläne*” (Duden 1984:608), and here we find an approach which essentially resembles that of the 1972 edition, only, items (4) and (6) have now, reasonably enough, been put together and item (10) has been left out. Thus some of the more disturbing individual problems are removed – the syntactic equality of the objects in (4) and (6) is fully recognized⁴, and the after all wrong account of (10) is removed.⁵ The passivizability of the polyvalent intransitive verbs is basically treated as in the 1972 edition, and when all is said and done, there are thus no important differences between the two editions; more details have been taken up, certain problems are removed – the basic approach, however, is the same.

2.1.2. Helbig and Hertzka (Lauridsen (1987:161–65))

Helbig, whose important contribution to the linguistic research of the passive is actually comprised in Helbig/Buscha (1984), works much more cogently than does the *Duden Grammatik*. According to Helbig, the passive is primarily characterized by the fact that the subject does not have the case role *agent* which, then, is defined “*als belebt vorgestellter Urheber einer Handlung, Träger einer Tätigkeit, Täter*” (Helbig/Buscha (1984:165 and 560). In other words, behind every passive there must be an agentive element, and for this very reason verbs like *ähneln*, *entsprechen*, *fehlen*, *kosten*, and *wiegen*, and verbs which indicate “having something” or “getting something” respectively, that is, verbs of the so-called “*haben*-perspective” mentioned above are not passivizable.

Helbig is here quite in line with Hertzka who already in 1910, though with other

⁴ Contrary to the 1972 edition, the 1984 Duden does not mention that passives of type “*es wird Schritt gehalten*” are in fact possible.

⁵ Of course *Staub bedeckt die Bücher* as well as *Lärm erfüllt die Halle*, *Flüchtlinge verstopfen die Straße* and so on (Duden 1972:494) can be passivized, only, there is obviously no pragmatic need for such constructions; hence the label “after all wrong”.

words and concepts, established this condition for passivizability (1910:11). This results in another problem, however: the passive of verbs like *hören*, *sehen*, *auffassen*, etc. is fully possible, and the subjects of *these* verbs are not agents. Hertzka does not include examples such as these at all, whereas Helbig attempts to do so by claiming that the relevant verbs are only immediately passivizable when the subject in a given use or in a given situation may be interpreted as a pure agentive: in *die Sonnenfinsternis ist von uns gesehen worden* the verb *sehen* has the meaning “watch” which demands an agent, and the passive is consequently acceptable; contrary to this the passive may be objectionable in another connection: in the example *der Unfall ist von uns gesehen worden* the verb *sehen* has the meaning “be present by coincidence”, and there is thus no agentive element present and the example must be labelled less grammatical. It is claimed that the subjects of the verbs *hören*, *sehen*, etc. apart from their basic functional-semantic status as “*Erkenntnisträger*”, “*Wahrnehmungsträger*”, etc. may also contain an element of agentivity, and since the subjects are then semi-agentive, the passives are only semi-correct – to put it a bit polemically, cf. Helbig/Buscha (1984:71, and especially 170).

It is methodologically infelicitous that certain purely syntactic factors (that is, the fact that certain verbs may actually be passivized contrary to the basic understanding of the passive), that pure surface structure mechanisms dictate the introduction of a kind of semantic case; all the more so because Helbig derives such semantic cases from factors of predicate logic which must be regarded as external to language itself and do not enter into any interrelationship with syntax, cf. Helbig (1982:11). Furthermore, a number of informants (cf. further below) have unanimously indicated that they fully accept both passives, that is, *die Sonnenfinsternis ist von uns gesehen worden* as well as *der Unfall ist von uns gesehen worden*, and it thus becomes apparent once again how difficult it is to connect the idea of the agent with the passive, and that a number of adjustments are required when this functional-semantic element is considered a decisive factor in the contrast \pm passive; at this point it should also be mentioned that the limitation of the agentive to [+anim], which Helbig has obviously adopted from Fillmore (1968:24), is not reasonable, cf. the above-mentioned examples *er wurde von einem Auto von oben bis unten bespritzt* and *das Holz wurde von den kräftigen Wellen angeschwemmt*. Another important reason for objecting to the presence of an agentive element as a precondition for passivization is the fact that agentive reflexive verbs (*sich waschen*) plus agentive verbs with objects which refer to a piece of clothing (*er zog den/seinen Mantel an*) or to a part of the body (*er hob die Hände*) cannot generally undergo passive transformation although there are sporadic exceptions to this rule, cf. chapter 5 below; such cases are also just mentioned in passing by Helbig, cf. Helbig/Buscha (1984:172).

2.1.3. Steube and Walther (Lauridsen (1987:166–68))

Quite different from the works of *Duden* and Helbig is that of Steube and Walther, who consider all the not passivizable polyvalent verbs derivations from a basic voice in which the logical subject and the logical object equal the grammatical sub-

ject and the grammatical object respectively. It is then a characteristic of the not passivizable derivations that the basic voice relation is broken and as a consequence of this the grammatical subject becomes identical with the logical object; thus *mich* in e.g. *mich überkommt die Lust* is logical subject but grammatical object, and the whole utterance is to be understood as being derived from *ich empfinde plötzlich stark die Lust*. This last example and similar ones are regarded as non-passivizable because their subjects *ab ovo* must be interpreted as showing relations between syntactic and logical factors similar to those of the passive; the latter is assumed to be present in exactly the sentences whose grammatical subject is different from the logical subject, cf. Steube/Walther (1972:19ff). An attempt at a universal theory, but not an unproblematic one: it is impossible to construct reasonable derivation bases for a number of non-passivizable verbs such as *enthalten* and *umfassen*; this is just mentioned in passing by the authors who at the same time disregard some of the other problematic cases of the research on the passive such as *betreffen*, *gleichen*, *kosten*, *passen*, *wiegen*, etc., cf. Steube/Walther (1972:22). Moreover, some of the bases postulated seem rather strained; a typical example of this would be *man kann großes Gedränge sehen* given as the basis for the nonpassivizable *es gibt großes Gedränge*; here the possibility factor *kann* is suppressed without good reason, cf. Steube/Walther (1972:21), and the authors have to use such and similar tricks on a number of occasions.

The basic concept of Steube and Walther – like that of Helbig – cannot account for all the instances of lacking passivizability and can therefore not be characterized as a coherent system, either. Only a subset of the examples is accounted for, and even so it is not without breaks in the methodology. In addition to this, none of the theories can explain the possible, but rarely occurring passives of the type *das Heilmittel wird vom Kranken gebraucht*. To a much too large extent they operate with an either-or. Like Helbig, the authors limit themselves to only mentioning that the passive is not possible with otherwise clearly passivizable verbs with a noun phrase referring to a part of the body as object and add further that the same conditions apply where other object noun phrases are determined by a reflexive possessive pronoun (e.g. *er wusch sein (i.e. eigenes) Kind*), cf. Steube/Walther (1972:22f); however, this type of mere listing just weakens the basic points of view.

2.1.4. Beedham (Lauridsen (1987:42–5))

Another attempt at a general theory has been presented by Beedham. For inexplicable reasons he only includes perfective verbs in his basic analysis and on the basis of these he is then able to conclude that the passive is a perfect aspect, cf. Beedham (1982:84), and only verbs compatible with it are passivizable, cf. Beedham (1982:62–73 and 95–100); among a host of exceptions is then, for instance, *bekommen*, perfective, but not passivizable and, in addition, the large number of fully passivizable imperfective verbs. His theory must therefore be labelled exotic rather than useful.

2.2. The Literature Concerning Danish Passivizability

2.2.1. Mikkelsen (Lauridsen (1987:160f))

Danish linguistic research has not contributed to the establishment of the passive-blocking mechanisms in any significant way. In his *Ordføjningslære* from 1911, reprinted 1975, Mikkelsen proceeds to a large extent like the *Duden Grammatik*, cf. Mikkelsen (1975:377f), and he primarily lists the non-passivizable verbs. He does not limit himself to mere listing, however; in a number of cases he tries to explain the lack of passivizability, e.g. in connection with verbs like *andå**, *lign*, *tilhøre*, etc.; he claims that these verbs are not connected with direct object (*genstandsled*), but with indirect objects (*hensynsled*) (1975:378), and of these two types of object, the latter is given the general characteristic of being more loosely connected to the verb than is the former (1975:85). In his general description of the constituents, Mikkelsen maintains that the subject of a passive clause is identical with the real object for the event expressed by the verb, that is, with the object of the active clause, and he thus actually sketches an explanation. However, it is very difficult objectively to measure the strength of two relations between constituents (*verb – direct object* as opposed to *verb – indirect object*), and since in his description of the indirect object, Mikkelsen claims that the loose connection to the verb of the indirect object – compared to that of the direct object – is seen in the fact that it cannot become the subject of the clause in a passive construction, that is, that the passive transformation cannot be carried out with verbs that only require an indirect object (*ibid.*), there is actually nothing much to gain from his explanation. Mikkelsen is not the only one to argue in such a circular way, however; Erben (1980:241) uses exactly the same line of reasoning in connection with *angehen*, *kosten*, etc.

2.2.2. Hansen (Lauridsen (1987:156))

Hansen only deals with the lack of passivizability connected with the reflexives, but contrary to the above-mentioned authors he is close to a reasonable explanation: the fact that the reflexive verbs are not passivized is due to the fact that this would be without any sense at all because the agent and the patient are identical, cf. Hansen (1976,III:146). Part of the truth is hidden behind these words, a point I shall demonstrate in chapter 5 below.

3. PASSIVIZABILITY AND VERB VALENCY (LAURIDSEN (1987:96–150))

As it has already been mentioned, and as it will be apparent in the following, linguistic research has actually not offered any really useful tools for language specific or contrastive studies and it is therefore compulsory to break new ground if one wants to discover the features that determine passivizability. Even at a quite early stage of my work I was convinced that the relation between syntactic and semantic valency was of decisive importance; I was obviously inspired by the works

of Mikkelsen, Hertzka, and Helbig, and even though their ideas were far from unimpeachable, I decided to follow this lead.

3.1. Syntactic Valency

As far as syntactic valency is concerned, I decided to follow Helbig closely even though I naturally realized, and still realize, that there are certain Gordian knots in his systems and that not all the details of his description are satisfactory⁶; however, it seems impossible to deny that, all things considered, Helbig's system of valency is by far the most useful of the systems considered; it is comfortably down to earth and comfortably without any theoretical extravaganzas that are more or less unmanageable.

3.2. Semantic Valency (Lauridsen (1987:97-149))

To find a suitable basis for semantic valency is much more problematic. Since the first articles by Fillmore in 1966 and 1968 the market has literally been flooded with contributions to case theory, and most of the authors of these have established their own sets (small or large) of cases. The general problem for case theory has been and still is the status, number, and types of cases. For obvious reasons I shall here refrain from any attempt at presenting a state of the art; instead I shall focus on some of the main points which may explain why I chose not to follow directly in the footsteps of others. In the following only the works of Charles Fillmore are included, not because they are to be criticized more than others, on the contrary, but rather because the problems considered there are of a general character and are thus found in just about all the rest of the literature on the subject.

In Fillmore's article "The Case for Case" (1968b) the case roles are obviously considered universal categories, and that makes any serious work with them impossible in connection with valency. Even though Fillmore uses the concept of "relationship" about his cases in various connections, e.g. (1968b:21), and claims that these cases relative to the verb via the whole proposition (ibid.:51), that is, the clause without the systems of for instance tense, mood or aspect (ibid.:23), he does carry out a categorization in his heavily stressed idea that cases or case combinations select the verbs (ibid.:27-31 and footnote 34, p.26) and not the other way round, a procedure which would seem reasonable if it was really a question of relations; moreover, the categorization is seen in the fact that special semantic features such as [\pm hum], etc. are attached to the case roles.

Fillmore was heavily criticized for this, and he tried to sharpen his points of view in "Some problems for Case Grammar" (1971). Already before "The Case for Case", in 1968 and 1969, he tried to establish a connection between a level of predicate logic and a level of case semantics in a couple of lexicalist studies, cf. (1968a) and (1969). In my opinion these studies are important because they contribute to the idea of the relational status of the case roles. He reconsidered this principle in 1971,

⁶ A survey of Helbig's many works on valency is found in Helbig/Schenkel 1975.

but he did not reach satisfactory results; he does not establish any system in his work, and he only considers one single abstract superordinate predicator, [cause]; he does not presuppose any hierarchical structure in the predication, but regards it as identical with the proposition of the actual clause, which is the same as a linear constituent structure (1971:especially 255). As a consequence of this he actually does not operate on predication structures, but on lexicalized verbs.

In 1977 Fillmore finally dealt with the problems concerning the number and types of semantic cases in the article "The Case for Case Reopened". He assumes that groups of verbs attach themselves to various scenes; *sell*, *spend*, *buy*, *pay*, *cost* are thus connected to the so-called "commercial event" which always involves a buyer, a seller, some goods, and some money. *Sell* is then used to bring the seller, the goods, and perhaps the buyer into perspective, *spend* focuses on the buyer and the money, and *pay* on the buyer and the money or the buyer and the seller, etc. (1977:72f). It cannot be denied that the basis of this viewpoint is an idea of predicate logic, but unfortunately it is not carried through: certain relations such as 'buyer' and 'seller' are introduced, and on the lexical level they are realized as case roles. This last point can only be inferred because it is not explicitly expressed anywhere in the article. In cases where the 1971 article did not distinguish clearly, the 1977 one shows certain indications of a taxonomy. Unfortunately they are confused by the basic concept of scenes, however, because this is totally subjective: How many scenes and what scenes are found in the language and in the real world? The problem about the number and types of the case roles has been exchanged with the number and types of the scenes.

In order to get hold of the status of the case roles one way or another, I assumed that they are derived from argument relations on the level of predicate logic, again with due reference to Helbig, who has defended this point of view since the early 1970s, cf. 2.1.2. If as an example one considers the Danish verb *give* or its German counterpart *geben*, the idea of the theory is that its actual use is determined by a given situation in the objective world represented in the human mind; this representation, which is in actual fact identical with the meaning structure of the verb, may be expressed in terms of predicate logic as follows:

$\text{caus}(x(\text{incept}(\text{hab}(y,z))))$

Verbalized: an x acts in such a way that there is a change so that y has z

When this idea is lexicalized, all the predicators are included in the verbal theme, and the relations of the arguments to their individual predicators are realized as case roles; it follows from this that they are lexical features and belong to the meaning of the verb only. Helbig does not establish any taxonomy for the level of predicate logic; I therefore included the theses of Arutjunow and tested them critically on all of the 292 lemmata in the valency dictionary by Helbig and Schenkel, altogether about 3,000 meanings – or, in my opinion, individual verbs because the so-called meanings are due to the choice of basically different arguments. I further tested the Danish equivalents of these 3,000 verbs plus a group of generally problematic verbs, that is, verbs which are generally problematic as far as passivization is concerned and which are not found in the valency dictionary.

It very quickly became apparent that Arutjunow's approximately 50 primitive or elementary predicates are not all primitive and elementary, on the contrary; the majority of them are derived from or compounded by a much smaller number, namely:

adesse (x)	= x exists
caus (x,y)	= x acts so that y
cogn (x,y)	= x has the information y
correspond (x,y)	= x corresponds to y
func (x)	= x functions in accordance with its nature
hab (x,y)	= x has y
idem (x)	= x remains x
incep (x)	= x starts
loc (x,y)	= x's concrete or abstract placement in relation to y
manag (x,y)	= x has power over y
mov (x)	= x moves
opin (x,y)	= x means y
pars (x,y)	= x is a part of y
parv (x)	= x is small
sign (x,y)	= x is characterized by y
simil (x,y)	= x equals y
spect (x,y)	= x relates to y
uno (x,y)	= x and y establish a unity
vict (x,y)	= x is superior to y

I then further added:

dur (x,y)	= x lasts y
min (x,y)	= x is smaller than y

With these altogether 21 predictors and a small set of modifiers which primarily influence the concept on the aspectual level: the truth function **non** and the conjunction \wedge , which I venture to interpret as an accompanying circumstance, I have been able to describe the meaning structure of the verbs, their semantic nucleus as this is reflected in a given situation in the objective real world. I determined altogether five different argument relations, namely:

the object relation (=BG):

the concrete or abstract object for the predicator

the relation of causing factor (=BIE):

the causer of the content of the predicator

the relation of the psychic starting point (=BPA):

the starting point for a psychic process or a situation expressed by the predicator

the relation of the possessing factor (=BV):

the entity to whose advantage or disadvantage an object appears

the limiting relation (=BO, BU, BZ):

relations of place (BO), quantity (BU), and condition (BZ) which specify the relation between the first argument and the predicator

The arguments are obviously abstract and on the basis of this it will be understood that they cannot be combined with specific semantic features; in connection with the **causing factor** for instance, it is therefore not interesting whether or not it can act according to its own will in the real objective world.

The verbs consequently group themselves in three classes: one with **caus** as the dominating predicator (*causative verbs*), one with **incep** as the dominating predicator (*transitional verbs*), both of which are then *dynamic (dynamic verbs)*, and finally one without any of these two which is then *stative (stative verbs)*. When this basic principle is combined with the presence of the above listed argument relations, a taxonomy in accordance with the following matrix appears; here the ordinate indicates the distinctions \pm caus/ \pm incep and the abscissa the types of argument relations:

Specification acc. to predicator type and argument relation		Basic type	Experientative type	Benefactive type	Terminative type
Stative verbs		BG "existieren"	BG+BPA "hören"	BG+BV "haben"	BG+BO v BU v BZ "sein" "dauern" "stehen"
			BG+BPA+BZ "finden" (etw. gut)	BG+BV+BO "schulden"	
			BG+BV+BPA "beneiden"		
D y n a m i c v e r b s	Transitional verbs	BG "entstehen"	BG+BPA "entdecken"	BG+BV "gewinnen"	BG+BO v BZ "ankommen" "werden (zu)"
	Causative verbs	BG+BIE "tanzen" "schlagen"	BG+BIE+BPA "erschrecken" "erzählen" BG+BIE+BPA+BU "antworten" "bitten"	BG+BIE+BV "geben" "unterstützen" BG+BIE+BV+BO/U "helfen" "schicken"	BG+BIE+BO v BZ "gehen" "werfen" "machen zu"

It must be said immediately that these predictors and relations are mere postulates to the same extent as are the cases of Fillmore and other linguists; however, to me they are not universals or something similar, but some entities of description chosen for practical purposes, that is, they are a kind of common denominators which may serve the purpose of discovering the individual meaning structures.

As already mentioned I consider Helbig's semantic cases as reflections of argument relations on the level of predicate locate logic, and this status implies that the types and number of case roles must equal those of the argument relations. On the lexical level I then have five cases, namely:

objective	(=o) corresponds to the object relation
agentive	(=a) corresponds to the relation of the causing factor
experientative	(=e) corresponds to the relation of the psychic starting point
benefactive	(=b) corresponds to the relation of the possessing factor
terminative	(=t) corresponds to the limiting relation

In the course of lexicalization all the predicators are included in the verb stem, but arguments may be included as well. For instance, the situation "he helps somebody do something" implies that a person receives help, that is, an object relation, and this is a permanent part of the verb stem itself on the superior lexical level.

With this principle in mind, one reaches a taxonomy as the one sketched below since verbs with an expressed objective are labelled explicitly objective, whereas verbs with an included objective are labelled implicitly objective:

Semantic type		Specification acc. to case relations		Basic type	Experientative type	Benefactive type	Terminative type
		Explicitly objectivistic	Implicitly objectivistic				
Stative verbs	Explicitly objectivistic	o "existieren"	o - e "hören"	o - b "haben"	o - t "sein" "dauern" "stehen"		
			o - e - t "finden" (etw. gut)	o - b - t "schulden"			
Dynamic verbs	Implicitly objectivistic	a "tanzen"	e - t "wundern"	b - t "brauchen"	o - t "werden (zu)" "landen"		
			o - e "entdecken"	o - b "gewinnen"			
Dynamic verbs	Explicitly objectivistic	a - o "schlagen"	a - e "erschrecken"	a - b "unterstützen"	a - t "gehen"		
			a - e - t "bitten"	a - b - t "helfen"			
Dynamic verbs	Explicitly objectivistic	a - o "schlagen"	a - o - e "erzählen"	a - o - b "geben"	a - o - t "werfen" "machen zu"		
			a - o - e - t "antworten"	a - o - b - t "schicken"			

4. THE RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS (LAURIDSEN (1987:151-225))

Having analysed somewhere between 6,000-6,500 verbs in order to determine their structure in terms of predicate logic, I chose altogether approximately 1,300 typical ones and classified them according to the taxonomy above. I then had 100 informants test the passivizability of the individual tokens in order not to rely on introspection alone. I am fully aware of the serious problems connected with informant tests, but as far as non-passivizability is concerned there is no other possibility. Text corpora are obviously of no help when it is a question of non-occurrence. Positive possibility, on the other hand, may be analyzed on the basis of corpus data, but in 1986/87 I had no access to such corpora and I was forced to base my analysis on the informant tests.

The results of these were quite unambiguous and very much in line with my own assessments:

1. Danish and German causative accusative selecting verbs and verbs requiring a prepositional object (cf. the table above) are all fully passivizable with only a few sporadic exceptions to the rule (*købe/kaufen, sælge/verkaufen, bede om/bitten um, tale til/sprechen zu* etc.)

1a. The passive of Danish and German causative verbs with an obligatory or optional adverbial complement indicating direction is regarded as inadequate (*gå, løbe (til byen)/(in die Stadt) gehen, laufen* etc.) (cf. chapter 5).

1b. The passive of German causative verbs which only accept a complement in the genitive or the dative is regarded as possible, but definitely conspicuous and unusual (*gedenken, helfen, etc.*).

2. Among the Danish and German transitional and stative verbs, those that have a subject ("Nominativergänzung") with the case role objective are NOT passivizable (*ske (der skete ham intet ondt)/geschehen (es geschah ihm nichts Böses), tilhøre (det tilhører mig)/gehören (es gehört mir), etc.*).

That German prefers the active of otherwise passivizable verbs with non-accusative and non-prepositional arguments, that is, arguments in the genitive or the dative is probably due to the fact that the majority of the verbs that select these cases cannot be passivized in the first place because of the clash of the subject and the objective; in other words, the system lacks productive analogy patterns.

Apart from 1b, a German speciality, the above items represent a considerable structural concord between Danish and German, but in other cases with no subject-objective clash the systems differ.

As far as Danish is concerned, it is a general principle that all verbs with the feature subject \neq objective are passivizable. The exceptions are few and far between, an example would be the stative benefactive *have* (**en hund haves af drengen*), and the stative benefactive-terminative *behøve* (**din medvirken behøves af os*) as well as the transitional benefactive verbs *få* and *finde*, the latter with the meaning "get" (*han fandt tid til ...*) and thus different from the causative *finde* = "find". As far as I can see, these examples do not indicate any real collapse of the system: rather, the non-passivizability seems to be caused by external factors: the benefactive terminative trivalent verb *have* (*have bogen i samlingerne*) is fully passivizable, it actually occurs most frequently in the passive, cf. the example (*bogen*) *haves på Det kongelige Bibliotek* - a remark often found on library requisition forms. This highly frequent use of the stem *hav-*, which is obviously related to the normal verb of possession *have* but at the same time conspicuously deviant from it, has so to speak monopolized the passive, or better still, in order not to confuse things, language use in general refrains from passivizing the normal *have*. Similar circumstances are found with the verbs *få*, *finde*, and *behøve*. There is *de facto* a *få* in the passive, actually primarily in the passive, *fås* with the modal factor "is available" (*mærket fås i alle førende forretninger*) - and like *haves*, this *fås* has monopolized the passive in order

to avoid ambiguity. While *haves* and *fås* are close to being in the medium voice since the active form has more or less disappeared, it must be taken for granted that it is the highly frequent medium verbs that prevent *behøve* and *finde* (= "get") from being passivized. *Behøves* (cf. *der behøves adskillige undersøgelser, før resultatet foreligger*) = "be necessary" and *(der) findes* = "(there) is/exists" prevent the passivization of the actives *behøve* and *finde*, a passivization that would lead to a clash between the passive and the medium voices and a consequent ambiguity. External factors also determine the non-passivizability of *komme på* (*en tanke*), *komme til* (*penge*): transitional, but non-passivizable *komme* is often used in abstract connections (cf. *komme i en vanskelig situation*), and the relatively high frequency of such examples influences the passivizability of the verb stem negatively. For the same reason agentive *komme ind på* and *komme tilbage* only occur in the active.

Before turning to the passivizability of German stative and transitional verbs the subjects of which do not have the functional-semantic status objective, I shall briefly account for the choice between Danish *-s* and *blive*-passive in the present tense; only the present tense will be considered here because in the past tense there are some limitations connected with the stem-final sounds, cf. Mikkelsen (1975:379f), and as a consequence of these the analogy patterns of the *-s*-passive in the past tense are weak and the form becomes altogether less frequent.

As far as the causative verbs are concerned the relevant form is chosen according to aspect: the *-s*-passive is primarily used in connection with non-perfectivity and the *blive*-passive in connection with perfectivity; in other words, *taget bæres af søjler* is chosen rather than *taget bliver båret af søjler*, and *forbryderen bliver henrettet i dette øjeblik* rather than *forbryderen henrettes i dette øjeblik*. Where the present tense has a future meaning the same conditions apply.

In opposition to this, the informants with surprising consistency prefer the *-s*-passive to the *blive*-passive with the stative and transitional verbs (*byen anes i kimgingens rand/brevet modtages af direktøren*), so here it must be concluded that other mechanisms than the aspectual ones are decisive. As far as I can see, historical factors are crucial here: the *-s*-passive is a new formation in the North Germanic languages, developed from reflexive constructions (*-s* < generalized enclitic reflexive *-sik*). Reflexives in no way presuppose an external causing force; this condition then lives on in the *-s*-passive which may immediately be combined with the non-agentive verbs. Then there is the *blive*-passive (originally *verða*-passive) which seems to have generally required a causing element. This line of thought is supported by modern German, and it should be mentioned in passing that I have carried out a small analysis of the passive in Gothic in order to get an idea of the passive at an earlier stage of Germanic, and this analysis shows that non-agentive verbs never occur in the Gothic equivalent to the *blive*-/*werden*-passive with the auxiliary *wairpan*, but only in the ancient, heavily reduced medium voice or in the *wisan*-passive, that is, the equivalent of the *være*-/*sein*-passive. If the above assumptions are correct, and a number of factors indicate that they are, we may conclude that, as far as Danish is concerned, there is a mixture of the systems: on the one hand an aspectual one for the causative verbs and, on the other, a primarily functional-semantic one for the stative and transitional verbs. It is feasible that the functional-semantic dis-

inction is the older of the two: When the original reflexive form took on a clearly passive meaning and became a variant to the complex passive, i.e. the *blive*-passive in modern Danish and the *werden*-passive in modern German (actually also unique in an Indoeuropean connection), it, in accordance with its origin, presumably first comprised the verbs not implying an agentive in the relatively broad sense of the term used here and therefore perhaps not able to occur in the periphrastic form. Since the *-s*-passive, as a kind of side effect, contains a durative element, and since the majority of the verbs occurring in this form are stative, the language was supplied with an aspectual expression which was gradually generalized with the agentive verbs.

As I have claimed above, the functional-semantic point of view also applies to the German transitional and stative verbs without the clash between the objective and the subject. It actually turns out that the verbs totally devoid of any influence from the subject do not occur in the passive, and this is probably where we find the explanation to the fact that *haben*, *besitzen*, *empfangen*, *kennen*, and *wissen*, to mention but a few, cannot be passivized while at the same time the passive form of *sehen*, *hören*, etc. is accepted. Independent of whether one hears or sees something consciously or unconsciously, the senses are dominated by the will of a human being and are therefore ultimately controllable whereas this is not the case with "having" and "getting".

It is interesting that the informants are unsure about a number of verbs. This goes for *ärger*, *langweilen*, and *wundern* among others, and is probably due to the fact that a controlling factor is possible, but less obvious; to be quite banal, if you are bored by a book, you may put it away, but the boring factor, if one may say so, is external. The two verbs *erben* are also an instructive example here; they may be taken to mean "to inherit something which is now in one's possession" and "to inherit something biologically" respectively. The informants are uncertain when faced with an example of the former, and because one may refuse to accept an inheritance of this kind, it must be maintained that only a relative control is present. A passive form of the verb in the latter sense is flatly refused, however, and this is in immediate accordance with the fact the possession of various physical characteristics is totally out of the control of the individual. It cannot be denied that considerations such as these may seem almost comically simple, but the reaction to such a reaction must be something like: it is compulsory that linguistic mechanisms are hard to manage, very abstract and non-transparent? As a last point it should be mentioned that the passive of transitional and stative verbs with arguments in the genitive or the dative (e.g. *gedenken* and *mißtrauen*) are subjected to the same rules, in principle at least, but the active form is generally preferred as it is the case with causative verbs also selecting the genitive or the dative and for the same reasons.

Why then this controlling element? As already mentioned it was presumably the case at earlier stages in the development of the language that only the agentive verbs, were compatible with the complex passive, Danish *blive*-passive, German *weraen*-passive; all other passivizable verbs occurred in the now obsolete medium voice found as late as in Gothic, cf. above. When the medium disappeared there was obviously still a need to be able to passivize, and since the German language did not develop any equivalent to the Danish *-s*-passive, the use of the *werden*-passive

spread. On the other hand, the agentive element connected with the complex passive was so strong that only verbs which comprise a factor at least partly corresponding with the causative element are compatible with this form.

5. CONSEQUENCES

All this must have some implication for the understanding of the passive – which characteristics of the passive prevent the use of this form when the grammatical subject is an objective on the functional–semantic level? If one assumes that every verb lexeme, when it occurs in a syntactic string, arranges the elements of the situation which is to be described or expressed in a given hierarchy of relations, the individual positions of which have a given, very abstract content, one may approach an explanation. I claim that the subject is a kind of fixed point, a point of origin for the verbal expression, and the object/objects are the point/points of what is affected or involved, and I consider this *semantico–syntactic* circumstances even though that might not be in accordance with tradition. It is here not a question of a functional sentence perspective even though what I am talking about here may correspond to what. It is rather a kind of first basis from which one may operate further. In the course of passivization the object of the active form becomes the subject of the clause whereas the original subject occurs in a prepositional phrase or disappears altogether. While the active thus sketches a situation with the subject as the fixed point and an orientation towards the point affected, the passive voice orientates the verbal expression away from the subject and fixes it within the sphere of the point affected. It is obvious that in actual fact the content of “being affected” is very similar to the content or meaning of the case role objective, that is, what is involved, what is the object. I actually assume that this is a content which, in contrast to others, functions at several linguistic levels. If an accusative selecting verb has a subject which from a case–semantic point of view is objective, e.g. *kosten*, then there is a relation between the verb and the subject on the functional–semantic level which is identical with the one which might be obtained by means of passivization, and if a passive transformation was then carried out, there would be an orientation, on the functional–semantic level, away from the sphere affected by the verb, and the language does not accept that.

As far as the verbs of movement (cf. 1a, chapter 4) are concerned, the reason why their passive is classified as inadequate is that the semantics of these verbs focuses so strongly on direction that any fixation in the sphere of the point affected is made impossible.⁷

So far I have strongly focused on the fixation of the passive in the sphere of the point affected. In order to gain a full understanding of the problems of passivizability, however, the orientation away from the fixed point of the active clause must also be taken into account; as a matter of fact, this explains, to put it very briefly, why reflexive verbs and verbs whose object is a noun phrase referring to either the

⁷ Verbs of movement have lexicalized the point affected; so *gå/gehen* e.g. indicate “x causes x to move to y”, the second x being lexicalized (and y being an optional complement), cf. Lauridsen (1987:214f).

clothing or the body part of the subject noun phrase are not passivized: there is no breach with the sphere of the fixed point and in the case of passivization the situation would still be connected with it. Already Hertzka (1910:3f and 5ff) and, as mentioned above Hansen, introduce ideas similar to these, but without systematizing them. In certain limited cases, passive transformation of such complexes is allowed, but informants are generally sceptical about them. In German the passive form of reflexive verbs always occurs without any indication of the agent, and the verbs must therefore be considered absolute with the reflexive being a part of the predicate without any reference; in Danish the verb is “dereflexivized” as the reflexive disappears, cf. *kranse frabedes* (Lauridsen (1987:153–157)). Similarly, the informants are doubtful about passives like *benene strækkes!*, that is, passives of complexes in which the object noun phrase of the active clause refers to a body part of the subject noun phrase, they are only accepted when they are used as imperatives (as a consequence of this the exception of the *Duden Grammatik*, cf. 2.2.2, must be generally rejected). As it was the case with the passive form of the reflexive verbs, we must here speak about an absolute use of the verb – the reference to an active subject is suppressed and the subject of the passive clause becomes part of the verb itself, cf. Lauridsen (1987:226f).

It is obvious that a system like the one sketched here may be broken and is broken, cf. apart from the above Dürrenmatt's *Hier wird nur gestorben (Der Verdacht)*⁸ and an example corresponding to Dürrenmatt's *Skulle der dø'es, så døde mam uden læge* (Hansen (1976:III:50)). But the deviations from the system found in the parole do not seem to challenge the basic principle: Danish allows passivization in almost any case where the subject is not an objective whereas German requires an element of controllability in connection with the transitional and stative verbs. The more wide–spread use of the passive in Danish is due to the special –s–form.

REFERENCES

- Arutjonow, A.R. 1970. “Zu einem beschreibenden Modell der Semantik”. *Beilage zu Deutsch als Fremdsprache* 4.
- Bach, E. and Harms, R.T.(eds). 1968. *Universals of Linguistic Theory*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Beedham, C. 1982. *The Passive Aspect in English, German and Russian*. Tübingen: Narr. (=Tübingen Beiträge zur Linguistik 186).
- Cole, P. and Sadock, J.M.(eds). 1977. *Grammatical relations. Syntax and Semantics*. Vol. 8. New York: Academic Press.
- Duden 1973. *Duden. Grammatik der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. 3. neu bearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage, bearbeitet von Poul Grebe unter Mitwirkung von Helmut Gipper et al. Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut. (=Der große Duden: Band 4).
- Duden 1984. *Duden. Grammatik der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. 4. völlig neu bearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage, herausgegeben und bearbeitet von Günther Drosdowski in Zusammenarbeit mit Gerhard Augst, Hermann Gehaus et al. Mannheim/Wien/Zürich: Bibliographisches Institut. (=Der Duden in 10 Bänden: Band 4).
- Erben, J. 1980. *Deutsche Grammatik. Ein Abriß*¹². Auflage. München: Max Hueber.

⁸ Quoted by Erben (1980:85).

- Fillmore, C.J. 1968a. "Lexical entries for verbs". *Foundation of Language* 4. 373-93.
- Fillmore, C.J. 1968b. "The case for case". In Bach, E. and Harms, R.T. (eds). 1968. 1-88.
- Fillmore, C.J. 1971. "Some problems for case grammar". *Osculd.* 254-65.
- Fillmore, C.F. 1977. "The case for case reopened". In Cole, P. and Sadock, J.M. (eds). 1977. 59-81.
- Hansen, A. 1967. *Moderne Dansk*. Bind III (Sprogbeskrivelse). København: Grafisk Forlag.
- Helbig, G. 1982. *Valenz - Satzglieder - semantische Kasus - Satzmodelle*. Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie.
- Helbig, G. and Buscha, J. 1984. *Deutsche Grammatik*. Ein Handbuch für den Ausländerunterricht. 8. neubearbeitete Auflage. Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie.
- Helbig, G. and Schenkel, W. 1975. *Wörterbuch zur Valenz und Distribution deutscher Verben*. 3. Auflage. Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie.
- Hertzka, A. 1910. "Studien zum Passiv im Neuhochdeutschen". In *Neunter jahres-Bericht der K.K. Staatsrealschule in Reichenberg für das Schuljahr 1909-1910*. Reichenberg. 3-15.
- Lauridsen, O. 1987. *Passiv und Passivfähigkeit im Dänischen und Deutschen*. Unpubl. MS. available at the Library of The Aarhus School of Business.
- Mikkelsen, K. 1911/1975. *Dansk Ordbøjningslære*. København: Hans Reitzel.
- Steube, A. and Waether, G. 1972. "Zur passivischen Diathese im Deutschen". In *Linguistische Arbeitsberichte* 5. 17-48.