

**THE GRAMMATICAL REALIZATION
OF THE LONG PASSIVE IN
NORWEGIAN**

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Abstract

Complex predicates have been discussed for decades. A favorite topic has been their passives, so-called long passives (e.g. Norwegian *Dette unngås å gjøres* 'this avoid.PRES.PASS to do.INF.PASS'). The realization of the long passive shows interesting variation in Norwegian. Not only is the first verb passive, the second verb also often is. Norwegian has an inflectional and a periphrastic passive, and both can be used. However, the inflectional passive is preferred with both verbs, even if it is in general the "marked" passive realization. I will discuss this variation and its grammatical treatment, and compare Norwegian to Swedish and French.

1 Introduction

Complex predicates have been the subject of discussion for decades (see e.g. Rizzi 1978, Aissen and Perlmutter 1983, Butt 1995, Alsina 1996, Wurmbrand 2001, Cinque 2006).¹ A complex predicate (e.g. *unngå å gjøre* 'avoid to do') consists of two verbs that together constitute one predicate in a monoclausal structure. The process of forming a complex predicate is often called reanalysis or restructuring, and the first verb is called a light verb or a restructuring verb. A complex predicate can undergo some grammatical processes that are normally reserved for one verb, such as the passive. Verbs with the same types of meaning recur as restructuring verbs in language after language (Wurmbrand 2001:342-45). Some important groups are causative and causative-like verbs (e.g. 'make', 'let'), which are put aside here, aspectual verbs (e.g. 'continue'), irrealis verbs (e.g. 'try'), and strong implicit verbs (e.g. 'avoid', 'forget', 'dare'). Restructuring is normally optional. Light verbs are tightly connected to their corresponding main verbs, and do not usually represent a first stage of further grammaticalization (Butt and Lahiri 2013).

In the traditional LFG analysis of restructuring, c-structure is not necessarily affected. It is f-structure that represents the monoclausal structure (Butt 1995, Alsina 1996, Niño 1997, Sells 2004). With restructuring, example (1) has the simplified f-structure (2).

¹ I was happy to be invited as a speaker at the LFG'22 conference. My paper has changed its title since then. I would like to thank several LFG'22 participants for comments and discussion, especially Yanis da Cunha, Ash Asudeh and Miriam Butt. The reviewers have been very helpful with their thorough and insightful comments. I have also benefited from discussions with colleagues in Oslo, especially Anu Laanemets. Special thanks to Elisabet Engdahl for many discussions through the years.

- (1) Ola **unngår å gjøre** feil
 Ola avoids to do mistakes
 'Ola avoids making mistakes.'

- (2)

PRED 'avoid-do <SUBJ OBJ>' SUBJ 'Ola' OBJ 'mistake' TENSE PRES

Evidence for complex predicates is given by different grammatical phenomena in different languages (Wurmbrand 2014). Verbal feature agreement (or feature sharing) is important in Norwegian.² The second verb can take on the form of the restructuring verb instead of the infinitival form (Lødrup 2014a, 2014b, Havnelid 2015, Aagaard 2016). In examples (3)-(4), the first verb is an imperative and a perfect participle respectively, and the second verb can have the same form, as an alternative to the infinitive.³

- (3) **Slutt å skrike / skrik** til meg!
 stop.IMP to cry.INF / cry.IMP to me
 'Stop crying to me.'
- (4) Jeg har **forsøkt å gjøre / gjort** det.
 I have try.PART to do.INF do.PART it
 'I have tried to do it.'

2.0 The long passive

The long passive is a classic favorite in the study of complex predicates (see Lødrup 2014a, 2014b on Norwegian). An example is (5).

- (5) Det **unnlates å sies**.
 it neglect.PRES.PASS to say.INF.PASS
 'They neglect to say it.'

² "Norwegian" is understood here as Urban East Norwegian and the Bokmål written standard. Most example sentences are from the www; some of them are modified. Complex predicates are in bold.

³ Additional evidence for complex predicates in Norwegian comes from the syntax of presentational sentences (Holmberg 2002, Lødrup 2014a), and negative polarity. Johannessen (2003) gives the relevant data for the latter phenomenon, but she considers the restructuring verbs modal verbs.

The subject of the long passive is typically the patient of the second verb. Long passives have the same options concerning subject choice as other passives. Impersonal passives and pseudopassives are possible, as shown in (6)-(7).

- (6) Det må **våges** **å tenkes** annerledes.
EXPL must dare.INF.PASS to think.INF.PASS differently
'One must dare to think differently.'
- (7) Det som er viktig, **unnlates** **å snakkes** **om**.
that which is important neglect.PRES.PASS to talk.INF.PASS about
'One neglects talking about what is important.'

In some cases, the first verb in a long passive can be followed by a preposition.⁴

- (8) Suksessen **satses** **på å gjentas**.
success.DEF go.in.PRES.PASS on to repeat.INF.PASS
'They go in for repeating the success.'

Norwegian differs from a number of other languages in that the long passive often shows verbal feature agreement — not only the first, but also the second verb often has a passive form.

Core cases of the long passive seem to be generally acceptable to speakers of Norwegian, even if there are also differences in intuitions. Examples can be found from the 19th century; (9) is from 1880, from the newspaper *Varden*.

- (9) Hvis den **taales** **at læses**, skal jeg afskrive den.
if it bear.PRES.PASS to read.INF.PASS shall I copy it
'I will copy it, if you can stand to read it.'

This paper is about the grammatical realization of the long passive: verbal feature agreement and the choice of passive form. A main goal is to account for the facts without construction specific rules, building on the traditional LFG analysis of restructuring and general properties of the elements involved. The main focus is Norwegian, but I will also compare to Swedish and French.

⁴ I assume that this must be explained as another case of restructuring — the first verb and the preposition restructure as a complex predicate "before" restructuring with the second verb (Lødrup 2022).

2.1 Voice agreement

Norwegian has two ways of realizing the passive: the inflectional passive with the suffix *-s*,⁵ and the periphrastic passive with an auxiliary and a participle. The inflectional passive can only be used in the infinitive and the present (some marginal preterits aside).

NORWEGIAN PASSIVE:

Inflectional passive: one form used for infinitive and present

Periphrastic passive: auxiliary 'become' or 'be' plus participle

Long passive:

first verb inflectional or periphrastic passive

second verb inflectional passive, or periphrastic 'become' passive, or no passive marking

Long passives are found with the periphrastic or the inflectional passive with the first or the second verb, cf. (10)-(13). The inflectional passive is more frequent in both positions.

- (10) Deres litterære arbeid **fortsettes** **å leses**.
their literary work continue.PRES.PASS to read.INF.PASS
'Their literary work is still read.'
- (11) Sykkelen skulle **forsøkes** **å bli** **reparert**
bike.DEF should try.INF.PASS to become repaired
'They should try to repair the bike'
- (12) bare de **blir** **husket** **å etterfylles**
only they become remembered to refill.INF.PASS
'if one only remembers to refill them'
- (13) Det er vi som **er blitt** **forsøkt å bli** **kastet ut**.
EXPL is we who are become tried to become thrown out
'It is us one has tried to throw out.'

Because the inflectional passive is only used in the infinitive and the present, the first verb must have the periphrastic passive in other tenses.

In some cases there is no voice agreement, as in (14)-(15).

⁵ The suffixal passive is considered inflectional, not derivational. The verbal feature agreement discussed here shows clearly its syntactic relevance, which is a traditional criterion for inflection. Enger (2000) gives more arguments. Norwegian also has a group of non-passive verb ending in *-s*, e.g. *synes* 'think', *ferdes* 'travel', *finnes* 'exist'. They are lexicalized derivations, not necessarily derived from verbs. In the literature, they are sometimes mixed up with inflectional passives.

- (14) hva som må **huskes** **å ta** med
 what that must remember.INF.PASS to take with
 'what one must remember to bring'
- (15) den gamle versjonen, som **ble** **fortsatt å produsere**
 the old version.DEF that became continued to produce
 'the old version that one continued to produce'

Swedish also has long passives, cf. (16) from Engdahl (2022).

- (16) Vissa saker **glöms** bort **att skriv** ut.
 some things forget.PRES.PASS away to print.INF.PASS out
 'One forgets to print out some things.'

In Swedish, the second verb is normally passive (Engdahl 2022). Swedish has the full paradigm of the inflectional passive. Both the first and the second verb in a long passive usually take the inflectional passive.

SWEDISH PASSIVE:

Inflectional passive: full paradigm

Periphrastic passive: auxiliary 'become' or 'be' plus participle

Long passive:

first verb inflectional passive

second verb inflectional passive

2.2 Feature sharing and directionality

Norwegian has feature agreement with imperatives, participles and passives. Is this one and the same phenomenon? In an imperative with feature agreement such as (17), it is clear that the first, but not the second imperative verb has imperative content.

- (17) **Slutt** **å skrik** til meg!
 stop.IMP to cry.IMP to me
 'Stop crying to me!'

With the long passive, however, the second verb is a part of a passivized complex predicate. Even when it does not have a passive form (as in examples (14)-(15) above), it behaves syntactically like a passive verb, in the sense that its internal argument is typically realized as the subject of the complex predicate.

Andrews (2021) and Engdahl (2022) see the passivity of the second verb as primary in Norwegian and Swedish respectively. Andrews (2021) says that the features imperative and participle percolate from the first verb to the second

verb in Norwegian, while the feature passive percolates from the second verb to the first verb. Engdahl (2022) says that there is feature spreading from the second to the first verb in the Swedish long passive.⁶ (Remember that Swedish always has voice agreement.) However, passive marking is obligatory in Norwegian with the first verb only, which makes it a better choice for being considered primary. In several other languages, passive marking is possible on the first verb only. Examples are the German (18) from Wurmbrand (2001:19), and the Spanish (19) from Aissen and Perlmutter (1983:390).

(18) dass der Traktor zu **reparieren versucht wurde**
 that the.NOM tractor to repair tried became
 'that they tried to repair the tractor'

(19) Estas paredes **están siendo terminadas de pintar**.
 these walls are being finished to paint
 'They are finishing to paint these walls.'

With imperative and participle agreement as in (3)-(4) above, there is a verbform that selects the same verbform. Norwegian voice agreement is different, however. There are two passives that agree independently of their grammatical realization. This was shown by examples (10)-(13) above, which have all possible combinations of the inflectional and the periphrastic passive: inflectional followed by inflectional (10), inflectional followed by periphrastic (11), periphrastic followed by inflectional (12) and periphrastic followed by periphrastic (13). Voice agreement is not for verbform, then, but for the more abstract feature passive.

It could be interesting to compare to another construction with verbal feature agreement. The so-called pseudocoordination is often considered a subordinating construction (Jespersen 1895, Lødrup 2014b, 2019).

(20) Han sitter og skriver / *skrev.
 he sits and writes /wrote
 'He is sitting there writing.'

In pseudocoordination, verbal feature agreement is obligatory, and there is agreement between verbforms. When the first verb in a pseudocoordination takes the periphrastic passive, both the first and the second verb must be participles, cf. (21)-(22). When the first verb takes the inflectional passive, the second verb must also have this form (Lødrup 2014b), cf. (23)-(24).

⁶ Niño (1997:137) writes about a voice feature being copied "upwards" in Colloquial Finnish. This is, however, in an informal presentation of facts that are later given an LFG analysis.

- (21) Men det blir sittet og produsert.
 but EXPL becomes sat and produced
 'One sits producing, however.'
- (22) *Men det blir sittet og produseres.
 but EXPL becomes sat and produce.PRES.PASS
 'One sits producing, however.'
- (23) Men det sittes og produseres.
 but EXPL sit.PRES.PASS and produce.PRES.PASS
 'One sits producing, however.'
- (24) *Men det sittes og blir produsert.
 but EXPL sit.PRES.PASS and becomes produced
 'One sits producing, however.'

The pseudocoordination facts show the need to distinguish agreement for verbform from agreement for an abstract feature that can be realized inflectionally or periphrastically.

Back to long passives: There is an ongoing discussion in LFG on how to handle complex predicates (e.g. Lowe 2016, Lovstrand 2020, Andrews 2021). Lowe (2016) treats restructuring verbs as not having a PRED, only contributing features to f-structure. This is not adequate for Norwegian, where restructuring verbs keep the meaning of their corresponding lexical main verbs. This seems to be the situation in other languages as well (Butt and Lahiri 2013, Andrews 2021).

A traditional LFG analysis is assumed, along the lines of Butt (1995), Alsina (1996), Niño (1997), and Sells (2004). A restructuring verb such as *unngå* 'avoid' has the option of combining with its embedded verb to form a complex predicate in a monoclausal f-structure. The active (25) has the a-structure (26) and the f-structure (27), while the passive (28) has the a-structure (29) and the f-structure (30).

- (25) Man **unngår å gjøre** dette.
 one avoids to do this
 'One avoids to do this.'

- (26) ACTIVE *avoid* < agent < do < agent theme > > >
 | _____ |
 SUBJ OBJ

- (27)

PRED 'avoid-do <SUBJ OBJ>'
SUBJ 'PRO'
OBJ 'this'
TENSE PRES

The explanation could be that this phrase does not have a syntactic function in f-structure, which is a general requirement for topicalization (see e.g. Lødrup 2011:166-67).⁷

Verbal feature agreement does not require any rules or stipulations (Niño 1997, Sells 2004). In the monoclausal f-structure of a sentence with restructuring, both verbs contribute verbal features. Passive first and second verbs contribute [PASSIVE +] to the f-structure, and these features unify. In a sentence without feature agreement, such as (33), only the first verb contributes [PASSIVE +].

- (33) Dette **unngås** **å gjøre**
 this avoid.PRES.PASS to do.INF
 'One avoids to do this.'

The active infinitive is traditionally seen as the unmarked form of the verb, and it is assumed that it does not have any features (e.g. Sells 2004, Falk 2008). An important assumption is that it does not contribute [PASSIVE -].

VOICE FEATURES

- Passive infinitive [PASSIVE +]
- Passive present [PASSIVE +]
- Active infinitive (NO FEATURES)
- Active present [PASSIVE -]

A sentence such as (33) then also gets the f-structure (30) above.

A sentence with an active first verb and a passive second verb, such as (34), is not well-formed as a long passive. The passive infinitive has the feature [PASSIVE +], while the active first verb has [PASSIVE -].

- (34) *Dette **unngår** aldri **å gjøres**
 this avoids never to do.INF.PASS
 'One never avoids to do this.' [intended]

It was pointed out that voice agreement is not for verbform, but for the more abstract feature passive. This follows by itself when the passive auxiliary is a functional head without a PRED, which only contributes grammatical features to f-structure (Butt, Niño and Segond 1996, Frank and Zaenen 2004). This analysis gives an inflectional passive and a periphrastic passive basically the same f-structure. Both the passive suffix and the passive auxiliary contribute a

⁷ A problem for this account is that German can topicalize the second verb (phrase) in a long passive, see Wurmbrand (2007).

passive feature, which unifies with another passive feature when there is agreement. This means that sentences with voice agreement such as (35)-(37), with one or two periphrastic passives, also have the f-structure (30).

- (35) Dette **unngås** **å bli** **gjort**.
this avoid.PRES.PASS to become done
'One avoids to do this.'
- (36) Dette **blir** **unngått å** **gjøres**.
this becomes avoided to do.INF.PASS
'One avoids to do this.'
- (37) Dette **blir** **unngått å bli** **gjort**.
this becomes avoided to become done
'One avoids to do this.'

The treatment of verbal feature agreement assumed here does not require special rules or stipulations (Niño 1997, Sells 2004). It allows for agreement with all verbal features in all complex predicates. The option for imperative agreement and participle agreement (examples (3)-(4) above) then follows by itself. The question of directionality of feature percolation that was raised by Andrews (2021) and Engdahl (2022) disappears when verbal feature agreement is treated this way.

A problem with this account is overgeneration. Norwegian does not have agreement with all verbal features in all complex predicates. There is both linguistic and sociolinguistic variation. Present and preterite agreement is very rare, even if examples can be found in texts. Another problem is how to account for obligatory feature agreement, as with voice agreement in Swedish (example (16) above). These questions cannot be discussed further here.

The treatment of verbal feature agreement assumed follows by itself from the traditional LFG analysis of restructuring, given relevant assumptions. An alternative could be an account at the level of m-structure. M-structure follows c-structure in that the first verb is the head of the second verb. This makes it possible to stipulate that a restructuring verb and its dependent verb have the same form. This kind of account would have the overgeneration problem mentioned above. It would also have additional problems, as Aagaard (2016:52-58) points out. It would be necessary to stipulate that feature agreement is optional. An important argument against this kind of account is that voice agreement in Norwegian is agreement for the abstract feature passive, and not for verb form. The first verb is not followed by a verb with the same form in voice agreeing sentences such as (35)-(37) above. A general rule for verb form agreement would also license ungrammatical sentences such

as (38), where a passive participle is followed by a passive participle without an auxiliary.⁸

- (38) *Dette **blir unnlatt sagt**.
this becomes neglected said
'One neglects to say this.' [intended]

An m-structure account of voice agreement would therefore be impossible without additional ad hoc rules.⁹

2.3 Inflectional and periphrastic passives

In several languages, only the first verb in a long passive has the passive form (Wurmbrand and Shimamura 2017). In Norwegian, the second verb usually has the passive form, but the active form is also to some extent acceptable (Lødrup 2014a).

Wurmbrand and Shimamura (2017) give a Minimalist analysis that connects voice agreement to morphological marking of the embedded passive. This idea could get support from Swedish, which uses the inflectional passive in long passives. Wurmbrand and Shimamura (2017) mention the Norwegian situation as a special problem. They see the embedded periphrastic passive as the marked case, which is accounted for by a special rule (Wurmbrand and Shimamura 2017:204).

⁸ A possible objection to the argument based upon (38) is that Norwegian has sentences with a passive participle followed by a passive participle, such as (i).

- (i) Dette blir forsøkt gjort.
this becomes tried done
'One tries to do this.'

This is a different construction, however, the so-called complex passive. It is usually considered a subject-to-subject-raising construction (see e.g. Christensen 1991, Ørsnes 2006). There are clear differences from the long passive (Lødrup 2014a). The complex passive construction takes a very small group of first verbs, while the long passive is possible with a somewhat larger group. There is a certain overlap between the groups, e.g. the verb *forsøke* 'try'. The first passive in a complex passive can be periphrastic or inflectional, so there is not agreement for verb form.

⁹ Pseudocoordination, as in examples (21)-(24) above, is (usually) not a complex predicate construction. It shows obligatory agreement for verb form (Lødrup 2019) — note that it differs from the long passive in allowing a passive participle followed by a passive participle (cf. example (21) above). Feature agreement with pseudocoordination could be accounted for with an m-structure rule without problems (Lødrup 2014b).

There is a question to what extent languages that are similar to Norwegian in relevant respects can be found – i.e. languages that can have a periphrastic passive as the second verb in a voice agreeing long passive. A complicating fact is that periphrastic passives are not very common in the world's languages (see e.g. Haspelmath 1990). Wurmbrand and Shimamura (2017:203-4) mention English sentences such as (39).

(39) Snapshots will **be tried to be updated** on reboot/shutdown.

This kind of sentences can be found in texts, but their acceptability has not been investigated, and native speakers seem to be reluctant to accept them.

French might be a better example. It is sometimes said that French does not have long passives or complex predicates of the relevant type (e.g. Cinque 2002, Wurmbrand 2014, Alsina 2021), but relevant examples with and without voice agreement have been discussed by French grammarians for a long time (e.g. Brunot ([1922] 1926:363, Anscombe 1989:48, Grevisse and Goosse 2008:986). These sentences have aspectual first verbs – a central type of restructuring verbs. Examples are (40)-(41), from Anscombe (1989:48).

(40) Mon article n' **est pas fini de rédiger.**

my article NEG1 is NEG2 finished to edit

'I haven't finished editing my article.'

(41) Mon article n' **est pas fini d'être rédigé.**

my article NEG1 is NEG2 finished to be edited

'I haven't finished editing my article.'

More research on the long passive in French is needed. Hobæk Haff and Lødrup (2016) argue that long passives in French have been underreported. They give www examples of long passives not only with aspectual verbs, but also with verbs such as *tenter* 'try', *oublier* 'forget', *négliger* 'neglect' and *éviter* 'avoid', including (42)-(45).

(42) ce qui **a été tenté d'être fait** cette année

that which has been tried to be done this year

'that which one has tried to do this year'

(43) ce qui **a été oublié d'être commenté** dans le Science & Vie

that which has been forgotten to be commented in the Science & Vie

'what one has forgotten to comment in Science & Vie'

(44) Souvent ce travail **est négligé d'être fait** par certains accordeurs.

often that work is neglected to be done by certain tuners

'Certain tuners often neglect to do that work.'

(45) Il y a des choses qui **sont évitées d'être dites.**

EXPL there have ART things that are avoided to be said

'There are things that one avoids saying.'

Hobæk Haff and Lødrup (2016) show that at least some French speakers have this kind of long passives. French long passives have some interesting properties. The set of possible verbs are the "usual suspects" as first verbs in other languages (see part 1). They seem to require voice agreement – differing from long passives with aspectual verbs, which can be found with or without agreement.

French has an alternative to the periphrastic passive, with the simple reflexive *se* as its only marker.

- (46) Tout se vend ici.
 all REFL sell here
 'Everything is sold here.'

However, informants reject the reflexive passive in long passives in French, both as first and second verb. (Examples (47)-(48) could be compared to the acceptable (40)-(41) above, and (49)-(50) to (42).)

- (47) *Mon article n' **est pas fini de se rédiger**.
 my article NEG1 is NEG2 finished to REFL edit
 'I haven't finished editing my article.' [intended]
- (48) *Mon article ne **se finit pas de se rédiger**.
 my article NEG1 REFL finish NEG2 to REFL edit
 'I haven't finished editing my article.' [intended]
- (49) *Le mur **est tenté de se peindre**.
 the wall is tried to REFL paint
 'They try to paint the wall.' [intended]
- (50) *Le mur **se tente de se peindre**.
 the wall REFL tries to REFL paint
 'They try to paint the wall.' [intended]

FRENCH PASSIVE:

Periphrastic passive: auxiliary 'be' plus participle

Reflexive passive: simple reflexive plus verb

Long passive:

first verb periphrastic passive

second verb periphrastic passive, or no passive marking if the first verb is aspectual

The Norwegian situation with a periphrastic passive as the second verbs is not unique, then. A voice agreement process does not necessarily depend upon the realization of the passive.

2.4 Why is the inflectional passive preferred in Norwegian?

The relation between the inflectional and the periphrastic passive is a difficult area in Norwegian and Scandinavian grammar. There are tendencies rather than fixed rules, and intuitions can be uncertain. The choice of passive form in the long passive raises some questions. The inflectional passive is clearly the preferred form, both with the first and the second verb. For 102 voice agreeing long passives in the NoWaC www corpus, the distribution is the following (Lødrup 2014a).

PASSIVE REALIZATION

inflectional passive + inflectional passive: 73

inflectional passive + periphrastic passive: 9

periphrastic passive + periphrastic passive: 1

periphrastic passive + inflectional passive: 19

Ideally, the choice of form in the long passive should follow from general properties of the passive forms. We now put the long passive aside, to have a look at the realization of the passive more generally.

The competition between the inflectional and the periphrastic passive in Mainland Scandinavian is not well understood (but see Heltoft and Falster Jakobsen 1996, Engdahl 1999, 2006, Laanemets 2012, Lundquist 2016). In Norwegian newspapers, there is roughly 50% inflectional and 50% periphrastic passives. In spoken Norwegian, however, there is 20% inflectional and 80% periphrastic passives (Laanemets 2012:92). The inflectional passive must be considered the "marked" passive realization in Norwegian. (See Heltoft and Falster Jakobsen (1996:211-13) on Danish.)

In Swedish newspapers, there are roughly 85% inflectional and 15% periphrastic passives. In spoken Swedish, there are 97% inflectional passives, and 3% periphrastic passives. (Laanemets 2012:92). The periphrastic passive is the "marked" realization. This makes the use of the inflectional passive in Swedish long passives natural. (Remember that the Swedish inflectional passive has the full paradigm.)

In Norwegian, however, the inflectional passive is the marked realization, especially in the spoken language. Why should it be the preferred form in long passives? A simple observation is that the passive suffix *-s* is a "small" element (Julien and Lødrup 2013). To get further, separate discussions of the first and the second verb are required.

The traditional view (Western 1921:161-66) is that the inflectional passive is used of states and unfinished actions, and in general and normative statements. Western (1921:162) gives examples such as (51)-(52).

- (51) Fluesoppen spises ikke
 amanita.DEF eat.PRES.PASS not
 'The amanita is not eaten.'
- (52) Boken selges til inntekt for feriekolonien
 book.DEF sell.PRES.PASS for benefit of holiday.camp.DEF
 'The book is being sold for the benefit of the holiday camp.'

The inflectional passive cannot be used of a completed event. Sentences with the inflectional passive are "timeless". What is traditionally called the infinitive and the present never have different forms. Lundquist (2016) says that there is one tenseless form.

The preference for the inflectional passive with the second verb could be explained by a general constraint on complex predicates: Complex predicate formation is not possible when the second verb refers to a time that is independent of the time of the first verb (Wurmbrand 2001:79–99). The inflectional passive seems to be a natural choice with the second verb, being a "timeless" form.

But what about the first verb? The periphrastic passive can be found with the first verb, but primarily when there is no alternative, i.e. when what is needed is not the infinitive or present (but see example (12) above). To explain the preference for the inflectional passive with the first verb, it is necessary to look at another of its properties.

The inflectional passive has a general preference for inanimate subjects in Norwegian, Swedish and Danish (Laanemets 2012:115). Why should animacy be relevant to the choice of the inflectional passive? One factor in the choice of passive form is control: to what extent the passive subject has control over the event (Engdahl 1999, 2006). With the inflectional passive, there is no control, with the periphrastic passive, there might be some. In a context where the subject clearly has some control, the inflectional passive is unnatural, cf. (53)-(54) (based upon Swedish examples in Engdahl 1999).

- (53) Representanten forsøkte å bli gjenvalgt.
 representative.DEF tried to become reelected
 'The representative tried to be reelected.'
- (54) ??Representanten forsøkte å gjenvelges.
 representative.DEF tried to reelect.INF.PASS
 'The representative tried to be reelected.' [intended]

The inflectional passive is impossible in the imperative, but not the periphrastic passive, cf. (55)-(56) (based upon Swedish examples in Engdahl 1999).

- (55) *Ikke ranes!
 not rob.PASS

(56) Ikke bli ranet i Chicago!
not become.IMP robbed in Chicago
'Don't get robbed in Chicago!'

The generalization about control seems to be more general. The impersonal passive with an expletive subject prefers the inflectional passive (Laanemets 2012:120). Again, there is an inanimate subject that has no control.

(57) Det slås på stortromme.
EXPL hit.PRES.PASS on bass.drum
'They beat the bass drum.'

It has been observed that passive verbs with subject-to-subject-raising prefer the inflectional passive (Engdahl 1999, 2022).¹⁰ An example is (58).

(58) Neymar forventes å være skadefri om en måned.
Neymar expect.PRES.PASS to be healthy in one month
'Neymar is expected to be healthy in one month.'

This preference for the inflectional passive with subject-to-subject-raising could be related to control (hinted in Ramhøj 2016:590). Relevant verbs are cognition verbs and reportive verbs (Ørsnes 2011). The intuition is that the passive subject has limited control over what people believe or say about the subordinate predication.¹¹

Back to the long passives: Long passives with the inflectional passive usually have inanimate subjects (Julien and Lødrup 2013), which by their nature can have no control of the event. It is difficult to find a sentence with an animate subject and the inflectional passive with the first verb, such as (59). The rare animate subjects found could in some cases be conceptualized as

¹⁰ An indication of the unmarked status of the periphrastic passive in Norwegian is that it can be always used when there is no inflectional passive form available, e.g. in the preterit and the participle of sentences such as (57) and (58).

¹¹ The so-called complex passive (mentioned in note 8) raises a problem here. This construction has an inflectional or periphrastic passive followed by a passive participle. It is usually considered a subject-to-subject-raising construction (see e.g. Christensen 1991, Ørsnes 2006). It has no preference for the inflectional passive, however. In my intuition it is rather the periphrastic passive that is preferred.

(i) Dette forsøkes /blir forsøkt gjort.
this try.PRES.PASS /becomes tried done
'One tries to do this.'

inanimate, cf. (59). Sentences with a periphrastic passive on the first verb are fewer, but animate subjects are easier to find in this group, cf. (60).

- (59) Hvor seint kan ungen **forsøkes** **å snus**?
 how late can baby.DEF try.INF.PASS to turn.INF.PASS
 'How late can one try to turn around the (unborn) baby?'
 (60) Det er vi som er **blitt** **forsøkt å bli** **kastet** ut.
 EXPL is we who are become tried to become thrown out
 'It is us one has tried to throw out.'

The question of control could also be brought up for the long passive. The complex predicate is semantically complex, and the passive subject usually realizes the internal argument of the second verb. For central restructuring verbs, it seems intuitive that the semantic embedding reduces the passive subject's control over the event as a whole, as compared to the event of the second verb only.

An example: If I am kicked by you, I could take some control over the event – varying with circumstances. I could hit you, or beg you to stop, or run away, or do various other things. However, if the kicking event is integrated in a larger event, the general case seems to be that I have less control over the event as a whole. This is what happens in a complex predicate. I have less control over your avoiding or trying to kick me than over your kicking me.

- (61) ??Jeg **unngås** / **forsøkes** **å sparkes**.
 I avoid.PRES.PASS / try.PRES.PASS to kick.INF.PASS
 'They avoid/try kicking me.' [intended]

It remains to see if these thoughts about control are on the right track. If they are, we seem to have some kind of explanation for the predominance of the inflectional passive with the first verb. It might seem strange that the degree of control should be relevant, but it has been shown that this can be important to grammatical phenomena; an example is the choice of aspect in negated imperatives in Slavic (Esipova 2021 and references there).

Other languages seem to give evidence both for and against this way of thinking. Bader and Schmid (2009) show that the inanimacy of the passive subject plays an important role with long passives in German. They tested sentences such as (62)-(63) with informants. Long passives with inanimate subjects such as (62) were judged more acceptable than (63) with an animate subject. This was a strong effect with long passives, but only marginal with related constructions.

- (62) Es ist gut, dass der Roman **zu lesen versucht wurde**.
 it is good that the.NOM novel to read tried became
 'It is a good thing that someone tried to read the novel.'

(63) Es ist gut, dass der Schüler **zu motivieren versucht wurde**.
it is good that the.NOM student to motivate tried became
'It is a good thing that someone tried to motivate the student'

However, French does not behave the way one might have suspected when it comes to the choice of passive form. Long passives with one or two reflexive passives, such as examples (47)-(50) above, are rejected by informants. This might be surprising — the French reflexive passive looks like a good candidate for both the first and the second verb. The French reflexive passive normally takes an inanimate subject (see e.g. Lamiroy 1993); this preference seems to be even stronger than for the Norwegian inflectional passive. The French reflexive passive also shares the "timelessness" of the Norwegian inflectional passive: It is mostly used in the present, of unfinished actions and in general and normative statements, even if it can also take an eventive reading (see e.g. Zribi-Hertz 2021:225).

The absence of the reflexive passive in French long passives must be seen in connection with its marked status (see e.g. Lamiroy 1993, Zribi-Hertz 2009). It is generally more marked and less frequent than the inflectional passive in Norwegian. Reflexive passives make up about 1% of all passives in a corpus researched by Barque and Candito (2019) and da Cunha and Abeillé (to appear).

To conclude part 2.4: The choice of passive realization in Norwegian long passives is a difficult area. Even so, it seems to be possible to get some way toward an explanation for the predominance of the inflectional passive which is based upon its general semantic properties. First, the inflectional passive is a "timeless" form. This contributes to its use with the second verb, which cannot have a time reference differing from that of the first verb. Second, the inflectional passive prefers an inanimate subject with minimal control over the event denoted. This contributes to its use with the first verb: There is evidence that the long passive is a construction that generally prefers inanimate subjects, and the combination of passive voice and event embedding gives the passive subject minimal control over what is happening.

3 Conclusion

The Norwegian long passive might seem to be a chaotic construction, with optional voice agreement and a choice between passive realizations. I discussed long passives in Lødrup (2014a, 2014b), and I have tried to get a bit further in this paper. My point of departure was the traditional LFG analysis of complex predicate constructions. When it is f-structure that represents their monoclausality, optional voice agreement follows without special rules or stipulations, given relevant assumptions. The predominance of the inflectional passive in long passives must be related to its general semantic properties.

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