The Loss of being + V-ing

Abstract:

Denison (1993) hypothesises that being + V-ing was productive as a passive, gerund-participial pattern in Early Modern English but receded because of the grammaticalisation of the progressive passive. Hardly any studies have followed up on this proposed link and those which do find few examples of the ´double -ing´ form in their corpus data (ARCHER; Hundt: 2004, Kranich: 2010) and therefore downplay the importance of the supposed relationship between the appearance of the one form and disappearance of the other. The ARCHER data is similarly scarce for other contemporary progressive periphrases. For example, it appears that there are no passivals in texts of certain genres, such as scientific writing, in this corpus. Other studies indicate that genre is a significant extralinguistic factor for progressives (Smitterberg: 2005, Smith and Rayson: 2007). Against this background, the present study examines the emergence of the progressive passive and related patterns – including the being + V-ing form – in two corpora where these variables have not been studied before: the Historical collection of the Text Creation Partnership´s and the CORUÑA Corpus of English Scientific Writing. This data sheds new light on the evolution of these progressive forms.

References:


CORUÑA; Information Retrieval Lab, University of A Coruna MuStE Group, University of A Coruna: 2020.
http://hdl.handle.net/2183/21850

Historical collection of the Text Creation Partnership´s (TCP)
https://textcreationpartnership.org/


