

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 (Smutterberg: 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 the *CORUÑA Corpus of English Scientific Writing*. This data sheds new light on the evolution of these progressive forms.

References:

- Denison, D. (1993) Passive. In *English Historical Syntax: Verbal Constructions*. London: Routledge, 413-445.
- 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/>
- Hundt, M. (2004) The passival and the progressive passive. In *Corpus Approaches to Grammaticalization in English*. Ed. by Hans Lindquist and Christian Mair. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 79-120.
- Kranich, S. (2010) *The Progressive in Modern English: A Corpus-based Study of Grammaticalization and Related Changes*. Amsterdam: BRILL.
- Smith, N. and Rayson, P. (2007) Recent change and variation in the British English use of the progressive passive, *ICAME Journal* 31, 129-159.
- Smutterberg, E. (2005) *The Progressive in 19th-century English: A Process of Integration*. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi.