

# On the Semantic Development of a Danish Modal Verb, *ville*

Rie Obe (Osaka University) and Lennart Westergaard (Lund University)

Keywords: modal verbs, semantic change, modality

Over the last few decades, a considerable number of studies have been conducted on semantic change of modal verbs within the framework of grammaticalization theory. During the last decade, several new attempts have also been made to describe semantic change of Danish modal verbs: Obe (2013), Gregersen (2019), Westergaard (2019), Westergaard (2020), and Obe (2021).

*Ville* (eng. will) has not been included in analyses of the so-called main semantic system of modal verbs, neither in Middle Danish (Bjerrum 1966, 1967 and Obe 2013) nor in Modern Danish (Hansen & Heltoft 2011). Therefore, the characteristics of *ville*'s semantic development have not been dealt with in depth. However, Westergaard (2019; 2020) and Obe (2021) reported on the semantic state of *ville* in Early Modern Danish and in Middle Danish respectively. These studies reveal that *ville* during its development had a number of different meanings: volitive modality (desire, wish), dynamic modality (necessity, cp. "omnitemporality" in Ziegeler 2006: 91), deontic modality (duty, obligation), future, and epistemic modality. However, in these studies the diachronic development of *ville* is only analyzed excursively.

This paper will analyze the development of *ville* from Middle Danish to Modern Danish, exploring how these meanings developed and are related to each other based on the chronology of the various senses and identification of bridging contexts (Evans & Wilkins 1998). The results will be discussed based on and the major paths of development for modality and future (Bybee *et al.* 1994; van der Auwera & Plungian 1998).

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