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The spread of the progressive and its 'future' use

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Numerous factors have been identified as being relevant to the spread of the progressive in Late Modern English. The potential role of the 'future' use of the construction (as in *I'm flying home next week*) has, however, been neglected so far. The present study aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the development of the progressive with future time reference since 1750 in British English. The investigation focuses on the question of whether and to what degree the factors at work in the development of the construction coincide with factors relevant to the development of other types of progressives.

The analysis demonstrates that the 'future' use of the progressive does indeed play a part in the spread of the progressive. Several hitherto unknown factors special to the development of the 'future' use of the progressive are also uncovered, among them an increased (and possibly) new use of the construction to express spontaneous decisions.

1 Introduction

It is a well-established fact that the progressive has increased greatly in frequency in the past few centuries (e.g. Dennis, 1940; Elsness, 1994; Hundt, 2004; Strang, 1982), and several factors have been shown to be relevant to this development.[1] The potential role of the use of the progressive with future time reference (as in *He's leaving for London tomorrow*) in the spread of the progressive has, however, been strangely neglected to date. In fact, the diachronic development of this construction has hardly received any scholarly attention.

The aim of the present article is to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the 'future' use of the progressive (or progressive futurate) in Late Modern (British) English. First, the potential contribution of the construction to the overall spread of the progressive will be investigated. Then, the analysis will focus on the question of whether and to what degree the factors that have been identified for the general spread of the progressive also play a part in the development of the progressive futurate, and whether and to what degree different factors are at work.

The analysis presented here is based on ARCHER (*A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers*). It will take into account potential grammatical, lexical, and semantic factors, and will also consider the potential role of register in the development of the progressive with future time reference.

[1] I would like to thank Marianne Hundt, David Denison, and the two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on earlier versions of this article.

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2 Previous research

2.1 Factors relevant to the spread of the progressive

One factor that has been shown to be relevant to the overall spread of the progressive is the extension of syntactic contexts in which the construction can occur. Over the centuries, longer constructions that were impossible before have entered the language, in particular the progressive passive, the combination of the progressive with modals, and the combination of the progressive with perfect *HAVE* (e.g. Denison, 1998: 145ff.; Strang, 1982: 440f.). A further factor in the spread of the progressive is its extension to all clause types. While it seems that, initially, the construction was restricted or at least largely restricted to certain types of subordinate clauses, it has come to be used in all types of clauses (cf. Strang, 1982: 441f.). Its use in main clauses in particular has been shown to have undergone substantial increase (e.g. Smith, 2002: 327f.; Smitterberg, 2005: 194ff.).

Further factors are the extension of possible subjects and of the range of possible verbs. Inanimate subjects have become more common over the past three centuries (cf. Hundt, 2004; Strang, 1982: 443ff.), and the same is true for nonactivity verbs (Smith, 2002: 325f.; Strang, 1982: 445ff.). There has also been an increase of what Smitterberg refers to as 'not-solely-aspectual' progressives, i.e. progressives conveying emotional involvement or subjective attitudes (Smith, 2002: 326; Smitterberg, 2005: 205ff.). Finally, 'colloquialization', or a growing tendency of written texts to incorporate features typical of spoken language, has also been cited as a potential factor in the spread of the progressive (Mair & Hundt, 1995; Smith, 2002: 328ff.).

2.2 Investigations of the development of the 'future' use of the progressive

As this brief overview demonstrates, the question of potential factors in the overall development of the progressive has received a fair amount of attention. In spite of this, the question of a potential contribution of the 'future' use of the progressive has hardly been investigated to date, and, what is more, the hypothesis that this particular use might play a part in the spread of the progressive has only very sporadically been advanced. There are only three studies I am aware of that have analysed the diachronic development of the progressive with future time reference (all three analyses being parts of more comprehensive studies of the development of the progressive). Two of these are limited to the second half of the twentieth century, and one is limited to the nineteenth century. Smitterberg (2005) investigates the progressive futurate with CONCE (*A Corpus of Nineteenth-Century English*), which contains various registers of nineteenth-century British English. He obtains the following results for progressives with future time reference:

1800–30: 45 occurrences (in c.345,000 words)
1850–70: 66 occurrences (in c.340,000 words)
1870–1900: 35 occurrences (in c.300,000 words)

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Table 1. *Previous diachronic studies on the 'future' use of the progressive*

Study	Text type(s) covered	Time (span) covered	Occ. per 100,000 words, BrE (AmE)
Smitterberg, 2005	various speech-based & written	1800–30	13
Smitterberg, 2005	various speech-based & written	1850–70	19
Smitterberg, 2005	various speech-based & written	1870–1900	12
Mair & Hundt, 1995	newspaper language	1961	5 (5)
Mair & Hundt, 1995	newspaper language	1991/2	5 (6)
Smith, 2002	various written	1961	5
Smith, 2002	various written	1991	3

Mair & Hundt (1995), who base their analysis on the press sections of the Brown group of corpora (each containing around 180,000 words), find the following numbers of occurrences of progressives with clear future time reference:

LOB (BrE, 1961): 9 Brown (AmE, 1961): 9
FLOB (BrE, 1991): 9 Frown (AmE, 1992): 11

Smith (2002), who bases his analysis on the complete LOB and FLOB corpora (1 million words of various text types each), distinguishes clear cases of progressives with future time reference from ambiguous cases, with the following results (the first number gives the occurrences of clear cases, the one in brackets the totals of both clear and ambiguous cases):

LOB: 51 (134)
FLOB: 29 (128)

For a better overview, the results of the three previous studies are summarized in table 1, with normalized frequencies per 100,000 words. These previous studies do not point towards a diachronic increase of the progressive with future time reference (if anything, the contrary), but as they are all limited to comparatively short time spans, further investigation is clearly called for.

3 Method

The study presented in this article examines a time span of roughly 250 years, from 1750 to 1990. It is based on several time-periods represented in the British part of ARCHER, version 3.1, which contains late Modern English texts from nine different registers.[2] ARCHER is subdivided into periods of approximately fifty years, each

[2] ARCHER-3.1 was completed in 2006. It presents an extended and more balanced version of the original corpus and is the result of a collaborative effort of the following universities: University of Freiburg, University of Heidelberg, University of Helsinki, University of Manchester, University of Mannheim, University of Michigan, Northern Arizona University, University of Southern California, Uppsala University, and University of Zurich.

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Table 2. *Composition of ARCHER (3.1)*

Text type	Abbreviation	Approx. number of words per period
newspaper reportage	n	20,000
journals/diaries	j	20,000
fiction (conv. & prose)	*f*	*40,000*
fiction conversation	–	10,000–20,000
fiction prose	–	20,000–30,000
drama	d	30,000
medical texts	m	20,000
science texts	s	20,000
homilies & sermons	h	10,000
private letters	x	10,000

of which contains between 10,000 and 30,000 words from texts of each register (cf. table 2). The different periods contain the same number of texts (between five and thirty, depending on the register) and about the same number of words from the different registers, so that comparability across periods is assured.[3] The present analysis is based on the periods 1750–99, 1850–99, and 1950–90, and thus on a total of about 540,000 words.

The search performed on these data to identify potential progressives was for all current Early and Late Modern forms of the verb *be*[4] plus all variants of *-ing* (*-ing, -yng, -in, in', -n'*) in a span of four to the right (i.e. with up to three words in between). From the results of this search, the nonprogressive forms were then manually removed, and in a next step, an attempt was made to separate 'future' uses of the progressive from 'nonfuture' uses.[5] A great amount of context was often needed to determine the time reference of a given instance. In many cases, however, the time reference could not even be determined after consulting all the available context (similar problems have been described by other researchers trying to classify progressives in this way; cf. e.g. Mair & Hundt, 1995: 116ff.; Smith, 2002: 326). It was thus necessary to further subcategorize the instances, namely into those that clearly or in all likelihood refer to the future and those that possibly refer to the future (but might also refer to the present). Examples (1) and (2) illustrate clear future time reference, (3) and (4) possible future time reference (emphasis added throughout):

[3] As, for obvious practical reasons, fiction prose and fiction conversation were not sampled separately in ARCHER, the numbers of words for these (sub)categories vary to some degree across periods. The category of fiction is equally represented in all periods, however.

[4] The following forms were included in the search: *'m, 're, 's, ain't, am, amn't, an't, ar, are, aren't, art, be, bee, been, beest, bein', bein, being, in't, is, isn't, 'tis, 'twas, was, wasn't, wast, were, weren't, wert*.

[5] Modal progressives (such as *will/may/should be coming*) were excluded on the grounds that the future time reference in these cases seems to lie primarily in the modal rather than in the use of the progressive.

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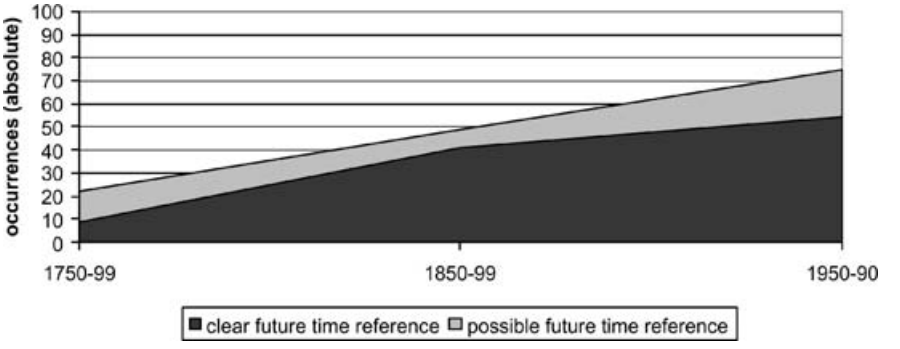


Figure 1 Progressives with future time reference in ARCHER, BrE

clear future time reference:

(1) I am leaving for New Zealand next Thursday (1894jone.d6b)
(2) he said he couldn't appear in the special show we are giving on 28 February (1976hall.j8b)

possible future time reference:

(3) I was desired to attend her funeral as a bearer. I cannot say I ever felt more in my life, than on the occasion, when I reflected that about three months before I was dancing with her, and that now I was attending her to her grave. (1788dyot.j4b)
(4) The windpipe closes; in fact, the hangman has you by the throat each ten or twenty minutes; you are a merry Gallow's bird. And to be waked up at night by a seizure, is akin to the dark archangel's intimation to you to prepare for immediate flight . . . However, I am getting free of this clutch. My wife and Mariette go to Eastbourne next week; and I think, if you will have me, I will offer myself for a couple of days. (1879merd.x6b)

In the case of (3), it depends on the interpretation of 'on the occasion' whether the progressive refers to the future or the present: if 'on the occasion' refers to the funeral, the progressive refers to the present, if it refers to the occasion when the writer was asked to attend the funeral as a bearer, the progressive refers to the future. In example (4), this decision depends on whether the writer's effort to get free of the illness's clutch is considered to have started already or whether it is considered to start in the following week.

4 The progressive with future time reference in Late Modern English – results

4.1 Overall development

The overall numbers of instances with clear future time reference as well as those with possible future time reference in the periods investigated are displayed in figure 1 (as well as numerically in table 3). This analysis clearly reveals that there has been an

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Table 3. *Progressives with future time reference in ARCHER (BrE)*

	1750–99	1850–99	1950–90
clear future time reference	9	41	54
possible future time reference	13	8	21
total	22	49	75

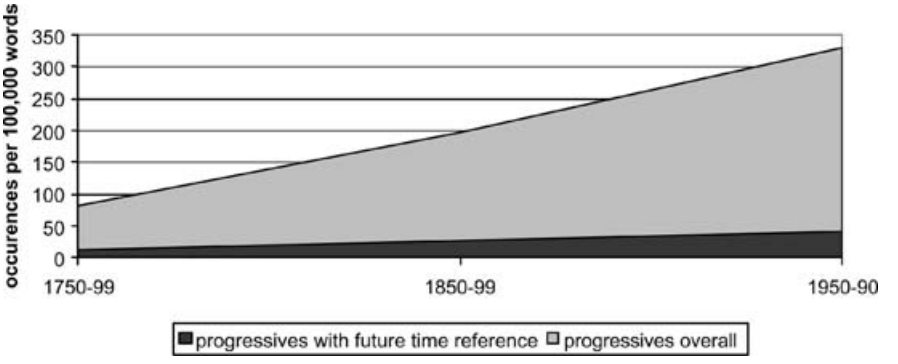


Figure 2 Proportion of progressives that refer to the future (overall results for progressives from Hundt, 2004: 69)

increase of the 'future' use of the progressive in the course of Late Modern (British) English; if both the clear and possible instances of future time reference are taken into account, the progressive futurate has roughly tripled in frequency between 1750 and 1990.

The next step in the analysis was to determine the degree of the contribution of the 'future' use to the overall spread of the progressive. For this purpose, the overall results were related to those given in Hundt (2004), who, also on the basis of ARCHER, investigated the development of progressives in general (cf. figure 2).[6] Both the clear and the possible cases of future time reference have been included in figure 2; the figure displays normalized frequencies per 100,000 words. The comparison shows that while the 'future' use of the progressive cannot be claimed to be the decisive factor in the overall development of the construction, a contribution cannot be denied: throughout the time span investigated, about one-seventh of the progressives have (potential) future time reference. Considering that at least six other factors are in all likelihood responsible for the increase of the progressive (cf. section 2.1), the 'future' use of the progressive

[6] Hundt (2004) used an earlier version of ARCHER. The composition of the relevant British part of that version, however, largely coincides with the version used here. The main difference between the British subcorpora of the two versions is that ARCHER-3.1 contains more medical texts. As the number of progressives in this category is low anyway (cf. Hundt, 2004: 62) and the aim here is merely to obtain a rough indication of the overall proportions, the comparison seems justified nevertheless.

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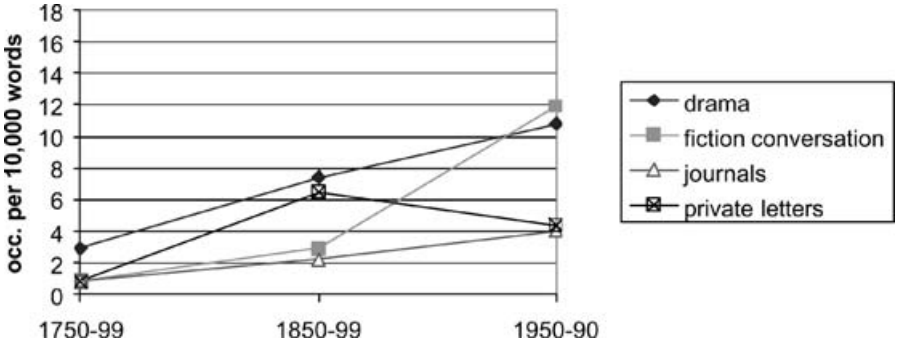


Figure 3a Progressives with future time reference in different registers I

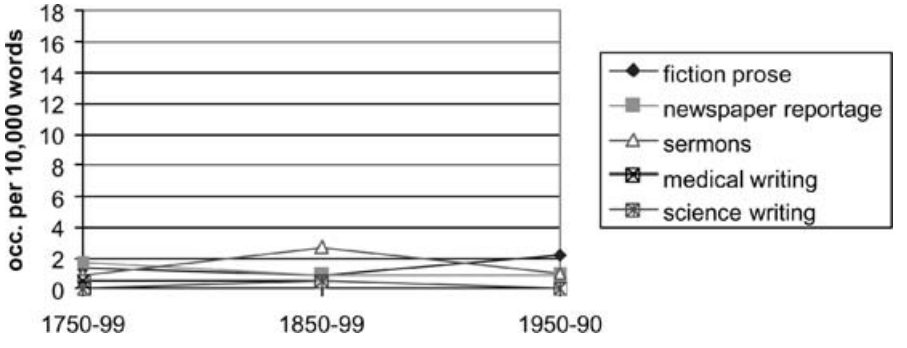


Figure 3b Progressives with future time reference in different registers II

thus seems to play a role which is comparable to those of other factors. Determining the exact relative importance of the different factors is a task for future research.

4.2 The developments in the different registers

There is evidence that the progressive is more prevalent in spoken and informal registers than in more formal and/or written registers (e.g. Quirk et al., 1985: 198), and there is also evidence, that, diachronically, its spread has been more pronounced in these registers (Smitterberg, 2005: 66). In addition, the increase of the progressive has also been put down to colloquialization, or an absorption of norms of spoken language into written language (cf. section 2.1). The question therefore arises whether the 'future' use of the progressive also displays similar patterns of usage and development, and whether its increase therefore also is partly a consequence of colloquialization. In figures 3a and 3b, the development of the construction is displayed separately for each register

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(per 10,000 words, as the total number of words is not identical for each register).[7] In figure 3a, what have been referred to as 'speech-based' registers (drama and fiction conversation) as well as the supposedly rather informal registers of journals (or diaries) and private letters are displayed, in figure 3b the more formal written registers.[8]

Figures 3a and 3b show that the most substantial increase has taken place in the speech-based registers of drama and fiction conversation. To a lower degree, the construction has also increased in frequency in journals and private letters. In the more formal written text types (fiction prose, newspaper reportage, sermons, medical writing, and science writing), on the other hand, practically no increase can be observed.[9] The development of the 'future' use of the progressive thus to some degree reflects the overall development of the progressive, in that the increase is more pronounced in speech-based and more informal written registers than in more formal written ones. However, when the results are compared to those in Smitterberg (2005: 113ff.) and Hundt (2004: 62), the almost total lack of increase in more formal written text types appears to be special to the 'future' use of the progressive (both Hundt and Smitterberg find some degree of increase in more formal text types as well; Hundt even records a particularly sharp increase of the progressive in newspaper reportage). Colloquialization of written language does not therefore seem to have contributed to the spread of the progressive futurate to the same degree as to the overall spread of the progressive.

4.3 Types of verb

With respect to the verbs that occur in the progressive with future time reference, a common claim is that the construction is predominantly used with motion verbs or verbs of movement. Palmer (1965: 88), for instance, states that 'with the progressives, reference to the future is very largely restricted to verbs of motion or verbs which at least imply motion'. If only those verbs for which 'movement' can be claimed to be a central semantic feature are considered verbs of movement (in the present data, this seems to apply to *come*, *go*, *leave*, *climb up*, *sail*, *fly*, *pass*, and *move*), this claim only holds for the period 1850–99, where over 70 percent of the verbs in the relevant construction can be subsumed under this category (cf. figure 4).[10] In both the periods

[7] In this, as well in the subsequent analyses with the exception of the one presented in section 4.9, all the instances of both the categories clear and possible future time reference have been included.

[8] Unlike what might be expected, sermons, although they are usually written to be spoken, cannot be considered a speech-based register (cf. Biber, 2001: 96f).

[9] These register-specific developments probably explain the differences between the results obtained in the present study and the previous ones conducted with the Brown group of corpora (cf. section 2.2). In these corpora (LOB, FLOB, Brown, Frown) only written text types are represented. In CONCE, on the other hand, both written and speech-based text types are represented, so the lack of any observed increase of the progressive with future time reference cannot be put down to register representation. Instead it is probably a consequence of the combination of the comparatively short time span investigated and the sampling principles employed (mostly only three long texts per text type and period; cf. Smitterberg, 2005: 22).

[10] The results displayed in figure 4 are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.001$ according to the chi-square test. Note that potential statistical significance of the results will only be indicated if the chi-square test can be performed (i.e. not, for example, if the numbers in the individual categories are below 5).

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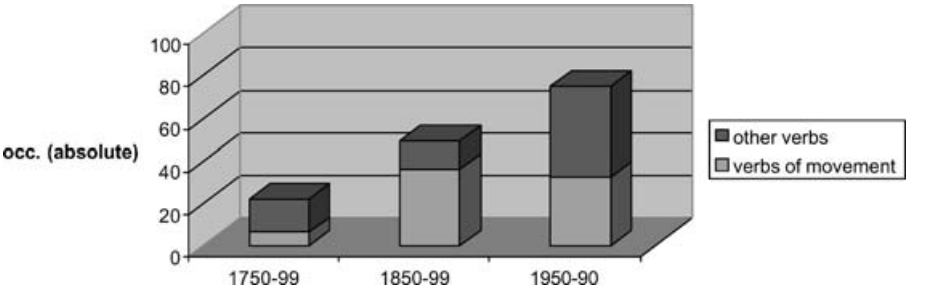


Figure 4 Proportion of verbs of movement

1750–99 and 1950–90, the proportion of nonmovement verbs is actually much higher than that of movement verbs. It therefore seems that verbs of movement, in particular *come* and *go* (which constitute by far the majority of instances of movement verbs in the present data), were responsible to a great degree for the increase of the progressive with future time reference in the first half of the time span investigated. In the twentieth century, however, it is predominantly the use with nonmovement verbs that contributes to the further spread of the construction. Of these, the great majority can be classified as activity verbs (i.e. verbs 'denoting actions and events controlled by a volitional agent' such as *draw* or *take*; Smith, 2002: 324). While the extension to nonactivity verbs (such as *seem* or *become*) is considered a factor in the general spread of the progressive (cf. section 2.1), it thus cannot be considered an important factor in the spread of the progressive futurate.

4.4 Subjects

In order to investigate whether the 'future' use of the progressive has undergone a particularly sharp increase with certain types or a certain type of subject, the co-occurrence of the construction with each of the personal pronouns as well as with singular and plural nonpronoun subjects was investigated. Figure 5 provides the results from this analysis (with third-person singular pronouns as well as singular and plural nonpronoun subjects combined as one single subcategory each). The figure shows that all personal pronouns except for the third-person singular ones have increased. The increase of the pronoun *I* with the relevant progressive futurate is particularly remarkable, having more than quadrupled in the time span investigated. To test whether this merely reflects a more general tendency of an increased use of *I* in the course of Late Modern English, this word was investigated separately in ARCHER (cf. table 4). This search revealed, however, that the increase of *I* in the relevant text types is not particularly sharp (there is a less than 50 percent increase from the first to the last period), so that the increased use of the 'future' use of the progressive with the first-person singular pronoun is indeed a factor relevant to the overall development of the progressive futurate. Whether it is also a factor in the general spread of the progressive has, to my knowledge, not been investigated yet.

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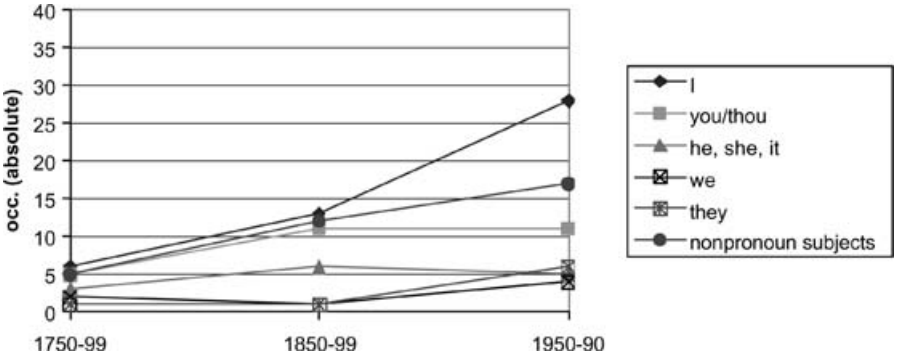


Figure 5 Subjects with progressives with future time reference

Table 4. *Overall occurrences of* I in *ARCHER, BrE*

	1750–99	1850–99	1950–90
in total	3329	3447	2800
in conversation & drama	1116	2050	1529

Table 5. *Inanimate subjects with the 'future' use of the progressive in ARCHER, BrE*

	1750–99	1850–99	1950–90
inanimate subjects	1	4	4
% of all subjects	4.5%	8.2%	5.3%

The increase found for nonpronoun subjects might lead one to suspect that as for progressives in general, an increase of inanimate subjects is also a factor. Inanimate subjects can, indeed, be found with progressives with future time reference (e.g. *Did I tell you that a children's story by me is coming out this year?* (1950lews.x8b)); however, their number is not only very low but has also only slightly increased over the relevant time span (cf. table 5). For comparison, Hundt (2004: 69) finds an increase of inanimate subjects from 17 (or 15.3 percent of all progressives) to 81 (or 21.5 percent) in the time span 1700–49 to 1850–99. The contribution of inanimate subjects to the overall spread of the 'future' use of the progressive is therefore at best minimal.

4.5 Length of verbal group

Another factor considered to be responsible for the increase of the progressive overall, namely the increase of longer verbal groups, does not seem to have contributed to any significant degree to the increased use of the progressive with future time reference

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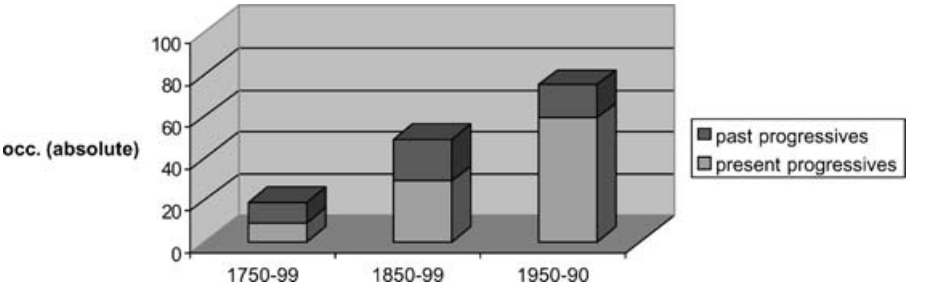


Figure 6 Present and past progressives with future time reference

either. Modal progressives had been excluded from the analysis in the first place (cf. footnote 5). Progressive passives with future time reference do occur in the data (for example *Members of the Civil and Public Service Association in four main passport offices are being balloted on a 24-hour strike tomorrow*; 1989tim1.n8b), and they do indeed only occur in the twentieth century. However, there are only four instances of this construction in total.

4.6 Tense

Just like other uses of the progressive, the progressive with future time reference can occur in both the present and the past tense, the latter being used 'for describing happenings which are in the future from some vantage point in the past' (Leech, 2004: 52). An investigation of the development of the proportion of tenses in which the progressive futurate occurs therefore might bring to light a further factor contributing to the increase of the construction. Figure 6 displays the instances of present and past progressives with future time reference.[11] The analysis reveals that the proportion of these tenses has shifted over time, with a proportion of over 50 percent of past progressives in the first period and a decrease to around 20 percent in the last period. It is therefore the use of the progressive futurate in the present tense that is predominantly responsible for its increase. For progressives in general, this point has not been investigated so far. However, it has been hypothesized that the not-solely aspectual progressive, which seems to have increased diachronically, mainly occurs in the present tense (Wright, 1994), so that an increase of the present tense in progressives generally is not unlikely.

4.7 Co-occurring adverbials

It is commonly claimed that the progressive with future time reference usually or at least often co-occurs with a time adverbial, as for example in the following quotation by Palmer (1987: 64): 'future uses of both progressive and non-progressive have

[11] The results given in figure 6 are significant at $p \leq 0.01$.

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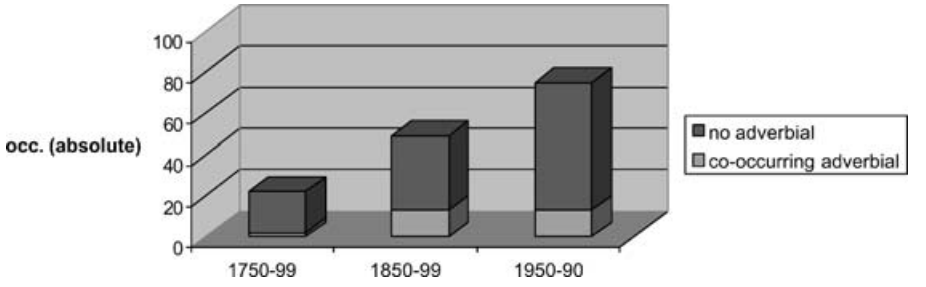


Figure 7 Co-occurring time adverbials

normally to be marked by an adverbial'. However, Nesselhauf & Römer (forthcoming) demonstrate that at least for spoken British English, this claim cannot be upheld, and that on the contrary only a small proportion of progressives with future time reference co-occur with such an adverbial. This result might give rise to the hypothesis that a constraint on the 'future' use of the progressive to occur normally with a time adverbial has been relaxed in the course of time. To investigate the validity of this hypothesis, the proportion of progressives with future time reference which co-occur with an adverbial in the same sentence was investigated. This analysis (cf. figure 7) reveals that, contrary to what is generally assumed, the co-occurrence of the construction with an adverbial has been the exception rather than the rule throughout the past three centuries. (If adverbials co-occurring in the sentences nearby are included in the analysis, the overall proportion changes only slightly.) The analysis also reveals that in the past two centuries the proportion of progressives with future time reference with a co-occurring time adverbial has decreased.

4.8 Clause types

In the area of grammar and lexico-grammar, the final potential factor to be investigated is the clause type the progressive with future time reference occurs in. The results of the analysis, which are displayed in figure 8, show that it is mainly the use in main clauses that has increased over time and not so much the use in subordinate clauses.[12] This is in accordance with what has been shown for progressives in general (cf. section 2.1).

4.9 The semantics of the progressive with future time reference

Whereas all the previous sections dealt with potential lexical and grammatical factors relevant to the increase of the progressive with future time reference, this final results section will examine the question of whether certain semantic subtypes of the construction are of particular importance for this development. In semantic descriptions

[12] The results displayed in figure 8 are significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

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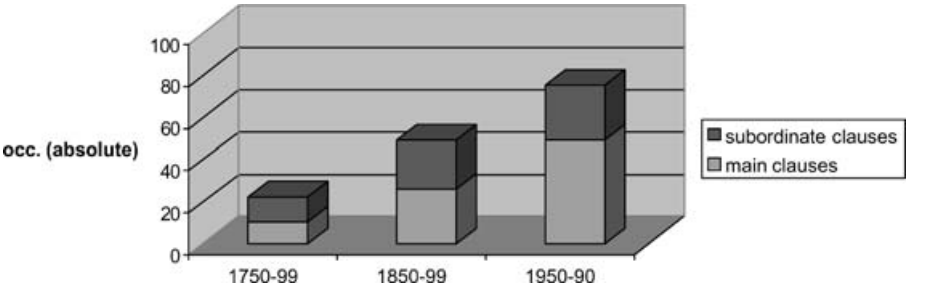


Figure 8 Progressive futurates in main and subordinate clauses

of the progressive futurate, it is usually asserted that the construction commonly or even exclusively refers to some kind of arrangement. An example of a fairly detailed description of the meaning of the construction is the following extract from Leech (2004):

> . . . it is not a present intention or cause, but rather a PRESENT ARRANGEMENT that is signalled by the Progressive [with future time reference]. . . .
>
> A reasonably precise definition of the Present Progressive futurate is: FUTURE EVENT ANTICIPATED BY VIRTUE OF A PRESENT PLAN, PROGRAMME OR ARRANGEMENT. . . .
>
> An intention is part of one's present state of mind, while an arrangement is something socially predetermined in the past, regardless of how the speaker feels now. (Leech, 2004: 61f.)

However, several instances in the data investigated here appear to refer to intention without any kind of prior social arrangement, as for example (5) and (6):

(5) Nick: Some glib pretext will get her out of the way. Then she and I can change clothes. Rance: I'm putting this youth into a padded cell. Rampant hermaphroditism must be discouraged. (1969ortn.d8b)
(6) Some day, though, I am coming to hear you preach. (1891barr.f6b)

A possible reason for the fact that this usage is not commonly acknowledged is that it is a fairly new usage, which might have contributed to the increase in the construction.[13] To test this hypothesis, an attempt was made to classify all the occurrences which had been classified as clear cases of 'future' use according to whether they refer to some kind of social arrangement or whether they refer to mere intention without any kind of social arrangement. As was to be expected, this distinction could not consistently be made. In addition to the category 'intention' and 'arrangement' a third category therefore had to be set up, for those instances where the context does not give enough

[13] One of the few accounts of the 'future' use of the progressives in which the existence of this sense is acknowledged is Hirtle & Curat (1986: 70ff.).

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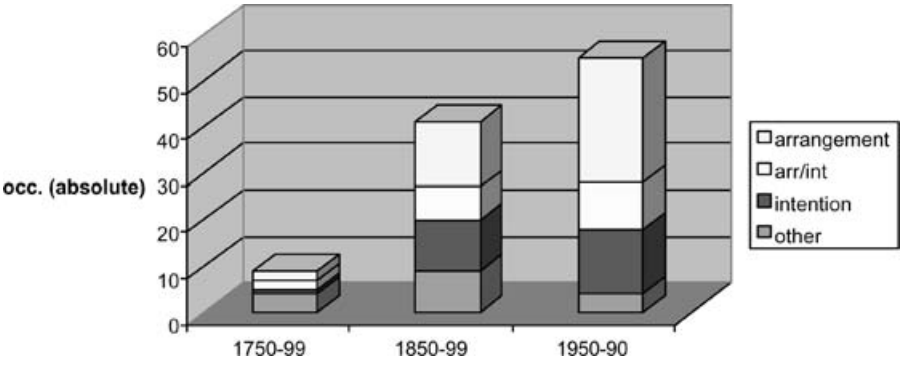


Figure 9 Semantics of the progressive with future time reference

clues to decide whether prior social arrangement has taken place or not ('arr/int' in figure 9). An example is (7). An instance where arrangements clearly *have* taken place (as the action expressed by the progressive is a consequence of a new job) is (8).

(7) 'Will you be going straight back to Valetta Road when the company packs up, Clara?' Clara flushed. 'No. I'm going to Oxford.' 'For long?' 'I don't quite know. A week at the most.' (1952whit.f8b)

(8) The day ended with the sad news that Dick is leaving to go to a rehabilitation center in N.H., for children. Of course he'll be excellent at the job . . . (1976horn.j8b)

As some of the occurrences did not fit any of these three categories, a further category ('other') had to be set up.[14] In the analysis, the results of which are displayed in figure 9, only cases of clear future time reference were considered. Figure 9 reveals that, while it is true that the instances of the sense of 'intention' have become absolutely more frequent over the centuries, the sense of 'arrangement' has increased to an even greater extent.

In the course of this semantic analysis, a subgroup of the sense of 'intention' emerged, namely in instances that do not refer to an intention that had been formed some time ago but rather to an intention arising out of a spontaneous decision, as illustrated by example (9) (cf. also Hirtle & Curat, 1986: 75ff.).

(9) Simon: Wrong. You salve my conscience by being a bloody nuisance. Your manners irritate me . . . Dave: I'm not staying – I'm not staying – I'm not staying in the fucking top of your fucking house another fucking minute (1975gray.d8b)

In many cases the context again does not provide sufficient evidence to decide whether an intention expressed in a progressive with future time reference has been formed

[14] Note that whereas in the instances belonging to the other three categories, human agency is usually involved, in this category there are a few instances where this is not the case (as in *the morning that was coming* [seen from the viewpoint of the evening before]; 18xxspur.h6b). However, the number of instances lacking human agency is so small that the development of this use over the time span investigated cannot be determined.

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just before the utterance or some time before that, but altogether ten fairly clear cases of progressives referring to a spontaneous decision could be identified. Of these, nine occur in the period 1950–90. This might be an indication that this usage (which has possibly only arisen in the twentieth century) has indeed increased and contributed to the increase of the construction.

Another semantic subtype that might have contributed to the overall spread of the progressive futurate is the 'not-solely-aspectual' progressives, which have also been proposed as being relevant to the general spread of the progressive (cf. section 2.1). The identification of this semantic subtype is rather difficult, but among the progressive futurates in the present data two patterns in particular often seem to express emotional involvement or subjective attitudes. These are the patterns *I'm/am not -ing* and *if x then -ing*, whereby the *if x then* can also be merely implied. Example (9) above illustrates the *I'm/am not -ing* pattern. An example of the *if x then -ing* pattern is (10); (11) illustrates this pattern with an implied *if*-clause.

(10) surely if you are going to abrogate the law and do away with it altogether, you are doing away with every guarantee of righteous and holy conduct and behaviour (1959lloy.h8b)

(11) Harriet: She'll have to have a bottle, because I shan't feed her. Shelley: You are stealing life and health from your own child [implied: if you don't breast-feed her] (1966jell.d8b)

The pattern *I'm not -ing* occurs nine times in the dataset investigated, and does so exclusively in the last period. The *if x then -ing* pattern is represented with seven occurrences, of which six occur in the last period. It does not seem unlikely, therefore, that the not-solely-aspectual progressive also plays a role in the development of the 'future' use of the construction.

5 Conclusion

The analysis presented in this article has revealed that the progressive with future time reference has greatly increased over the past 250 years. The construction therefore has contributed to the overall spread of the progressive that has taken place in Late Modern English.

The analysis has also shown that the factors that are relevant to the increase of the 'future' use of the progressive only partly coincide with factors that have been demonstrated or proposed as relevant to the general spread of the progressive. For both the progressive in general and its subtype investigated here an increased use mainly in spoken, speech-based, and more informal registers can be observed, as well as an increased use in main clauses, and probably also an increase in the range of possible verbs and an increase of the not-solely-aspectual progressive.

Some factors that seem to play a role in the overall spread of the progressive either do not seem to play a role or play a less important role in the spread of its 'future' use, however. In particular, inanimate subjects and longer forms such as passive constructions hardly seem to account for the spread of the 'future' use. This is in

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all likelihood due to the fact that 'intention' and 'arrangement by a human agent' are the meanings of the progressive futurate that are both predominant and increasing to the greatest extent (cf. section 4.9), as these meanings are more readily (though not exclusively, cf. example from 1950lews.x8b in section 4.4) expressed by animate subjects and active constructions. Colloquialization also seems to play a much less important role in the development of the construction under investigation than in other types of progressives.

Similarly, a number of factors were identified which either do not (or in some cases perhaps do not yet) seem to have been established as factors relevant to the increase of the progressive in general, or which appear to be more important for the 'future use'. The increase in speech-based text types, for example, seems to be greater for the type of progressive investigated here than for progressives in general. Similarly in the case of verb types it is only the general development (i.e. that more verb types have become possible) that coincides with the general development of the progressive, but the verb types involved differ. While in the case of the progressive it seems to be nonactivity verbs that play the key role in its spread, in the case of the progressive with future time reference it is other types of nonmovement verbs that are relevant. Further newly uncovered factors are the increased occurrence with first-person singular subjects, an increased use of present-tense forms, recently an (even) greater freedom to occur without an adverbial of time, an increased use of the sense of 'social arrangement', and an increased (and possibly new) use of the sense of 'spontaneous decision'. Of these, in particular the last two can be assumed to be special to the 'future' use of the progressive.

Finally, it has to be pointed out that some of the factors identified for the development of the progressive futurate can be expected to interact. The increased use of the first person and the new (or at least increasing) meaning of 'spontaneous decision', for example, are certainly connected. It also seems likely that the relative increase of main clause uses and of present-tense uses is a consequence of the increase of the 'spontaneous decision' sense as well as of the increased use of the not-solely-aspectual progressive (for the latter connection cf. Wright, 1994). The precise nature and extent of these kinds of interaction requires further investigation (cf. Nesselhauf, in prep.).

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