THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRESSIVE IN ENGLISH IN THE 19TH CENTURY

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The present book under review deals with the development of the progressive in the 19th century English of England. The basic argument of the author is that quantitative developments indicate that the progressive became more fully integrated into the English language in this century. The strong point of this research is that this is the first comprehensive, cross-genre, corpus-based study of the progressive, something we have so far lacked. The weak point is that the author’s reasoning about the relation between quantitative developments and integration is not sufficient. Overall, the results presented are quite valuable and will stimulate further research.*

Keywords: progressive, 19th century, integration, corpus, coefficient

1. Introduction

The present book under review, Smitterberg’s The Progressive in the 19th-century English, a revised version of the author’s doctoral dissertation, is an empirical, corpus-based, cross-genre study of the development of the progressive, e.g. are playing in They are playing tennis, in the 19th century English of England (henceforth “English English”). The progressive in 19th century English English is defined as “a verb phrase of two or more words which contains a form of BE and a present participle” (p. 25). Why does Smitterberg take up this period, the 19th century, for his investigation? According to Smitterberg, although this period 1800–1900 is of

* I would like to thank two anonymous EL reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions on the earlier version of this paper. Needless to say, all remaining errors are mine.

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importance for the history of English in several ways, it has received little scholarly attention so far (p. 1). It is only recently that the 19th century has attracted interest among researchers (see Bailey (1996), Romaine (1998) and Görlach (1999)). The same state of affairs holds for research on the progressive. Especially, there is still no study that deals with its development across the entire 19th century from an explicit cross-genre perspective.

Hence, this volume includes the data from a wider variety of genres from formal texts to speech-related genres. Smitterberg, referring to the previous important studies on the progressive form, such as Arnaud (1998), Denison (1993, 1998) and Geisler (2003), demonstrates a convincing argumentation throughout this book based on the corpus. Historical linguistic works such as Visser (1973) are taken into account. Another important background is Biber’s (1988, 2003) multi-dimensional approaches, which will be discussed in more detail later.

In this review article, I will first introduce the outline of this monograph briefly. Next, some of his findings and contributions are enumerated. Finally, I will review Smitterberg’s findings and discussions critically one by one.

2. An Outline of the Volume

The volume is divided into eight chapters, a reference and three appendices. There is no explanation for the absence of an index which would have been very helpful for readers to access the content of the book. Discussions of results are provided at the end of each chapter, which is a good summary of the relevant chapter. The first two chapters are devoted to explaining statistical methodology and the corpus used in the book. The chapters from three to seven constitute investigation sections and main discussions.

Chapter 1, “Introduction,” states the general background of this work. The aim and scope of this work is to account for the use and development of the progressive in 19th-century English English, using data from a wide spectrum of written genres, speech-related and non-speech-related. This main aim subsumes the secondary aims. The author tries to correlate the use of the progressive with extralinguistic features of the time, genre, and the sex of the language user. It is known that the frequency of the progressive varies with these features (cf. Arnaud (1998), Smitterberg (2000)), but the present study is expected to shed more light on how various combinations of extralinguistic features affect the incidence of the con-
struction. The author also tries to analyse the make-up of progressive verb phrase in detail. The occurrence of modal, perfect, and passive auxiliaries in progressive verb phrases is investigated; the study includes an analysis of which main verbs are commonly used in the progressive as well.

The first part of Chapter 2, “Material and data,” is devoted to a detailed description of his corpus used in this book, CONCE, the Corpus of Nineteenth-Century English. CONCE, which is compiled by Merja Kytö (Uppsala University) and Juhani Rudanko (University of Tampere) contains around 900,000 words of 19th century English collected from seven genres (Debates, Drama, Fiction, History, Letters, Science, and Trials). CONCE is divided into the following three periods:

1. Periodization of CONCE
   Three periods
   Period 1: 1800 ~ 1830
   Period 2: 1850 ~ 1870
   Period 3: 1870 ~ 1900

In the second part of Chapter 2, after the selection processes in which irrelevant examples like gerunds and the BE going to-future are discarded, it is shown that the total number of progressives in the whole CONCE is 2440. The number of examples by period and genre is shown below:

2. Table 5: Progressives by Period and Genre in CONCE (p. 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Debates</th>
<th>Drama</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Trials</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1,055</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>2,440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The beginning of Chapter 3, “The frequency of the progressive in 19th-century English,” is dedicated to discussing four statistical methods of measuring the frequency of the progressive, three of which (viz. the M-, K-, and V-coefficients) have already been used in previous studies. The fourth method (viz. the S-coefficient) is a new one which is designed by Smitterberg himself. Smitterberg uses two of them (the M- and S-coefficients) to measure his results in this investigation: the M-coefficient, which relates the raw frequency of progressives to the number of words in a given text, and the S-coefficient, which relates the raw frequency of finite progressives to the number of finite non-imperative verb phrases. The M-coefficient normalizes the raw frequency of the progressive to occurrences per 100,000
words, and is thus a variant of the typical occurrences/words normalization procedure. The S-coefficient calculates the number of progressives in relation to the number of non-progressives.

The remaining of Chapter 3 discusses the distribution of the progressive over the three periods and genres of CONCE.

In Chapter 4, “M-coefficients and factor score analysis,” some of the results of Chapter 3 are compared with the results of Geisler’s (2003) factor score analysis. The aim of this comparison is to see whether there is a correlation between the frequency of the progressive and frequencies of features that are characteristic of opposing poles on Biber’s (1988) dimensions of variation. I will describe this issue in more details later.

In Chapter 5, “Morphosyntactic variation in the verb phrase,” the occurrence patterns of the progressive in the verb phrases are analysed. Four morphosyntactic features to be examined are tense (present vs. past), the perfect, voice and modal auxiliaries. Concerning the voice, this 19th century saw the replacement of the passival “the house is building” by the passive “the house is being built.”

In Chapter 6, “Variation with linguistic parameters,” Smitterberg examines five linguistic variables that previous research has identified as influential for the development and distribution of the progressive such as the type of main verbs, etc.

In Chapter 7, “The non-solely-aspectual progressive: An analytical approach,” Smitterberg takes up the “not-solely-aspectual functions of progressive,” that is, progressives expressing something beyond aspectual meaning, for example, expression of subjectivity, emotional attitude or emphasis. For this purpose, he investigates the modification of progressives by always and adverbs of similar meaning, ‘experiential’ progressives and ‘interpretative’ progressives.

In Chapter 8, “Concluding discussion,” Smitterberg summarises his major findings.

3. Detailed Discussion of Findings

3.1. Chapter 3

In Chapter 3, the progressive is analysed in terms of its variation in frequency with extralinguistic factors: time, genre, and gender. With time used as the only independent variable, the frequency of the progressive increased considerably over the course of the 19th century, as expected, though not quite as much as other scholars (for example, Dennis (1940),
Arnaud (1998), Hundt (2004)) have reported. The results in Table 8 show that the frequency did not quite double, while above-mentioned scholars’ results show a more than doubled frequency. This fact has puzzled the author throughout the study. The M-coefficients per period are given in Table 8:

(3) Table 8: M-coefficients per Period in CONCE (p. 60)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>M-coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (1800 ~ 1830)</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (1850 ~ 1870)</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (1870 ~ 1900)</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ~ 3</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When, instead, genre is used as the sole independent variable, the genres in CONCE split into an expository and a non-expository group with respect to the frequency of the progressive.\(^1\) The M-coefficients by genre are given in Table 10:

(4) Table 10: M-coefficient by Genre in CONCE (p. 63)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>M-coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debates</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trials</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All genres</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is shown in Table 10, there is considerable variation in the frequency of the progressive across the genre parameter. The speech-related genres, Drama and Trials, and the informal written genre, Letters, have the highest M-coefficients; Fiction, which contains a mix of written narrative and constructed dialogue, forms a middle ground; and the formal, speech-related genre Debates, together with the formal written genres, History and Science,

\(^1\) This split has previously been noted by Geisler (2002) in his factor score analysis of CONCE.
has the lowest normalized frequencies.

Thus, the four non-expository genres (Drama, Fiction, Letters, and Trials) exhibit higher frequencies of progressives than the three expository genres (Debates, History and Science). This supports the familiar assumption that the frequency of the progressive is higher in colloquial texts (cf. Dennis (1940: 860)).

Smitterberg’s next step is to consider time and genre together as independent variables. Smitterberg expects that frequency increases should be visible in all genres and that the division of the genres into an expository and a non-expository group should remain intact. The M-coefficients by period and genres are given in Table 12:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Debates</th>
<th>Drama</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Trials</th>
<th>All genres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ~ 3</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smitterberg states that these results show that the division between two groups of genres, one non-expository group comprising Drama, Fiction, Letters and Trials, and one expository group comprising Debates, History, and Science, appears to be present in diachrony as well. These findings conform to the expected picture of an increase in frequency for all genres, and a clear division between expository and the non-expository genres. No genre exhibits an overall decrease in frequency from period 1 to period 3, regardless of whether the M- or S-coefficient is used; and the non-expository genres tend to have higher frequencies than the expository ones. However, Smitterberg states that this picture is too simplified and is not always a faithful reflection of the fact.

It is interesting that genre diversity increases rather than decreases over the century: the difference between the genres with the highest and lowest frequencies is 253 M-coefficient units in period 1 (Trials and History), and 311\(^2\) in period 3 (Letters and Science).

These M-coefficients are complemented by S-coefficients and verb density

\(^2\) Smitterberg has mentioned 310 for this difference.
ratios in order to present a more comprehensive account of the development of each genre. As Smitterberg argues, one effect of the M-coefficient is to exaggerate differences in the frequency of the progressive between expository and non-expository genres, in terms of actual occurrences compared with potential occurrences (p. 42). However, the addition of the S-coefficient to the analysis makes the picture more complex.

The addition of the S-coefficients to the analysis reveals that the finding that the non-expository genres tend to have higher frequencies than the expository ones is to some extent an effect of the normalization procedure. Thus, it may not be wholly safe to rely on the number of words in the texts as the only norm to which raw frequencies of progressives are normalized. Expository genres tend to have lower verb density ratios, and thus fewer slots that can be filled by progressives, than non-expository genres. For instance, in the CONCE corpus as a whole, History has a lower verb density ratio than Fiction (0.086 vs. 0.112), and this difference affects the results: the S-coefficient takes into account the fact that there are more slots that can be filled by progressives in Fiction than in History. The same tendency is evident within individual period subsamples. In the results for period 1 using only the M-coefficient, the progressive is 782% more common in the genre with the highest frequency (Trials) than in that with the lowest (History); but if the S-coefficient is used, this difference is only 400%. In other words, nearly half the difference in the frequency of the progressive across the genre parameter in period 1 can be accounted for partly in terms of differences in verb density (pp. 88–89).

Despite the differences between the M- and S-coefficient results for period, genre, and period/genre subsamples, the most pronounced trends in the material are the same. These trends include the overall increase in the frequency of the progressive and the general tendency for expository and non-expository genres to form two separate groups.

An analysis of the verb density ratios shows that the overall ratio increased from 0.110 to 0.117 between periods 1 and 3, an increase of 6%. There is a good deal of cross-genre variation: for instance, in Drama the ratio is 0.123 in period 1 and 0.124 in period 3, while in Science the ratio increased from 0.079 to 0.085. Smitterberg (p. 89) argues that low verb density ratios may indicate high frequencies of non-finite clauses and complex noun and prepositional phrases, and thus imply a comparatively elaborated sentence structure. He argues that in this respect, the results point to expository genes having a more complex sentence structure than non-expository ones: whereas all expository genres have verb density ratios of
<0.1, all non-expository genres have ratios of >0.1. He concludes that the
diachronic results for the entire corpus imply that the English language as a
whole tended towards a slightly less elaborated sentence structure across the
19th century.

The final extra-linguistic parameter investigated is gender. This variable
also has a significant influence on the occurrence of the progressive: women
use more progressives than men in private letters and the difference appears
to increase across the century. The Letters genre in the CONCE corpus is
stratified into letters written by women and by men. Table 23a–b (p. 80)
presents raw frequencies of progressives and word counts for these two sub-
samples of Letters:

(6) Table 23a: Letters Written by Women: Progressives and Word
Counts per Period (p. 80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Progressives</th>
<th>Word count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>69,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>62,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>50,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>181,765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7) Table 23b: Letters Written by Men: Progressives and Word
Counts per Period (p. 80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Progressives</th>
<th>Word count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>52,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>68,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>40,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>161,866</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the data in Table 23a and 23b, Smitterberg also calculates the rel-
evant M-coefficients and S-coefficients for letters written by women and
men. The results are given in Table 25a–b.
The results in Table 25 are in accord with those of the previous research like Arnaud (1998). In Arnaud’s (1998: 139ff.) material, women letter-writers consistently displayed higher frequencies of progressives than men letter-writers. Similarly, in Smitterberg’s findings, in every period, women use the progressive more than men, and the overall difference is one of 100 M-coefficient units. Moreover, the difference appears to increase in diachrony: it is 60 M-coefficient units in period 1, 122 in period 2, and 142 in period 3.

There are no major changes in the picture when the S-coefficients are added to the discussion. The total difference in S-coefficients between women’s and men’s letters is statistically significant. While women’s letters have a higher S-coefficient than Trials, men’s letters have a lower S-coefficient than Fiction. The results as expressed in S-coefficients are also similar to those expressed in the M-coefficients in that the difference between women’s and men’s use of the progressive increases in diachrony: the difference is 0.45 S-coefficient units in period 1 and 1.84 (sic) in period 3, with an overall difference of 0.96 units.

Smitterberg argues that one of the reasons for this increase in gender-based differentiation is that the development in verb density ratios is different for women and men letter-writers (p. 82). The texts produced by women exhibit almost no change on this parameter. In contrast, the texts
produced by men change substantially: the verb density in letters written by men increases by 12% between period 1 and 3.

The addressee also influences the frequency of the progressive, so that letters written to women are characterized by higher frequencies of progressives compared with letters written to men. It is possible to conclude that a high frequency of progressives is characteristic of a female gender style, and a low frequency of a male gender style. What is behind this difference between women and men?

Most research into gender-based differences has indicated that women use more standard forms than men. The finding has been attributed to the unequal power structure of societies investigated by many scholars: for instance, Romaine (1999: 174), referring to Eckert (1993), suggests that “[w]omen may be using linguistic means as a way to achieve status that is denied to them through other outlets such as occupation.” Romaine (1999: 128) also discusses how the ability to speak properly became a type of social capital during the Victorian era. It thus seems likely that the avoidance of features considered to be non-standard would have constituted social capital for 19th-century English women to a higher extent than for men.

However, Smitterberg argues that this does not seem to be applicable to the data presented here (p. 86). It is not clear that the progressive has stylistic values that can be fitted onto a scale of perceived correctness. Rather, some variants of the 19th-century progressive were indeed stylistically stigmatized. The stylistic judgments concerning the acceptability of the progressive do not appear to play an important role when it comes to accounting for the differences in the data.

Smitterberg (p. 86) introduces Labov’s (2001) interesting hypothesis on this issue. According to Labov (2001: 292), “[i]n linguistic change from below, women use higher frequencies of innovative forms than men do,” but also “conform more closely than men to sociolinguistic norms that are overtly prescribed” (Labov (2001: 293)). These statements can be connected with the results presented in Chapter 3 of the book under review. The general increase in the frequency of the progressive can probably be regarded as a change from below, taking place largely below the level of social awareness. In addition, since the results presented in Chapter 3 have shown that the progressive is encroaching on the non-progressive, the progressive can be seen as the more innovative feature.

Smitterberg concludes that the results for Letters in CONCE thus match Labov’s (2001) hypothesis, which would predict that women should use more progressives than men because the progressive is an innovative fea-
ture. Finally Smitterberg (pp. 86–87) introduces more recent attempts which have been made to explain gender-based differentiation. For example, within the framework of social network theory, weak network ties constitute a promising channel for the diffusion of linguistic change (e.g. Milroy (1992)). Arnaud (1998: 142f.) argues that middle- and upper-class women may have been influenced by servants from Ireland and Scotland, in whose dialects the progressive was more frequent; the women would have had more contact with these servants, and thus been more influenced than the men. However fascinating these hypotheses may be, they can only hint at possible causes and more research would be necessary.

3.2. Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, the frequency of the progressive is placed in a wider context by relating it to the frequency and co-occurrence patterns of other linguistic features. That is, the frequency of the progressive, as expressed in the M-coefficients in Chapter 3, is compared with dimension scores obtained by Geisler (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003), on dimensions of variation that resulted from Biber’s (1988) factor score analysis. The dimensions identified in Biber (1988) characterize different types of discourse in the sense that they “are interpreted in terms of the situational and cognitive functions most widely shared by the co-occurring linguistic features, and in terms of the relations among registers along each dimension” (Biber and Finegan (1997: 258)). Since the interpretations given to the different dimensions are thus based partly on functional considerations, there may be connections between the functions of the progressive and the function of the features that load on these dimensions.

Drawing for data on the CONCE corpus, Geisler (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003) has computed dimension scores, based on Biber’s (1988) factor analysis, for Dimension 1 (“involved vs. informational production”),³ Dimension

³ I referred to Biber (1988) for more information on these Dimensions. “Informational versus involved” can be explained as below:

If the primary purpose of the writer/speaker is informational, the production circumstances are characterized by careful editing possibilities, enabling precision in lexical choice and an integrated textual structure. Nouns, and longer noun phrase are used frequently since nouns are the primary bearers of referential meanings in a text, and a high frequency of nouns thus indicates great density of information. Prepositional phrases also serve to integrate high amounts of information into a text. If the primary purpose
2 ("Narrative vs. non-narrative concerns"), Dimension 3 ("Elaborated vs. situation-dependent reference"), and Dimension 5 ("Abstract vs. non-abstract information"). Dimension 1, 3, and 5 are of special relevance to research on the progressive. These three dimensions distinguish "stereotypically oral (conversational)" from "stereotypically literate (written expository)" genres ((Biber and Finegan (1997: 260)): oral genres tend to be associated with "involved production" on Dimension 1, "situation-dependent reference" on Dimension 3, and/or "non-abstract information" on Dimension 5, whereas the opposite holds true for literate genres. Similarly, the progressive has been hypothesized to be common in genres which incorporate spoken, colloquial features such as plays and personal letters. Thus, the of the writer/speaker is interactive and involved, the production circumstances are dictated by real-time constraints, resulting in generalized lexical choice and a generally fragmented presentation of information. Precise lexical choice is rare. Private verbs (e.g. *think*, *feel*) and present tense forms are among the features with largest weights on this factor, indicating a verbal, as opposed to nominal, style. First and second person pronouns refer directly to the addressor and addressee and are thus used frequently in highly interactive discourse.

4 Dimension 2 ("Narrative vs. non-narrative concerns") can be accounted for as follows. Past tense verbs, third person personal pronouns, perfect aspect verbs, public verbs, synthetic negation, and present participial clauses can be considered as markers of narrative action. Past tense and perfect aspect verbs describe past events. Third person personal pronouns mark reference to animate, typically human, referents apart from the speaker and addressee. Narrative discourse depends heavily on these two features, presenting a sequential description of past events involving specific animate participants. Public verbs are apparently used frequently with these other forms because they function as markers of indirect, reporting speech (e.g. *admit*, *assert*, *declare*, *hint*, *report*, *say*). Overall, this dimension can be considered as distinguishing narrative discourse from other types of discourse. This dimension can thus be interpretively labeled "Narrative versus Non-narrative Concerns": narrative concerns marked by considerable reference to past time, third person animate referents, reported speech, and depictive details; non-narrative concerns, whether expository, descriptive, or other, marked by immediate time and attributive nominal elaboration.

5 Dimension 3 ("Elaborated vs. situation-dependent reference") can be explained as below. The dimension seems to distinguish between highly explicit, context-independent reference and non-specific, situation-dependent reference. WH-relative clauses are used to specify the identity of referents within a text in an explicit and elaborated manner, so that the addressee will have no doubt as to the intended referent. Time and place adverbials, on the other hand, crucially depend on referential inferences by the addressee: for text-internal references (e.g. *see above*, *discussed later*), the addressee must infer where and when in the text above and later refer to; in the much more common text-external references, the addressee must identify the intended place and time referents in the actual physical context of the discourse.
possibility of a connection between the progressive and Dimension 1, 2, 3, and 5 is investigated.

Smitterberg states that against this background, it can be hypothesized that the progressive will co-occur in texts with features that indicate “involved production,” “narrative concerns,” and “situation-dependent reference,” and that the construction will not co-occur with features indicative of “informational production,” “elaborated reference,” and “abstract information” (pp. 94–95).

Since Biber’s (1988) dimensions are interpreted in functional terms, a comparison between (a) the frequency of the progressive, and (b) dimension scores for Dimensions 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the factor analysis, may shed new light on the functional load of the progressive.

The results for the genre samples presented in Section 4.1 show that the progressive appears to co-occur with features indicating “involved production” and “situation-dependent reference,” and not to co-occur with features indicating “informational production,” “elaborated reference,” and “abstract information.” To a lesser extent, the progressive also co-occurs with features indicating “narrative concerns.” These results are interpreted as indications of the multi-functionality of the progressive; in particular, aspectual progressives should be common in texts with a good deal of “situation-dependent reference,” and not-solely-aspectual progressives should be frequent in texts tending towards “involved production.”

Then, in Section 4.2 Smitterberg considers the development of each genre in CONCE with respect to M-coefficients and Dimensions 1, 2, 3, and 5 in Geisler’s (2002) factor score analysis. In this context, the results based on the entire genre samples are used as interpretative tools. The results of the comparison confirm the general tendency, established in section 4.1, for comparatively high M-coefficients to be attested in samples displaying “involved production,” “narrative concerns,” “situation-dependent reference,” and “non-abstract information.” However, there was a great deal of variation across the genre parameter as regards which dimension(s) correlated most closely with the frequency of the progressive. Patterns of co-occurrence could be established between the M-coefficients and all of the four dimensions investigated: with Dimension 1 in Debates and Science, with Dimension 2 in History and Trials; with Dimension 3 in Debates and Trials; and with Dimension 5 in Drama (and perhaps letters).

This variation can be interpreted as pointing further to the multi-functionality of the progressive discussed in Section 4.1. Although most uses of the progressive imply aspectual values, the construction also has functions
involving, inter alia, subjectivity, emotion, intensity, and emphasis (see for instance Scheffer (1975), Wright (1994), Rydén (1997)).

3.3. Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, the occurrence patterns of the progressive within the verb phrases are analysed. The focus is placed on the combination of the progressive with four important formal features of the late Modern English verb phrase: tense (present vs. past), the perfect, the active and passive voice and modal auxiliaries. These four features may affect the occurrence and functional distribution of the progressive. These features are investigated one by one, in isolation, and then, in the ways they combine in complex verb phrases.

Smitterberg claims that the progressive has occurred in both the present and the past tense since Old English. It can thus be expected that the 19th century progressive should be well established in both tenses. In the investigation of the book under review, the terms “present” and “past” cover all verb phrases that include a present or past finite verb form; that is,

\[
\begin{align*}
I \text{ am writing a novel.} & \\
I \text{ have been writing a novel.} & \\
The \text{ novel may be being written.} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

All are classified as present-tense progressives.

Then, non-finite or [−tense] progressive verb phrases are removed from the total counts.

The investigation of the tense variable shows that there is no consistent diachronic trend in the material in the distribution of present vs. past progressives.

Likewise, for perfect progressives, which have occurred in English since the late Middle English period, the results are inconclusive and no particular diachronic trends can be observed.

\footnote{However, this statement is a little misleading. See the discussion in Section 4 of this review article.}
As shown in Table 40, Drama, Fiction, and Trials displayed decrease over the century, and Science exhibited a clear decrease between period 2 and 3.

With respect to the examination of voice, the 19th century is particularly interesting as the period during which verb phrases containing Be + being are introduced. The availability of this sequence made it possible to combine progressive and passive. Before this, the passival\(^7\) “the house is building” was used. This construction lacked syntactic passive marking, and nevertheless, it was passive semantically. The example from Austen (1800–1830) is introduced in illustration of this construction.

(29) They went in; and while the sleek, well-tied parcels of “Men’s Beavers” and “York Tan” were bringing down and displaying on the counter…. (p. 123)

(Fiction, Jane Austen Emma, 1800–1830, pp. II. 103–II. 104)

This “passival” construction was replaced by the passive (the house is being built). The example from Dickens (1850–1870) is introduced in illustration of this construction.

(28) Then I was being ushered into one of these boxes, and found myself saying something as I sat down…. (p. 123)

(Fiction, Charles Dickens The Personal History of David Copperfield, 1850–1870, p. 255)

Apart from a few possible early Modern English instances, attested by

\(^7\) Smitterberg, following Visser (1973), refers to the type in (29) as “passival” and to the type in (28) as “passive.”
Elsness (1994: 15) and Nakamura (1998), the formal combination of passive and progressive marking as in (28) is not attested until the late 18th century. After the introduction of the new passive progressive, the old passival progressive continued to be used alongside the new construction over the 19th century. Despite widespread stylistic condemnation of the sequence “Be + being,” the passive progressive gained in frequency and replaced the passival progressive. However, the total frequencies of passival and passive progressives are very low in CONCE. The results for the three periods are given in Table 41.

(11) Table 41: Active, Passival, and Passive Progressives in CONCE per Period (row percentages within brackets) (p. 128)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passival</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>588 (99%)</td>
<td>4 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (0%)</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>885 (99%)</td>
<td>5 (1%)</td>
<td>8 (1%)</td>
<td>898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>925 (98%)</td>
<td>1 (0%)</td>
<td>16 (2%)</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,398 (99%)</td>
<td>10 (0%)</td>
<td>25 (1%)</td>
<td>2,433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smitterberg argues that although raw frequencies are low—a total of only 35 relevant instances, the diachronic trend concerning the distribution of passival and passive progressives is quite clear. The passival progressive is more common in period 1, but the passive progressive is more frequent in period 2 and dominates the scene almost completely in period 3.

Finally, the co-occurrence of modal auxiliaries with progressives was investigated. The example is given below:

(38) If it were otherwise—if its exports exceeded its imports—bullion would be flowing towards it…. (p. 135)
(Science, G. J. Goschen The Theory of the Foreign Exchanges, 1850–1870, p. 72)

Smitterberg (p. 133) states that the combination of the progressive and modal auxiliaries could occur in the same verb phrase as early as Old English (cf. Visser (1973: 2412)). This statement is very controversial, however. The grammaticalization of Old English main verbs as modal auxiliaries was not established in the Old English period. This depends on how to define the category “auxiliary” and, in this respect, Smitterberg’s discussion is ambiguous. Syntactic criteria should be used to define auxiliaries (cf. Lightfoot (1979)). See the discussion in Section 4 of this review article. Anyway, the combination does not appear to have been frequent in the 1700s: Strang (1982: 440) claims that progressives with modal auxi-
iliaries were rarer than perfect progressives at the beginning of the 18th century. For 19th century English, we might thus expect either a continued low frequency or an increase in frequency as these types of verb phrases become more fully integrated into English. The frequency of progressives with modal auxiliaries turned out to be both low and, contrary to expectation, decreasing. Look at the results in Table 44.

(12) Table 44: Progressive Verb Phrases with Modal Auxiliaries in CONCE by Period and Genre (percentages of all finite progressives in each subsamples within brackets) (p. 134)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Debates</th>
<th>Drama</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Trials</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td>(8%)</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td>(23%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(10%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8%)</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td>(12%)</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 44, progressives with modal auxiliaries are quite rare in CONCE: they account for only 3% of all finite progressives in the material. The proportion further decreases from five per cent in the earlier period to only one percent in the final period. This decrease is statistically significant. Smitterberg gives a few possible reasons for this unexpected decrease: a possible general decrease in the frequency of modal auxiliaries in 19th century English; the development of modal function inherent in the progressive itself; and the possibility that constraints on which meanings of the modals the progressive was compatible with became gradually more rigid during the 19th century.

3.4. Chapter 6

In this chapter, Smitterberg examines five linguistic variables that previous research has identified as influential for the development and distribution of the progressive. They are: (i) the type of main verbs that can form
progressives, (ii) the Aktionsart values\(^8\) (e.g. \([±\text{stative}], [±\text{durative}]\)) of the situation in which the progressive occurs, (iii) the agentivity of the subjects of progressive verb phrases, (iv) the modification of progressives by temporal adverbials and (v) the type of clauses (e.g. main, adverbial) in which the progressive occurs.

Concerning (i), that is, the type of main verbs that commonly occur in progressive, look at the results in Table 49.

\[(13) \text{Table 49: Main Verbs with More than 20 Occurrences in Progressive Verb Phrases in CONCE (p. 149)}\]

\begin{table}[h]
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|l|c|}
\hline
Main verb & Occurrences (%) & Main verb & Occurrences (%) \\
\hline
GO & 265 (11\%) & LIVE & 38 (2\%) \\
COME & 102 (4\%) & MAKE & 33 (1\%) \\
DO & 73 (3\%) & GROW & 29 (1\%) \\
GET & 62 (3\%) & TAKE & 29 (1\%) \\
SPEAK & 59 (2\%) & TRY & 27 (1\%) \\
WRITE & 58 (2\%) & STAND & 26 (1\%) \\
STAY & 52 (2\%) & THINK & 26 (1\%) \\
SIT & 50 (2\%) & BEGIN & 25 (1\%) \\
READ & 46 (2\%) & SUFFER & 23 (1\%) \\
TALK & 43 (2\%) & SAY & 22 (1\%) \\
LOOK & 42 (2\%) & EXPECT & 21 (1\%) \\
WAIT & 40 (2\%) & LIE & 21 (1\%) \\
WALK & 39 (2\%) & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

In the CONCE corpus 544 different main verbs are used in progressive verb phrases. The commonest main verbs in progressive are GO (265 occurrences) and COME (102 occurrences). Note that all instances of \textit{BE going to} + infinitive constructions with future reference are excluded from the counts. The most common verbs in progressive verb phrases seem to come from specific semantic areas, such as movement verbs and communicative verbs. However, the dominance of GO decreased diachronically, as shown

\(^8\) Smitterberg uses the term “Aktionsart” to refer to “the intrinsic temporal qualities of a situation” (Brinton (1988: 3)).
Referring to Biber et al. (1999) and Kytö (1997), Smitterberg argues that the possible reason for this dominance of GO and COME is that GO and COME may have been very common as main verbs in verb phrases in late Modern English, as they are in the present day.

The genre parameter is shown to affect the distribution of main verbs. In two of the expository genres, Debates and Science, some of the verbs that occur in the progressive with the highest frequency are not the same as the commonest verbs in progressive verb phrases in the overall results. Differences in subject matter have an influence on the verbs.

In the investigation of what Aktionsart categories the progressive co-occurs with, no major diachronic development could be observed. Adopting a modified version of Quirk et al. (1985) typology of situations, Smitterberg selects seven situation types to be applied to the CONCE data:

---

**Table 50: The Most Frequent Main Verbs in Progressive Verb Phrases in CONCE per Period (percentages of all progressive verb phrases in each period subsample within brackets)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period 1</th>
<th>Period 2</th>
<th>Period 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GO 73 (12%)</td>
<td>GO 112 (12%)</td>
<td>GO 80 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALK 20 (3%)</td>
<td>COME 42 (5%)</td>
<td>COME 42 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COME 18 (3%)</td>
<td>DO 28 (3%)</td>
<td>GET 31 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAK 17 (3%)</td>
<td>GET 25 (3%)</td>
<td>DO 29 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRITE 17 (3%)</td>
<td>WRITE 24 (3%)</td>
<td>STAY 28 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Table 54: The Seven Situation Types Distinguished in the Present Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>[+stative], [+durative], [−telic]</td>
<td>He is being silly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance</td>
<td>[±stative], [+durative], [−telic]</td>
<td>I was standing right here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>[−stative], [+durative], [−telic]</td>
<td>Jill is singing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processive</td>
<td>[−stative], [+durative], [+telic]</td>
<td>I am reading a book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momentary</td>
<td>[−stative], [−durative], [−telic]</td>
<td>The door was banging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>[−stative], [−durative], [+telic]</td>
<td>The train is arriving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>[+future]</td>
<td>I am leaving tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis reveals that the clear majority of all progressives occur in “processive” and, above all, “active” situations. Look at the results given
in Table 55.

(16) Table 55a: The Progressives in CONCE across the Parameter of Situation Type  (p. 167)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>135 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance</td>
<td>139 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>1,084 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processive</td>
<td>687 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momentary</td>
<td>33 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>69 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>146 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next issue is whether the progressives that occur in [−stative] situations have agentive or non-agentive subjects. Again, there is little diachronic change. Strang’s (1982) analysis of whether the subjects of progressive verb phrases are human, quasi-human/animals, or inanimate indicates that the difference between the 18th and 19th centuries is considerable, while that between the 19th and 20th is small; it is therefore assumed that most development towards a higher incidence of progressives with non-agentive subjects took place prior to the period covered by CONCE. The progressives with non-agentive subjects do not increase within the 19th century.

Concerning the modification of progressives by temporal adverbials, the analysis shows that the progressive developed towards less adverbial modification over the 19th century, although there is variation among genres.

(17) Table 60: Progressives in CONCE Modified by Temporal Adverbials by Period and Genre (percentage of all progressives in each subsample within brackets)  (p. 190)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Debates</th>
<th>Drama</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Trials</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(58%)</td>
<td>(19%)</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td>(37%)</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>(30%)</td>
<td>(32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(36%)</td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td>(19%)</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>(34%)</td>
<td>(38%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
<td>(23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(36%)</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>(32%)</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown above, modification by temporal adverbials decreases significantly over the three periods in CONCE.

The most frequent temporal adverb is now (72 occurrences), followed by just (28), always (24), still (22), and then (17). Smitterberg proposes the hypothesis that an increased integration of the progressive leads to a decrease in the need for modification by temporal adverbials. That is, the extent to which progressives are modified by temporal adverbials is relevant to the integration of the aspectual functions of the progressive into English grammar. It can be hypothesized that the need for explicit adverbial modification will decrease, when the progressive becomes more integrated as a marker of ongoing action and imperfective aspect. Once these functions of the progressive are well established, adverbials such as now or when X happened will no longer be needed to bring out these shades of meaning; the progressive alone will be sufficient. The results presented in Chapter 6, Smitterberg states, support this hypothesis.

Finally, the type of clauses (e.g. main, adverbial) in which the progressive occurs is investigated. The results presented here are consistent with Strang’s (1982) study of narrative prose, which showed that main clauses accounted for an increasingly large share of the progressive in the material. The overall figures show that the progressive developed towards more occurrences in main clauses and fewer in adverbial clauses over the 19th century.

3.5. Chapter 7

In Chapter 7, Smitterberg investigates the not-solely-aspectual functions of the progressive, which are seldom discussed in quantitative studies of the construction. The “not-solely-aspectual” progressives express something beyond aspectual meaning, for example, expression of subjectivity, emotional attitude and emphasis. In short, they are assumed to convey speakers’ attitude towards what is said. For this purpose, Smitterberg investigates three not-solely-aspectual types of progressives: (i) progressives modified by ALWAYS-type adverbials, (ii) potentially experiential\(^\text{10}\) progressives and (iii) interpretative progressives. The analyses reveal that there is no statistically significant change in diachrony concerning the type (i). Since always—type

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\(^9\) The discussion is limited to one-word adverbs.

\(^{10}\) The term “experiential” is from Fitzmaurice (2004) to refer to not-solely-aspectual progressives.
adverbials have been found to occur with progressives for many centuries, Smitterberg states that the result is interpreted as an indication that this type of progressive is a stable feature of 19th century English. The type (ii) such as “I am wanting to see some day the additions to Sister Helen....” (p. 209 (88)), increased significantly in the 19th century, while the type (iii) increased much but not so significantly. The results of this investigation also indicate that around one-fourth of all progressives in CONCE are classified as not-solely-aspectual.

Over all, the results show that not-solely-aspectual functions of progressive were further integrated into English grammar in the 19th century.

4. Critical Evaluation

There is a big difference between Smitterberg’s approach and the reviewer’s one. The reviewer is interested in giving explanation to syntactic changes within the framework of generative grammar. My study of this book has revealed both strong and weak points of this research from a generative viewpoint. In this section, I will first address those points one by one and then present an overall evaluation.

This book is the first comprehensive, cross-genre, corpus-based study of the progressive, which we have so far lacked, despite the impressive amount and depth of previous research on this topic. The author has intended to fill this gap. His attempt has produced a good and valuable account of the development of the progressive within the framework of corpus-linguistics.

Throughout the book, Smitterberg relates his findings to those of previous studies on this topic. So readers can easily see how the results presented in this book relate to those in other studies. His careful analysis of the data using statistical methods gives the readers a clear understanding of corpus-based linguistics.

Nevertheless, a few critical comments have to be made. First, I contend that the results presented are inconclusive because of the relatively small size of the CONCE corpus, which limits the empirical basis for the discussion. Since this study is not theoretical, but quantitative, the size of the corpus used is important in increasing the reliability of the results. Smitterberg is aware of this, saying, “a one-million-word corpus cannot be expected to yield sufficient data for an analysis (p. 116)”: he sometimes uses additional data collected by René Arnaud (cf. Arnaud (2002)). However, the use of this additional data does not solve the problem. Smitterberg sometimes generalises the results and draws overtly assertive statements on
the basis of low raw frequencies. For example, he states, “in Debates… the percentage of progressives occurring in relative clauses decreases over the century (p. 197).” However, this statement is based on a total of only 14 occurrences in all three periods. Smitterberg presents his interpretations like this as if they were facts.

One might think that using sophisticated statistical methods can compensate for these defects. However, his discussion about the results in Chapter 3 shows how difficult it is to draw a precise picture of what happened in the development of a certain syntactic construction. The difficulty does not decrease much even if we resort to sophisticated statistical methods like M- and S-coefficients. The expression “figures can be fabricated,” comes to mind. Although the use of statistical methods can increase the reliability of the analysis, this is not a perfect answer.

Secondly, this book spends too much time on non-essential information, while some essential information is not given. For example, there is too much explanation of statistical methods in Chapter 3, and the same descriptions are repeated throughout the book. There is too much introduction of previous studies such as Quirk et al. (1985). This is at the expense of important information that would have been helpful to the readers. For example, there is not much information on Biber’s (1988) “Dimensions,” which is essential to understanding the discussion in Chapter 4. It is implausible to assume that this is knowledge basic to all readers. Furthermore, this book contains only 116 examples of progressive forms, many of which are not given a deeper analysis, while it includes as many as 77 tables.

Thirdly, Smitterberg draws some important conclusions without adequate discussions. For example, on page 89, he asserts that the diachronic results for the entire corpus imply that the English language as a whole has tended towards a slightly less elaborated sentence structure across the 19th century. According to Smitterberg, an elaborated sentence structure involves high frequencies of non-finite clauses and complex noun and prepositional phrases, and the results of this study point to expository genres having a more complex sentence structure than non-expository ones. This is a very strong statement. I have a different view on this point. Looking through the changes from Old English to Modern English, we can argue that the English language has tended towards a more elaborate structure syntactically.
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRESSIVE IN ENGLISH IN THE 19TH CENTURY

over time. He needs to present more detailed analyses and more thorough discussions before drawing such an important conclusion.

Smitterberg states that the progressive has occurred in both the present and past tense since Old English (p. 116). Care is needed when we say that Old English had the same progressive forms as Present-day English. Although Old English had “beon/wesan + -ende/-inde” constructions, there has been no agreement on the status of those “beon/wesan + -ende/-inde” forms. See Nickel (1966), Mitchell (1976), and Ono and Nakao (1980).

Likewise, as touched on in 3.3, Smitterberg (p. 133) states that, drawing on Visser (1973: 2412), the combination of the progressive and modal auxiliaries could occur in the same verb phrase as early as Old English. If this is so, it follows that modal auxiliaries already existed as such in Old English. This depends on how to define the category “auxiliary” and, in this respect, Smitterberg’s discussion is ambiguous. It is widely accepted that the ancestors of Present-day modal auxiliaries were lexical main verbs and that the grammaticalization of Old English main verbs as modal auxiliaries was not established in the Old English period (cf. Lightfoot (1979)).

Fourthly, it does not seem to me that the importance of the 19th century, especially, for the development of the progressive in English is well illustrated in Smitterberg’s discussion, if I compare this study with Strang’s analysis (1982). Present-day English progressive can be traced back to the

An anonymous EL reviewer suggests that this claim requires proof. It is true that this claim is one possibility. This claim is based on the view that a language may go through developmental stages in terms of functional category systems diachronically. This means that functional categories historically emerge in a given language and the emergence of a new functional category triggers syntactic changes. English started without a functional system, and later functional categories emerged, finally reaching a stage in which functional systems have fully developed. Hence, the words “a more elaborate structure” only refers to syntactic complexity with many functional projections in the clause structure. It is not related to the value judgment that earlier languages are primitive or something.

Against this view, Warner (1993) claims that Old English ancestors of Present-day modal auxiliaries already appeared in constructions that can sometimes be translated using modern auxiliaries. Warner (1993) asserts that accordingly, they had at least some notional points of contact with their modern congeners. However, since auxiliaries are a syntactic category, the question of whether auxiliaries were present in the Old English period should be examined on the basis of the syntactic criteria, and not semantic criteria. Their grammar in Old English was clearly much closer to that of non-auxiliary verbs.
end of the 13th century, which means that at least 500 years have passed since its first appearance in the history of English. Concerning this point, Strang (1982) already argues that the 19th century is a turning point for the progressive, which increased rapidly after 1800. “Principal factors in the growth of frequency are the extension of the construction to all types of clause, of subject and all types of verb” (Strang (1982: 445–453)).

Although it is true that the use of the progressive increased considerably over the course of the 19th century, as shown by Smitterberg’s data in Chapter 3, the increase is not as drastic as expected. The increase can be partially attributed to the overall increase in the verb density ratios, as discussed in Section 3.1. Since more slots are available for verb phrases, the ratio of the progressive increases.

Moreover, Smitterberg’s explanation for this increase is not sufficient. He argues that the progressive increased in the 19th century as the progressive became more fully integrated into the English language in this century. However, the integration process neither began at the same time nor developed at the same pace for all genres (or for women and men). He argues that it is possible to hypothesize an integration process that first reached spoken, non-expository genres (disregarding the unexpected development of the Fiction genre), then spread to speech-related non-expository written genres, and finally reached expository genres, speech-related or non-speech related. Such a development would be in line with suggestions that the progressive was a spoken, colloquial feature that gradually spread to written genres.

Smitterberg concludes that his results shed more light on what is referred to as an integration process, by which the progressive became an increasingly more important part of late Modern English grammar. Smitterberg says that the concept of an integration process combines grammaticalization theory, the development of obligatory functions of the progressive, the increase in the frequency of the construction, and the diffusion of the progressive across linguistic and extralinguistic contexts (pp. 3–4).

Why does Smitterberg use the term “integration”? He says that since quantitative analyses of the distribution of the progressive across linguistic and extralinguistic parameters are central to the present study, he prefers the wider term “integration” to “grammaticalization” with reference to his own results. The term “integration” should be taken to cover aspects of both grammaticalization and obligatorification (p. 57). If the concept of integration is so crucial to his analyses, a precise definition of integration should be given in his arguments.
The chief aspect of the concept of integration in his study is that of frequency: an increase in frequency over the 19th century is taken to indicate that the progressive became more fully integrated into English grammar during this period and in that sense less marked. Here the concept of integration into English grammar is reduced to the increasing frequency of the progressive in the data. His discussion is circular. He concludes that the progressive was integrated into English grammar, because the number of examples increased in the data. And the frequency increased, because this construction became more integrated into English grammar. Which comes first? The reason for preferring “integration” to “grammaticalization” is not satisfactorily discussed.

It is laudable that Smitterberg tries to establish a bridge between frequency and function in Chapter 4. In Chapters 5 and 6, the integration of the progressive is discussed with reference to the distribution of the construction over the verbal paradigm and to the co-occurrence of the progressive with other linguistics features and contexts. However, if the extension of the progressive to many verbal forms played a part in the increase, the question of why verbal forms such as perfect progressive and the co-occurrence of modal auxiliaries were made possible must be answered.

One suggestion I would like to make from the standpoint of generative grammar is that the appearance of a variety of progressive forms, which are crucial to the increase of the progressive in the 19th century, would be better analysed by drawing on the emergence theory of functional categories. The combination of the progressive and modal auxiliaries assumes the presence of auxiliaries and syntactic positions besides TP to accommodate verbal elements in the clause structure. I prefer the term “grammaticalization” to “integration” since the combination of the progressive and modal auxiliaries is made possible due to grammaticalization, if grammaticalization is defined as the emergence of functional categories heading their own projection in the clause structure (cf. Osawa (2005)). As argued above in this section, due to the grammaticalization of lexical verbs with modal meaning as modal auxiliaries, the separation of TP from VP is made possible, and more positions are available in the clause structure to accommodate verbal elements. Modal auxiliaries are placed under the T-node and under TP there are more positions available such as vP, or VP in Present-day English (cf. Radford (2004)). Hence, a variety of complex progressive forms including perfect progressive and passive progressive are made possible. Though applying the emergence theory of functional categories (cf. Gelderen (1993), Osawa (2003)) to this issue has problems of its own, it
is a promising approach to accounting for what happened in the development of the progressive. As Smitterberg admits, more research is needed to clarify the connection between the progressive and the processes of grammaticalization and obligatorification in later Modern English.

The fundamental question of “why things should be this way?” always remains. Besides the issues mentioned above, for example, as I have touched on in 3.4, Smitterberg argues that the dominance of GO and COME is possibly because they may have been very common as main verbs in verb phrase in late Modern English, as they are in the present day. However, the question of why GO and COME are very common as main verbs in verb phrases remains. Answering these questions may be beyond the scope of this corpus-based quantitative study. Within the framework of corpus-based analysis, the results presented in this book are fully elaborated and well-discussed.

What I would like to suggest finally is that the primary factor in the increase of the progressive may be a syntactic one, not a social one, although I do not deny the influence of the extralinguistic factors on which Smitterberg focuses, especially in Chapter 3. The introduction of a more qualitative approach involving a closer investigation of the factors related to what happened would increase the validity of this study. Additionally, although I have pointed out only a few, there are many basic calculation errors in the data.

Despite these critical comments, Smitterberg’s findings are quite valuable, and I recommend this monograph to those who are not familiar with corpus-linguistics. This book gives readers with no knowledge of statistics a clear introduction to corpus-based linguistics. The results presented will serve as a useful source for further research. In short, Smitterberg (2005) occupies an important position in the field of corpus-linguistics.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRESSIVE IN ENGLISH IN THE 19TH CENTURY


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