

The English Progressive: Beyond an Aspectual-Temporal Analysis

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1. Introduction

Ever since Dowty's (1977) influential analysis of the English progressive that treats the construction as an intensional operator, there have been many linguists and philosophers that have adopted a modal semantics approach to formalise the meaning of the progressive. Asher (1992), Landman (1992), and Portner (1998) are a few notable scholars who have built upon Dowty's (1977) framework, each arguing to have improved the MODAL ACCOUNT by introducing new sets of constraints in order to determine the relevant worlds that their analysis would work with. In contrast to this, there also have been a number of scholars that reject the intensional approach whilst presenting an extensional one, treating the progressive as a predicate modifier within an event-based semantic framework. A few advocates for the extensional approach are Vlach (1981), Parsons (1990), and Forbes (2006).

Both analyses do not fall short of criticism and in this paper, I will draw references especially from Bonomi (1997), who brings to attention some shortcomings of the modal account, and Szabó (2004, 2008), who highlights the issues that both approaches hold. Through the detailing of existing intensional and extensional analyses, I will argue that the

modal approach, despite lacking a developed account that is able to capture the semantics of the progressive fully, is less problematic than the contending extensional approach.

Another important factor to consider when putting together an analysis for the progressive is the usage type of the construction in English sentences. The progressive construction is seemingly polysemous in nature, being able to yield aspectual, temporal, and even purely modal meanings in the contexts in which they appear. De Wit and Brisard (2014) present a study that categorises the present progressive into nine distinctive usage types using data from a corpus analysis. Additionally, Gavrilović (2019) investigates the contextual conditions in which progressives appear and determines the pragmatic factors that give rise to the various meanings of the construction. Later in this paper, I will review the categorisations presented by both studies and attempt to organise how these meanings are realised while determining what kind of semantic framework is needed to best account for the multiple meanings of the English progressive.

2. The Intensional Approach

As mentioned before, Dowty's (1977: 57) view of the progressive being a 'mixed modal-temporal operator', has sparked off a number of analyses treating the progressive to be a form constituting a modal meaning. Out of these, I take Portner's (1998) analysis that incorporates functions from Kratzer's ORDERING SEMANTICS as well as a consideration of EVENT-BASED SEMANTICS to be the best developed in accounting for the meaning of the progressive. By adapting the MODAL BASE and ORDERING SOURCE functions developed by Kratzer, Portner was able to establish a selection of relevant worlds through contextually supplied parameters, which he relabelled as *Circ* (circumstances) for the modal

base, and *NI* (non-interruptions) for the ordering source.

This is an important development to the modal account as a key argument against Dowty's theory is that the possible worlds, which Dowty defines as *INERTIA WORLDS*, are not sufficiently defined. Dowty takes the possible worlds w' to be exactly like the real world w up through a relevant interval I , and dismisses any circumstances that could result in the falsity of [*PROG* Φ ¹]. Instead, he argues that if an interrupting situation was to occur, another interval I that suggests this change-of-state would need to be introduced. Portner's analysis is able to resolve this matter more elegantly by directly setting context-driven constraints onto the set and ranking of accessible worlds, avoiding the reanalysis that is needed by Dowty's account.

Another improvement that Portner brings to the modal account is the consideration of not only the event under discussion, but specific properties of it too (i.e., how the event is described). His semantics for the progressive can be defined as (1) below (rewritten for notational consistency), in which the *PROG* operator, when applied to the event e and property P described in Φ , "asserts that if e is not interrupted, it will become an event of the kind described" (Portner 1998: 782).

- (1) [*PROG* Φ] is true at a pair of an interval and world $\langle I, w \rangle$ iff there is an event e in w such that $T(e) = I$ and for all worlds w' in $\text{Best}(\text{Circ}, NI, e, P)$, there is an interval I' which includes I as a non-final subinterval, such that Φ is true at $P(\langle I', w' \rangle)(e)$.

Portner's analysis accounts for some of the shortcomings in Dowty's work but it does not resolve a fundamental issue that was also identified

1) In the analysis of progressives, following Dowty (1977), Φ represents [*BECOME* Ψ]. This cause-and-result operator is required to determine the truth conditions of progressive sentences.

but not tackled in Dowty's (1977) article. This issue is later picked up by Bonomi (1997), who termed it as the MULTIPLE-CHOICE PARADOX, and further discussed on by Szabó (2004). The essence of the problem is that the set of possible worlds adapted by modal theories may sometimes be too restrictive in cases such as what is illustrated in (2) to (5) below.

- (2) John is drawing a horse.
- (3) John is drawing a unicorn.
- (4) John is drawing either a horse or a unicorn.
- (5) Context: John has begun drawing but has not yet decided whether it will be a drawing of a horse or a unicorn.

Until John decides what he will draw and determines that his drawing is complete, (4) is intuitively true, whereas (2) and (3) are not. Dowty's primitive modal account predicts that both counterintuitive statements are true whereas in Portner's (1998), the application of the PROG operator onto event properties *P* fail to allow a true reading of either (2) or (3). However, either one has to be true in order for (4) to hold as well.

Bonomi (1997) highlights another issue of the modal account, that is, presuppositions based on 'reasonableness' could lead to false predictions of the truth conditionality of progressive sentences. Accounts developed by Asher (1992), Landman (1992), and Portner (1998) all rely on some sense of 'reasonableness', 'normality', or other similar notions in order to determine the set and ordering of possible worlds where [PROG Φ] would yield a true interpretation. An example that counters this is given by Bonomi (1997: 186-187), who also provides an axiom schema defining the notion of 'normality' and the presupposition that this schema falsely predicts.

- (6) A hundred boats are circumnavigating the globe. Most of them will fail.
- (7) $\forall [\text{PROG } (\Phi)(s^2)] > \exists e[s \leq e \wedge \Phi(e)]$
- (8) For every boat x which is circumnavigating the globe, x typically circumnavigates the globe eventually.

As shown above, the sentences in (6) are perfectly acceptable propositions in the order that they appear, and the notion of ‘normality’ which has a core role in modal theories is defied. These false entailments and predictions are a key motivation for some scholars to opt for an extensional approach in defining the semantics of the progressive. The next section will detail some of the important literature in regards to the extensional approach and also highlight some of its outstanding problems.

3. The Extensional Approach

In the extensional view, the progressive is assumed to be a predicate that takes events as arguments; thus, also being referred to as the ADVERBIAL ACCOUNT. Parsons’ (1990) theory is a representative of this approach and his semantics is captured in examples (9) and (10) below.

- (9) John was crossing the street.
- (9') $\exists e \exists I \exists t [I < \text{now} \wedge t \in I \wedge \text{crossing}(e) \wedge \text{AGENT}(e, \text{John}) \wedge \text{THEME}(e, \text{the street}) \wedge \text{HOLD}(e, t)]$
- (10) John crossed the street.
- (10') $\exists e \exists I \exists t [I < \text{now} \wedge t \in I \wedge \text{crossing}(e) \wedge \text{AGENT}(e, \text{John}) \wedge \text{THEME}(e, \text{the street}) \wedge \text{CUL}(e, t)]$

² s stands for the state of the world of evaluation w in Bonomi’s (1997) theory.

The only differing element in the event-based logical forms of the progressive and perfective minimal pairs are the HOLD and CUL (culminate) operators. In the logical form of the progressive (9'), HOLD denotes that event e holds (is ongoing) at the given time t , whereas in the case of the perfective (10'), CUL indicates that event e culminates (is completed) at t . At the surface level, this seems straightforward and intuitive but problems arise when predicates of different aspectual classes are considered.

Szabó (2008) brings to our attention that the examples (9) and (10) above bear different aktionsarten which results in the logical forms (9') and (10') respectively. However, in the case of (11) and (12) below, both are atelic predicates and fall under the aspectual class of 'activity', yielding analogous logical forms which becomes a problem that Parsons' (1990) analysis fails to account for.

(11) John was running.

(11') $\exists e \exists I \exists t [I < \text{now} \wedge t \in I \wedge \text{running}(e) \wedge \text{AGENT}(e, \text{John}) \wedge \text{HOLD}(e, t)]$

(12) John ran.

(12') $\exists e \exists I \exists t [I < \text{now} \wedge t \in I \wedge \text{running}(e) \wedge \text{AGENT}(e, \text{John}) \wedge \text{HOLD}(e, t)]$

Another widely discussed issue when it comes to the adverbial approach is the existential entailment problem with verbs of creation (i.e. *build, make, carve, bake*). (13) below illustrates this.

(13) John is building a house.

(13') $\exists e \exists I \exists t [I = \text{now} \wedge t \in I \wedge \text{building}(e) \wedge \text{AGENT}(e, \text{John}) \wedge \exists x [\text{house}(x) \wedge \text{THEME}(e, x)] \wedge \text{HOLD}(e, t)]$

The argument $\exists x[\text{house}(x)]$ in (13) entails that there is already a house in existence which Zucchi (1999) and Szabó (2008) claim is problematic as it is difficult to say there exists a house if John is only in the initial stages of building. Forbes (2006) offered a solution to this by introducing the idea of ‘notional’ and ‘relational’ readings, with the former being applied to progressives. For the ‘notional’ reading to be derived, the THEME operator is replaced by CHAR (character) so that the verb does not thematically relate to the object in question, but rather, the object characterises the event *e*. A crucial problem with Forbes’ approach is that in order for CHAR to work the way he is arguing for it to, he assumes CHAR to be an intensional operator without providing adequate grounding on how this came to be when THEME functions extensionally. Szabó (2008) further points out that Forbes employs only the CHAR operator in cases which the progressive consists of a creation verb but this leads to false interpretations as well. An example sentence given by Szabó to further prove this point is provided in (14).

(14) John was carving a large block of stone.

In the case of (14), Forbes’ semantics would falsely dismiss the existence of ‘a large block of stone’ if he assigns the ‘notional’ reading to the progressive sentence. This shows that Forbes’ analysis is problematic and verbs of creation remain as an unresolved challenge for the adverbial account.

4. Different Usage Types of the English Progressive

As detailed in the preceding sections, putting together a uniformed analysis of the progressive is not an easy feat. Scholars have either attempted to add new constraints to existing analyses, or combine features

of the two main views in hopes of bettering their accounts. In this section, I aim to show that an important factor to consider when attempting to put forth a compositional analysis for the progressive is the various usage types of the construction. I am in agreement with De Wit and Brisard (2014) who claim that this aspect has been generally ignored by most of the formal approaches. The existing model-theoretic accounts focused on the truth- conditionality of sentences involving progressives and the aspectual class of the verb phrases in such constructions. However, as De Wit and Brisard, and later Gavrilović (2019) will show, the progressive yields various levels of meanings in natural language environments, and therefore, there is a need to profile these usage types in order for any theory to account for the grammar holistically.

De Wit and Brisard (2014) carried out a corpus study, drawing data from the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English, and identified nine distinctive usage types of the present progressive. An example of each usage type will be provided below, followed by a discussion of whether each usage type is directly influenced by the progressive construction in the sentence or if there are other linguistic features at play.

4.1. Current Ongoingness

This is the most common usage type of the progressive construction denoting an event or situation that is ongoing or incomplete. When the progressive form is used, the described event is usually not considered structural, but phenomenological, putting an emphasis on the ‘here-and-now’ and on the perspective of the speaker (Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger 1982; De Wit and Brisard 2014).

(15) Pete’s **using** the colander. (De Wit and Brisard 2014: 71)

4.2. *Historical Present Progressive*

The historical and futurate present progressive together make up what De Wit and Brisard calls VIRTUAL ONGOINGNESS. The described event may not necessarily be taking place, but in the case of the historical usage type for example, the progressive is used typically in narratives to bring a sense of ‘currentness’ and ‘relevance’ to the storytelling or retelling of a particular account. This usage type can also be called SHIFTED ONGOINGNESS.

- (16) Two weeks ago I’m **watching** TV, and David Horowitz is going to have this former car radio thief on? (De Wit and Brisard 2014: 73)

4.3. *Futurate Present Progressive*

The futurate present progressive is used when referring to future events, therefore, it also falls under the category of VIRTUAL ONGOINGNESS. With this usage type, the speaker is expressing the likelihood of some event to occur, and again, this is not concrete, but based on the speaker’s judgement. Once again, we see that what is integral to the usage of the progressive is not the occurrence of the event itself, but the speaker’s perception of ‘what is’ or ‘what may happen’. This is a piece of evidence that the progressive constitutes an inherently modal meaning.

- (17) It looks like these people **aren’t going** home alone tonight. (De Wit and Brisard 2014: 75)

4.4. *Temporary Validity*

This usage type is seen to be an extension of CURRENT ONGOINGNESS, where a salient temporal boundary is present to make explicit the tentativeness of the event being described. De Wit and Brisard’s

argument for having a separate category for cases such as (16) below is because there are progressive propositions that are not bounded by temporality and they quote Ljung's (1980: 28) example, '*The universe is forever **expanding***', to illustrate their point better.

- (18) So they're kind of **suffering** from that... from that this year. (De Wit and Brisard 2014: 77)

4.5. (Limited) Duration

Both this usage type and the former are derived from sentences that have a salient time boundary which suggests temporariness and a certain duration. The difference between the two usage types is argued to be the focus. With TEMPORARY VALIDITY, the focus is on the temporal boundary that an introduced time adverbial sets (i.e. *this year* in (18) above). As for DURATION, the focus is on the fact that the described event holds. De Wit and Brisard go even further to suggest that a sense of 'irritation' can be pragmatically inferred from this usage type with the example given below.

- (19) So then, and then, he sort of pulled the paper aside, and he's still **staring** at you. (De Wit and Brisard 2014: 77)

4.6. Iteration

For this usage type, and the following two, De Wit and Brisard shows that the progressive construction is not only used to refer to a singular event, but could also represent multiple (repeated) events. In the case of ITERATION, this usage type is derived due to the occurrence of a self-factive verb (i.e. *blink, sneeze, knock*) in the progressive. As this class of verbs denote instantaneous events and are typically treated as not having an internal temporal structure, the progressive that holds the

meaning of ‘duration’ and ‘ongoingness’ translates these verbs into a series of repeated events.

(20) John’s **blinking**.

4.7. *Habitual*

When a progressive gives a HABITUAL reading, it is referring to a temporary routine, differing from generic statements expressed in the simple present. Examples (21) and (22) below illustrate this difference in meaning. In this regard, De Wit and Brisard puts forth that the HABITUAL usage type is the virtual counterpart of TEMPORARY VALIDITY, as both usage types require an explicit temporal boundary introduced for their meanings to be derived.

(21) I’m **sleeping** a lot these days.

(22) I sleep a lot.

4.8. *Repetition*

De Wit and Brisard allocates events that fall in the middle of an ITERATION and HABITUAL interpretation into this category. They do not fall into the category of ITERATION as they are not a string of continuous events, and they are not general enough to be considered HABITUAL either.

(23) I mean, you turn your back and there’s somebody **moving in**. (De Wit and Brisard 2014: 80)

4.9. *Modal*

The final category comprises of the usage of progressives which do not bear any aspectual- temporal meaning, and can be interpreted as purely

modal. This is a crucial fact that attests that modality cannot be left out when it comes to defining the semantics of the progressive. De Wit and Brisard describe these usages as ‘epistemically’ motivated, rather than aspectually or temporally, and the example given in (24) highlights that the progressive can be used to express a personal subjective evaluation, independent of considering whether the described event is imperfective or temporally bound.

- (24) He’s smart, he talks about minorities. But he’s really **talking** about African Americans. (De Wit and Brisard 2014: 85)

4.10. Implications

Reviewing the nine usage types of the progressive presented by De Wit and Brisard (2014) makes it clear that the progressive construction is indeed versatile and through this, further insight into the progressive’s semantics can also be attained.

Firstly, the progressive undoubtedly holds a modal meaning. However, previous modal analyses that assess the truth-conditionality of a progressive proposition in the framework of POSSIBLE WORLD SEMANTICS have been too rigid. Accounts like those discussed in Section 2 impose a DEONTIC MODALITY to the PROG operator as the notion of ‘normality’ is employed to determine and rank the best, accessible worlds. Due to this, we run into problems such as the false truth-value predictions when there is a violation of the ‘normality’ axiom schema (see (6)-(8)).

In contrast to this, De Wit and Brisard (2014) propose that the progressive should be interpreted in terms of EPISTEMIC MODALITY. Rather than describing structural events, the progressive is used to express the speaker’s perception towards a state of affairs. This is also intuitively captured by Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982: 80) who

referred to this as the STRUCTURAL/PHENOMENAL DISTINCTION. Now that the modal flavour of the progressive is redefined, we are one step closer to unifying the semantics of the progressive; but there still remains a gap in accounting for why some usage types hold aspectual-temporal meanings and why some do not. This issue will be addressed in the following section along with a humble attempt to put forth some new insights into what should be accounted for in a formal analysis of the English progressive.

5. A Monosemous Account for the Polysemous English Progressive

In the previous section, I established that I stand alongside De Wit and Brisard in viewing the modal meaning of the progressive as ‘epistemic’ as opposed to ‘deontic’. This will be an important consideration when determining and organising the features of the progressive in the latter part of this section. Before that, I will discuss what kind of aspectual-temporal meanings the progressive form holds and why these meanings are not present in some sentences where the progressive form does occur.

Leech (2004) presents three levels of meaning that the verb predicate in the progressive could yield, which are i) *duration of the verb situation*, ii) *limited duration*, and iii) *incompleteness of the verb situation*. To allow for a simpler analysis later, I will conflate Leech’s list and the findings from De Wit and Brisard’s (2014) study into two mandatory components for all usages of the English progressive. The two components are as follows:

- (a) + DURATION
- (b) + ONGOINGNESS

If this rule, where the two components are set to be compulsory in the meaning of the progressive, is applied to the formal analysis, it accounts for the first eight usage types identified by De Wit and Brisard. It explains why multiple event interpretations can be derived, especially in cases where the verb in the progressive is a semelfactive. In order to generate the above two meanings, the semelfactive verb is transformed into a series of repeated events.

I have yet to address TEMPORARINESS that is also argued to be a key meaning of the progressive. This is because I do not view this component as mandatory and just as how De Wit and Brisard note in their detailing of the TEMPORARY VALIDITY usage type, this meaning is usually derived from the temporal constraint introduced by an adverbial or other contextual clues. Therefore, in order to not be met with problems when faced with a sentence like what Ljung (1980: 28) had presented (*The universe is forever expanding*), I will not attribute this meaning to the progressive construction itself, but to the temporal and pragmatic elements that surround it.

To reiterate some of the key points thus far, I will summarise the three components that have to be considered when determining the semantics of the progressive.

- (i) The modal meaning of the progressive is EPISTEMIC and truth conditions should be interpreted on the basis of the speaker's perception rather than structural knowledge of the real world.
- (ii) The verb predicate in the progressive must have DURATION.
- (iii) The verb predicate in the progressive must convey ONGOINGNESS.

One final point to consider is the mechanics that set apart the purely modal usage type from the others. My argument is that if the first of the

three points above are adopted into the analysis of the progressive, this disjunction would be taken care of. Even if the event being described in sentences such as (25) and (26) below do not actually hold any aspectual-temporal meaning in structural reality, by shifting the basis of interpretation to the speaker's perception, [+ DURATION] and [+ ON-GOINGNESS] are present at the cognitive level.

(25) I **am hoping** you will give us some advice. (Gavrilović 2019: 94)

(26) You're always **complaining** about something. (Gavrilović 2019: 94)

Gavrilović details that there are pragmatic implications that are derived from the use of the progressive above, such as conveying politeness in (25), and expressing irritation or anger in (26). I agree with this but I take these implications to be an additional colouring to the meaning of the progressive and are not necessary to be included in the core semantic analysis. Thus, I maintain that (i), (ii), and (iii) are the integral ingredients needed for a formal analysis of the progressive that can account for all usage types identified in the literature discussed in Section 4.

Table 1 above summarises the proposal I aim to put forth regarding what meanings should be regarded as core, and what can be considered as additionally derived from other linguistic or pragmatic factors and not necessarily from the progressive itself. The components included in the bolded (red) frame are the three essential meanings, whereas TEMPORARINESS and MULTIPLE EVENTS are triggered by other factors.

There are two more things I would have to clarify in regards to the classification above, the first being the category of TEMPORARINESS that I have set to be a non-essential component. It can be argued that the progressive sentence need not have a salient temporal adverbial to

Table 1

Usage Type		EPISTEMIC MODALITY	DURATION	ONGOING-NESS	TEMPO-RARINESS (EXPLICIT)	MULTIPLE EVENTS
STRUCTURAL	CURRENT ON-GOINGNESS	✓	✓	✓	MAYBE	
	SHIFTED ON-GOINGNESS	✓	✓	✓	MAYBE	
	TEMPORARY VALIDITY	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	DURATION	✓	✓	✓	MAYBE	
	ITERATION	✓	✓	✓	MAYBE	✓
SEMI-	HABITUAL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	REPETITION	✓	✓	✓	MAYBE	✓
	MODAL	✓	✓	✓	MAYBE	MAYBE
NON-	FUTURATE	✓	✓	✓	MAYBE	

denote the tentativeness of the event being described, and that certain verb predicates in the progressive itself could yield this meaning. However, as discussed by Ljung (1980) and touched upon by De Wit and Brisard (2014), this is not always the case, and therefore, I assign a ‘maybe’ to these usage types. Also following De Wit and Brisard, only the TEMPORARY VALIDITY and (restricted) HABITUAL usage types need to have this meaning component explicitly addressed.

Next, I depart from De Wit and Brisard’s distinction of CURRENT and VIRTUAL ONGOINGNESS, although I admit that there still needs to be a distinction of which usage types involve actual events and which do not. I use the terms STRUCTURAL, SEMI-STRUCTURAL, and NON- STRUCTURAL to distinguish between these, whilst highlighting that the state of affairs being expressed through progressive sentences need not be events that actually occur in our physical world. The reasons for having a SEMI-STRUCTURAL category is firstly because the events being represented by the HABITUAL and REPETITION usage

types represent multiple events over a course of time, but the actual frequency occurrence of the described event cannot be exactly captured. Take (23) that is repeated below as an example; the speaker, by his/her own judgement, is expressing the event of ‘somebody moving in’ as a frequently repeating occurrence. However, it cannot be assumed that this proposition is fully structural because surely, there is not ‘somebody moving in’ every time the addressed ‘you’ in the sentence ‘turns their back’.

(23) I mean, you turn your back and there’s somebody **moving in**. (De Wit and Brisard 2014: 80)

The second reason has to do with the modal usages. Although this usage type involves a strong notion of subjectivity, there is still a certain situation at hand that the speaker’s personal evaluation is based around. The utterance may be an emphasis, exaggeration, or what Gavrilović (2019: 94) calls ‘emotional colouring’ of a situation, but there must exist some actuality of the described event, even if it is in the past. This also informs why I categorise the SHIFTED ONGOINGNESS usage type as STRUCTURAL, as they are events that had already taken place and did actually exist. Contrastively, the FUTURATE involves events that have yet to take place, therefore, I consider this usage type to represent NON-STRUCTURAL events.

I recognise that how I regard these distinctions differs from the way that De Wit and Brisard consider what are ‘actual’ and ‘virtual’ events, which in their view, correlates with ‘current (now)’ and ‘past/future’ respectively. Instead of bringing in a consideration of temporal reference at this point, I will first keep my analysis to only consider the existentiality of the event being described.

6. Concluding Remarks

Looking at previous model-theoretic accounts, both the intensional and extensional views are faced with challenges that have yet to be resolved. Therefore, it is clear that there still lacks a developed analysis that can account fully for the semantics of the progressive. In my approach to understanding the semantics of the progressive better, I have first considered the multiple usage types of the construction. The fact that there are instances in which the progressive can be interpreted in purely modal means, is evidence that a modal analysis should be preferred. However, there needs to be redefinition of the kind of modality that is assigned to the construction, in which I argue that ‘epistemic’ is the way to go.

In the prior section, I had put forth a suggestion on how to simplify the core meaning(s) of the progressive, as well as a reorganisation of the usage types based on this. I have not applied this into a compositional framework nor have I yet to integrate tense and temporal referentiality to the analysis. These are all essential points to consider in further studies, and the result of this paper only serves as a departure point for a more complete formal analysis of the English progressive.

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ABSTRACT

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There are two main approaches to formally accounting for the semantics of the English progressive. One treats the progressive as an intensional modal-temporal operator (Dowty 1977), whilst the other, considers the construction to be an extensional predicate modifier (Parsons 1990). Both approaches are not without problems, and this paper, through a study of the different usage types of the progressive, aims to contribute some insight into how these problems can be accounted for. Finally, suggestions for what should constitute the core meaning of the progressive will be given, in hopes that this will inform the formal analysis of the construction.

Key Words English progressive, imperfective aspect, temporal semantics, modality, event structure, core meaning