

I'm loving it.

The progressive with verbs of emotion and cognition

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Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää statiiviverbien esiintymistä progressiivissa (*be + V -ing*) puhutussa amerikanenglannissa. Viime vuosikymmenen aikana on havaittu, että progressiivin käyttö statiiviverbien kanssa on lisääntynyt (Mair&Hundt 1995, Mair 2006, Smith 2002), ja erityisesti emotionaalisia ja kognitiivisia tiloja ilmaisevat verbit esiintyvät muita statiiviverbeiksi luokiteltuja verbejä useammin progressiivissa (Das 2010). Tutkimuksen kohteena ovatkin emotionaaliseksi tai kognitiiviseksi luokitellut verbit *agree, believe, forget, know, like, love, need, remember, understand* ja *want*.

Tutkimusaineisto muodostuu The Contemporary Corpus of American English (COCA) –korpuksen puhutun kielen osiosta, joka on 90 miljoonaa sanaa sisältävä amerikanenglannin korpusaineisto. Tutkimusmetodini ovat sekä kvantitatiivisia että kvalitatiivisia. Tutkimus tarkastelee progressiivimuotojen esiintymistiheyden ja kontekstipiirteiden lisäksi progressiivin semanttisia piirteitä, niitä merkityksiä ja funktioita, joita progressiivi ilmaisee kun sitä käytetään statiiviverbien kanssa. Tutkimus perehtyy progressiivin perinteisiin määritelmiin (Comrie 1976, Huddleston&Pullum, Biber et al. 1999, Leech&Svartvik, Quirk et al.) ja niistä poikkeaviin teorioihin kuten 'susceptibility to change' -teoriaan (Williams 2002) ja metafyyssiseen teoriaan (Goldsmith&Woiseschlaeger 1982). Tavoitteena on selvittää, soveltuvatko progressiivin määritelmät ja teoriat kuvaamaan progressiivin merkitystä ja funktioita myös statiiviverbien kohdalla. Tutkimus on myös osittain vertaileva, sillä progressiivien esiintymistä ja konteksteja tutkimusaineistossa sekä progressiivin funktioita verrataan puhutusta brittienglannista saatuihin tuloksiin (Römer 2005). Lisäksi progressiivin funktioita tutkimusaineistossa verrataan aiempiin tutkimuksiin (Jørgensen 1991) ja progressiivin määritelmiin.

Tutkimus osoittaa että progressiivita käytetään emotionaalisten ja kognitiivisten verbien kanssa hieman useammin amerikanenglannissa kuin brittienglannissa, mutta esiintymistiheydessä sekä progressiivien konteksteissa on verbikohtaista vaihtelua. Progressiivimuotojen semanttinen analyysi osoittaa, että verbin luokittelu statiiviseksi tai dynaamiseksi vaikuttaa progressiivin merkitykseen. Progressiivin funktiot ovat erilaisia statiiviverbien kanssa kuin dynaamisten verbien kanssa, joten progressiivin perinteiset määritelmät eivät sovellu statiiviverbien progressiivin kuvaamiseen. Lisäksi analyysi osoittaa, että verbien semanttinen luokittelu ei ole kaikilta osin pätevä, sillä osa statiiviksi luokitelluista verbeistä toimii dynaamisten verbien tavoin progressiivissa. Tutkimus osoittaa että metafyyssinen

Avainsanat: amerikanenglanti, aspekti, korpustutkimus, progressiivi, statiiviverbit

Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| 2 Background | 4 |
| 2.1 Aspect as a way to define the progressive | 5 |
| 2.1.1 Incompleteness | 6 |
| 2.1.2 Temporariness | 7 |
| 2.1.3 Duration | 8 |
| 2.2 Non-aspectual functions of the progressive | 10 |
| 2.3 States and events | 12 |
| 2.3.1 Stative verbs | 12 |
| 2.3.2 The progressive with stative verbs | 14 |
| 2.4 Susceptibility to change –theory | 17 |
| 2.5 A metaphysical view of the progressive | 19 |
| 3 Previous studies | 23 |
| 3.1 Jørgensen’s study on the progressive with verbs of cognition and emotion | 24 |
| 3.2 Römer’s study on individual verbs in the progressive | 26 |
| 3.2.1 Frequencies of progressive forms | 27 |
| 3.2.2 Functions of the progressive in general | 28 |
| 3.2.3 Functions of the progressive with verbs of emotion and cognition | 31 |
| 4 Material and methodology | 33 |
| 4.1 Corpus selection | 33 |
| 4.2 Methods of analysis | 34 |
| 4.2.1 Query strategies | 34 |
| 4.2.2 Data processing | 36 |

5 Discussion of results _____ **38**

5.1 Frequencies **39**

5.2 Contexts **41**

5.2.1 Tense forms 41

5.2.2 Subjects 44

5.2.3 Negation 47

5.3 Individual verbs in the progressive..... **49**

5.3.1 Agree 49

5.3.2 Believe 52

5.3.3 Forget 55

5.3.4 Know 57

5.3.5 Like 59

5.3.6 Love 61

5.3.7 Need 62

5.3.8 Remember 65

5.3.9 Understand 67

5.3.10 Want 68

6 Conclusion _____ **72**

6.1 Frequencies and contexts **72**

6.2 The functions of the progressive **73**

Source of data _____ **77**

References _____ **77**

1 Introduction

The topic of this study is the use and meanings of the progressive form, realised as the construction *be + -ing*. A native speaker of English knows intuitively when to use the progressive form, but for a learner of English as a foreign language, its meaning and use is often problematic despite the instructions given by grammars. Despite the fact that traditional grammars are quite agreed in their definitions of the progressive, it is nevertheless difficult for a non-native speaker of English to decide when the progressive is required and when not. It could also be argued that the definitions are rather patched, in other words no single definition is sufficient. What a learner of a language would need is an umbrella definition that covers the entire area of progressive meanings. In fact, there are some interesting, not perhaps so well-known views of the progressive that even question the adequacy of traditional explanations. Williams (2002), for one, has aimed at finding a single criterion for defining when a progressive is needed, and as a result of that has coined a theory that he calls 'susceptibility to change'. Also Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982) have a rather different approach that gives quite an interesting insight into why a (native) speaker of English chooses to use the progressive instead of the simple form.

What is the logic behind the progressive? This study intends to answer this question by focusing on a group of verbs typically considered incompatible or at least unorthodox with the progressive, namely verbs of emotion and cognition. These verbs are typically classified under the title 'stative verbs', since they are seen to denote a (permanent) state. However, there are definitely cases where a so-called stative verb appears in the progressive construction. Therefore, the starting point of this study is first of all the supposition that the use of the progressive with stative verbs is

actually more common than what traditional grammars suggest. Secondly, this study aims to find out whether the traditional definitions of the progressive, including the classification of verbs into dynamic and stative verbs, need to be re-evaluated.

Although several studies have been conducted on the use of the progressive, the studies tend to focus on the progressive in general rather than explore the use of individual verbs in the progressive, not to mention question the traditional ways of defining the progressive. In addition, the few studies that explore the use of stative verbs in the progressive give only statistical information without pondering the semantics or logic behind the progressive. Besides that, the studies tend to be small-scale studies with no quantitative value. Furthermore, the studies mainly explore British corpora, although it is often suggested that American English is actually leading the way in many language changes. Therefore, this study focuses on American English. However, as far as the frequencies of stative progressives are concerned, it will be interesting to compare the results of this study to those Römer (2005) gained by investigating the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Bank of English (BoE).

As one can guess, the group called stative verbs include a relatively large number of verbs, which differ considerably in their meaning. Therefore stative verbs are often divided into four or five meaning groups according to the state they refer to. In order to keep the size of this study within reason I have chosen to focus on verbs of emotion, i.e. verbs that denote an emotional state, and of cognition, i.e. verbs that describe a cognitive state or process. Verbs of emotion are probably the most agreed on group of verbs as regards their tendency of taking the progressive. Traditional grammarians and linguists seem to agree that they do not, or very rarely, take the progressive, although quite a few empirical studies on verbs of emotion and cognition show the opposite (Jorgensen 1991; Das 2010; Römer 2005; Smith 2002). Therefore, it will be interesting to see what results the study at hand will give of this area of research.

The individual verbs under investigation in this study have been chosen with the help of previous studies, especially that of Römer's (2005). Most of the verbs investigated in this study

were among the hundred most common verbs in Römer's study. That is to make sure that there will be enough tokens to examine. Another criterion for the choice of verbs is that they clearly denote states, not cognitive actions such as *wonder* or *think*, for instance. Therefore, the verb *love* is chosen into this study, though it is not included in Römer's study. To be precise, the verbs included in this study are emotional verbs *like*, *need*, *want*, and *love*, and cognitive verbs *agree*, *believe*, *forget*, *know*, *remember*, and *understand*.

To sum up, the main purpose of this study is to see whether the use of the progressive with stative verbs in spoken American native-speaker English is actually more common than generally thought. This is done by investigating the frequency of the progressive forms of the verbs *like*, *need*, *want*, *love*, *agree*, *believe*, *forget*, *know*, *remember*, and *understand* in the Contemporary Corpus of American English (COCA). The study then aims to analyse the meaning(s) of the progressive with these verbs, and furthermore to re-evaluate the traditional definitions of the progressive in general. The exact research questions that this study is set out to answer are:

1. How frequently is the progressive used with verbs of emotion and cognition in spoken American native-speaker English?
 - 1.1 Are there differences between spoken AmE and spoken BrE as regards the frequency of the progressive with verbs of emotion and cognition?
 - 1.2 In what kind of contexts do the progressive constructions appear in as regards tense, subject and negation?
2. What is the meaning of, or logic behind, the progressive with verbs of emotion and cognition?
3. In the light of the results, how can the progressive be defined? Are the existing definitions or theories adequate?

2 Background

The term ‘the progressive’ denotes to both form and meaning. The form, i.e. syntactic construction of the progressive, is realized by the verb *be* followed by the main verb in the *-ing* form, e.g. *I am writing*. This construction carries several meanings. In short, the progressive may imply that an activity is in progress, temporary or incomplete (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 74), which can be called ‘aspectual functions’ of the progressive, since they all relate to the speaker’s point of view, i.e. how the speaker sees the internal structure of the situation. However, the progressive is often understood to express other, so called non-aspectual, meanings as well, such as future reference (*I’m leaving soon*), politeness (*I was hoping you could help me*), or emotional involvement (*He’s always having the best of everything*). As we will see, these meanings of the progressive are quite commonly agreed on among linguists, but there are some differing opinions, such as that of Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger’s (1982), who have a very different approach to the logic of the progressive. Their theory will be handled separately in chapter 2.4.

Since the progressive is defined in somewhat different ways, it is also referred to with various different names, such as ‘continuous tense’, ‘continuous form’, ‘expanded form’, and ‘be + -ing construction’ (Smitterberg 2005, 7), as well as ‘the durative aspect’ and ‘the continuous aspect’ (Quirk et al. 1985, 197). To make things a bit less complicated, only the term ‘the progressive’ is used in this study, since it appears to be the most common and also perhaps the most simple of all the different names. Typically, ‘the progressive’ may stand for both form and meaning, and when it is necessary to make a difference between form and meaning, they are referred to as ‘the progressive form’ and ‘the progressive aspect’ respectively. Here again, there is a confusing variation of terms used by grammarians; as far as Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 163) are concerned,

‘progressive aspect’ stands for form and ‘progressive aspectuality’ for meaning. Furthermore, as Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982) dismiss aspectuality as an adequate way of defining the use of the progressive, they do not include the term aspect in their theory at all.

The definitions of the progressive will now be handled in more detail. Section 2.1 deals with aspect as a way to define the meanings of the progressive, whereas section 2.2 will shed light on what linguists consider as additional, or non-aspectual, functions of the progressive. Section 2.3 clarifies some lexical semantic matters related to the use and meanings of the progressive, focusing on the so-called stative verbs, and sections 2.4 and 2.5 introduce two approaches to the use of the progressive that are rather different from other views. These are Williams’ susceptibility to change theory and Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger’s metaphysical theory.

2.1 Aspect as a way to define the progressive

The meanings that the progressive construction carries can be explained in terms of aspect. Aspect is concerned with the viewpoint of the speaker of a given situation, i.e. it deals with meaning and not form or structure. Comrie (1976, 3) defines aspects as “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation”. He continues that the ‘imperfective aspect’ looks at the situation from within, referring to its internal structure, and not distinguishing the beginning or the end of the situation, whereas the ‘perfective’ aspect views the situation from outside, presenting the situation as a unified whole without distinguishing its internal structure (Comrie 1976, 3-5; Huddleston & Pullum 2002, 117). However, Comrie’s definition of imperfective and perfective aspect is not easily applicable to the English language, since the opposition between imperfective and perfective aspect has not been grammaticalized in English (Comrie 1976, 7; Huddleston & Pullum 2002, 124). However, Comrie (1976, 124) continues that

English has two aspectual oppositions that pervade the whole of the verbal system, that between Progressive (verb to be and verbal form of –ing) and non-Progressive, and that between Perfect (verb to have and Past Participle) and non-Perfect.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 117) clarify this by explaining that in English the progressive form is used to express progressive aspect, which they define as being the same as imperfective aspect, i.e. that of looking at the situation from the inside, referring to its internal structure, as opposed to the non-progressive aspect, i.e. viewing the situation from outside, without distinguishing the internal structure.

On the other hand, Smitterberg (2005, 7) argues that the progressive does not cover all meanings of imperfectivity, because there are certain limitations in the use of the progressive, e.g. with stative verbs. However, he also notes that since the use of the progressive is becoming less restricted, it is possible to say that the progressive expresses imperfective aspect to a certain extent. Therefore, it is possible to define the aspectual use of the progressive as that of looking at the situation from inside, and referring to its internal structure. However, not all linguists agree with this definition of the progressive. There are also other meanings that the progressive is seen to carry, and they are introduced in the next section.

2.1.1 Incompleteness

According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 124), the basic function of the progressive is to express “a special case of imperfectivity [...] where a dynamic situation is presented as ongoing, in progress”. Indeed, Comrie (1976, 19) Quirk et al. (1985, 197), Biber et al. (1999, 460-470), and Leech and Svartvik (2002, 74) all see that the progressive indicates that the happening is in progress, or continuing, at a particular time. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 163) give the following example (a) to clarify this meaning:

- (a) He **was reading** the letter when the phone rang.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 163-164) further explain that when a situation is in progress it is typically also imperfective, i.e. incomplete (Quirk et al. 1985, 198; Mindt 2000, 248). Leech and Svartvik (2002, 74) point out that the incompleteness of the activity is most evident in the past and present perfect progressives, especially when compared to simple tenses:

- (b) He **was writing** a novel several years ago (but I don't know if he finished it).

He wrote a novel several years ago.

- (c) They've **been mending** the car this morning (but the job may not be finished).

They've mended the car this morning.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 164) also add that the progressive can be interpreted as a point that excludes the beginning and the end. They call this 'the mid-interval implicature', and explain that it is closely connected to the notion of incompleteness. Furthermore, Leech and Svartvik (2002, 74) point out that sometimes the progressive indicates "movement towards change", excluding the completion of the change:

- (d) The young man **was drowning** (but at the last moment I rescued him).

It can be argued that the two meanings, 'mid-interval implicature' and 'movement towards change', are both present in example (d). The progressive describes a dynamic, incomplete situation in progress, without distinguishing the beginning or the end, but referring to the internal structure of the situation. However, when one compares the verbs of examples (d) and (b), it is easy to see that the verbs are very different from each other: *write* is a verb that denotes activity, i.e. with an active agent, whereas *drown* refers to a happening, where the subject of the sentence is more an object than an active "doer". Therefore, it can be argued that the progressive does not always need to have an active agent. In addition, the two verbs are different also in the sense that *write* refers to an action that can last for a long time, whereas *drown* refers to a punctual situation. The next two meanings of the progressive are related to this distinction.

2.1.2 Temporariness

Several linguists are of the opinion that the progressive may emphasize the temporariness, i.e. limited duration, of a situation (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 74; Mindt 2000, 249; Quirk et al. 1985, 197-198). This effect can be seen by comparing the sentences (e) and (f), provided by Quirk et al. (1985, 197):

- (e) Joan sings well.

(f) Joan **is singing** well.

Quirk et al. explain that the first sentence “refers to Joan’s competence as singer” whereas in the latter example the progressive signals that Joan’s singing is a temporary, not a permanent phenomenon (1985, 197-198). In other words, in (e) the progressive is used to describe Joan’s temporary performance, not her permanent ability. It does not, however, suggest that Joan is not competent – only the point of view is different, and thus the two sentences could both be true. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 167) give another example (g) of a sentence where the progressive very clearly describes the present behaviour, not a permanent quality, of the subject:

(g) He **is being** tactful.

In the sentence above the progressive not only expresses temporariness, but also emphasizes the activity of the agent i.e. the subject of the sentence. This example is rather interesting, since it has a typically stative verb which is presented as dynamic by using the progressive.

2.1.3 Duration

In addition to incompleteness and temporariness, Quirk et al. (1985, 197-198) see that the progressive may also express the meaning of duration. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 165-166) support their view by explaining that a situation needs to have duration in order for it to be in progress. Therefore, the progressive may sometimes change a punctual situation into a durative one:

(h) The train **was arriving**.

Typically the arrival of a train is regarded as a situation that lasts for only a short period of time, in other words, the situation is punctual. However, the example above suggests that the arrival of a train has duration, although it is also possible to see the elements of temporariness and perhaps even incompleteness that the progressive gives to the situation. Mindt (2000, 249), on the other hand, does not list duration as one of the meanings of the progressive. However, there are similarities between what Huddleston and Quirk et al. call duration and what Mindt names the habit/iteration

function. Mindt (2000, 249) explains that the habit/iteration function expresses that something happens repeatedly and/or regularly:

- (i) She **was** crying and **jumping** up and down.

Here also a punctual event (to jump) is prolonged by the progressive, though here the same action happens repeatedly, as opposed to Huddleston and Pullum's example (h), where the train only arrives once. However, it could be argued that, if we understand habit as something one does regularly for a longer period of time, the sentence (i) does not actually describe a habit, but the temporariness or duration of the action of jumping.

As the examples above illustrate, it seems that the progressive may convey several meanings at the same sentence, and many of the meanings are very closely attached to each other. Indeed, Mindt (2000, 250) notes that it is quite usual that the meanings of incompleteness and temporariness are present at the same time, and gives us an example:

- (j) My father and I **are having** a struggle.

In the sentence above the struggle is going on, i.e. incomplete, at the moment, but the progressive also implies that the situation is temporary.

To sum up the definitions presented here, the aspectual functions of the progressive express the speaker's view of the situation as seen 'from the inside'. Thus, by using the progressive construction, the speaker may want to 1) present the situation as being in progress and therefore incomplete, or 2) emphasise the temporariness of the situation, or on the other hand 3) the duration or continuousness of a (typically short) situation, or 4) underline the active role of the agent controlling the situation (dynamicity). However, many linguists point out that not all the uses of the progressive deal with aspect. In addition to the aspectual functions, there are also other uses of the progressive, which are henceforth referred to as 'non-aspectual' functions.

2.2 Non-aspectual functions of the progressive

Using the progressive construction *be + -ing* is not always a question of viewing the situation from the inside, but it can have a non-aspectual function. Grammarians have different names for non-aspectual uses of the progressive; Quirk et al. (1985) name other uses than those indicating temporariness ‘special uses’ of the progressive, Smitterberg (2005) calls them ‘not-solely-aspectual’ functions, and Mindt (2000, 249-250) talks about non-progressive meanings when referring to functions that do not emphasize the action as a process, and exclude all progressive meanings. However, despite the differences in naming and describing the non-aspectual uses of the progressive, the functions themselves appear to be the same.

The most commonly acknowledged non-aspectual function of the progressive is the future time reference. In fact, that is the only non-aspectual use of the progressive that Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 171) distinguish. Particularly the present progressive is often used to refer to events that are about to happen in the near future:

- (a) I’m **phoning** her tonight.

In addition, the past progressive can be used to refer to future in the past (Quirk et al. 1985, 210):

- (b) They **were getting** married the following spring.

With the modal auxiliary *will* or *shall* the progressive may imply that something is expected to happen in the normal course of events, ‘as a matter of course’ (Mindt 2000, 250: Quirk et al. 1985, 210):

- (c) Thousands of holidaymakers **will be** happily **paying** that.
- (d) I’ll **be seeing** you next week.

Mindt (2000, 250) also distinguishes the meaning of volition/intention, which implies somebody’s willingness or plan to do something (e). However, as we can see from the sentence (f), the meaning of volition/intention seems to be very close to that of future reference:

- (e) I’m **taking** on that job, Nan.
- (f) We **are leaving** here in half an hour.

Politeness is probably the second best-known non-aspectual function of the progressive. Mindt (2000, 250) explains that the progressive is often used to make a statement less direct or harsh, or to soften its effect on the addressee.

(g) I **was wondering** if it could, perhaps, be stolen.

Quirk et al. (1985, 210) add that especially when used with the ‘attitudinal past tense’, the progressive helps avoid impoliteness and make a request less direct, but also the present progressive has the same function:

(h) I **was wondering** if you could help me.

(i) I’**m hoping** to borrow some money.

In addition, Mindt (2000, 250) explains that the progressive can also express an emotional involvement, such as annoyance:

(j) You’**re** always **having** the best things.

It can be argued, though, that using the adverb *always* actually bears the meaning of annoyance, not the mere progressive.

Finally, Mindt (2000, 250) is of the opinion that there are two more non-aspectual functions of the progressive, namely that of describing something that is required in a certain situation (k), and that of highlighting, i.e. drawing attention to or stressing something that is of importance (l):

(k) If you **are doing** business as usual, you are probably doing it wrong.

(l) “Madam”, I said, pointing out my crying client, “**are you telling** the court that this poor little physical wreck attacked you in the way you have described?”

It could be argued that neither of these two meanings is very clear. They could be understood as aspectual uses of the progressive, example (k) having the meaning of incompleteness and duration and (l) that of temporariness.

All in all, it must be admitted that not all of the non-aspectual or even aspectual functions are evident from a single sentence, without knowing the larger context, the situation. Often it seems that the progressive conveys both aspectual and non-aspectual meanings. Furthermore, also the

semantics of the verb itself has an effect on the way it can be interpreted in the progressive, or whether it actually can be used in the progressive. Several linguists are of the opinion that certain verbs that denote a state are incompatible with the progressive in the first place. Thus, the next section will shed some light on different situation and verb types, taking into spotlight the focus of this study, namely verbs that denote a state.

2.3 States and events

Smith (1983, 479-482) is of the opinion that the choice between the progressive and nonprogressive (i.e. simple) form depends on the nature of a particular situation that is being referred to. Linguists distinguish two basic situation types, namely events and states. Basically, the difference between events and states is that events involve change, while states do not (Smith 1983, 481; Huddleston & Pullum 2002, 119). Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 119) note that “states exist or obtain, while occurrences happen, take place”. They also point out that states do not have internal structure or distinguishable phases, but they “are the same throughout their duration”. Smith (1983, 480-483) further explains that events include the beginning and the endpoint of the situation, and everything that goes on in between the endpoints, whereas states exclude beginnings and endings because those naturally involve change.

Following the division of situations into states and events, there are also attempts to group individual verbs into semantic groups, dividing between verbs that denote a state or have a stative meaning, and verbs that have a nonstative/dynamic meaning. What interests us more here, is the group of so-called stative verbs. The next two sections deal with stative verbs and their use in the progressive.

2.3.1 Stative verbs

Quirk et al. (1985, 200-201) divide stative verb meanings into ‘qualities’, which are “relatively permanent and inalienable properties of the subject referent”, (*Mary is Canadian*), and ‘states’,

which are “less permanent situation types” (*Mary is tired*) (Quirk et al. 1985, 200). From the category of ‘states’ Quirk et al. (1985, 202-203) distinguish the following semantic classes of verbs:

- (a) intellectual states (*e.g. know, believe, think*),
- (b) emotional/attitudinal states (*e.g. intend, want, like*),
- (c) states of perception (*e.g. see, hear, feel*), or
- (d) states of bodily sensation (*e.g. hurt, ache, tickle*).

They add that there is also a class of verbs that are “intermediate between the stative and dynamic categories”, namely verbs that express ‘stance’ (*e.g. live, stand, sit*) (1985, 205).

Huddleston and Pullum, on the other hand, are of the opinion that in reality, it is impossible to draw a sharp line between states and occurrences (2002, 168). Consequently, dividing verbs into stative and dynamic ones is difficult. Therefore, Huddleston and Pullum state that many verbs “fall around the boundary between states and occurrences” (2002, 169), and identify four classes of verbs that cannot be classified as stative or dynamic (2002, 169-171):

- (a) verbs of cognition, emotion, and attitude (*believe, think, like*),
- (b) verbs of perception and sensation (*see, hear, feel*),
- (c) verbs of hurting (*ache, hurt*), and
- (d) verbs of stance (*stand, lie, sit*).

As one can see, the verb classes are basically the same than those of Quirk et al., with the difference that Quirk et al. label all except verbs of stance as denoting a state and not event, whereas Huddleston emphasizes the impossibility of putting them into either category.

Biber et al. (1999) also avoid labelling verbs as stative or dynamic. They begin by dividing all single-word lexical verbs into seven semantic domains, those being “activity verbs, communication verbs, mental verbs, causative verbs, verbs of simple occurrence, verbs of existence or relationship, and aspectual verbs” (Biber, Johanson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan 1999, 360). As can be seen from the category of mental verbs below (Biber et al. 1999, 362), it consists of the same sub-groups

which Quirk et al. include in their definition of stative verbs, and which Huddleston considers as verbs that are in between stative and dynamic meaning.

- (a) cognitive meanings (e.g. *think, know*),
- (b) emotional meanings (e.g. *love, want*),
- (c) verbs of perception (e.g. *see, taste*),
- (d) receipt of communication (e.g. *read, hear*).

Biber et al. explain that some mental verbs describe relatively dynamic cognitive activities (such as verbs *discover*, and *calculate*), but other mental verbs are more stative, describing cognitive states (e.g. verbs *know, remember*, and *understand*) or emotional states (e.g. *hate, love*, and *like*) (1999, 363).

Despite the fact that defining whether a verb denotes a state or an event is by no means simple or straightforward, the grammarians however seem to regard the progressive aspect as not a purely grammatical, but as a lexical-grammatical construction. This means that the progressive is not only a construction or form used with any single verb, but that the acceptability of the progressive with a given verb is to some extent dependable on the meaning of the verb. In the next section we will take a look at what grammarians say about whether it is possible to use the progressive with a verb denoting a state.

2.3.2 The progressive with stative verbs

First of all, it must be noted that when referring to the use of the progressive with stative verbs, grammarians tend to focus on the aspectual use of the progressive, not saying much about the possible non-aspectual use of the progressive with stative verbs. Therefore, this section only handles the possibilities of using the aspectual progressive (i.e. the progressive aspect) with verbs that denote a state.

Traditionally, stative verbs are considered incompatible with the progressive aspect, which Comrie explains in the following way (1976, 35-36):

Verbs tend to divide into two disjoint (nonoverlapping) classes, those that can appear in the progressive forms and those that cannot. Naturally, then, stative verbs do not have progressive forms, since this would involve an internal contradiction between the stativity of the verb and the nonstativity essential to the progressive.

However, Comrie also notes that there are verbs that can be treated as statives or nonstatives depending on the meaning that the verb has in a given sentence. An example of such a verb is the verb *be*, which is usually stative, as in *Fred is silly*, but has a different meaning and is seen as nonstative in *Fred is being silly* (1976, 36).

Also Quirk et al. and Leech and Svartvik (2002, 75) are of the view that the progressive is often unacceptable with stative verbs, partly because “stative verb meanings are inimical to the idea that some phenomenon is in progress” (Quirk et al. 1985, 198). Quirk et al. point out that when a state verb is combined with the progressive, the interpretation of the verb needs to be changed, and it usually means reclassifying the verb as dynamic, “e.g. as having a meaning of process or agentivity” (1985, 201-202). Furthermore, Leech and Svartvik explain that in special cases a verb of state can refer to an “active form of behaviour” and can therefore be said to have changed into an activity verb (2002, 77).

Smith (1983, 479-482), on the other hand, emphasizes the possibility of the speaker to choose non-standard perspectives for situations, and says that a state can be presented as an event by using the progressive, such as in *I'm hating this walk*. She also adds that although the previous example may be called a non-standard sentence, it is, however, perfectly grammatical (1983, 483). According to Smith (1983, 497-498) progressive statives can present the situation as having limited duration (a), involve variability in the situation, object position, speaker position, or speaker attitude (b), or present a mental state as an event (c):

(a) The river **is smelling** particularly bad today

(b) I'm actually **liking** this play.

(c) I **am remembering** now.

Biber et al. (1999, 471), who compiled *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* on the basis of corpus research, also argue that it is possible to use the progressive with verbs that refer to a state, adding that e.g. verbs *hope*, *think*, and *wonder* actually occur in the progressive frequently, whereas other stative verbs, such as *believe*, *like*, *want*, and *know*, rarely take the progressive. Used with a stative verb the progressive most commonly expresses that the state is temporary, existing only for a period of time:

(d) Chris **is living** there now.

Biber et al. (1999, 473) further explain that there are two features that characterize verbs that commonly occur with the progressive: First of all, they “typically take a human subject as agent, actively controlling the action (or state) expressed by the verb”, whereas verbs that rarely take the progressive aspect either have no human subject at all or “take a human subject as experiencer, undergoing but not controlling the action or state expressed by the verb”. The second feature of verbs that can take the progressive is that the situation the verb describes can be prolonged, i.e. the verbs can be regarded as reporting a process (1999, 473-474). In other words, as regards verbs of cognition, emotion, or attitude, it is possible to use the progressive aspect if the sentence involves an active agent controlling the situation, and/or if the situation can be understood as a process.

As for verbs of emotion, cognition, and attitude, Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 170) are of the opinion that they “do not completely exclude the progressive, [...] though they differ with respect to how easily they take it.” They suggest that the progressive adds a dynamic factor to a stative meaning of the verb, and list different functions of the progressive with statives. According to them (2002, 170) the progressive may suggest limited duration (e), yield an activity reading (f), add the feature of duration (g), or add an element of tentativeness or politeness (h):

- (e) I’**m thinking** we ought to accept.
- (f) They’**re loving** every minute of it.
- (g) You’**re forgetting** you said you’d help.
- (h) I’**m hoping** you can help me.

As regards the last example, many linguists would label it as a case of non-aspectual/additional meanings of the progressive. Nevertheless, in these situations a verb that typically expresses a state does take the progressive aspect, which changes the interpretation of the situation from stative to dynamic. As we can see, the meanings or functions that the progressive has with stative verbs are basically the same as with non-stative/dynamic verbs.

To sum up, according to the grammarians and linguists referred to here, the progressive may be used to present a state as an event, such as presenting the situation as a process or as having duration (i.e. continuousness) or limited duration (i.e. temporariness), or in order to make a sentence more polite. One might, however, criticise grammarians on aiming to explain each deviating situation in a different way to support their original explanation, thus making the definition of the progressive complicated and “patched”. Furthermore, they explain quite similar examples in different ways: According to Huddleston and Pullum, in (f) *They’re loving every minute of it* the progressive adds an activity reading, i.e. there is an active agent, whereas Smith explains that in (b) *I’m actually liking this play* the progressive implies ‘variability’. A learner of English as a foreign language would certainly benefit from a more coherent and simple definition. Therefore, I have chosen to introduce here both Williams’ (2002) and Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger’s (1982) views of the progressive, since they both differ quite significantly from other views.

2.4 Susceptibility to change –theory

Williams (2002) argues that the difference between the simple and the progressive construction could be described in terms of what he calls ‘susceptibility to change’. He explains that the progressive form is chosen whenever the speaker thinks that “the situation referred to in the verb may be susceptible to change in some way” (2002, 87). The simple form is used when the situation is not perceived susceptible to change (2002, 213). On the other hand, Williams explains that using the simple form does not mean that the situation is seen more permanent, but the simple form

implies that the speaker is not interested in emphasizing that the situation is susceptible to change (2002, 87). Williams provides the following examples to clarify this:

- (a) I work nightshifts now, but I can't do that for long.
- (b) I'm **working** nightshifts now, but I can't do that for long.

He explains that in both sentences the situation of working nightshifts is seen as temporary, but the difference between the sentences is that the simple form refers to a state that holds at the present, while the progressive refers to a situation in progress and therefore susceptible to change. In other words it is the speaker's way of viewing the situation that counts. Williams also adds that there is a connection between the idea of susceptibility to change and incompleteness. He clarifies this by explaining that if a situation is complete, there is no place for change.

As regards stative verbs, Williams (2002, 213-214) is of the opinion that with some stative verbs the progressive does not imply that the situation is expected to change. He states that with verbs of stance the progressive does not carry the meaning that there is susceptibility to change.

- (c) That empty crisp packet **has been lying** there since yesterday.
- (d) Oil **has been lying** under that sea-bed for millions of years.
- (e) The book's still **sitting** on the self.

He further explains that although we know from experience that at least situations in (c) and (e) typically do change at some point, the progressive does not imply susceptibility to change in these sentences. Instead, the progressive carries the meaning of 'continuousness' (2002, 220-221). On the other hand, Williams is of the opinion that if some other type of stative verb is used in the progressive it no longer refers to a state but to a process or activity (2002, 167). He gives the following examples:

- (f) I'm **understanding** more about physics every day.
- (g) You're **being** silly.

However, Williams does not really explain if these types of sentences include the meaning of susceptibility to change. Williams does admit that the progressive in general also carries other

meanings, such as the situation being ‘in progress’, and ‘imperfective’. However, he is of the opinion that the progressive does not always imply ‘duration’, nor ‘temporariness’ of the situation, but that progressive sentences can refer to permanent situations as well (2002, 214-220).

2.5 A metaphysical view of the progressive

Although most linguists seem to agree on dividing verbs into dynamic and stative ones depending on whether they denote an activity or a state, there are differing approaches. One of them is that of Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger’s (1982, 79-80), who do not want to draw a distinction between states and activities, nor stative and dynamic verbs, in the first place. They claim that the division to stative and active verbs is taken uncritically by many linguists only because it is such a familiar way of viewing the progressive. Furthermore, they dismiss nearly all the definitions of the progressive and its functions, aiming to explain all uses of the progressive from one point of view, namely that of the speaker’s judgement of the structural and phenomenal properties of the situation, or, in other words, ‘knowledge’ and ‘evidence’ (1982, 84-86).

Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982, 85-86) clarify this definition by explaining that when the speaker chooses to use the progressive form, he is commenting the situation on the basis of what he sees (i.e. evidence), but when he uses the simple form he is actually making a claim that is not based on mere observation, but on knowledge. They give the following example (1982, 85-86): if two people see a third, unknown person, give up his seat on the subway, they might either simply comment on the person’s behaviour by saying *He is being polite*, or make judgement on the person’s character beyond the evidence by saying *He is polite*. If the person is well known to the speakers as an impolite person, they would use the progressive *He is being polite* to express that the person is acting against his character, i.e. pretending. The simple *He is polite* would only be logical if the speakers knew the third person to be a polite one, and they would express their knowledge of his character. Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982, 86) also add that the progressive is a weaker statement than the nonprogressive, because it describes the situation as such, whereas the

nonprogressive makes a claim beyond observation to the character of the situation (i.e. how it is known to be or should be).

The terms ‘knowledge’ and ‘evidence’ can also be referred to as ‘structural’ and ‘phenomenal’ properties of a situation. Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982, 81) explain that the simple form is used to describe the structural properties of a situation, i.e. the “structure of the world” (a), whereas the progressive form describes the phenomenal properties of a situation, i.e. the speaker’s observations of a situation (b):

(a) The engine doesn’t smoke anymore.

(b) The engine **isn’t smoking** anymore.

Unlike most linguists, Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982, 84) see that the progressive cannot be explained in terms of incompleteness, temporariness, or duration. They explain that the typical account on the progressive is that example (c) is appropriate if the situation is permanent, whereas the progressive form in (d) would suggest that the situation is temporary.

(c) The statue of Tom Paine stands at the corner of Kirkland and College.

(d) The statue of Tom Paine **is standing** at the corner of Kirkland and College.

However, with examples (e) and (f) they show that this is not always the case:

(e) The statue of Tom Paine now stands at the corner of Kirkland and College, but everybody expects the new Administration to move it.

(f) The statue of Tom Paine **is standing** at the corner of Kirkland and College, and nobody thinks the deadlocked City Council will ever find a proper place for it.

In example (e) the first part of the sentence could be understood to imply that the situation is permanent, but the second part implies an imminent change. In (f) it is the other way round: the progressive implies temporariness, but the end of the sentence implies that the situation will not change. Therefore, they explain, the meaning of the progressive (f) is not temporariness but the speaker’s observation of the current situation, i.e. the phenomenal property of the situation, as

opposed to the nonprogressive form (e) which is used to imply that the location of the statue is “the properly designated one” and so describes the structural property of the situation.

To sum up, the metaphysical view of the progressive is quite different from the traditional definitions. It leaves aside both situation types and verb types, and focuses on the speaker’s judgement on the situation. It could be argued that Woisetschlaeger and Goldsmith’s view of the progressive has some characteristics in common with that of Smith’s (1983), who emphasizes the speaker’s possibility to choose a perspective for a situation and present a state as an event by using the progressive. However, Smith (1983, 479-482) is of the opinion that using the progressive to describe a state as an event is a ‘non-standard’ perspective, whereas Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger consider all speaker perspectives equally correct. They do not differentiate situations as such (to states and events, or permanent and temporary situations), but highlights the speaker’s point of view or judgement of the situation, i.e. whether the speaker is purely observing a current situation as such (i.e. its phenomenal properties), or commenting on how the situation should be (i.e. its structural properties).

Unfortunately, Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger do not provide more example sentences that have a stative verb. However, their definition could be applied to example sentences of other linguists, for instance those of Huddleston’s in the previous chapter. One could argue that in *I’m hoping you could help me* and *I’m thinking we ought to accept* the speaker is observing the properties of the situation, i.e. that at the moment of the utterance he/she is *thinking* or *hoping* that something would happen or be done. It is interesting that both sentences would be grammatically correct and have the same meaning with the simple form, *I think we ought to accept* and *I hope you can help me*. However, there is that little difference when using the simple form, namely it makes the speaker somehow more certain or determined about his/her opinion. Indeed, Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger say that the nonprogressive is a stronger statement than the progressive, since it makes a claim that is based on knowledge (1982, 86), not on mere observation.

It would be interesting to take a look at all the sentences provided by different grammarians from Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's perspective, but since the aim of this study is to get up-to-date material for analysis, that will not be done here. After dealing with these theoretical implications, let us next take a look at what previous empirical research has to say about the use of the progressive with verbs of emotion and cognition. When doing so, it will be worthwhile to consider the results in the light of different theories.

3 Previous studies

The increasing use of the progressive with verbs that typically express state was discovered long before the appearance of the first computer corpora (Smith 2002, 317). However, despite the availability of computerized corpora, the list of studies exploring the use of the progressive with stative verbs is by no means extensive, and furthermore, many studies tend to focus on the progressive in general instead of investigating individual verbs. However, even small-scale studies may produce interesting instances of language use for analysis.

There are several studies from recent years that support the view that the use of the progressive with stative verbs is increasing (Mair 2006, Mair and Hundt 1995). According to the results of Smith's (2002, 322) study, there is a 41 percent overall increase in the use of mental verbs in the progressive between years 1961 and 1991 in British English. Furthermore, some linguists also suggest that the development has not ended, but the use of the progressive is still changing at present day (Quirk et al. 1985, 202; Mair 2006, 93-94).

As regards the verbs included in this study, Das' (2010) study is rather interesting. He has studied verbs of cognition and emotion in the progressive using the spoken and written sub-sections of The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and including in his corpus analysis altogether twenty stative verbs. According to the results, verbs of emotion or cognition occur in the progressive much more frequently than other stative verbs (2010, 6). His results also show that the progressives of verbs of emotion and cognition are much more common in the spoken sub-corpus than in other genres of COCA (2010, 9). In addition, Mair (2006, 88-89) has detected a readiness to use the progressive with verbs such as *want* or *understand*, and according to Jørgensen's (1991) study the verbs *hate*, *hope*, *know*, *think*, *like*, *dislike*, and *love* are also used in the progressive.

As for the study at hand, there are two studies that are worth introducing more thoroughly since they provide possibilities for comparison. The first of them is Jørgensen's qualitative but not very comprehensive study on the use of the progressive with individual cognitive and emotional verbs, and the other is Römer's vast corpus-driven study of a hundred most common verbs in the progressive.

3.1 Jørgensen's study on the progressive with verbs of cognition and emotion

One of the few studies that focus on individual stative verbs, and include several verbs of emotion, was conducted by Jørgensen (1991). In his study Jørgensen takes a look at the use of several verbs that he calls 'non-conclusive' in the progressive aspect in literature of the late twentieth century. According to him, the cognitive or emotional verbs *hate*, *hope*, *know*, *think*, *like*, *dislike*, and *love* are actually used in the progressive so often "that it must seem far-fetched, indeed impossible, to describe them as 'non-progressive'" (1991, 181). Although the scale of his study is rather small, it gives examples of actual cases where cognitive and emotional verbs are used in the progressive.

According to Jørgensen, the verbs under investigation can be used in the progressive without any major changes in the meaning of the verb, and adds that "it is the possible special shade of meaning of the individual verb in its particular context that determines its structural possibilities with regard to the use or non-use of the progressive" (1991, 173). Jørgensen (1991, 173-176) explains that with stative verbs, the progressive can indicate that there is a process of gradual change going on in the intensity of the feeling (a), or the progressive may emphasize the limited duration of the situation, as in (b) and (c):

(a) [...] although she **was liking** it less and less

(b) They **were liking** that kind of thing just then.

(c) Ptolemy **was hating** every moment of it.

Jørgensen (174, 176-177) adds that in (c) the progressive also expresses the dynamicity of the situation, giving the verb an emphatic effect, as also in (d) and (e):

(d) I'm **disliking** all this thoroughly.

(e) She **was loving** every minute of it.

In addition, Jørgensen also found instances of cognitive verbs *hope*, *remember*, *understand*, *think*, and *know* in the progressive. He explains that the verb *hope* in the progressive may have a dynamic of a durative character (1991, 174):

(f) You **will be hoping** there are no ghosts in the house.

The next example is of particular interest, because here Jørgensen's explanation of the meaning of the progressive agrees with Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's metaphysical view. Jørgensen suggests that the progressive form is used here when the speaker is describing the other person's (i.e. Bulic's) reflections:

(g) He sincerely hoped that that would not happen. Bulic **was hoping** so too.

Jørgensen provides only one instance of the verb *know* in the progressive. His analysis of it again coincides with that of Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's.

(h) He **was not knowing** me again.

He explains that the progressive form implies that the person ('he') is pretending, because it is clear from the context presented earlier in the novel that 'he' does actually know 'her'.

As regards the verb *think*, Jørgensen (1991, 181) points out that it has two different meanings, namely 'to believe' and 'to ponder, reflect', and it is possibly the latter one that more easily appears in the progressive, such as in (i):

(i) "Clement is in favour of it," offered Mansell. –"Possibly," said Silas ironically. "But I **am thinking** that it is not Clement who would have to bear the brunt of that capital outlay you mentioned."

Jørgensen (1991, 177-179) is of the opinion that verbs that refer to mental activity can be viewed as a gradual process going on for a limited period of time. According to him, this applies to the verbs *understand* and *remember*, as well:

(j) Bradley, wait, please do stop. I'm **not understanding** you.

(k) Hiram smiled...He **was remembering** the days at the copy-desk

Although Jørgensen does not agree with the traditional definitions of the progressive, he is not disproving them on the basis of his findings. Rather, he seems to be trying to form a category of stative verbs within the traditional theory of the progressive, explaining that with stative verbs the progressive has the meaning ‘dynamicity of situation’ or ‘intensity of feeling’, or even ‘limited duration’, which is actually the same meaning that the progressive is seen to have with dynamic verbs. However, in some instances Jørgensen appears to share Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger’s view as regards the progressive. Analysing all Jørgensen’s cases through the lens of Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982) shows that it is possible to apply their view of phenomenal properties/evidence to the above-mentioned examples from Jørgensen’s study.

All in all, Jørgensen’s study suggests that it is possible to use the progressive with verbs of cognition or emotion in the same way as with dynamic verbs. However, as Jørgensen himself admits, the material of his study is “of rather modest proportions” (1991, 181-182), and as regards frequency figures, it does not give much information. This makes it difficult to compare the results of this study with those of other studies. Therefore, a more comprehensive study is needed for the purpose of making any generalizations on the use of the progressive with verbs of emotion.

3.2 Römer’s study on individual verbs in the progressive

As a response to the lack of quantitative studies regarding the progressive with individual verbs, Römer (2005) has conducted a vast corpus-driven study in which she explores the occurrence of hundred most frequently used English verbs in the progressive in spoken native-speaker British English, using as a source of data two large British corpora. These corpora are the spoken part of the British National Corpus from 1995, which consists of over 10 million words, and the spoken part of the Bank of English, a 20-million-word collection of spontaneous speech also from the early 1990s.

Among the verbs that Römer's study includes are all the verbs that the study at hand focuses on, excluding the verb *love*. Unfortunately, Römer does not report the normalized frequencies of the progressives, but to make comparison between two corpora of different sizes possible, they were counted by the author of this study. This was done by dividing the number of tokens by the number 30, since the two spoken British corpora used in Römer's study contain altogether 30 million words.

3.2.1 Frequencies of progressive forms

In her study Römer explores the contexts of progressive forms rather exhaustively, including into the analysis seven different context features, such as negation, subjects and tense form. These three context features are presented in chapter 5 when the results of the study at hand are compared to those of Römer's study.

As regards individual verbs in the progressive, Römer's study includes three verbs of emotion, namely *like*, *need*, and *want*. The distribution of the progressive form tokens of each individual verb in Römer's data (BNC and BoE altogether) shows that there is quite some variation in the occurrence of individual emotional verbs in the progressive (2005, 114-115). As can be seen from Table 1, the verb *want* appears in the data 111 times, its normalized frequency thus being 3.70. There are 52 tokens of the verb *agree*, the normalized frequency being 1.73. *Need* is a bit less common in the progressive, occurring in the data 1.4 times per million words. There are 37 tokens of *forget*, with a normalized frequency of 1.23. The verb *remember* appears in the data 30 times, that is, once per million words.

As regards *understand*, *like*, and *believe*, they appear in the data very rarely, their normalized frequencies being from 0.20 to 0.30 per million words. Finally, there is only one instance of the verb *know* in the progressive, its normalized frequency being next to zero.

Table 1. The frequencies and normalized frequencies of progressive forms in Römer's study.

| VERB | NUMBER OF TOKENS | PM |
|-------------------|------------------|------|
| <i>want</i> | 111 | 3.70 |
| <i>agree</i> | 52 | 1.73 |
| <i>need</i> | 42 | 1.40 |
| <i>forget</i> | 37 | 1.23 |
| <i>remember</i> | 30 | 1.00 |
| <i>understand</i> | 9 | 0.30 |
| <i>like</i> | 7 | 0.23 |
| <i>believe</i> | 6 | 0.20 |
| <i>know</i> | 1 | 0.03 |

3.2.2 Functions of the progressive in general

As far as functions of the progressive are concerned, Römer's way of approaching the issue is quite distinctive from grammars and previous studies, although after all she uses many terms that are familiar from the grammars reviewed in chapter 2 of this study. She does not refer to aspectual and non-aspectual functions, but makes division between 'basic' and 'additional' functions of the progressive. However, it appears that the basic functions do in fact express aspectual meanings and the additional functions are largely similar with the non-aspectual functions of other linguists.

On the basis of her analysis Römer (2005, 86) claims that the progressive has two basic functions, namely continuousness and repeatedness. She defines continuousness as "extending over a certain time span without interruption". It seems clear that continuousness is the same basic function of the progressive which other linguists explain with words 'an event in progress' or 'continuing over a period of time'. Repeatedness refers to "an action occurring more than once" (2005, 87-89). One could argue that this function is the same that Mindt (2000, 249) calls 'habit/iteration' function. Römer further explains that these two features, or the absence of them, form four basic functions of the progressive, and gives examples from the data to illustrate the four functions (2005, 90-91). Thus, the progressive may express that an event is:

(a) continuous and repeated (e.g. *He **was spending** nearly forty hours a week on*

governors' business you know),

(b) continuous and non-repeated (e.g. *We're currently **running** about fifteen minutes late*),

(c) non-continuous and repeated (e.g. *We're not giving out mortgages at the moment I'm sorry*), or

(d) non-continuous and non-repeated (e.g. *I'm just ringing up to say congratulations to Birmingham City on making the final at Wembley at last*).

In addition, Römer distinguishes seven additional functions that the progressive can express (2005, 95-106), namely

(a) general validity (e.g. *But in general the people who are doing some of those things, a lot of it's probably escapism*),

(b) politeness or softening (e.g. *So I was just wondering how you'd be paid*),

(c) emphasis or attitude (e.g. *You're always buying things and then wanting Oh! to buy something better!*),

(d) shock or disbelief (e.g. *What? Am I hearing right FX dear*),

(e) gradual change and development (e.g. *Oh dear I'm forgetting my engineering terms*),

(f) old and new habits (e.g. *I'm always checking dates when bills go to be paid*),

(g) framing (e.g. *So anyway yesterday afternoon I was checking through it when the phone went again*).

Römer explains that (a) 'general validity' means that something is valid not only at the time being but in the future as well, and they refer to "repeatedly occurring, general actions" (2005, 96). She adds that these types of sentences often have the noun *people* as a subject, and that these sentences also often include a time adverbial such as *always*. One of the verbs that frequently occur in this function is the verb *want*, but other verbs of emotion or cognition are not mentioned in this context (2005, 97). However, one could argue that the expressions *in general* and *always* actually cause the interpretation of the progressive as 'general validity', and the same sentence could simply be labelled as 'continuous and repeated' action.

The function (b) 'politeness or softening' is a function used by many other linguistics as well. Römer states that often the progressive makes the sentence less direct and therefore more polite to

the addressee (2005, 97). According to Römer (2005, 98) ‘politeness or softening’ is not a function common to all progressives, but only the progressives of certain verbs have this function. Among these verbs are the cognitive verbs *forget*, and *want*. Römer also adds that adverbials *just*, *whether*, *if*, and *actually* are often part of a progressive construction that has a softening function.

The functions (c) ‘emphasis or attitude’ and (d) ‘shock or disbelief’ cover about ten percent of the progressive forms (2005, 99). Römer explains that it is common to use the progressive to express your (mostly negative) attitude to something, or convey surprise or doubt about something. Not surprisingly, the adverb *always* very often occurs in this type of constructions, especially when the speaker wants to express his/her annoyance about something that another person keeps doing. As Römer (2005, 100) points out, the collocation of a progressive and the adverb *always* expressing attitude or emphasis is also studied by for example Jespersen (1931, 526). Among the verbs that most often carry the function of emphasis or attitude is for example the verb *want*, whereas *agree* is one of the progressives that often express shock or disbelief.

According to Römer (2005, 100-101), some progressive constructions convey that there is a (e) ‘gradual change and development’ going on in the situation. She adds that these are not sudden changes but gradual developments, and points out that this function is very much lexically determined since only particular verbs frequently have this function. Among those verbs is the verb *forget*, and the time adverbials that typically occur with this function are *now* and *just*.

One of the less common functions of the progressive is (f) ‘old and new habits’, occurring in past progressive and present progressive forms respectively (2005, 103). As regards adverbials, Römer (2005, 103) states that it is clear that *when* appears with the old habit function and *now* with the new habit function, but it is sometimes difficult to tell which time span sentences with *always* have. Again, the number of verbs having the function of ‘new and old habits’ is very limited, and none of the verbs this study investigates is among those verbs.

The last, and also a rather infrequent function of the progressive in Römer’s data is (g) ‘framing’, which she explains as a situation that is in progress when something else happens (2005,

104). The adverbs that often appear with this function are *when* and *while*. As opposed to the other additional functions that she found, there is greater variety of verbs that can express the function of framing. None of the 42 verbs that have this function appears in this function more than five times. In other words this function is not so much lexically determined as it is a general (although rather infrequent) function of the progressive (2005, 105). Therefore, Römer does not provide any list of verbs that can have this function. Römer also points out that this result is different from Jespersen's (1931, 524) view that framing is the most important function of the progressive (2005, 105).

3.2.3 Functions of the progressive with verbs of emotion and cognition

As regards verbs of emotion or cognition, Römer's results show (2005, 157-161) that their progressive forms convey two meanings, namely that the situation is either, 'continuous and repeated', or 'continuous and non-repeated'. Mainly the progressive forms of these verbs express 'continuous and non-repeated' action. The progressive forms of *believe* and *know* refer to only continuous and non-repeated situations (100% of cases), whereas *want* is used in this meaning in 82.88% of cases. *Agree* refers to continuous and non-repeated situations in 76.92% of cases, and *remember* in 73.33% of cases. The function of the progressive with verbs *understand*, *like* and *need* are rather similar, they express continuous and non-repeated action in 66.67%, 62.50% and 64.29% of cases respectively. *Forget* was the only verb that more often expressed continuous and repeated action (54.05%) than continuous and non-repeated action (45.95%).

In addition, Römer argues that verbs of emotion or cognition in the progressive have additional functions (2005, 161-164). The progressive forms of *like* and *forget* convey general validity (37.05% and 45.95% respectively), rather often politeness/softening (62.50% and 62.16%), and sometimes gradual change (12.5% and 18.92%). The progressive form of *need*, on the other hand, mainly expresses emphasis/shock (69.05%), but also general validity (35.71%), and politeness/softening (16.67%). With *want*, the progressive has the same functions with almost similar percentages, 74.77%, 30.63%, and 17.12% respectively. The progressives of *believe* express

general validity in 50.00% of cases and emphasis/shock in 16.67% of cases. *Understand* is quite often used in the progressive to express emphasis/shock (55.56%), but its progressives also often express general validity (33.33%) and even gradual change in 11.11% of cases. As regards the verbs *agree* and *remember*, their progressives do not very often have additional meanings. The progressive forms of *agree* sometimes express general validity (17.31%), politeness/softening (17.31%), or emphasis/shock (19.23%) and extremely rarely gradual change (1.92%). The progressives of *remember*, on the other hand, express general validity in 26.67% of cases and politeness/softening in 20.00% of cases.

To sum up, according to Römer the verbs of emotion and cognition are mainly used in the progressive to refer to continuous and repeated or continuous and non-repeated actions, but they also have what she calls additional functions. Römer points out that among all verbs that his study included, there are also many verbs that never or extremely rarely express continuous action, but only refer to non-continuous situations (2005, 158). In this light it seems that the verbs of emotion and cognition form quite a coherent group, or rather, that they seem to function in the same way as the majority of verbs in general.

It must be argued that Römer's classification to different functions seems rather thoroughly but also complicated, even more so as regards the teaching of English as a foreign language. In addition, there are not many extracts from the data to support this classification. It would be interesting to have more example sentences to support her analysis of the functions. They would help understand and apply, and perhaps criticise, her classification of the functions. Also, it would be interesting to try to apply other ways of classification to the example sentences. In order to get more information on the verbs of emotion and cognition in the progressive and to test different theories on their use in the progressive, an entirely new study is needed. The following section describes how it is done.

4 Material and methodology

This chapter introduces the corpus used in this study, as well as presents the methods of analysis that were used to gain and process the data. The objective is to ensure the reliability of this study, as well as make it possible for the reader of this study to regain the material that is used as the data of this study.

4.1 Corpus selection

Since Römer's study already answers a number of questions concerning the use of the progressive in spoken British English, my intention is to turn to the American equivalent, and compare the use of the progressive with stative verbs in spoken British English and spoken American English. In order to find answers to my research questions I intend to investigate the spoken sub-corpus of the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA).

The Corpus of Contemporary American English is the only large and balanced corpus of American English. The corpus was compiled by Mark Davies, professor of Corpus Linguistics at Brigham Young University. It is 425 million-word corpus, compiled during years 1990-2011 and including 20 million words from each year. The corpus is updated once or twice a year, the most recent texts having been added in March 2011. The corpus is evenly divided between five genres, namely spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts. The 90-million-word spoken part of the corpus consists of transcripts of unscripted conversation from more than 150 different radio and TV programs.

There are several reasons for choosing to concentrate on spoken language instead of written. First of all, as Quirk et al. (1985, 198) note, and Das' (2010, 9) corpus-based study proves, the

progressive aspect is used more frequently in conversation than in written language. Secondly, verbs of emotion are used more commonly in conversation and fiction than in news or academic prose (Biber et al. 1999, 365-366). Furthermore, spoken language tends to change more rapidly than written, so supposedly also the possible development in the use of the progressive is more detectable in spoken corpus. And finally, as Römer (2005, 38) points out, grammars tend to be “biased towards the written language”, although in everyday life spoken language is more common than written.

The verbs under investigation in this study are emotional verbs *like*, *need*, *want*, and *love*, and cognitive verbs *agree*, *believe*, *forget*, *know*, *remember*, and *understand*. The verbs are chosen on the basis that they first of all present cases of verbs that are commonly labelled as ‘stative verbs’, meaning that they are seen to denote a state, not an event nor a process. Secondly, the verbs included here are also included in previous studies. This makes comparison with earlier results possible.

4.2 Methods of analysis

4.2.1 Query strategies

When making the query all tense forms (including present, past, present perfect, and past perfect), as well as to-infinitives (*to be wanting*), modals (*might be wanting*), modal perfects (*might have been wanting*) and perfect infinitives (*to have been wanting*) were included. Both affirmative and negative sentences as well as both types of questions were taken into account. It was important to include sentences with either a pronoun or a noun as a subject. I also found it essential to include both full and contracted forms of the verb *be*, since the assumption is that spoken language often favours eluded forms. In addition, cases that have an adverb between the verb *be* and the *-ing* – form, such as in *She is always wanting more*, and *He is still loving you* were also taken into account. It is actually considered rather common to use the progressive with especially the adverb *always*

this construction having the sense of annoyance about what another person keeps doing (Römer 2005, 99). However, passive progressives were not included in this study.

Using *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* is relatively simple. The corpus is tagged, so using Part of Speech (POS) tags helped in filtering out irrelevant cases. POS tags also made the number of queries quite tolerable. In practice, seventeen (17) different search strings (Table 2) were needed with each verb to get all the possible progressive constructions.

Table 2. Search strings used in queries.

| SEARCH STRING | TYPE OF STATEMENT | EXAMPLE |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| [vb*] V-ing | affirmative statements | <i>is wanting ,be / been wanting</i> |
| [vb*] [xx*] V-ing | negated statements | <i>is not wanting</i> |
| [vb*] [p*] V-ing | questions with a pronoun subject | <i>is he wanting</i> |
| [vb*] [p*] [xx*] V-ing | negated questions with a pronoun subject | <i>is he not wanting</i> |
| [vb*] [xx*] [p*] V-ing | negated questions with a pronoun subject | <i>isn't he wanting</i> |
| [vb*] [nn*] V-ing | questions with a noun subject | <i>are people wanting</i> |
| [vb*] [nn*] [xx*] V-ing | negated questions with a noun subject | <i>are people not wanting</i> |
| [vb*] [xx] [nn*] V-ing | negated questions with a noun subject | <i>aren't people wanting</i> |
| [vb*] [r*] V-ing | affirmative statements including an adverb | <i>is always/still wanting</i> |
| [vb*] [r*] [xx*] V-ing | negated statements including an adverb | <i>is still not wanting</i> |
| [vb*][xx*][r*] V-ing | negated statements including an adverb | <i>isn't always wanting</i> |
| [vb*][p*][r*]V-ing | questions, pronoun subject, including an adverb | <i>is he always wanting</i> |
| [vb*][p*][r*][xx*]Ving | negated questions, pronoun subject, including an adverb | <i>is he still not wanting</i> |
| [vb*][xx*][p*][r*]V-ing | negated questions, pronoun subject, including an adverb | <i>isn't he always wanting</i> |
| [vb*][nn *][r*]V-ing | questions, noun subject, including an adverb | <i>is mother always wanting</i> |
| [vb*][nn*][r*][xx*]V-ing | negated questions, noun subject, including an adverb | <i>is mother still not wanting</i> |
| [vb*][xx*][nn*][r*]V-ing | negated questions, noun subject, including an adverb | <i>isn't mother always wanting</i> |

4.2.2 Data processing

Despite the fact that COCA is tagged, all tokens were also manually checked, and some cases were detected where the combination of the verb *be* and *-ing* participle turned out not to be a progressive construction, but the *-ing* form functioned as an adjective (a) and (b), a noun (c), or as a participle clause (d). The types of cases are illustrated by the following extracts from the results:

- (a) 1998 SPOK ABC 20/20 Bill and his wife were loving parents, loved everybody.
- (b) 2010 SPOK Fox Sunday Where are our civilian and diplomatic assets? They've really been wanting.
- (c) 2000 SPOK NBC Today Well, the most important thing, too, is knowing that your child has the answers they're asking for.
- (d) 2011 SPOK NPR TalkNation That 's Americans wanting news about the rest of the world that they can't find from American sources...

These and the like cases were sorted out and the raw frequencies were counted again manually. Checking all tokens manually proved necessary, since there were quite a many irrelevant cases (i.e. those that are not progressive constructions). The percentage of actual progressive constructions of all tokens given by the search engine varied between 20.4 and 96.7 percent depending on a verb in question.

The search engine also shows the normalized frequency (PM, per million words) of the search string. However, filtering out irrelevant cases made it necessary to calculate the normalized frequencies again. This was done by dividing the number of tokens with the number 90, since the spoken section of COCA consists of approximately 90 million words. This is esteemed to give a ratio that is precise enough. It could be argued that excluding one or two cases does not have a significant effect on the normalized frequency, but since the number of tokens was often fairly small, I judged it important to count the ratio again. The PM ratio is rather important since it makes it possible to compare the results of two studies that explore corpora of different sizes. For the study at hand it means that comparison with the results of Römer's study becomes possible.

Finally, the corpus also provides a possibility to view the search string in Keyword in Context (KWIC) format, which gives information of the source, in the case of spoken section the date and name of the radio or TV program. It is also possible to view the search string in expanded context,

where one can also see the names of the speaker(s). This helps understand the meanings of the sentences and thus makes it easier to analyse the functions that the progressive has with the verbs in question. What the results of the analysis were, we shall see next.

5 Discussion of results

This chapter introduces the results of the analysis starting from the occurrence and normalized frequencies of progressive forms in section 5.1, and then moving on to the contexts of the progressives in section 5.2. The context features included in this study are the tense forms and subjects of the progressives, as well as negation of the progressive sentences. Frequencies and the results as regards context features will be compared to those gained from earlier studies, especially to the results of Römer's study, whenever possible.

The functions of the progressive will be handled in section 5.3, and the results compared to earlier studies. However, as far as the functions of the progressive are concerned, Römer's method of analysis is not applied here, and thus comparison of percentages of different functions is not possible. There are two reasons for this. First of all, I did not endeavour to keep to a single theory or model, but my intention was to analyse the functions that the progressive has with the verbs in question from different points of view, testing different definitions and theories. Therefore the analysis was data-driven, in other words I aimed at deriving the meanings of the progressive by investigating the corpus data. However, each verb was then approached by bearing in mind what has been said about the functions of the progressive, to see whether the corpus evidence supports the different descriptions. Secondly, as can be seen from the results of my study, the evidence of this study did not totally support Römer's way of describing the functions of the progressive. Thus, each verb is handled separately in section 5.3, starting from the data and moving on to testing different definitions and functions of the progressive.

5.1 Frequencies

It can be said that in general, verbs of emotion and cognition are not very common in the progressive. After filtering out irrelevant cases there were altogether 1245 tokens of progressives left for the analysis. The numbers of tokens and the normalized frequencies are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Tokens and normalized frequencies of progressive forms.

| VERB | BEFORE FILTERING | AFTER FILTERING | PM |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|------|
| <i>want</i> | 430 | 387 | 4.30 |
| <i>love</i> | 273 | 160 | 1.78 |
| <i>remember</i> | 157 | 142 | 1.58 |
| <i>agree</i> | 133 | 127 | 1.41 |
| <i>forget</i> | 120 | 114 | 1.27 |
| <i>understand</i> | 223 | 107 | 1.19 |
| <i>believe</i> | 110 | 76 | 0.84 |
| <i>need</i> | 61 | 59 | 0.66 |
| <i>like</i> | 48 | 42 | 0.47 |
| <i>know</i> | 152 | 31 | 0.34 |
| Total | 1707 | 1245 | |

The most frequent verb in this study was the verb *want*. The search engine gave 430 tokens of *want* in the progressive, but after sorting out cases that were not progressive constructions after all there were 387 tokens left, the normalized frequency (PM) of *want* in the progressive thus being 4.30 tokens per million words. The frequency is clearly higher than in Römer's data, where it was 3.70.

The results showed 273 cases of *love* in the progressive, which was reduced to 160 after sorting out irrelevant cases: there were quite a many cases where *loving* was used as an adjective. Thus, the normalized frequency of *love* in the progressive is 1.78 tokens per million words. As Römer's study did not include the verb *love*, there is no possibility for comparison.

As regards the verb *remember*, after filtering out 15 cases there were 142 tokens of *remember* in the progressive, meaning that it is used in the progressive 1.58 times per million words. This is clearly more than in the British corpora, where the normalized frequency of *remember* in the progressive was 1.00. The verb *agree* was almost as common. There were 133 tokens of *agree* in the progressive, of which 127 were actual progressives. This gives a normalized frequency of 1.41,

which is a bit lower than the 1.73 in Römer's study. Compared to the approximately 26,000 cases of *agree* used in the simple form, all tense forms considered, the number of progressives is not very high.

The verb *forget* occurred in the progressive 114 times after 5 irrelevant cases were filtered out. Its normalized frequency is thus 1.27, which is nearly the same as the 1.23 in Römer's study. Almost as common was the verb *understand*, which was used in the progressive 107 times in the corpus. However, *understand* was more common in the American corpus than in the British ones, its normalized frequencies being 1.19 and 0.30 respectively. As regards the verb *believe*, it is a bit less common with 76 progressives. Altogether 34 cases were filtered out, nearly all of them being the saying *seeing is believing*. The normalized frequency of *believe* in the progressive is thus 0.84, which is rather low but clearly higher than the 0.20 reported by Römer.

The verbs *like* and *need* were used rather rarely in the progressive. There were altogether 48 cases of *like*, of which 6 cases were not progressive constructions. Thus, the remaining 42 tokens of *like* in the progressive give the normalized frequency of 0.47 times per million words. It is, nevertheless, higher than in Römer's study, according to which *like* is used in the progressive 0.26 times per million words. *Need*, on the other hand, was more common in the British corpus than in the American one. The COCA search engine gave 61 tokens of *need* in the -ing form, of which 59 were progressive constructions. This means that its normalized frequency, 0.66 per million words, is clearly lower than the 1.4 reported by Römer. There seems to be a difference between the British and American spoken English in the use of the verbs *like* and *need* in the progressive, *need* being more common in British English and *like* in American English.

Finally, the verb *know* proved to be very rarely used in the progressive. The search engine gave altogether 152 tokens of *know* in the -ing form, but the majority were cases where *knowing* was used as a noun. There were only 31 actual progressives, which gives the normalized frequency of 0.34. This is, however, higher than the 0.03 in Römer's data, which only included one single case of *know* in the progressive (2005, 114).

The normalized frequencies of the progressives in the two studies are presented in Figure 1. It shows that the progressives are more common in the American corpus than in the British ones, with the exception of the verbs *agree* and *need*, which are more common in BNC and BoE.

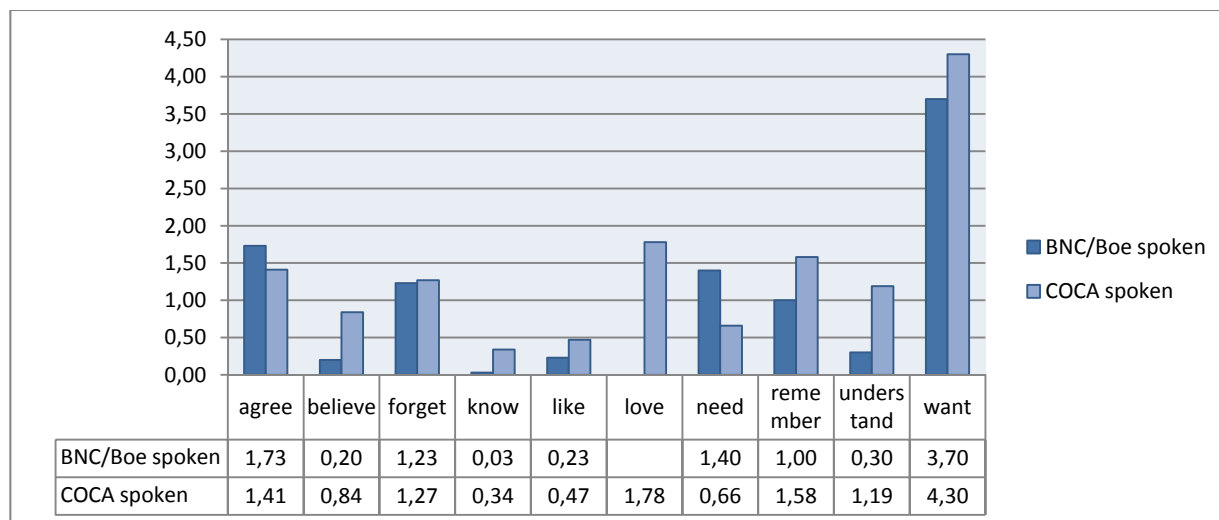


Figure 1. The normalized frequencies of progressive forms in COCA and BNC/BoE.

5.2 Contexts

This section presents the occurrence of progressive constructions according to three context features, namely tense form, subject type, and negation. The aim is also to compare them with the results of Römer's study whenever possible.

5.2.1 Tense forms

As regards tense forms of progressive constructions, it can be said that the present progressive is by far the most common tense form with all verbs included in the study. This is hardly a surprising result. In addition, the present and past perfect progressives appear to be very rare. However, there is quite some variation between individual verbs, as can be seen from Table 4.

The verb *like* seems to be the most restricted verb in the data as regards its use in different tense forms. It is only used in the present (85.7%) or past (14.3%) tense. Also the verbs *forget*, and *understand* appear in the present progressive in over 85% of cases, rarely in the past tense, and never in the present perfect or past perfect progressive. However, they do appear in other, more

complex constructions with auxiliaries (*will be forgetting*) or other verbs (*seem to be understanding*) or in *be going to* constructions.

Table 4. Tense forms of progressive constructions.

| | PresProg | | PastProg | | PresPerfProg | | PastPerfProg | | other | |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| <i>want</i> | 176 | 45.5% | 89 | 23.0% | 62 | 16.2% | 7 | 1.8% | 53 | 13.7% |
| <i>love</i> | 129 | 80.6% | 17 | 10.6% | 5 | 3.1% | 0 | 0.0% | 9 | 5.6% |
| <i>remember</i> | 105 | 73.9% | 26 | 18.3% | 4 | 2.8% | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 4.9% |
| <i>forget</i> | 102 | 89.5% | 5 | 4.4% | 1 | 0.9% | 0 | 0.0% | 6 | 5.3% |
| <i>agree</i> | 99 | 78.0% | 18 | 14.2% | 1 | 0.8% | 0 | 0.0% | 9 | 7.1% |
| <i>understand</i> | 93 | 86.9% | 5 | 4.7% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 9 | 8.4% |
| <i>believe</i> | 53 | 69.7% | 15 | 19.7% | 2 | 2.6% | 0 | 0.0% | 6 | 7.9% |
| <i>like</i> | 36 | 85.7% | 6 | 14.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| <i>need</i> | 32 | 54.2% | 4 | 6.8% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 23 | 39.0% |
| <i>know</i> | 14 | 45.2% | 4 | 12.9% | 10 | 32.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 3 | 9.7% |
| Total | 839 | 67.4% | 189 | 15.2% | 85 | 6.8% | 7 | 0.6% | 125 | 10.0% |

The verbs *agree* and *love* seem to behave quite similarly as regards tense forms. They are mostly used in the present tense (69.7% and 80.6% respectively), sometimes in the past tense (14.2% and 10.6%) and in other constructions (7.1% and 5.6%), and very rarely in the present perfective (0.8% and 3.1%). The verbs *believe* and *remember* are both used in the past tense a bit more often than that, in 18-19% of the cases, in other constructions in 7.9% and 4.9% respectively, rarely in the present perfect (2.6% and 2.8%), and never in the past perfective.

The progressives of *want*, *need*, and *know* are clearly rather different from the other verbs as regards tenses, since they are more evenly distributed into different tense forms. *Want* is actually the only verb in the data of this study that sometimes occurs in the past perfect progressive, and it is also rather frequently (16.2%) used in the present perfect progressive. Furthermore, it is quite often used in the past tense (23%) and also appears in more complex constructions (13.7%), whereas its frequency in the present tense (45.5%) is lower than that of many other verbs. *Need* is mainly used in either present tense (54.2%) or in more complex constructions (39.0%), rarely in the past tense (6.8%) and never in perfect tenses. *Know* is used in the present perfect progressive more often than

any other verb, in 32.3% of all cases. It is also used in the past tense (12.9%) and in other constructions (9.7%), and only 45.2% of the progressives of *know* are present progressives.

As regards differences between American and British English, Figure 2 presents the differences between the British and American corpora as regards the tense forms of verbs of cognition and emotion. The comparison was made rather easy by Römer who provides the tense form distributions of each individual verb in her data. I counted the averages of different tense forms in the two studies including the verbs that are relevant in this study, except the verb *love*, which was not included in Römer's study.

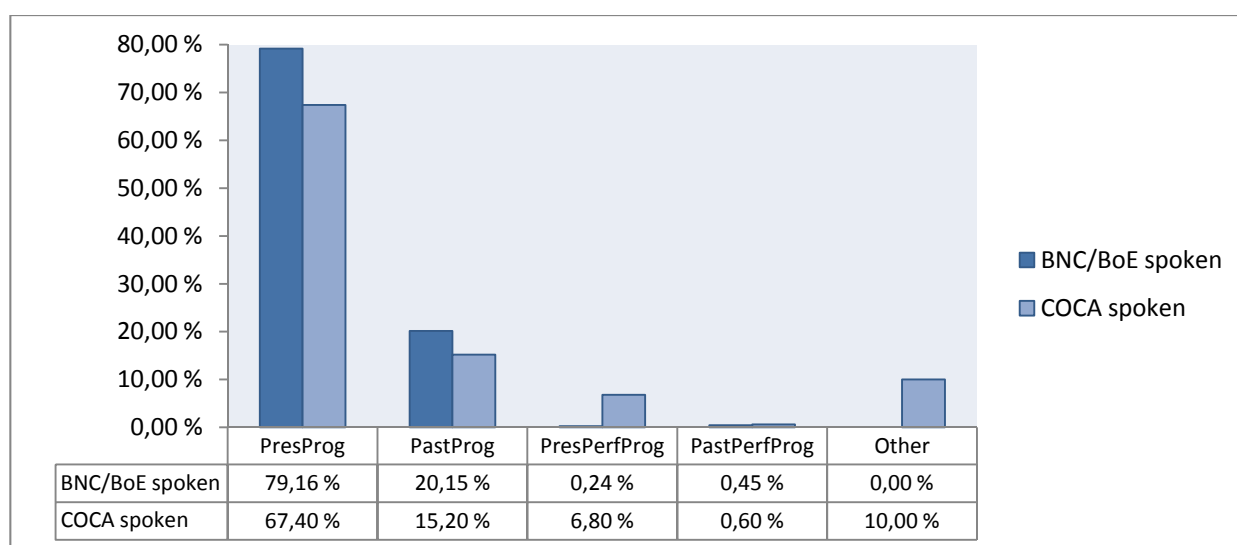


Figure 2. The distribution of progressive tense forms in the two studies.

As figure 2 shows, the progressives in both spoken corpora, British and American, typically appear in the present tense, and rather often in the past tense. Present perfect progressives are almost nonexistent in the British corpora, whereas they are much more common in the American corpus. In addition, as much as 10% of the progressive forms in the American corpus occur in a more complex structure, together with auxiliaries or other verbs. Unfortunately, the fact that Römer's study does not include the more complex progressive constructions, such as *will be needing*, *is going to be needing*, and *seem to be needing* (Römer 2005, 61), is assumed to twist the results so that the percentages in Römer's study are higher than those in this study. This makes comparison of tense forms less reliable. Therefore, comparison of tense forms of individual verbs is not done here.

5.2.2 Subjects

As regards the subjects of progressive constructions it can be said that, in the data of this study, the progressives clearly favour personal pronouns, which are subjects in at least two thirds of the progressive constructions, varying between 62.7% and 78.6% (Table 5).

Table 5. Subjects of progressive constructions.

| | pers.pron. | who | names | people | that | other subjects |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>agree</i> | 69.3% | 2.4% | 4.7% | 2.4% | 0.8% | 20.5% |
| <i>believe</i> | 65.8% | 5.3% | 3.9% | 6.6% | 2.6% | 17.1% |
| <i>forget</i> | 67.5% | 0.9% | 2.6% | 6.1% | 0.0% | 22.8% |
| <i>know</i> | 64.5% | 6.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 29.0% |
| <i>like</i> | 78.6% | 2.4% | 2.4% | 12.1% | 0.0% | 7.1% |
| <i>love</i> | 75.6% | 1.3% | 1.9% | 3.8% | 1.3% | 16.9% |
| <i>need</i> | 62.7% | 8.5% | 1.7% | 3.4% | 8.5% | 15.3% |
| <i>remember</i> | 64.8% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 9.9% | 0.7% | 18.3% |
| <i>want</i> | 68.5% | 4.4% | 2.6% | 4.9% | 2.3% | 17.3% |
| <i>understand</i> | 67.3% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 9.3% | 0.0% | 19.6% |
| Total | 68.7% | 3.0% | 3.1% | 5.6% | 1.5% | 18.23% |

This figure is a bit lower than the overall subject distribution in Römer's study, where personal pronouns formed 76-79% of all subjects, all 99 verbs of her study included (2005, 69).

The next most common subject group with all verbs of the data, with the exception of the verb *like*, was *the+noun* (such as *the students*, *the government*) and other subjects (such as *everybody*, *her kid*), which are grouped under the title 'other subjects' in Table 5. These are used in 15.3% to 29.0% of progressives, except with the verb *like* that only takes it as subject in 7.1% of its progressives.

However, the word *that* is extremely rare (1.5% of progressives) as a subject with all verbs except *need*, which takes it as subject in 8.5% of cases. Also *who* is used rather rarely as a subject (in approximately 3% of progressives), *need*, *know*, *believe*, and *want* using it a bit more often than other verbs. Names are also rare as subjects in progressive constructions (3.1%), however the verbs *agree* and *remember* use them more than other verbs. The word *people* is also not a very common

subject (5.6%), only the verbs *like*, *remember* and *understand* have them in approximately 10% of progressives.

Since personal pronouns are by far the most common group of subjects with progressives, it is worthwhile examining them a bit closer. The distribution of personal pronouns among the progressives in this study is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Personal pronoun subjects in progressive constructions.

| | I | you | he | she | it | we | they |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>agree</i> | 24.4% | 22.8% | 8.7% | 2.4% | 0.0% | 8.7% | 2.4% |
| <i>believe</i> | 21.1% | 10.5% | 5.3% | 2.6% | 0.0% | 14.5% | 11.8% |
| <i>forget</i> | 14.0% | 14.9% | 1.8% | 1.8% | 0.0% | 25.4% | 9.6% |
| <i>know</i> | 16.1% | 6.5% | 6.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 25.8% | 9.7% |
| <i>like</i> | 38.1% | 9.5% | 7.1% | 7.1% | 0.0% | 2.4% | 19.0% |
| <i>love</i> | 35.6% | 12.5% | 8.8% | 1.9% | 0.0% | 8.1% | 8.8% |
| <i>need</i> | 10.2% | 13.6% | 0.0% | 1.7% | 1.7% | 13.6% | 22.0% |
| <i>remember</i> | 21.1% | 9.9% | 7.0% | 2.8% | 0.0% | 14.8% | 9.2% |
| <i>understand</i> | 25.2% | 11.2% | 2.8% | 1.87% | 1.87% | 11.2% | 13.1% |
| <i>want</i> | 21.7% | 9.8% | 8.0% | 5.7% | 0.5% | 7.5% | 15.2% |
| Total | 23.1% | 12.2% | 6.4% | 3.4% | 0.4% | 11.5% | 11.8% |

As Table 6 shows, the personal pronoun *I* is clearly the most common subject. It is used as subject in nearly every fourth progressive sentence. Pronouns *you*, *we* and *they* share the second place, all of them being used in 11 to 12 percent of progressives. *He* and *she* are less common, *he* being used more often than *she*. The pronoun *it* is almost never used with the progressives of this data.

The comparison of subject choice between the British and American corpora was done by calculating the average percentages of the verbs in this study as regards each personal pronoun subject. Respectively, the average percentages of the same individual verbs (*love* excluded) in Römer's data (2005, 123-125) were calculated. The comparison is presented in Figure 3.

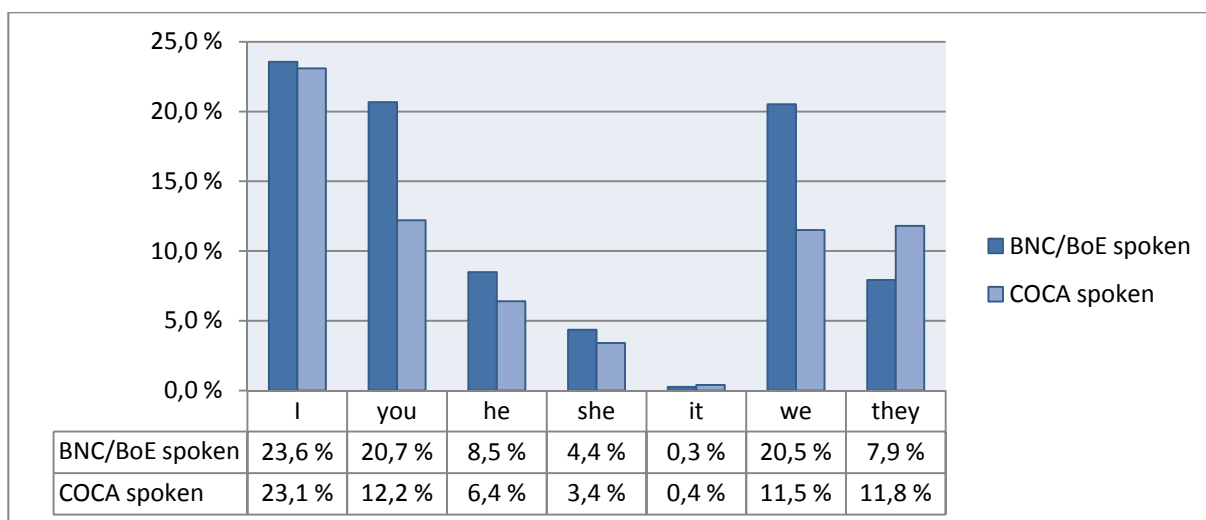


Figure 3. Personal pronoun subjects in the two studies.

As can be seen from Figure 3, the frequencies of the first person subjects are similar in the American and British corpora. However, in the British corpora *you* and *we* are nearly as common as *I*, whereas in the American corpus the pronouns *you*, *we* and *they* are clearly less frequent than *I*. These three pronouns have similar frequencies. In both variants, the third person pronoun *he* is used more often than *she*.

As regards individual verbs, there are some differences. In the American corpus the verb *agree* takes *you* or *I* as subject equally often (24.4% and 22.8%), whereas in the British corpora *agree* these percentages are 30.77% and 17.31% respectively. In addition, in the data of this study the subjects of the verb *believe* are rather evenly distributed, but in Römer's data *believe* favours the pronoun *he* (33.33%). However, it should be noted that there were only 6 cases of the verb *believe* in the progressive in Römer's data. Furthermore, the verb *forget* takes rather similar personal pronouns in both data, but in the American corpus it also often takes other subjects. The verb *know* favours the pronoun *we* over other pronouns in both studies, though in Römer's data there was only one case of *know* in the progressive, which explain the 100% frequency of *we* as subject. As regards *like*, the results are similar, the pronoun *I* being clearly the most common subject.

The verb *need* differs from other verbs in both studies, since it more often takes some other pronoun than *I* as subject. In the British data *need* most often takes the pronouns *you* or *we* as

subject, whereas in the American data *need* favours the pronoun *they* over *we* and *you*, which both still are more common than the pronoun *I* as subject. In the British data, the verb *remember* has *I* as subject in 40.00% of all cases, *you* being also common with 26.67%, whereas in the American data *I* is used as subject in 21.2% of progressives, *we* coming next with the frequency of 14.8%. The verb *understand* has the pronoun *you* as subject in 55.56% of progressives in Römer's data, but in the data of this study *understand* so often takes other subjects besides personal pronouns, that the most common personal pronoun subject *I* is used in only 25.2% of cases. Finally, *want* most often takes the pronoun *I* or *they* as subject in the data of this study, but in the British data it most often has *you* as subject, the pronouns *I* and *they* being a little less frequent.

To sum up, the differences in the subject choice between the American and British corpora are not great. In both variants, progressives mainly take personal pronouns as subjects, *I* being the most frequent subject in both corpora. However, the pronouns *you* and *we* are used almost as often as *I* in the British corpora, whereas in the American data *you* and *we* are not as common. Compared to the British data, the American data includes more progressives with the pronoun *they* as subject, *they* being used as often as *we* and *you*. As regards individual verbs, there is some variation between the two variants in the choice of personal pronoun subjects. In addition, there is also variation between individual verbs as to which personal pronoun they favour as subject.

5.2.3 Negation

As regards negation, it can be said that the verbs of emotion and cognition are negated a bit more often than verbs in general. In Römer's study, the average negation percent, all 99 verbs considered, was between 7.98% and 8.59% (2005, 136). The average negation percent of the verbs of this study is 9.59%. In addition, there is quite a lot of variation between the verbs of this study as far as negation is concerned. The negation of the verbs of this study is presented in Figure 4.

The verb *like* is negated more often than other verbs of this study. As much as 21% of the progressives of *like* are negated. This is true in also Römer's data, where *like* is negated in 25% of

cases (2005, 141). Also the verb *understand* is negated rather often in the data of this study, in 19% of its progressive constructions. However, in the British corpora, *understand* is negated in 10% of cases. *Believe*, on the other hand, is negated in over 16% of cases in the British data, whereas its negation percentage here is clearly lower, 12%.

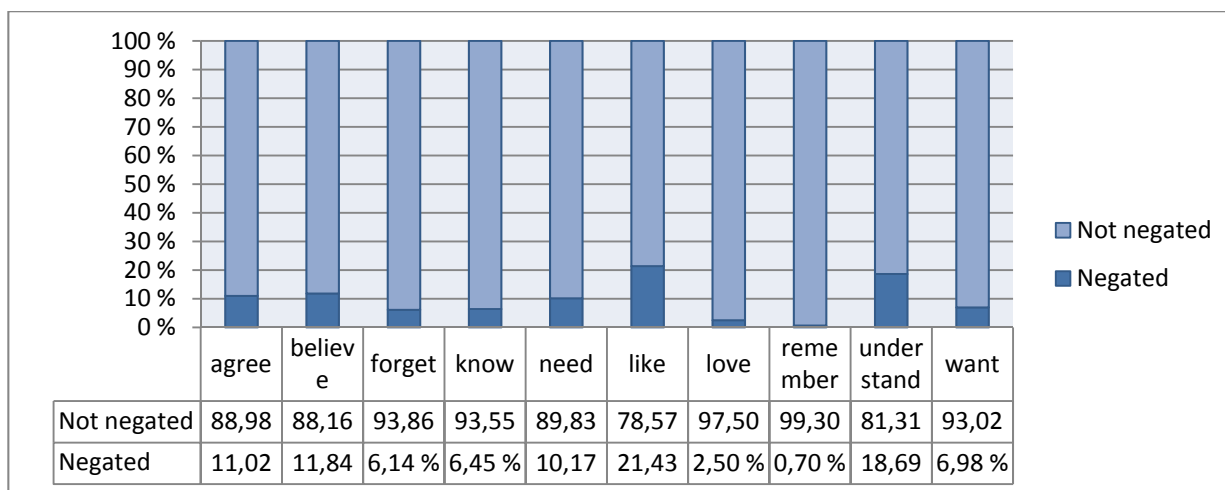


Figure 4. Negated and not negated progressives in the data of this study.

The greatest differences in the negation of individual verbs between the British and American corpora relate to the verbs *know*, *remember* and *forget*. The verb *know* is not very often negated in this study, but always in Römer's study. However, there was only one token of *know* in the progressive in Römer's study, so that can explain the result. The progressives of *remember* are negated in nearly 7% of cases in Römer's data, when in this study they are hardly ever negated. Furthermore, *forget* is never negated in Römer's data, but in the data of this study 6% of its progressives are negated. As regards the rest of the verbs, the results between the two studies are similar. *Agree* and *need* are negated in approximately 10 % of progressive sentences, and *want* a bit less frequently.

5.3 Individual verbs in the progressive

This section aims at an analysis of the meanings that are conveyed through the use of the progressive construction with verbs of emotion and cognition. This proved to be the most challenging part of the study. The intention was not to hold on to any particular theory of the functions of the progressive, but to test different theories and definitions. Therefore, each verb at a time was approached bearing in mind all that has been said about the meanings of the progressive in chapters 2 and 3 of this study.

5.3.1 Agree

The data included 127 cases of *agree* in the progressive. Most of the progressives of *agree* are not negated, present tense progressives, with the personal pronoun *you* or *I* as subject. Römer (2005, 157-161) claims that the progressives of *agree* mostly (76.92% of cases) express that the action is continuous and non-repeated. Indeed, it is possible to find this meaning in the data of this study:

- (1) 2001 SPOK NPR Science You have three doctors who **are agreeing** that this is a non-specific test that can show calcium scores...

However, it could be said that the verb *agree* expresses a continuous situation also in the simple form, that continuousness is not a meaning carried by the progressive. On the contrary, the progressive seems to imply that the situation is of temporary nature, something that is true at the moment but not endlessly, but that it might change. Römer also reports that in 23.08% of the cases the progressive denotes to continuous and repeated action. It is possible to see the function of repeatedness in some of the cases of this data:

- (2) 2010 SPOK NBC Matthews I'm endlessly **agreeing** with Howard this morning.
- (3) 1993 SPOK CBS Morning You guys **are agreeing** too much today.
- (4) 2002 SPOK CBS 48Hours He is smiling and laughing, and he's **agreeing** with everything, and he's doing what you tell him.

Especially in the last two extracts there is also a sense of pretence, as if the subjects of the sentences do not actually agree, but they pretend to do so. Indeed, Quirk et al. (1985, 197-198) claim that the progressive can be used to describe a person's performance, not his/her character. They explain that

in *Joan is singing well* the speaker is commenting on Joan's performance, not her abilities as a singer. They add that this does not suggest that Joan is not competent – only the point of view is different, and thus the two sentences could both be true. This is actually exactly the same point of view that Golsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982) have when they explain that the progressive describes the phenomenal properties of a situation, something that can be observed, and does not make a claim of the structural properties of the situation.

In many of the cases, Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's metaphysical theory seems perfectly applicable: *agree* seems to be used in the progressive form whenever it is a question of the speaker conveying something that he or she observes happening. With first person subject it seems as if the speaker is only forming his/her opinion at the situation that is going on. The following extracts from the data clarify this meaning:

- (5) 2002 SPOK CNN Crossfire It's incredibly...well, I'm **agreeing** with you. Yes, I think the news is terribly hypocritical.
- (6) 1995 SPOK Ind Geraldo Let's...let's...let's keep...we're...we're **agreeing**.
- (7) 2001 SPOK Fox O'Reilly All right. I'm **agreeing** with you. I'd put them in rehab.
- (8) 2007 SPOK Fox Susteren I don't' know what's wrong with the air tonight, but I'm **agreeing** with Geoff tonight.

When one compares the progressive form with the simple form extracts, taken from COCA spoken sub-corpus as well, one gets the idea that when the speaker uses the simple form, he/she bases his statement on knowledge of the situation rather than observation. In the case of the verb *agree*, the speaker seems to have formed his opinion beforehand (a), or is stating a proven fact that he/she has knowledge of (b):

- (a) 2011 SPOK Fox Baier I **agree** with Charles about the merits of the speech. Obama did a great job.
- (b) 2011 SPOK CNN Cooper There's some debate over Forrest's history, but most historians **agree** he was in the KKK.
- (c) 2011 SPOK Fox Hannity Doug, look, I **agree** that the problems for the country are monumental. No one is disagreeing with that.

Extract (c) is rather interesting since the speaker also uses the progressive form of the verb *disagree*. Is it because the fact that he/she agrees is something he/she can be certain of, but the fact that nobody is disagreeing is something he/she thinks on the basis of his observations.

When the subject is not the first person, the progressive clearly conveys the meaning that the speaker is describing the situation on the basis he/she can observe:

- (9) 2007 SPOK Fox HC Careful, Rich. You're **agreeing** with Alan. That's a dangerous thing.
- (10) 1995 SPOK Ind Limbaugh We believe he **is agreeing** with us that the position of the Republicans is extreme.
- (11) 1993 SPOK Ind Geraldo You're...you're **agreeing**?
- (12) 2010 SPOK Fox Watch Judy is shaking her head. I don't think she's **agreeing** with you.
- (13) 2004 SPOK CNN CapGang ...and I think every day, the American people **are agreeing** with John Kerry and disagreeing with the president.

This meaning is especially evident when the progressive is used with the verb *seem*. There were five cases where the verb *seem* was used with *agree* in the progressive:

- (14) 2008 SPOK CBS FaceNation But I...as I listen to you here, you **seem to be agreeing** with me that it's probably not going to happen here.
- (15) 1990 SPOK ABC Nightline ...as you **seemed to be agreeing** at the beginning of your response to my question...

As regards past tense progressives, Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's theory can be applied to them as well, although they themselves do not actually comment on this possibility. However, one could argue that in the following extracts the speaker is referring to past situations, which he/she describes as he/she observed them at the time:

- (16) 2005 SPOK CBS Rather At our first meeting, when we **were agreeing** so much with each other, I think people thought the end is near.
- (17) 1999 SPOK CBS Morning No, no...I just...I think I just **was agreeing** with you. I said George W. would have beaten Dan Quayle...

In addition, in the extracts above the progressive also seems to express that the situation does not necessarily stay that way. Williams calls this idea 'susceptibility to change', but he also claims that the progressive does not imply this meaning with stative verbs (2002, 213-214). However, as regards the extracts (16) and (17), this idea seems perfectly applicable.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 167) argue that if a situation is in progress, it needs to have duration. The element of duration is rather clearly present in the next extract:

- (18) 2007 SPOK NPR TalkNation Well, you know, I've **been agreeing** with your guest there...

However, it could be argued that the present perfect tense is what carries the meaning of duration, and that it is more the idea of limited duration, i.e. temporariness that the progressive expresses. *I've*

been agreeing with you and *I have agreed with you* both have duration, but the progressive form suggests that what is said is valid at the moment, temporarily, including the possibility that what holds true at the moment might or might not change later, whereas the simple form does not include any of those meanings. The concepts of ‘susceptibility to change’ and ‘temporariness’ seem to be rather closely related here.

According to Römer (2005, 100), the verb *agree* also has additional uses such as politeness/softening (17.31%). In the few questions that the data of this study included, the progressive appears to work as a way to make the question more polite:

- (19) 1991 SPOK ABC Brinkley Well, may I just interrupt you. **Are you agreeing** with the thought that...
- (20) 2004 SPOK NPR Sunday **Are you agreeing** with Mr. Cheney? Do you dispute his assertion?

On the other hand, in the next extract the progressive seems to make the question less polite and more intensive:

- (21) 1994 SPOK CBS FaceNation ...Senator Hatch mean by that when he said all of that? **Is he agreeing** with Senator Helms or **not agreeing** with him?

Again, the progressive seems to imply that it is not a question of the structure of the world, i.e. whether the person actually agrees but of the phenomenal properties of the situation, i.e. what his statement about the issue is.

5.3.2 Believe

There were 80 cases of *believe* in the progressive in the data of this study. The verb is used in the present tense in nearly 70% of all cases, with a varying personal pronoun subject. Nearly 12% of the progressives of *believe* were negated. When *believe* is used in the progressive, it seems to carry the meaning of temporariness, as so many grammarians earlier have pointed out (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 167; Leech and Svartvik 2002, 74; Mindt 2000, 249; Quirk et al. 1985, 197-198). In addition to temporariness, also the meaning of ‘susceptibility to change’ seems to be present in the following extracts:

- (1) 1999 SPOK CNN Talkback And what we **are believing** now happened is that
- (2) 1999 SPOK CBS Morning And I took it literally. I **was believing** in that.
- (3) 1992 SPOK ABC Nightline ...people are going to be disappointed. I think a lot of people **are believing** that he is on their side.
- (4) 2007 SPOK NPR TalkNation We're **believing**, from what we've been told, that one person was shot...
- (5) 1999 SPOK Fox Drudge ..Mike, because quite frankly, I'm **believing** you at this point.

Sometimes the progressive seems to indicate gradual change, as Leech and Svartvik (2002, 74) and Jorgensen (1991, 173-176) have noted:

- (6) 2010 SPOK Fox Hannity More Americans **are believing** that there's going to be a double-dip recession.

However, it could be argued that the word *more* contributes to the meaning of gradual change here, since if it was omitted, the sentence would not suggest that there is change going on in the situation.

In her study, Römer reports that the verb *believe* expresses continuous and non-repeated actions in all cases in the data. Here again, the progressive does not exclude this meaning, but one could ask if it is a meaning expressed by the progressive or included in the (simple form of the) verb itself:

- (7) 2009 SPOK CBS Early ...but we are thinking positive and we **are believing** that everything that ...that's been presented in the court of law will show that...
- (8) 1997 SPOK CBS 48Hours He didn't believe in be...being married or having kids. He **was believing** working, and that was his job. His job was his life.
- (9) 2009 SPOK ABC Primetime Couldn't it be that you're **believing** what you wanna believe?

It could be claimed that what Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 170) say about the progressive yielding an activity reading, seems to hold true here. The sentences above seem to have more intensity than what the nonprogressive forms would have, as if the speaker in extracts (7) to (9) has made the choice to believe. As opposed to Römer's findings, as regards extract (10), it is possible to judge that the progressive of the verb *believe* expresses action that is repeated:

- (10) 1999 SPOK ABC 20/20 He's seeing what he wants to see. He's **believing** what he wants to believe.

However, it is also possible to view these extracts from Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's point of view, interpreting them so that the speaker is commenting the phenomenal properties of the situation, i.e. telling what he/she can observe happening. Related to that, the next extract is

especially interesting because here the speaker is choosing between the progressive and the simple form while speaking:

- (11) 1993 SPOK PBS Newshour And we think that since we are...we **are believing**...we believe in the same principles of the Western world...

The fact that the speaker chooses to use the simple form after all suggests that he/she wants to give the impression that their believing is not a temporary situation that might change. Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's (1982, 86) point out that the simple form is stronger than the progressive one since it makes a claim based on knowledge, not on mere observation.

There are only a few cases that have a present perfect progressive. Again, these sentences have the element of duration, but also of temporariness:

- (12) 1993 SPOK NPR ATC And I've **been believing** that all my life, because I never got treated nice by the police.
 (13) 1990 SPOK CNN Crossfire Mike **has been believing** in the business cycle for a long time.

As noted earlier with the verb *agree*, here again the sense of duration is conveyed by the present perfect tense, with time expressions *all my life* and *for a long time* adding to it. It is more temporariness or the possible change of the situation that the progressive suggests here. This becomes evident if we compare the same sentence in the progressive and simple form:

- (14) And I've **been believing** that all my life.
 And I've believed that all my life.
 (15) Mike **has been believing** in the business cycle for a long time.
 Mike has believed n the business cycle for a long time.

All of these sentences have the feature of duration, of something that has lasted for a longer period of time, but the progressive one implies that the situation might be changing now, whereas the simple form does not comment on that but quite neutrally states a certain fact.

Furthermore, Römer reports that *believe* in the progressive also sometimes expresses emphasis/shock (16.67%). In the data of this study there were three cases that convey this meaning:

- (16) 1999 SPOK CBS Morning I'm **believing** you. I really **am believing** you. They're absolutely terrific.
 (17) 2000 SPOK NBC Dateline What **am** I actually **believing** in? **Am I believing** in myself?
 (18) 1995 SPOK Ind Limbaugh ...you know, it's never...what **is** he really **believing**? Let's just say that. It's...I don't know.

It could be argued, though, that the adverbs *really* and *actually* contribute to the meaning of emphasis or shock, and the sentences would appear rather different without the adverbs.

5.3.3 Forget

The data include 115 cases of the verb *forget* in the progressive form, of which nearly 90% are present progressives with typically a personal pronoun subject, most often the pronoun *you*. Under 7 % of the progressives of *forget* are negated. It seems on the basis of the data that often the speaker chooses to use the progressive form when he notices that somebody is ‘about to forget’, e.g. to mention, something:

- (1) 2008 SPOK Fox HC We’**re forgetting** one thing here. He admits it. He brags about it.
- (2) 1994 SPOK CBS Morning Wait a minute. We are...we’**re forgetting** about the victims here?
- (3) 1993 SPOK Ind Geraldo All right, Amy...I’m sorry, I’**m forgetting** all these names.
- (4) 2010 SPOK NBC Matthews Look, I’ve tried. But everybody’s **forgetting** something, which is that the American people don’t want this plan.
- (5) 2003 SPOK ABC GMA...it’s ESPN, that’s right. I knew there was something we **were forgetting**.

This can be claimed to be what Leech and Svartvik (2002, 74) call “movement towards change” and Römer “gradual change/development”. According to Römer’s results the progressive of *forget* occurs in this function in 18.92% of cases (2005, 162). It appears, on the basis of the data of this study, that this function is even more common than what Römer suggests. Several progressives include the sense of gradual change. The first two of them are from a conversation where the topic seems to be the cons of the Internet:

- (6) 2009 SPOK NBC Today Because I just think that it’s that kind of thing that kids **are forgetting** about.
- (7) 2009 SPOK NBC Today...through the Internet, they’**re forgetting** about real life.
- (8) 2005 SPOK Fox OReilly Other topics are coming up. And people **are forgetting**.

On the other hand, the extracts above could be explained in Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger’s terms as situations where the speaker is making observations about the situation and describing it as he/she sees it on the basis of the observations. In other words, the speaker does not imply that *forgetting* is something that happens to the subjects of the sentences typically or always, but in this

particular situation. Using the simple form in (6), (7) and (8) would express that the speaker is stating a fact based on his/her knowledge.

In her study Römer argues that *forget* in the progressive expresses mostly continuous and repeated action and nearly as often continuous and non-repeated action. Also Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 170) see that with the verb *forget* the progressive adds the feature of duration. Indeed, the progressive does refer to a situation in progress, although here the gradual change function and the metaphysical theory can apply as well:

- (9) 2008 SPOK NPR TalkNation And a month ago, John McCain was ahead. I feel like people **are forgetting** it's a month and a half ago.

It could be argued that the verb *forget* as such refers to an event of short duration, the same way as for example the verb *arrive*, and the progressive prolongs this event, i.e. adds duration. However, it was harder to find cases where the progressive form of *forget* implied that the action was continuous and repeated. I was able to find two extracts from the data of this study could be said to include the element of repeatedness:

- (10) 1995 SPOK ABC 20/20 I think they're **forgetting** kindness.
 (11) 1992 SPOK CBS 48Hours Do you notice, though, at all, that you're **forgetting** things more...

However, it can be argued that in extract (10) the plural form (*things*) and the adverb *more* add to the sense of something happening repeatedly. Changing the object as in *Do you notice, though, at all, that you're forgetting something* does not refer to repeated action.

Römer reports that in her study *forget* is often (62.16% of cases) used in the function of “politeness or softening”. It could be assumed that the progressive is used to soften the effect of *forget* in situations where the subject is *you* - the most common subject with *forget* - in order to soften the accusation that the other person has forgotten something:

- (12) 2003 SPOK CNN Talkback It seems that you're **forgetting** that U.N. Resolution 1441 was put together by a 15-0 vote and...
 (13) 1996 SPOK CNN Burden Yeah, but you're **forgetting** that this particular woman was perfectly bilingual.

It does seem, indeed, that *you're forgetting* is much less harsh than *you forgot*. However, the extracts above also include the meaning of 'gradual change', which actually makes the accusation of forgetting more polite. Furthermore, Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's theory explains *why* the progressive makes the sentence more polite: the progressive does not make a claim (beyond what can be observed) that the person has forgotten, but observes what can be seen, i.e. that the other person seems to, or is about to, forget something.

5.3.4 Know

The verb *know* proved to be rarely used in the progressive. The search engine gave altogether 152 tokens of *know* in the *-ing* form, but the majority were cases where *knowing* was used as a noun. There were only 31 actual progressives, which gives the normalized frequency of 0.34. This is, however, higher than the 0.03 reported by Römer, who actually only had one token of *know* in the progressive in the data of her study. In the data of this study, *know* is used in the present perfect tense more often than other verbs. As much as 32.3% of its progressives are in present perfect, whereas the percentage for present progressives is 45.2%. The most typical subjects of the progressives of *know* are personal pronouns, especially the pronoun *we* (25.4%), but it also takes 'other subjects' (such as *everyone*) more often than other verbs of this study (29.0%). The progressives of *know* are negated in 6.45% of cases.

The present perfect progressives are rather interesting as regards the function of the progressive:

- (1) 2005 SPOK MSNBC Cosby I have to tell you, you know, I've **been knowing** this man for a long time, and I was absolutely amazed by his admission on television...
- (2) 1997 SPOK Ind Springer Well, I've **been knowing** him for six months.
- (3) 2005 SPOK Crossfire We've **been knowing** it's going on in baseball forever. And then, finally it blows up.

It could be argued that the progressive here expresses the duration of the situation, in other words continuousness, which is how Römer (2005, 157-161) defines the meaning of the progressive with the verb *know*. However, these situations would have duration, i.e. they would be continuous, even

with the simple present perfect. In extract (1) there seems to be an implication that the speaker used to think he knows the man he is talking about, but that after the man's surprising admission on television the speaker has started to doubt whether he really has known him. Therefore, he uses the progressive to express that what he says about *knowing* the man has been his own judgement, not a fact nor a truth. In other words, it is a matter of phenomenal versus structural properties of the situation. Extract (2) can be explained the same way, as the speaker describing the phenomenal properties of the situation, but the progressive also refers to the temporary nature of the situation. In the last extract (3), where the topic is the use of steroids in sports, using the progressive is not a matter of the speaker having judged the situation wrong, but it implies that things are going to change from now on. In other words, it is the temporariness of the situation that the progressive expresses.

Indeed, in most cases of the verb *know*, the progressive seems to express the temporal nature of the situation, in other words there is an implication that the situation might change. The following extracts show that it is so in any tense form:

- (4) 1991 SPOK PBS Newshour We're **not knowing** what's going to happen in the next few days.
- (5) 2007 SPOK Fox O'Reilly You're getting real famous, aren't you? Everybody **is knowing** you now.
- (6) 2011 SPOK CNN News ...the person who's searching is preparing the whole time and **is knowing** that's the direction they're going.
- (7) 2009 SPOK Fox Beck And so everybody in town **was knowing** that this was happening.
- (8) 1997 SPOK CBS 48 Hours I mean, that's the most important thing. I'm **knowing** him. I'm having a father-son relationship.

As regards extract (8), the progressive also seems to add dynamicity and activity to the situation. In Smith's words (1983, 479-482), the progressive describes a state as an event. This function is rather clear in the next extract, where *know* is used first in the simple and then in the progressive form.

- (9) 2007 SPOK NBC Today But you've got to work out your differences. And know how to argue and share yourself with your spouse so that you **are** really **knowing** one another.

The two constructions of the verb can actually be argued to have two different meanings: the simple form seems to have the meaning 'to be aware of' or 'have knowledge of', whereas *know* in the

progressive seems to refer to a deeper understanding of something. Also Jorgensen (1991, 173) says that with some stative verbs the progressive may add a “special shade of meaning”. However, these cases are not very frequent.

Römer reports that the verb *know* in the progressive expresses continuous and non-repeated action. However, it can be argued that in the next extract from the data of this study *know* refers to repeated action:

- (10) 2000 SPOK NBC Today Well, basically, the idea is to make sure that your children **are** always **knowing** what’s going to go on and what’s going to happen.

It is clear that the adverb *always* affects to this reading, but it is actually rather difficult to say whether *always* implies repeated action or duration of the situation. However, this is the only case in the data that can be seen to refer to repeated action.

5.3.5 Like

The corpus included 42 cases of the verb *like* in the progressive, of which 86% were in the present tense and 14% in the past tense. Over 21% of the progressives of *like* are negated, which is much more than the negation of other verbs of this study. In addition, *like* strongly favours personal pronoun subjects, especially the pronoun *I* that is used in 38% of its progressives, but it also takes *people* as subject in 12.1% of cases, which is more than the other verbs.

According to Römer, 62.50% of the progressives of *like* express continuous and non-repeated activity. However, since the verb *like* in itself refers to a state that has duration, it is more the temporariness or dynamicity of the situation that the progressive implies:

- (1) 1995 SPOK NPR Weekend ...and until our administration realized that the black students **were not liking** the way we were being treated, that’s when policy began to change.
- (2) 2004 SPOK NBC Today That’s right, because they’re noticing that people around them **are not liking** them,...
- (3) 1995 SPOK CNN News ...he dipped his head down into his hands as though he **was** clearly **not liking** what was going on.

Thus, it can be said that these extracts also supports Smith’s (1983, 479-482) argument that the progressive presents a state as an event with a beginning and an end, and also Jørgensen’s (1991, 174,

176-177) claim of the progressive adding dynamicity to the situation. It could be claimed that Biber et al. (1999, 473-474) are referring to the same meaning when they explain that the progressive often includes an active agent controlling the situation. In the following lines the progressive expresses the intensity or dynamicity of the feeling, and the agent's active role, even more clearly.

- (4) 2008 SPOK NPR TellMore I said, OK, she's **liking** this a little too much, man. You know?
- (5) 2000 SPOK NBC Today I'm **liking** it. I'm **liking** it. Let's develop. Let's develop.

However, the extracts (4) to (5) above could also be explained in Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's (1982) terms as the speaker commenting on what he/she is observing. In the following extracts from the data the speakers seem to observe themselves:

- (6) 1998 SPOK CBS SatMorn ...they look pretty nice, actually. I'm...I'm... I'm **liking** these. They're nice and white.
- (7) 1997 SPOK NPR Sunday I'm great, too. I guess I'm rather **liking** the fall.
- (8) 2007 SPOK FoxOReilly I'm still **liking** the war. I wanted to win the war.
- (9) 2004 SPOK PBS Tavis Ha ha ha! I **was liking** you till you got to that point.

In these extracts the progressive also expresses that the speakers' feeling or opinion is valid at the moment, and that it may change later. Therefore, it could be claimed that the progressive expresses the temporariness of the situation more than anything else. Also Jorgensen is of the opinion that the progressive emphasizes the limited duration of the situation. Smith's (1983, 479-482) definition about states and events agrees with this: since the progressive presents a state as an event, it also includes the beginning and the endpoint of the situation, which always involve change.

As regards additional functions of the progressive, Römer (2005, 164) reports that in the data of her study the progressive forms of *like* convey politeness/softening in 62.50% of cases. The data of this study does not support her results as regards the frequency of this function, since there were only two such cases in the data of this study. Nevertheless, the progressive appears to have this function. It could be argued that the progressive softens a question because it does not request the hearer to state a firm stand towards the issue, but inquires the hearer's thoughts or feelings about the issue at the moment:

- (10) 2002 SPOK Ind Oprah And so how **are** you **liking** your new sister?
- (11) 2002 SPOK NPR And he said, How **are** you **liking** being back in DC?

In addition, Römer's study shows that the progressives of *like* sometimes (12.50% of cases) express gradual change. This result agrees with Jørgensen's (1991, 173-176) argument that the progressive conveys the idea of gradual change in the intensity of the feeling. The data of this study also supports this finding, though this function does not appear to be very common since there was only one concordance line among the 42 cases of *like* in the progressive that has this meaning.

- (12) 2010 SPOK Fox O'Reilly There's a Marist poll out today that says independents **are** actually **liking** him less and he remains and continues to have the most...the lowest approval.

It can be argued, though, that the meaning of gradual change is more evident when the progressive construction is used together with words such as *less* or *more*.

5.3.6 Love

The verb *love* is typically used in the present progressive (80.6%), and it is nearly never negated (2.5% of cases). The progressives of *love* favour the personal pronoun *I* as subject (35.6%). As regards its meanings in the progressive, *love* appears to have quite similar functions as *like* when used in the progressive, which is rather natural considering how closely related the meanings of these two verbs are. The progressive seems to add dynamicity and intensity to the meaning of the verb *love*, a definition that also Jørgensen (174, 176-177) agrees with. Smith's (1983) and Williams' (2002) claim that the progressive turns a state into an event, appears especially true with the verb *love*.

- (1) 2010 SPOK Fox Baier Oh, I'm **loving** retirement.
- (2) 2004 SPOK CNN King Are you enjoying school? I'm **loving** it.
- (3) 2002 SPOK Ind Oprah You've got tremendous power. Now. He's **loving** her through it now.

The dynamicity of the situation, or intensity of the feeling, is furthermore added with using adverbs *so*, *just* and *really*.

- (4) 2007 SOK CNN Situation So I really...and I'm **loving** it, I'm **just loving** it.
- (5) 2003 SPOK NBC Today Oh yeah. I'm **so loving** this.
- (6) 1996 SPOK CNN KingWknd That I can go into the popular world...which I **was really loving** and enjoying getting a big kick out of...

The next extract with the progressive and the simple form is interesting, since it shows the difference between these two constructions:

- (7) 1993 SPOK CBS Morning Well, it makes...it makes me feel like God **is loving** me, and that it just reminds me how much he loves me,...

Here the progressive refers to a present activity (of God), whereas the simple form refers to a state or a fact. Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's definition of the progressive describing the phenomenal properties of a situation, whereas the simple form describes the structural properties of a situation, is perfectly applicable here: it can be seen as a fact based on the speaker's knowledge that God loves him/her, but choosing to use the progressive implies that the speaker is experiencing that love at the time of the utterance.

In addition, the progressives of *love* sometimes emphasize the temporariness of the situation, which also includes the idea that Williams (2002) calls 'susceptibility to change'. This is especially true with past tense progressives, but also with present progressives. Here the progressive seems to present *love* as a situation that 'comes and goes'.

- (8) 1999 SPOK CNN King Pick up where you left off in 1988 when America **was loving** you.
 (9) 2010 SPOK CBS Early We'**re loving** you today, Dave.
 (10) 2010 SPOK NBC Today How **are** you **loving** your life these days?
 (11) 1993 SPOK Ind Geraldo You loved her daughter, now you'**re loving** her? No way.
 (12) 2009 SPOK NBC Today Right. I'**m loving** him again. All over again.

Finally, it is possible to define these progressive cases also in Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's terms as describing a (present or past) situation. This naturally includes the meanings of temporariness and susceptibility to change.

5.3.7 Need

As regards the verb *need*, it is mainly used in the present tense (54.2%), but 39.0% of its progressives are more complex constructions that include other verbs. The progressives of *need* most often have a personal pronoun subject (62.7%), of which *they* is the most common with the proportion of 22%. However, *need* is also used with subjects *who* (8.5%) or *that* (8.5%) more often than other verbs of this study. Approximately 10% of its progressives are negated.

Römer claims that approximately 65% of the progressives of *need* express continuous and non-repeated action. Again, it must be noted that the simple form of the verb *like* includes the idea of a state that is going on, without having a beginning or an end. The following extracts show that the progressive refers to situations that are valid for the time being, not continuously:

- (1) 1999 SPOK CBS Morning We're providing for a very wonderful mission, the humanitarian, for people that **are needing** us more than anything.
- (2) 2005 SPOK NPR ATC Some of my staff are giving each other intravenous nutrition because they **are needing** to be rehydrated. It has to happen today.
- (3) 1992 SPOK Ind Geraldo They'll get...if it's treatment your kid **is needing**, they'll do what they can to help you identify and get your kid into a treatment program.
- (4) 2008 SPOK Fox Susteren And the public schools quite often open their doors to a congregation that **is needing** some space for a meeting or for a church event.
- (5) 2002 SPOK CNN King ...they might need health care, **are going to be needing**... **are** already **needing** it.

The last extract clearly shows how replacing the progressive form with the simple form of the verb clearly indicates how the progressive implies the limited duration, i.e. temporariness of the situation. This could also be explained in terms of phenomenal and structural properties: the progressive is used when a situation is commented on the basis of what can be observed, not on the basis of what is known beyond evidence (Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger 1982, 81-82). The following extracts show how the progressive refers to what is observed by the speaker, whereas the simple form relates to what is considered a truth:

- (6) 2004 SPOK CNN Dobbs We're **needing** to address the issue. We need to issue this at the federal constitutional level...
- (7) 2011 SPOK NBC Today I mean, she's a beautiful girl who seems **to be** desperately **needing** attention.
- (8) 1995 SPOK ABC Special Well, it's important to balance that, to listen to our children and to see if there's something that they're really **needing** that's different from what we think they need.

In addition, it could be claimed that the progressive also adds intensity or dynamicity to the situation. Römer reports that the data of her study showed that the progressive with *need* very often (in 69.05% of cases) expresses 'emphasis/shock'. However, this function did not prove so frequent in the data of this study, although there were a few cases where the progressive could be seen to imply intensity of the situation:

- (9) 1999 SPOK NPR Morning But now that I know that I'm **needing** you so help me, Jesus, my soul's in your hands.
- (10) 2002 SPOK Ind Oprah I'm feeling good, but I'm **needing** you to keep me grounded here.
- (11) 2004 SPOK NPR Saturday With the headlights burning, looking for something, something that we're **needing**, something that we're **needing**.

Besides the intensity function, the progressives in these extracts also imply that the situations are temporary.

There was also another function that Römer found rather frequent, but which was not very common in the data of this study, namely repeatedness. In Römer's data approximately 35% of the progressives of *need* referred to continuous and repeated action. The data of this study only includes a couple of cases that could be labelled as expressing repeated action:

- (12) 1994 SPOK ABC Turning So, we're always **needing** another person to provide us with intensity, with self-fulfillment, with gratification...
- (13) 2010 SPOK CNN Misc So when they're **needing** pain medication or anything else, people can always get to them.

Again, it could be argued that it is the word *always* that expresses repeatedness, and that without it these would be cases where the speaker makes observations about the situation or emphasizes the temporariness of the situation.

Finally, one of the functions that the progressive is often understood to express is politeness. In Römer's study this meaning covered 16% of the progressives of *need*. The data of this study does not fully support that result, since the number of progressives that express politeness was lower than that. There were two present progressives and one past tense progressive that could be labelled as having the politeness function:

- (14) 2005 SPOK CNN Turn All right and when **will** you **be needing** these posters?
- (15) 2003 SPO Ind Oprah Thanks for coming, but we **wont't be needing** you.
- (16) 2001 SPOK CBS 48 Hours I **was needing** phone service.

However, when the sentence was studied in the expanded context, it was not that clear whether the progressive in extract (16) was used to express politeness or to describe the person's temporary situation in the past.

5.3.8 Remember

The verb *remember* is nearly never negated (0.70%), and mainly used in the present (73.9%) or past (18.3%) progressive, and 64.8% of its progressives have a personal pronoun subject. However, nearly 10% of its progressives have the word *people* as subject. As regards the functions of the progressive, there seems to be two meanings of the progressive with the verb *remember*.

First of all, *remember* in the progressive conveys the idea of somebody thinking about somebody of something rather decidedly and intensively. Also Smith (1983, 497-498) argues that the progressive may present a stative verb such as *remember*, which typically denotes a state, as an event. In the data of this study, example (7) excluded, the object of remembering is usually a deceased person or a tragic happening, and the remembering is preceded by a decision made together by a group of people. Consequently, the subject of the sentence is typically plural, such as *we*, *people*, or *everyone*:

- (1) 2011 SPOK NPR FreshAir We're **remembering** jazz pianist and composer George Shearing. He died yesterday at the age of 91.
- (2) 2006 SPOK CNN Zahn Well we're **remembering** Mattie Stepanek tonight with Jimmy Carter and Mattie's mother Jeni...
- (3) 2003 SPOK NPR Daybreak Today, in different ways and to different degrees, Americans **are remembering** September 11th even as they search to balance the demands for safety and freedom.
- (4) 2011 SPOK CBS SunMorn And this morning we'll **be remembering** her life and carer both on and off the screen.
- (5) 2006 SPOK CNN King This morning we've **all been remembering** experiences with him, funny things that have happened to us and his character and...
- (6) 1998 SPOK PBS Newshour ...to the meeting of world leaders in Birmingham, England...everyone was **remembering** Frank Sinatra today.
- (7) 1995 SPOK ABC WorldNews ...through interpreter I **don't have to be remembering** what I did yesterday.

Although the situation in extract (7) is very different from the others, the progressive in all the extracts refers to an active event of remembering. However, typically those progressives of *remember* that have a singular subject appear to have a different meaning. This meaning can be said to be more of a punctual nature, such as the verb *forget*. Some extracts from the data agree with Jorgensen's (1991, 177-179) opinion that mental activity verbs, including *remember*, can be viewed as a gradual process when used in the progressive:

- (8) 2007 SPOK NBC Today I think I'm...I think I'm **remembering** that I'm not supposed to put this...
- (9) 1998 SPOK NPR Weekend You know, I'm **remembering** this.
- (10) 1995 SPOK CBS EyeToEye I felt I **was remembering** things a little bit better than I have before.

Also the metaphysical theory seems rather applicable in explaining the use of the progressive with the verb *remember*. In the next extracts the speakers are using the progressive when commenting what they observe happening. Extract (11) is especially interesting, since the speaker (Rivera) first uses the progressive to express his observation that Mike appears to remember something, and after getting confirmation from Mike then uses the simple form to express that Mike's remembering is a fact that holds true. This is exactly what Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger mean with phenomenal and structural properties of a situation:

- (11) 1992 SPOK Ind Geraldo MIKE: I actually did. I actually... RIVERA: You're **remembering** now? MIKE: Yeah. RIVERA: He remembers now.
- (12) 1990 SPOK ABC Nightline But Mr. Mitchelson, forgive me if I **am remembering** this incorrectly, but...
- (13) 2006 SPOK NBC Today Because you're **not remembering** to take a pill every day.
- (14) 1997 SPOK CNN Combanay Alzheimer's just set in. He's **remembering** his days of great war with John Wayne...

The data of this study seems to agree with Römer's view that the progressives of *remember* mainly expressed continuous and non-repeated actions (73.33% of cases). Indeed, both of the functions described here refer to an activity that has duration, an activity in progress. However, the data does not support Römer's finding that approximately 26% of the cases of *remember* in the progressive have the function of 'continuous and repeated'. There was only one extract that could be seen to include the meaning of repeatedness:

- (15) 2008 SPOK ABC 20/20 Is it, you're **remembering** what you were wearing.

However, the meaning is not very clear here, and the meaning of the progressive here could be defined as describing a situation on the basis of observation or as gradual change. Furthermore Römer does not regard gradual change as one of the meanings of the progressive with the verb *remember*, but argues instead that the progressives of *remember* express general validity in 26.67%

of cases and politeness/softening in 20.00% of cases (2005, 162-163). These are functions that the data of this study does not appear to include.

5.3.9 Understand

The COCA spoken corpus includes 107 progressives of *understand*, of which the majority (86.9%) are present progressives. Its progressives typically have a personal pronoun subject (67.3%), of which *I* is the most common with 25.2%, but also *they* is used rather often (13%). In addition, the progressives of *need* are negated often, in 20% of cases. It appears that the progressive forms of *understand* most often present a state as an event, as an active mental work where the agent has an active role, which is in agreement with what Smith (1983) and Biber et al. (1999) state about the progressive with stative verbs:

- (1) 2006 SPOK CBS Sixty The music is obviously a conversation to him and he's **understanding** it on the levels in which the composer was really trying to convey it.
- (2) 2005 SPOK CNN Insight The government **are understanding** their needs now and we are trying to...

In addition, often the progressives of *understand* appear to convey that there is gradual change going on. This meaning is emphasized by using the word *more*, but the meaning remains without it, as well:

- (3) 2000 SPOK NPR FreshAir I'm going through the therapy, and I'm **understanding** some things about life I never understood.
- (4) 2003 SPOK CNN SunMorn More and more people **are understanding** now that it's aggression that wins...
- (5) 1998 SPOK Ind NewsForum And I think more and more people **are understanding** now that we can probably handle larger populations in the United States and elsewhere...
- (6) 2006 SPOK Fox Cavuto I think the president and the NSC **are understanding**, more than perhaps they did some time ago, that this is a terrorism...

Also Jorgensen (1991, 177-179) is of the opinion that with *understand*, the progressive can refer to a gradual change, and also Römer found this function in her data in 11.11% of the progressive cases of *understand*. However, it is also possible to explain the extracts above in terms of metaphysical theory, i.e. that the progressive is used when the situation is described on the basis of what can be observed, without making claims about how things usually are. This includes that there is

possibility for change, which agrees with Williams' (2002) definition. The following extracts show how the situation is described on the basis of observation:

- (7) 1999 SPOK CNN Talkback I guess I'm **not** quite **understanding** what you're trying to say.
- (8) 2004 SPOK NPR Sunday ...actually, the world right now, in my view, **is understanding** why the picture we see after the war is the almost unanimous picture...
- (9) 2006 SPOK Fox O'Reilly I doubt it, Lynn. You **seem to be understanding** what's going on here just fine.
- (10) 2003 SPOK Ind Oprah I don't think that she's **understanding**, firstly, about love being a behavior.
- (11) 1990 SPOK ABC Nightline Violence is the only thing the country **seems to be understanding** right now.
- (12) 2001 SPOK CNN Event I think American people **are** clearly **understanding** that this is a long term process...

As can be seen from the extracts above, the use of the progressive also makes the sentences more polite, since they do not make claims about the character of the other person but only comment on his/her performance. There were also some sentences with a more complex structure, which again increases politeness:

- (13) 2002 SPOK CNN KingWknd **Are** you **understanding** everything being said?
- (14) 1999 SPOK Fox Cavuto I'm **understanding** that this has gotten to be a little bit of a tension convention between you...
- (15) 2000 SPOK CNN Talkback You **seem not to be understanding** that.
- (16) 2002 SPOK CNN LiveSun But Ben feels like Bruce **might not be understanding** how he works.

The results differ quite remarkably from those of Römer's (2005, 161-164), who does not consider politeness as a function of the progressive with *understand*, but claims that *understand* is quite often used in the progressive to express 'emphasis/shock' (55.56%) or, in 33.33% of cases, 'general validity', i.e. repeated action. These functions were not found in the data of this study.

5.3.10 Want

The progressives of the verb *want* turned out to be more evenly distributed between tense forms than any other verb in this study. The progressives of *want* typically have a personal pronoun subject, of which *I* and *they* are the most common, with proportions of 21.7% and 15.2% respectively. Nearly

10% of its progressives have the word *people* as subject, and less than 7% of its progressives are negated.

As regards the meaning of the progressive with *want*, it can very often be explained in terms of describing situation on the basis of observation (Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger 1982):

- (1) 1992 SPOK CBS Street I'm still -- I'm not sure if **I'm wanting** to do this.
- (2) 2010 SPOK NPR TalkNation But I have noticed they're **wanting** the most value that they can possibly get.
- (3) 1997 SPOK CNN Company And I understand that they're **wanting** to do a very good job.

The progressives here also seem to express what Smith (1983, 497-498) means when she points out that the progressive turns a state into an activity. *Wanting* can be seen as an active form of behaviour here. Consequently, these extract also include the implication that the situation may not always stay the same, whereas the simple form of the verb *want* denotes to a state with no beginning or end. This view disagrees with the analysis of Römer, who reports that over 80% of the progressives of *want* in her study expressed continuous and non-repeated situations (2005, 161).

In the data of this study *want* was also used in the past tense quite often, in 23 percent of all cases. Sometimes the past progressive very clearly expresses the temporariness of the situation:

- (4) 2008 SPOK ABC 20/20 I think she was angry, enraged, **was wanting** to punish him and hurt him and then realized...
- (5) 2008 SPOK CBS 48 Hours I guess I **was wanting** more than he **was wanting** to give, you know?

Applying Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's (1982) metaphysical theory, it can be argued that these cases can also be seen as situations where the speaker is describing a past event as he/she observed it at the time being. Unfortunately, they do not provide any examples in the past progressive, so it remains a bit unclear whether they think it is possible to apply this theory to past tense progressives. However, it does not seem totally inappropriate as regards extracts (4) and (5).

In her study, Römer reported that the progressive with *want* expresses politeness/softening in 17.12% of cases. It was possible to find this function in quite a many of the tokens in the data of this study. The politeness function is more often to be found in past progressives, but sometimes also with present progressives:

- (6) 2003 SPOK CNN King Hi. I'm **wanting** to connect with my grandma. Hello?
- (7) 1997 SPOK CNN King Hello, yeah, I'm **wanting** to know if you can clone a clone?
- (8) 2003 SPOK CBS 48 Hours He **was wanting** to know how the case was going on...
- (9) 1991 SPOK CNN King I **was** just **wanting** to know if you're going to have another book out?

In addition, there were as many as 62 cases (16.2% of all progressives of *want*) that had a present perfect progressive. In these cases, the progressive seems to express the duration of the situation. However, it could be argued that even the simple present perfect expresses duration, and that it is the intensity or dynamicity that the progressive adds here.

- (10) 2010 SPOK ABC ThisWeek I've **been wanting** to ask you this for some time.
- (11) 2010 SPOK NBC Today Sources say she and Jay-Z **have been wanting** a child and she is pregnant.
- (12) 1997 SPOK CBS 48 Hours My grandson **has been wanting** one and my little girl's **been wanting** one, so.
- (13) 2010 SPOK NPR TalkNation But I've **been wanting** to do it for a long time because I know so many gospel songs...

Again, the metaphysical theory would explain these as situations where the speaker bases his/her utterances on observations, not on knowledge. It is, naturally, difficult to tell why the speakers here really used the progressive, although it must be admitted that Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's explanation does make sense.

Furthermore, the corpus included 7 cases that had the past perfect progressive. Compared to the present perfect progressives, the difference is that the past perfect progressive implies that the situation has ended. In extract (17) here the speaker even clarifies that his opinion about the issue has not changed:

- (14) 2003 SPOK NPR ATC Producer Alison Owen says she'd **been wanting** to make a move about Plath for years...
- (15) 1994 SPOK SunMorn ...and like I said, that's what I **had been wanting** to hear for...all my life.
- (16) 2006 SPOK CNN King Have you ever worked with him? - **I had been wanting** to, do want to.

Finally, there were also quite a many cases with a more complex progressive structure, where the meaning of the progressive can be defined the same way as with other sentence structures. It can

be argued that in most cases the progressive is used when the speaker is describing what he/she can observe happening, but the progressive can also be seen as implying that the situation is temporary:

- (17) 1990 SPOK PBS Newshour The Syrians **seem to be wanting** to have much better relations with the West.
- (18) 1990 SPOK CNN Crossfire They're **going to be wanting** to know what I'm doing.
- (19) 2004 SPOK Fox Sunday If I were the president, I **would be wanting** him to stay.

6 Conclusion

This chapter aims to summarize the results of this study and answer the research questions set out in the first chapter. The frequencies and contexts of the progressives are handled in section 6.1, whereas section 6.2 aims at a conclusion of the functions of the progressive with verbs of emotion and cognition.

6.1 Frequencies and contexts

First of all, the results of this study show that verbs of emotion and cognition are rather rare in the progressive. However, the progressive seems to be slightly more common with stative verbs in American English than in British English. The average normalized frequency of the verbs included in this study was 1.38, which was a bit higher than in the two British corpora (Römer 2005), where the same verbs appeared in the progressive 1.09 times per million words. The verbs *believe*, *know*, *like*, *remember*, *understand* and *want* are more often used in the progressive in the data of this study than in the data of Römer's study. However, the progressives of *agree* and *need* are more common in the British corpora, and *forget* appears in the progressive as frequently in both variants of English. It must be noted, however, that the spoken corpora of BYU consists of transcriptions of discussion in television programs, whereas the BNC and the BoE include recorded conversations. It could be assumed that when in front of television cameras people tend to pay more attention to speaking in a correct way than when they are discussing in everyday situations. Therefore the fact that the number of progressives in the COCA data exceeds the number of respective progressives in the BNC/BoE data is not to be undermined, although the differences are rather small.

As regards the contexts of the verbs, there results mostly confirm what Römer discovered in her study. In the data of this study the progressives occur mainly in the present or past tense, the result being similar with the British corpora. There is some variation between individual verbs, the progressives of *want* and *know* being more evenly distributed among tense forms than other verbs. In addition, the verb *need* appears in complex progressive constructions more frequently than other

verbs. However, the progressives occur in the present perfect clearly more often in the American corpus than in the British corpora. In the data of this study the progressives also rather often appear in more complex constructions. It needs to be reminded that Römer did not include complex progressives in her study at all.

As for subjects, verbs of cognition and emotion have a strong tendency of taking personal pronoun subjects, especially the pronoun *I*, which is a result that supports Römer's findings in the British corpora. There is, however, variation between individual verbs as to which personal pronoun they favour. The pronouns *I*, *we*, and *you* are the most common subjects in the British corpora, whereas in the American corpus *they* is used as often as *we* and *you*. The pronoun *I* is favoured especially with the verbs *like* and *love*, which makes sense considering the meaning of these verbs. However, the progressives of *like*, *remember* and *understand* also rather often take *people* as subjects, and the verb *know* very often has other subjects than personal pronouns.

The negation of the progressives of this study varies quite a lot between 0.70 and 21.43 percent. The progressives of verbs *like* and *understand* are negated most often in both American and British corpora. Differences between the variants are rather minor: the verbs *remember* and *know* are negated more frequently in the British data, whereas the verb *forget* is negated more often in the American data. Compared to the overall negation of all progressives in the British data of Römer's study, verbs of emotion and cognition appear to be negated slightly more often than progressives in general.

6.2 The functions of the progressive

As mentioned in section 6.1, verbs of cognition and emotion are rather rare in the progressive. However, this does not mean that their use in the progressive is nonexistent or inappropriate. The extracts from the data of this study prove that using the progressive with verbs of emotion and

cognition has its justification. Furthermore, the analysis of the data clarifies the logic behind the progressive not only with stative verbs, but also in general.

Although all the verbs included in of this study are labelled as ‘stative verbs’, it is possible to discern two types of verbs as regards their meaning and the functions of the progressive. The verb *forget* refers to events that have short duration, whereas *agree, believe, know, like, love, need* and *want* refer to states that naturally have duration. The verbs *remember* and *understand* seem to be somewhere in between, since they can be interpreted as punctual situations i.e. having a short duration, or as states. The functions of the progressive vary according to the verb type. On the basis of the results of this study it can be said that the verbs *agree, believe, know, like, love, need,* and *want,* are stative verbs, i.e. verbs that denote a state, whereas *forget, remember, and understand* are dynamic verbs that refer to cognitive action. The progressive has different functions with these verbs than with stative verbs.

As regards stative verbs, the results of this study show that the functions of the progressive with stative verbs differ from those with dynamic verbs. First of all, as several linguists have already noted, the definition of the progressive as expressing incompleteness/imperfectiveness, and describing an event ‘in progress’, or ‘continuous’ at a particular time is not applicable with verbs that denote a state, since those verbs already, in their simple form, include duration and continuousness. Applying Comrie’s (1976, 3-5) definition of aspects it could be said that stative verbs in their simple form have imperfective aspect, whereas the simple form of a dynamic verb has perfective aspect. Since states do not include the beginning or the end, the situation denoted by the simple form of a stative verb is imperfective, in other words in progress and continuous. Thus, with stative verbs the progressive implies that the situation has a beginning and an end, in other words it could be said that the progressives of stative verbs have perfective aspect.

In addition, implying that the situation has a beginning and an end can also be argued to imply that there is a possibility that it might change. The data therefore supports Smith’s (1983, 480-483) definition that the progressive presents a state as an event, i.e. as a situation that has a beginning and

an end. Since beginnings and endings naturally involve change (Smith 1983, 480-483), also Williams' (2002) theory of the progressive as expressing 'susceptibility to change' of the situation, applies to the progressive of stative verbs. Furthermore, it can be said that since the progressive includes the possibility of change, it also often expresses temporariness, which also Biber et al. (1999, 471) see as a function of the progressive with stative verbs. However, it must be clarified that the progressive does not imply that the situation *will* change, but it expresses the *possibility* of change. Thus, it can be argued that the concepts 'temporariness' and 'susceptibility to change' are very closely related and can both be present in the progressives of stative verbs. The data of this study shows that the progressive includes Jørgensen's (174, 176-177) and Huddleston and Pullum's (2002, 170) views of the progressive adding dynamicity to the situation with stative verbs. That is especially true with verbs of emotion, though 'dynamicity' in itself is not sufficient in explaining the logic of the progressive.

As regards the verbs *forget*, *remember*, and *understand*, the results of this study show that the functions of the progressive with these verbs are partly different from other verbs of this study. The results suggest that *forget*, *remember* and *understand* should be considered as dynamic verbs since they do not refer to states, but to mental action. It is rather clear that the simple forms of these verbs refer to events that have a beginning and an end, i.e. have perfective aspect. Therefore, the functions of the progressive with these verbs are rather similar than with other dynamic verbs. The argument of Biber et al. (1999, 473-474) that situations that can be prolonged can be used in the progressive, applies as regards the verbs *forget*, *remember*, and *understand*. In fact, these three verbs often refer to rather punctual events, and the data of this study shows that the progressive can add duration to the situation denoted by these verbs. This is in accordance with what Quirk et al. (1985, 197-198) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 165-166) claim to be one of the functions of the progressive. Furthermore, the analysis of *forget*, *remember*, and *understand* show that rather often the progressive indicates gradual change, which is a function of the progressive according to Leech and Svartvik (2002, 74) and Jørgensen (1991, 173-176).

Finally, Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's (1982) theory that the progressive is used whenever the speaker is commenting on the phenomenal properties of the situation, i.e. what he/she can observe, can explain the use of the progressive with all the verbs in this study, both dynamic and stative. As Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger (1982, 79) point out, the metaphysical theory is not a function of the progressive, but it endeavours to explain the use of the progressive in a deeper level. Thus, the choice between the simple and the progressive can be explained in terms of structural and phenomenal properties of the situation, and the progressive can still include the meanings of possible change, temporariness, duration or gradual change. In addition, Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's theory can be seen to explain why the progressive is used to make a sentence more polite. Since the progressive implies that what is being said is based on observation in that particular situation, it is often less harsh and more polite than the simple form, which comments on situations based on knowledge, making claims beyond evidence.

All in all, the results of this study show that the progressive is not incompatible with stative verbs, but its functions are different with stative verbs and with dynamic verbs. Thus, this study proves the fact that the progressive is not a purely grammatical, but a lexical-grammatical phenomenon. The meaning of the verb affects the meaning that the progressive has when used with that particular verb. It can also be said that Goldsmith and Woisetschlaeger's (1982) metaphysical theory is applicable with both dynamic and stative verbs, and it can actually explain why the speaker chooses to use the progressive. However, the theory does not seem to totally exclude other functions of the progressive. Finally, the results of this study show that as regards stative verbs, there is a need to redefine the progressive and its functions. Although this study has aimed at that direction, what is suggested here can by no means be considered a sufficient definition, but more research is needed for that.

Source of data

The Contemporary Corpus of American English. Available at www.americancorpus.org. April 2012.

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