Progressive markers in Germanic languages

1. Introduction

1.1. The state of the art

Progressive markers have never been treated systematically in any grammar of a Germanic language other than English. (The English progressive was not part of the present investigation, as it is dealt with by Bertinetto (this volume).) The reason for the neglect may lie in the fact that the progressive is nowhere grammaticalized to the same extent as in English. This is reflected on the one hand in the optionality of the markers, on the other in a variety of alternative forms.

The progressive constructions are, however, mentioned in various subchapters of grammars, sometimes in a chapter on participles (Koefoed 1969: 188) or on the use of the preterite (Jones & Gade 1981: 119), sometimes only in a footnote (Duden 1984: 94, Erben 1972: 75). In the German tradition they are subsumed under ‘durative aspect’ or ‘aktionsart’; in grammars with an Anglo-Saxon orientation they are often presented as optional possibilities for translating the English progressive. Kress (1982: 159f) has a whole chapter on the Icelandic progressive formed with an, but refers to the postural verb construction only in a footnote. Hansen (1967: 30–31) classifies the Danish postural verb construction as a durative aktionsart/aspect, whereas vore ved at / vore først med is said to indicate non-completed activities. The Dutch grammar by Geers et al. (1984) offers the most explicit discussion, devoting several pages to both the postural verb construction and aan het V zijn. Both are, together with continuative, subsumed under ‘duratief aspect’.

Of the few recent articles, Andersson (1989) deserves special mention. Andersson describes the use of the German am-form in the Rhineland dialect, but he also gives a brief summary of the Standard German progressive markers which gives more information than any of the grammars. Boogaart (1991), van der Hauwe (1992) and Bhatt & Schmidt (1993) are attempts to explain the Dutch and German progressives in theoretical models. I have earlier published two articles on Fering and on German and Dutch progressives (Ebert 1989, 1996), based mainly on native speaker intuition and/or written prose.
1.2. The data

The investigation of tense and aspect in EUROTY'P was based on questionnaires. Answers to the Progressive Questionnaire (PROGQ, see p. ??7 in this volume) were provided for the following languages:

- Icelandic: 1
- Swedish: 7
- Danish: 3
- North Frisian: 6 (4 Fering-Öömrang, 1 Widdinghiird, 1 Mooring)
- Frysk: 1 (based on several native speakers' judgments)
- Dutch: 2
- German: 8 (5 standard colloquial, 1 Rhineland, 2 mixed with Rhineland influence)
- Züritüütsch: 4

We collected no data for Faroese, Norwegian, Low German, and Yiddish, which will be mentioned briefly in part 5. The different forms used in the answers to PROGQ are listed in Table 4 at the end of this article. Eight questionnaires have been neglected in this Table: three Swedish ones which do not contain a single progressive construction; the questionnaire from the Mooring dialect of North Frisian, as practically only 1st forms (see Table 1) are used; two German questionnaires which have progressive markers only in the incidental schema and in PROGQ: 1. These results are, of course, interesting in themselves, but they need not be listed. Two of the Züritüütsch questionnaires, which did not yield anything new, were neglected mainly for reasons of space.

Evaluation of the PROGQs was problematic for several reasons. Some consultants tried to list all possibilities, whereas others gave only the translation that came to mind first. Some checked and discussed with several native speakers, so that their questionnaire already represents a broader consensus (e.g., Frysk). The informants did not always understand what the intended meaning was. If the misunderstanding is obvious, I have left a blank in Table 4. Very few informants answered the theoretical questions.

In some of the languages the progressive constructions belong to an informal style. They are frequent in the spoken language, but avoided in writing. In a few cases I had the possibility to conduct an oral interview following the completion of the questionnaire: the results were sometimes rather different, especially for German, where many dialectal and sociocultural differences exist. A systematic comparison of the written and the elicited data on one hand with spoken discourse on the other would be interesting, but was beyond the aims and possibilities of the project.

1.3. Inventory of progressive markers

Most Germanic languages have at least two types of constructions used in the typical progressive contexts:

I. Postural verb constructions:
   - "sit" + to + INF (Frisian, Dutch)
   - "sit" + and + V (Scandinavian)

II. Prepositional constructions:
   - be + in/at + the + INF (Dutch, Friisian, German)
   - be + at + to + INF (Dutch)
   - be + to + INF (Icelandic)

III. 'hold' constructions:
   - hold end/in (Swedish, Norwegian, Yiddish)

The postural verbs include the verbs for 'sit', 'stand', 'lie', 'hang' and 'go (around)'. The verb 'go' in a POS-construction always indicates undirected motion. German and Züritüütsch lack the POS-construction. The PREP- and the HOLD-constructions are used in roughly the same way, and languages have either one or the other. I have distinguished a subgroup PREP 1st for Frisian and German forms with the preposition bi, bei 'at, near', which is restricted to agentive verbs.

The expressions listed under IV in Table 1 all emphasize the dynamic, active characteristic of the event, comparable to French être en train de or English be busy doing. All are marginal; only a few forms were used in the questionnaires (see Appendix).

Table 1. Progressive markers (3rd person sing. forms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>PREP</th>
<th>'bei'</th>
<th>HOLD</th>
<th>BUSY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ice</td>
<td>sit continent er oon</td>
<td>húlla på och/rat</td>
<td>er i fied gol</td>
<td>er i gang med</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swd</td>
<td>sit och</td>
<td>er ved at</td>
<td>los bai tol/on</td>
<td>los bai tol/in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>sidder og</td>
<td>er ved at</td>
<td>los bai tol/on</td>
<td>los bai tol/in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>sitte/la</td>
<td>is oon/t</td>
<td>los bai tol/on</td>
<td>los bai tol/in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frysk</td>
<td>sitte</td>
<td>is oon/t</td>
<td>los bai tol/on</td>
<td>los bai tol/in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dut</td>
<td>zit te</td>
<td>is aan het</td>
<td>is bai tol/on</td>
<td>is bai tol/in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gem</td>
<td>ist en</td>
<td>ist bein</td>
<td>ist bai tol/on</td>
<td>ist bai tol/in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Züri</td>
<td>isch an</td>
<td>is bai tol/on</td>
<td>ist bai tol/in</td>
<td>ist bai tol/in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far</td>
<td>sit og</td>
<td>er og</td>
<td>holde på (med)</td>
<td>holde på (med)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nor</td>
<td>sid og</td>
<td>er fäst vid at</td>
<td>holde på (med)</td>
<td>holde på (med)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yid</td>
<td>sit un</td>
<td>is oon/t</td>
<td>holde på (med)</td>
<td>holde på (med)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LowGem</td>
<td>sit un</td>
<td>is oon/t</td>
<td>holde på (med)</td>
<td>holde på (med)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Use of the progressive markers

2.1. Test cases

The PREP and POS-constructions were used in typical progressive contexts, e.g., as answers to the question 'What is X doing right now?' (PROGQ: 1, 6–18) and in the incidental schema (see (3)). (As the structure of all Germanic languages is very similar to that of English, I have chosen to provide word-by-word rather than morphemic glosses, which would complicate the reading unnecessarily. I also gloss sentences with parallel constructions together for reasons of space. Icelandic að corresponds to both 'at' and 'to').

(1) (PROGQ: 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ice</td>
<td>Hún er að vinna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Han er ved at arbejde.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wid</td>
<td>Ji es bai to iepüütten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swd</td>
<td>Hon håller på att arbeta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FerÖöm</td>
<td>Hat as unn t köögín.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frysk</td>
<td>Hja is aan t ítten-stöckén.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Ze is aan het köcken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grm</td>
<td>Sie ist am köochen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Züri</td>
<td>Si iach am choöhe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) (PROGQ: 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swd</td>
<td>Han stiter och lüer tidningen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Han stider og lüer avisen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wid</td>
<td>Hi stt on löst et bläät.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FerÖöm</td>
<td>Hi sat unn t bleed a leeenzen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frysk</td>
<td>Hy sit on kräntte te lezen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dut</td>
<td>Hij sit do kräntte te lezenan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a rule, progressives were not used in the negative test sentences PROGQ: 2, 4, 5, 71 exemplifying habitual (but cf. (33)), repeated or sequential actions. No progressives were used with stative verbs in any of the languages (PROGQ: 39–43). Unlike in English, it is not possible to use a progressive to express temporary states. Thus none of the other Germanic languages can have a progressive marker in the translations of: 'She is sitting in the kitchen' (PROGQ: 28), 'The shirt is hanging on the nail' (PROGQ: 29), 'You are being rude this evening' (PROGQ: 42).

Progressives generally do not combine with adverbs that specify a limited duration. No PREP- or HOLD-constructions were used in PROGQ: 48. The fact that a number of informants in various languages chose a POS here (cf. (29)) suggests a different status for this construction.

2.2. Transitive verbs and incorporation

The North Frisian and Standard German PREP and POS do not combine with a direct object. In order to use a progressive, the verb phrase has to be intrastringized by way of incorporation. Incorporation is common, also in Frysk and Dutch, if the combination verb + noun designates a typical activity. This characterization is nec-
essarily vague, as no well-defined rules exist and there is much individual variation. Thus peeling potatoes and catching butterflies are obviously 'typical' activities in Germanic societies, whereas catching elephants and writing a thesis are not. If the object cannot be incorporated, North Frisian and German speakers have to resort to some other construction, as in (5b).7

(4) (PROGQ: 12)
Frysk  Hja is oan't jirpel-skiten/ is j. oan't skiten.
Dutch  Ze is aan het aardappel-schillen/ is j. aan het schillen.
FerÖöm  Hat as van't kerdaaiple-skinin/ as e. van't skilen.
Grm  Sie ist an Kartoffel-schillen/ ist K. an Schillen.

she is IN/AT the potato(es)-peeling is p. IN/AT the peeling
‘She is peeling potatoes.’

(5) a. (pROGQ: 14)
Frysk  Hja is trije kilo jirpel-s van't skiten.
Dutch  Ze zit drie kilo aardappelen AT_the peeling.
Grm  Sie sit dabei, 6 Pfund Kartoffeln zu schillen.

she sits 3 kilo potatoes to peel
‘She is peeling 6 pounds of potatoes.’

There is an alternative construction which transforms the direct object into a prepositional phrase, thereby deteleizing it (cf. also FerÖöm (3)).

(6) (PROGQ: 18)
FerÖöm  Hat akraft bi sin doktorarbeit.
Grm  Sie schreibt an ihrer Doktorarbeit.

she writes at her dissertation
‘She is writing her dissertation.’

In the Rhineland dialect, am is used with transitive verbs just as naturally as with intransitives (cf. Andersson 1989; Bhatt & Schmidt 1993).11 Some Zürichisch speakers incorporate definite noun phrases and even locative complements.12 (The Zürichisch examples are rendered in the transcription used in the questionnaires.)

2.3. Combinability with tense, voice and modal verbs

There are in principle no restrictions for the combination of progressives with tenses. As marking of future time reference is not common in any of the languages, it is not surprising that we found only present progressive forms in future contexts (e.g. PROGQ: 83). Only the Icelandic future marker cannot be combined with the progressive (Kress 1982: 159). The Dutch future marker is more acceptable with aan’t than with POS (De Groot 1992: 7). In Feröe-Omøring, inserting vaal or vaal with a progressive marker invariably yields a modal interpretation (cf. Ebert 1994a).

(10) a. (FTRQ: 2, Dahl 1992: 64)
Swd  Han kommer att hilda pd att skriva ett brev.
he comes to hold on to write a letter
In PROGQ: 81 (=11a) with a present perfect both progressive constructions were used, though POS is somewhat more natural in Dutch and the Frisian languages.15

(11) a. (PROGQ: 83)
    Icelandic is the only language where a past perfect was used in PROGQ: 82. Combinations of past perfect with progressive markers seem somewhat odd in the other languages; I have only found a single natural occurrence with a POS. The example translates naturally into Fering with a POS, but not with PREP.

(11) c. Dan [På politigården i Malmö bed Per Månsson tandselkteren over]
    which he had sat:PP and chewed:PP on
    (Sjöwall & Wahlstöd, cited from Haberland 1978: 65)
2.4. Combinability with types of verbs

The progressive constructions are excluded with stative verbs. They are common with dynamic verbs, both stelic (activities) and telic (accomplishments). The restriction of PREP and POS to intransitive constructions in North Frisian and German is syntactic rather than semantic. Telic intransitives do not pose a problem with "wan'tem", although they are somewhat odd with POS (cf. part 3.1). The progressive is even obligatory in some cases, for example in (14a), if the people were later saved from starvation. Replacing the progressive by a simple form in (14b) would describe the situation as much less dramatic.

(14) a. FerÖöm | Grm
Jo wair wan't fethongrin, jo hed wennen riles rochts tu
Sie waren am Vertunser, sie hatten Wochen nichts
they were at the starving ... 
ijdjen fungen.
Rechtes gegessen.
'They were starving, they had not had proper food in weeks.'

b. Grm
Alle Varianten des Nordfräischen zind am Ausserben.
all varieties of North Frisian are at the out_dying
'All varieties of North Frisian are dying out.'

c. FerÖöm | Grm
Hi as wun't promovirtin.
Er ist am Promovieren.
he is at the dissertation_writing 
'He is writing his dissertation.'

If a progressive is used with a verb that is normally conceived of as momentaneous, it refers to a short pretransformative phase, or it has the meaning of 'almost'. No POS is possible here.

(15) a. FerÖöm | Grm
Ik wiar wun't/rast tu matlassen, iar at telefon
Ich war am Einschlafen, als das Telefon
I was at the /lay to falling_asleep when the phone
klingert.
klingele.
rang
'i was falling asleep when the phone rang.'

2.5. Motion progressive

The theoretical part of the PROGQ contained a question about a 'motion progressive' (Part II, 1e) and a 'locomotive' (Part II, 2c). Of the informants who answered the theoretical part, all but one stated that there were no such constructions in their language. Nevertheless the following sentences were given in the translations of the questionnaire sentences:

b. Dan | Jeg var ved at falde i sovn.
I was at to fall_in sleep
'i almost fell asleep.' (no progressive reading possible)

The progressive is generally excluded with directed motion verbs. Cases with momentaneous motion verbs like (16) are interpreted in the same way as (15a), i.e., referring to a short time span before the transition point.

(16) a. (PROGQ: 21)
Grm | Ziri
Sie ist (gerade) am Rausgehen.
Si isch (grad) am ussegaa.
'She is going out right now.'

b. (PROGQ: 56)
Swed | Danish
Tåget håller på at gå.
Toget er ved at køre.
'The train is about to leave.'

No progressives were used with phasal verbs in Dutch, standard colloquial German, North Frisian or Fryslân. The few cases where a progressive was combined with 'start' or 'finish' (PROGQ: 23–26) have an imminential meaning. The first Swedish informant (see Appendix) uses hålla på att, which generally can express imminential or progressive in these cases, whereas he has hålla på och with progressive meaning.15 Agentivity plays a major role in the choice between PREP and POS. With non-agentive verbs POS is clearly preferred in the languages which have it. The distribution of PREP vs. POS will be dealt with in section 3.

The 'busy'-constructions listed under IV are explicit means of indicating that a person is in the process of doing something. They combine only with agentive verbs, as do the PREP-constructions listed under Ib.

(17) Dutch
'Hij is bezig te slapen.'
FerÖöm
'Hij is diarbi tu slaipen / *hi tu slaipen.
Grm
'Er ist dabei zu schlaifen / *beim Schlafen.
'He is sleeping.'
(18) Danish
a. (PROGQ: 1) "Hun går rundt og laver mad. She goes around and makes food."
   "She is preparing dinner. / She is running around preparing dinner."

   b. (PROGQ: 52) "Han går rundt og glemmer folks navne. He goes around and forgets people's names."
   "He keeps forgetting people's names."

   c. (PROGQ: 44) "Hun går og danser ved siden af. She goes and dances at side:DEF off."
   "She is dancing in the next room."

(19) Wüdinghiird (PROGQ: 33) "Hi lapst steeri wäch an fernärmed sän näber rnä sin stupid questions."
   "He walks continuously and insults his neighbor with his stupid questions."

   "Stephen was looking forward to his birthday."

   b. Dutch "Casper was ziek en liep te hoesten. Casper was ill and was (going around) coughing."
   "Casper was ill and was (going around) coughing."

   c. Dutch "Hij loopt te pochen. He walks around to pochen."

The Danish consultant explains: One would normally say "Hun står og laver mad ('stands and'); with går rundt one gets the impression that the person is moving around 'like a wild hen'. A negative connotation of this construction is also mentioned in the Dutch grammar (Geerts et al.: 538).

A negative emotion can, however, also be expressed by (other) postural verbs (cf. (21a), (26)), and a motion verb construction can have a neutral interpretation, parallel to that of POS-constructions, as in:

   "Stephen was looking forward to his birthday."

   b. Dutch "Casper was ziek en liep te hoesten. Casper was ill and was (going around) coughing."
   "Casper was ill and was (going around) coughing."

There is thus no clear evidence for distinguishing a motion progressive from postural verb constructions, nor for distinguishing a motion progressive from a locomotive of the type 'go around'. German is the only language that has no POS, and it does not allow läuft herum and V. It does have the attitudinal construction läuft herum und V, but also stativistische herum und V. In the other languages there is no clear distinction between constructions with 'go' and 'go around'. The motion progressive can therefore be included in the POS-constructions, 'going (around)' being a type of constant body position.16 A POS-construction with a verb meaning 'go, walk' is common in Danish, Dutch and Frisian, but very restricted in North Frisian. For Icelandic and Swedish more detailed information is necessary.

3. Prepositional vs. postural verb constructions

3.1. Semantic and pragmatic conditions

What factors determine the choice between PREP/HOLD and POS? Although the PROGQ was not specially designed to test this opposition, some general roles and tendencies became apparent. In Table 2 I have arranged the forms used in the
Table 2. POS vs PREP with types of verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Danish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>+agentive</strong></td>
<td><strong>+telic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGQ:8</td>
<td>build a shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>give a present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>count 2 chickens out of the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-agentive</strong></td>
<td><strong>-telic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGQ:7</td>
<td>sing a song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>rot (Scandin.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>+telic</strong></td>
<td><strong>-agentive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGQ:12</td>
<td>swim (as a song)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-intentional</strong></td>
<td><strong>-intentional</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>insult the neighbor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* b stands for bai; the other small letters abbreviate various types or PREP forms, which should speak for themselves. Cf. Table 1.

PROGQ according to verb types. This arrangement reveals certain patterns that are lost in the general list in Table 4 (Appendix).

Agentic verbs combine in principle with both PREP/HOLD and POS. Since the postural verbs still carry some of their original meaning, they are in general restricted to events that take place with the protagonist in a constant position. POS was used in PROGQ: 7 (<d> and PROGQ: 70 for 'read' in all the Frisian and in most Scandinavian questionnaires, in PROGQ: 12 for 'peel potatoes' in most Frisian and in some Scandinavian questionnaires, i.e., with activities that are typically carried out while sitting (or standing in the case of Scandinavians peeling potatoes). But POS is always possible if the activity is carried out, or imagined as being carried out, with a certain position of the body. Thus informants have people 'sit' or 'stand' cleaning a gun (PROGQ: 6) or singing a song (PROGQ: 9). "sit", 'stand' or 'go around' admitting their guilt (PROGQ: 34), 'sit' playing cards (PROGQ: 45) and 'go around' dancing (PROGQ: 44).

The choice between PREP, POS and simple form seems to be partly dependent on personal preferences. The second Danish consultant translated practically all agentic verbs with both POS and PREP; the other two Danes used no or one POS in the examples of Table 2. The POS-constructions of the two Dutch informants are practically in complementary distribution: one has nearly all his POS forms with agentic verbs, the other has POS only with non-agentic verbs.

Whether a postural verb was used or not with non-agentic verbs depends again on the general condition mentioned above, namely the constant position of the protagonist.
niet or object. There was a high number of POS in PROQQ: 35 (e22). One usually dreams while lying down, and although it is also possible to sit, stand or go around dreaming only the verb 'lie' was used in the questionnaires.

(22) (PROQQ: 35)

Dan Han ligger og drømmer om sin pige.
Wid Hi luitt an drinint funn sin frøndin.
FerÖöm Hi luitt faan sin foomen tu dremeen.
Frysk Hi leti fan syn faam te dreamen.
Dutsch Hij liggt van zijn vriendin te dremmen.
he lies and dreams about/of his girl(friend)
He is dreaming of his girlfriend.

The verb 'dream' is odd with a PREP/HOLD form. Two consultants wrote that this combination would imply that the person is not sleeping, or that he is absorbed in his dreams; i.e., a more active interpretation results.

Table 2 suggests that agentivity is the crucial factor and non-agentive verbs rule out PREP. That this is not generally true was clear already from Fering and German (14a, b).

No clear picture emerged for the role of telicity in the choice of the progressive form. PREP is sometimes preferred with telic verbs (cf. (23)), but this did not become clear from the questionnaires. Östen Dahl (PROQQ comments) thinks that "hälla på is more often used with telic verbs, and in general with goal-directed activities. With the postural verbs, it is rather the other way round". This is only partly confirmed in Table 2. There is not a single POS with telic verbs in Swedish, but there are many HOLD forms with atelic verbs. Dahl himself does not make a clear difference between atelic PROQQ: 12 (peel potatoes) and telic PROQQ: 13-15 (peel the / all the / 3 kilos potatoes). Though he uses only POS in the former and only HOLD in PROG 14-15, he gives both a POS and a HOLD form for telic PROQQ: 13 (peel the potatoes). As Table 4 in the Appendix shows, most informants marked all four sentences in the same way. The exceptions are of course North Frisian and German, where incorporation is possible only with the indefinite object. Atelic PROQQ: 16 and telic PROQQ: 17 (chase chickens / two chickens out of the house) were marked identically by all Scandinavian informants, and there are no relevant differences in the other questionnaires.

A candidate for a telic non-agentive verb in the questionnaire is 'rot' (PROQQ: 38), but the actionality of this verb in the individual languages is far from clear. Intransitive telic verbs often have ambiguous actionality. For instance apples can (in English) rot in a week or for a week, towels can dry in two hours or for two hours. But the actionality of the translational equivalents of these verbs need not be the same. Whereas Fering drägt has the same actionality as the English dry there are two different verbs for 'rot'. The atelic röödi combines preferably with POS, the telic ferröödi with PREP (23). With the verb drägt 'dry' both forms are possible (24), but I could not say that mun't drügin implies the idea that eventually the towels will become dry and hängi tu draagin does not.

The Swedish verb numma seems to be telic. Dahl finds hälla på "natural since the process is not yet complete". HOLD was used in two of the Swedish questionnaires. Haberland (p.c) excludes a progressive interpretation for er ved at tørre (25), but not for er ved at tørre (24).

(23) (PROQQ: 38)

FerÖöm A aapler hängr; and a buum tu röödi. tu ferröödiin.
the apples hang on the tree to rotting
A apeler sun't röödi. / hälla på háj:tu röödiin.
the apples are IN the rotting
Dan Áfbíræn hænger og rådter på træet. / ?er ved at tørre.
Apples/DEF hang and rot on tree/DEF
Swd Affossa. häller på och rutter på träd.
Apples/DEF HOLD on and rot on tree/DEF
'The apples are holding (on the tree),'

(24) (PROQQ: 37)

Swd Vattnet står och koka. / Vattnet häller på att koka.
water/DEF stands and boils
Dan Vandet står og koger. / Vandet er ved at koge.
water/DEF stands and boils
It is not clear whether the impossibility or oddity of a PREP-construction with 'boil' in Frisian and Dutch is due to non-agentivity or to non-telicity. In Fering telicity seems to matter, as shown in (23) and in (14). According to the Frysk expert it is not possible with non-agentive verbs, but sentences like *Het water staat te koken* are clearly acceptable. This could be a quasi-agentive use, but there could also be a further factor involved, namely dynamicity. Highly dynamic verbs favor PREP, whereas verbs of low dynamicity hardly occur with PREP even if they are agentive; e.g., in Germanic languages people generally sit/stand to wait.

Non-intentional events are treated like non-agentive ones. Table 2 shows no PREP forms and only one Swedish HOLD. The POS-construction chosen esp. by the Wildsägund and one Dutch informant seem to imply a negative evaluation, cf. (26) and (27).

The verb is of low dynamicity and high agentivity; e.g., "the water stands to boil," the activity is goal-oriented, but it is most normal to have a postural verb here: *Het water staat te koken.* Mending socks, knitting sweaters, and writing letters counted as a leisure activity in traditional Frisian society, done when the serious work was finished. All activities in the living quarters of the house allow POS; cf. also in English sources.

Another somewhat vague factor has to do with goal-directedness or the importance attributed to the activity (cf. citation from Dahl above). This criterion has been elaborated somewhat in Ebert (1989) for Fering, where *aan’t* is used if an activity belongs to the work that has to be done in a farming society and POS is preferred with leisure activities. Thus one can only say *het an’t melken* ‘she is milking the cows,’ although I have never seen anyone milk a Frisian cow other than in a sitting position. The verb is stative, but the activity is goal-oriented. Mending socks is also goal-oriented, but it is most normal to have a postural verb here: *Het water staat te koken.* Mending socks, knitting sweaters, and writing letters counted as a leisure activity in traditional Frisian society, done when the serious work was finished. All activities in the living quarters of the house allow POS; cf. also in English sources.

Apart from some variation between languages or idioms, the use of POS is remarkably stable across languages and appears also across time. The following combinations with POS from Dutch and Swedish12 prove with examples from English sources.

| Table 3. Factors determining the choice between PREP and POS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PREP** | **POS** | **PREP** | **POS** |
| a) +constant position | +constant position | b) +agentive | ±agentive |
| c) ±telic | ±telic | d) high dynamicity | low dynamicity |
| e) shorter durations | longer durations | f) goal-directed, important | ±goal-directed, ±important |

(26) (PROGQ: 34)

Swd  Had står och erkänner skylden oavsettigt.
   he stands and admits guilt unintentionally

Wiid  Soner dat ’r ’t wjij lapr ’r je dn skit dat ’r
   without that he it knows goes he PART and says that he
   guilty is

Dutch  Hij zit onbewust zijn schuld toe te geven.
   he sits unconsciously his guilt PREP to give
   (togeven - admit)

‘He is (standing/sitting/walking around) unintentionally admitting his guilt.’

Two contributors remark that the postural verb in (25) implies duration. Hoberland writes (PROGQ): "Vendet står og koger (og hur gjør det et stykke tid) [the water stands and boils (and has done this for a while)]." I think POS always implies some noticeable duration (cf. Ebert 1989), and this explains why it is incompatible with momentaneous verbs, where we only find PREP (cf. (15a)). That the remark is linked to this example is probably due to the fact that one would not normally let the water boil for a long time. In oral interviews Fering speaker sometimes inserted a temporal adverb indicating duration in postural verb sentences:
Dutch
ZAT TE lezen, schrijven, kijken, besten, bedenken,
SAT TO read, write, look, think, schommelen, appels schillen
STOND TE wachten, dromen, kijken, bekijken, vertellen,
STOOD TO wait, dream, look, tell, pick fruit, stampen
LAG TE wachten, dromen, slapen, roernolen
LAY TO wait, dream, sleep, mess around
LIEP TE leuren
WENT TO peddle/hawk
SATT OCH läste, pratade, vaktade, stirrade
SAT AND read, talked, waited, stared
STOOD OCH vend pl... , helit ögt intill ...., vacklade
STOOD AND rubbed, held the eyes against, shook
MEEngl SAT AND lokede, thoughte, playd, behelde, soeg, dinede, loghe, ...
STOD AND lokede, thoughte, behelid, logh, wordred, prechecie, ...
ModEngl LAY AND talked, gazed, looked, smiled, listened, thought, mused, worked, ...
SAT AND talked, gazed, looked, smiled, watched, stared, ...
STOOD AND talked, gazed, watched, ...
LAY AND gazed, watched, ...

(30) a. Dan Anne var (*2 timer/ fra 2 til 4) ved at lege.
    FerÖm Anne var (*2 stund/ fra 2 til 4) utan 't spelin.
    Grm Anna war (*2 Stunden/ von 2 bis 4) am Spilen.
    A. was (2 hours/from 2 to 4) AT the playing
b. Dutch (?)Anne was twee uur alleen aan het spelen.
    GrmRhi Anne war zwei Stunden alleine am Spilen.
    A. was 2 hours alone AT the playing

Although in some languages limiting adverbs can be combined with progressives (cf. Bertinetto & Delfitto, this volume), they are excluded with PREP-constructions in most Germanic languages. Dutch and the Rhine land dialect are an exception.

The PREP-constructions usually imply a focusing perspective: at a certain moment such-and-such event is in progress. This explains why they do not combine with adverbs that indicate a temporal limit. No such perspective is involved with POS. Here the event can be located in relation to a time interval with a specified duration or temporal endpoint. The temporal structure for the contexts in question can be symbolized as follows:

(A) E1 E2
    E2 • –– R

(B) E1 –– E2
    T1 —– T2

(A) symbolizes the focusing perspective, which is usually taken as a test case for progressives (cf. examples in section 2.1): E1 holds at reference point R, which can be a second event (E2)
(B) symbolizes the durative constellation, i.e., E1 holds over a time interval: E1 while E2 / from T1 to T2

(29) (PROGQ: 48)
Dan Anne sat to timer og lagede helt alene.
    A. sat 2 hours and played all alone
    FerÖm Anne need tau stini' alian ta spelin.
    Dutch Anne sat twee uur alleen te spelen.
    A. sat 2 hours alone to play
    ‘Anne played (was playing) for two hours by herself.’

3.2. Temporal conditions
The POS-construction occurs in some contexts that are usually incompatible with progressives, e.g. with adverbs that indicate a temporal limit. In PROGQ: 48 (=29) no PREP, but various POS forms were used.

(and similar for Old English; see van der Gaaf 1934, Visser 1973: 1401–1408, 1902–1916). Earlier periods of English also had the constructions sit V-ende, sit V-ing and – with decreasing frequency – sit to V. Note that all the text examples have human subjects and none has a telic verb.
Progressive markers in Germanic languages

In situations where Germanic languages use a progressive construction, PREP and POS are often used interchangeably, so in situations where the POS allows for a progressive interpretation, the PREP is also compatible with adverbials which delimit a stretch of time including R, like "since" (31a). The crucial factor is that the situation holds at R and leaves the endpoint unspecified. PREP is not possible if there is no temporal overlap, e.g., with adverbials like "after 5 / after John left", or "before 5 / before John left".

(31) a. Fer Ööm
   Grm
   *Sarnstags ist sie am Putzen.
   *An saminjem aat hat lner uun't renskin.
   Grm
   Sanstags ist sie immer am Putzen.

   [Oom hurkte, nam de arm van de man en telde diens polsslagen,]
   terwijl hij op zijn horloge keek/*Wat te kijken*aan het kijken was
   while he on his watch looked
   "Uncle squatted down, took the arm of the man and counted his pulse"
   while he looked *was looking *at his watch."

   Due to the lack of a focusing perspective the POS-constructions combine easily with habitual contexts ((33a) and analogous for the other languages). But then PREP seems to be compatible with a habitual interpretation, too (33b).

   (33) a. Fer Ööm
      At l tidj sat an injem blus nocht tu fernseen.
      the people sit in the evenings only PART to TV_watching
      iar sejld tu koordin of tu leesen.
      earlier sat_they to card_playing or to reading
      'Nowadays people only watch TV in the evenings. Earlier they used to
      play cards or read.'

   b. Fer Ööm
      Hat as lner uun't werkin.
      Dutt Zij is alijdj aan het werken.
      Grm
      Sie ist immer am Arbeiten.
      she is always AT the working
      'She is always working.'

   To the question "What does Ann do on Saturdays" (PROGQ: 2) one can answer with (c), but hardly with (d).24

   (33) c. Fer Ööm
      An saninjem aat hat lner uun't renskin.
      Grm
      Sanstags ist sie immer am Putzen.
      on-Saturdays is she always IN the cleaning
      'On Saturdays she is always cleaning.'

   d. Fer Ööm *An saninjem as hat uun't renskin.
      Grm *Sanstags ist sie am Putzen.
The adverb 'always' is crucial in those sentences, as it invokes plurifocalization: Ei holds at every R.

3.3. Grammaticization and stylistic variation

The Germanic progressives correspond to typologically frequent patterns; locative expressions and postural verbs are among the most frequent sources for progressive markers (Bybee & Dahl 1989, Bybee et al. 1994: 127ff., Heine et al. 1991: 117f.). Grammaticization has proceeded to different degrees. The PREP-constructions are all desemanticized. Syntactically they do not behave like 'be' + locative complement any longer. Only the German and North Frisian progressives do not allow a direct object, the PREP-construction still being analogous to a locational phrase; cf. Germ. sie ist am Schreiben 'she is at the desk'; sie ist am Schreiben 'she is writing'. But the Rhineland forms are spreading into other areas. Most German speakers accept a sentence like Das sind wir noch am Diskutieren 'We are still discussing that' with a pronounrealized and preposed object, even if they otherwise reject objects with am.

The POS-constructions of North Frisian underlie the same syntactic restrictions as the PREP forms. Syntactically the postural verbs behave like auxiliaries. In Fering-Öttingen the perfect auxiliary with motion verbs is 'be', but in a POS-construction the perfect takes the auxiliary 'have'.21 In Dutch auxiliaries appear in a past participle position without the prefix ge-, and an is or can be omitted after a non-finite POS (cf. Dutch (12a)). The meaning of the postural auxiliaries is bleached, as mentioned by several authors (Geerts et al. 1984: 538), Hansen (1967: 30). Desemantization has proceeded furthest in Danish (cf. (18b), (20a)). Generally the postural verbs can not replace each other, but in emotive use they are desemanticized in all languages (cf. also (19), (20)).

(34) Dutch
Loop / lig / zit niet te zeuren.
wank / lie / sit not to whine
'Stop whining.'

Postural verb periphrases indicating durative actionality are found in many languages. They may develop into progressives, but then it is usually only one verb that is generalized as a grammatical marker.22 Often the actional and the aspectual functions exist side by side, and this seems to be the case in the Germanic languages.

There are some loose semantic restrictions on both progressive constructions, as described in part 3.1. These restrictions are also indicators of incomplete grammaticization.

As a corollary of grammaticization a construction becomes obligatory, often ruling out alternative markers. This happened with English at V-ing, which replaced the postural verb constructions that were common in earlier periods. In most Germanic languages marking of progressive aspect is not obligatory. For Frysk, Horkstra (PROGQ) writes that "Progressive marking is nearly obligatory in West Frisian. The use of a simple verb instead of a progressive construction is perhaps not fully ungrammatical, but marked to say the least [...] There is no relevant difference with respect to style and register. Both constructions are very frequent both in the spoken language and the written (standard) language." In traditional Fering progressive marking is strongly preferred. Some speakers find a simple present inadequate to describe what is going on at the moment (Ebert 1989: 306). That the constructions are seldom in the written materials is due to the fact that written Fering is influenced by German even more than the spoken language (cf. Ebert 1994b). According to van der Heuwe (1992: 9) a progressive marker is necessary in Dutch in some contexts, for example in the incidental schema (cf. (3)) a simple form would be infelicitous.23 This can hardly be correct for the written language, as in some texts not a single progressive marker was found.

In German the progressive is quasi-obligatory at least in the Rhineland and adjacent areas, but also in Züriütsch. Many speakers in the northern and northwestern part of Germany regularly use the am-form in conversation. In spite of being banned by school teachers, the am-form is spreading into all the German speaking areas and also into more formal registers (see Eben 1996 for examples). Thiersch, although he claims that there is no grammatical aspect in German, admits "dass der Gebrauch der sog. 'rheinischen Verlaufsform' (er war am Essen) in weiten Teilen des deutschen Sprachgebietes ständig zunimmt" (1992: 70). The am-form seems to become indispensable in the incidental schema; two informants who otherwise do not use the progressive (in the PROGQ) felt it to be necessary here.

The Danish POS-construction is very common in the spoken language. In Rifbjerg (1957), written in an extremely colloquial style, I found several occurrences of POS on each page (see Ebert 1989: 315–316 for examples), but practically no PREP. In other prose texts I found fewer, sometimes not a single occurrence in a whole short story (but cf. (35a) and Hansen 1967: 30 for examples from older literature). In a Swedish novel POS and HOLD occurred with approximately equal frequency, but half of the hälla på att examples were immemorials. Hälla på och belongs to a lower style and is not written (except in the comitative meaning). In approximately 100 pages of Dutch short stories written in a colloquial style, I found numerous POS-constructions (cf. (28), (35b)), but only two occurrences of am het. POS is thus in a whole more frequent than PREP in the written language.24 In order to illustrate the natural occurrence of series of POS, let me cite two examples from literature:

(35) a. Danish (Jepsen 1964: 15)
No stod de og sløjde op om skrämlet inde i vognporten, og han følte, hvor det rev i hans bryst. Det var jo en af hans tanker, de stod og tog fra ham.
Skræmt i vognporten, som hun havde tænkt så ofte på, at det var blot hendes indvendige ejendom. Det er mit. Det er mit, vilde hun sige. Skal i da gø og ødelægge alt mit?

'Now they were crying out (stood and cried out) the trash in the coach-house, and he felt how it cut in his breast. It was after all one of his thoughts they were taking (stood and took) from him. The trash in the coach-house, which he had thought of so often that it had become his inner property. It is mine. It is mine, he wanted to shout. Do you have to go around destroying everything that is mine?'

b. Dutch. (Broos n.d.: 30 E29)

'Mantinea and Tegen liggen te slapen, hun lijven tegen elkaar aangedrukt om warm te blijven. De hulpverleenster staat met een setje condoms in haar hand naar de twee meisjes te kijken

'Mantinea and Tegen are sleeping (lie to sleep), their bodies pressed against each other to keep warm. Holding a set of condoms in her hand, the social worker stands looking at the two girls.'

4. Other constructions used in the questionnaires

According to prescriptive grammars (e.g., Duden 1984: 94), German beim and im should be used instead of am in the written language. Apart from the fact that the accepted forms are just as scarce in written texts as am is, the instruction is rather misleading, especially as no restrictions on the use of the two forms are mentioned. Beim and im as progressive markers are far more specific than am is. Beim combines only with agentive verbs, and im is used only in a few idiomatic expressions. It never occurs with agentive verbs, so that beim and im exclude each other, whereas both can be replaced by am.

(36) **German**

a. Der Mond ist am / im ! *beim Abnehmen. 'The moon is decreasing.'

Die Wunde ist am / im / beim Heilen. 'The wound is healing.'

Sie ist am / beim / *im Einkaufen. 'She is shopping.'

b. (PROGQ: 45/47)

Sie ist am Kartenspielen / Sie ist beim Kartenspielen.

'She is playing cards.' (in the next room) / ... (in the club, as usual)

The am-sentence of (36b) is used if Anna (*sbe*) is actually playing cards at reference time; beim implies that she is in a certain place where she usually plays cards (she need not be playing right at the moment). The beim-phrase is - at least in the northern part of Germany - associated with some locative meaning. Beim V, though not am V, is a possible answer to the question 'where is Anna?v

A nominal construction Anna ist Kartenspielen indicates that Anna has gone to the place where she usually plays cards; she may be on her way - an interpretation that is excluded for am and beim - or at that place (cf. De Groot, this volume, Ebert 1996). The absorptive construction appears with some regularity in PROGQ: 46/47 in all languages except Icelandic and Zürichütsch. In Zürichütsch the construction is totally unknown, and students found, e.g., a note on the door saying *his Einkaufen* 'am shopping'; *beim essen* 'am eating', a typical use in German and Dutch, utterly funny.

In absorptive contexts Germanic languages often use a prepositional phrase with a derived noun. Thus PROGQ: 63 was translated with an absorptive (a), with the verb *go* (b), or with a noun (c).

(37) **(PROGQ: 63)**

a. Grm Damals war er jeden Samstag tanzen.

*beim* at that_time was he every Saturday dance:INF

b. Frysk Deudetids gie er alle snezen te disfrjen.

*beim* at that_time went he every Saturday to dance:INF

c. FerÖöm Dojetijd wiar hi arken sanarj *beim* dansen.

*beim* at that_time he went at that_time every Saturday dance:INF

d. Grm Es ging damals jeden Samstag tanzen.

*beim* at that_time was he every saturday to:pron the dance:N

At that time he was dancing every Saturday.'

A nominal construction is also often preferred with motion verbs, e.g., Swd hon är *on *på väg ut, Ist hun er d leibini ut (instead of intended: she is going out = PROGQ: 21), Swd hon är *på väg till New York (instead of: she is flying to N.Y. = PROGQ: 22), and with 'work', e.g., Grm Sie ist zur Arbeit, FerÖöm Hat as ta werk 'she is working; she is at work' (= PROGQ: 1).

German *tan* 'do' occurred with some frequency in the Rhineland PROGQ and in one of the Zürichütsch PROGQs and is not restricted to agentive verbs (does'). As the verb 'do' is attested as a progressive marker in a few languages, the German verb *tan* seemed a possible candidate. However, *tan* is not restricted to progressive contexts, but appears just as naturally in habitual sentences, with stative verbs and in the imperative, e.g., Grm Shi Sie tat putzen, Zür Si tat putze (lit. 'she does clean [every Saturday]' = PROGQ: 2), GrmKhi Peter tat die Antwort wissen (lit. 'P. does the answer know' = PROGQ: 39). We can therefore exclude that *tan* is a progressive marker.

Two informants list Swedish *just* or German gerade as progressive markers. As this particle has also been mentioned in the literature, I have listed it in Table 4 in the Appendix. Although *just* / *gerade* may sometimes disambiguate a sentence, it is by so
means a progressive marker. In the PROGQ sentences just/gerade as well as North Frisian just, Danish fige translate ‘right now’, but not the progressive. The particles combine with all tenses and aspects, including the progressive.

(38) a. FerÖöm Ik san just san`t teeeatjiten / has just teee atjitten / will just teee apjitten.
    Grm Ich bin gerade am Teekochen / habe gerade Tee gekocht / will gerade Tee koehen.
    "I am just preparing tea / have just prepared tea / am just about to prepare tea.'

b. (PROGQ: 73)
    Swd Se till att ni (just) håller på att arbeta när see_to_it that you:PL just hold on to work when
    boss-DEF comes
    Grm Seh zu, dass ihr (gerade) am Arbeiten see_to_it that you:PL just AT_the working are
    wenn der Chef kommt.
    "See to it that you are (just) working when the boss comes.'

The particle is rather odd with expected events and impossible with events of longer duration. Inserting it in (38b) has a comic effect, as it suggests that the periods in which the addressees work are rather short and that they happened to be working when the boss came in.

5. Other Germanic languages

For the other Germanic languages we did not get any questionnaires, and I can only give a summary of the information I found in the literature and on the basis of my knowledge.

Yiddish has a progressive periphrasis formed by *halin in 'hold' (Aronson’s ‘aspekt fun gedoyvernklayt’, 1985: 175). The same verb with *in eyn has continuative meaning (cf. Swd hålla på eck, with bynmin minimal meaning (cf. Swd hålla på arr). There are no restrictions for combining the progressive with tenses nor with the habitual marker *fleg (Aronson 1985: 177).

(39) Yiddish
   a. ikh haln in shraybn
      I hold in write
      'I am writing'
   b. ikh haln in eyn shraybn
      I hold in one shraybn
      'I keep on writing, I continually write'
   c. ikh haln in eysgraban
      I hold in eysgraban
      'I will be digging'
   d. ikh fleg haln in oysgraban
      I used to be digging'

Low German has a progressive marker *an’, corresponding to German on and Dutch aan het. This form is reported by Anderson (1989) for the dialect of Lower Saxony. Slesvig Low German uses a loan translation from Danish *i bi ut which can be combined with objects. At least in this dialect a postural verb periphrasis is also common, usually with ‘and’ + finite verb (as in Danish). All constructions exist also in the variety of (High) German spoken in Slesvig and in the mainland North Frisian dialects (see Ebert & Hoekstra (1996)).

(40) a. (Bock 1933: 99)
    LoGrm he liech un sladb
    SitesGrm er liegt un schlafen
    "He is sleeping.'
Progressive markers in Germanic languages

b. (Bock 1933:99)
LoGrm vad sdat du da un chobsd?
SlesGrm was stihet du da zu gafrin?
what stand you there an/to sure
‘What are you staring at?’

Pennsylvania German has the same construction as Standard German: copula + am (+ incorporated noun) + INF. It is interesting that the variety spoken by conservative religious groups allows the incorporation of definite objects, like Zitihtischt, but the preposition is then not contracted with the article (cf. Van Ness 1994: 435, phonetic symbols neglected):

(41) Pennsylvania German
a. ar is am brif slawe
he is at the letter write:INF
‘he is writing a letter’
b. (conservative speakers)
ar is on sal bagi fikse
he is at his buggy fix:INF
‘he is fixing his buggy’
Norwegian has, according to Fabricius-Hansen (1994: 54), the same ‘imperfectivizing’ forms as Danish, which she relegates – without giving criteria – to the realm of Aktionsarten. Marm & Sommerfelt (1967: 49) mention only two constructions of the ‘hold on’ type: holde på (med), drive på med. Both are translated ‘keep on with’ by the authors, but the examples given are progressives and not continuatives. Askedal (1994) mentions the postural verbs gå, stå, ligge (but not sitte) and the periphrasis drive på med, but gives only a Nynorsk example for drive og.

(42) Norwegian
a. Bokmål (Fabricius-Hansen 1994: 54)
Hans er ved å rydde’ opp.
Hans is at to clean up
‘Hans is cleaning up.’
b. Bokmål
Da jeg kom hjem sto Hans og lagde mat.
when I came home stood Hans and made food
‘When I came home, Hans was preparing dinner.’
c. Bokmål (Marm & Sommerfelt)
Jeg holder på (med) å skrive et brev.
I hold on with to write a letter
‘I am writing a letter.’

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Both sources for Faroese, Lockwood (1964) and Barnes & Weyhe (1994), mention the postural verb construction as a possible translation of the English progressive:

(43) Faroese (Lockwood 1964: 140)
a. vit sáðu og þráðu
we sat and talked
‘we sat talking, we were talking’
b. þeir ganga og mala.
they go and drift
‘they are drifting around, doing nothing’
Lockwood gives “be and V” as a second possibility for expressing progressive meaning. This construction is also used as an absentive:

(43) c. meðan þeir vóru og þráðu lunda
while they were and drew puffin
‘while they were ‘drawing’ puffin’

(43) e. Menninar var þá við at seta gæði á vatnum.
man:DEF:PL were busy with to set nets in water:DEF:DAT
‘The men were busy putting nets into the water.’

Pennsylvania German has the same construction as Standard German: copula + am (+ incorporated noun) + INF. It is interesting that the variety spoken by conservative religious groups allows the incorporation of definite objects, like Zitihtischt, but the preposition is then not contracted with the article (cf. Van Ness 1994: 435, phonetic symbols neglected):

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man:DEF:PL were busy with to set nets in water:DEF:DAT
‘The men were busy putting nets into the water.’
5.1. Areal distribution

The POS-constructions can be separated into two areas according to form: POS + 'to' + INF is used in Dutch, Frysk and North Frisian, POS + 'and' in the Scandinavian languages (map 1). In Mainland North Frisian the Scandinavian construction exists besides the Frisian form. The form PREP + DEF + VN is spread over the Dutch, Frisian and German area. The Scandinavian languages have no common PREP-construction: Danish has PREP + 'to' + INF, Icelandic 'to' + INF; Swedish and Norwegian share a 'hold'-periphrasis with Yiddish (map 2).

Certain features are found in adjacent areas across language boundaries. Mainland North Frisian uses not only the Danish 'sit and' construction, but but (corresponding in form to Danish ved) is the most frequent progressive marker here. The German am-form is constantly gaining ground. It has quite recently reached Swabia and Berlin, while it is apparently unknown further east (Thieroff, p.c.). The possibility of combining am with definite objects in the Rhineland dialect can possibly be attributed to the Dutch neighborhood (but the transitive construction is found also in Züritüütsch). From the dialect the transitive am-construction leaked into the colloquial standard in the Rhineland and is now spreading in the German speaking area.

Some probable recent areal influences are tentatively presented in map 3. Needless to say, much more detailed research is necessary both into the use and the spread of the Germanic progressive constructions.

### Map 3. Distribution of PREP-constructions

1. 'be' + PREP + DEF + VN
2. 'be' (PREP) + 'to' + INF
3. 'be' + 'and' + V
4. HOLD

### Map 4. Some recent areal influences

#### Special abbreviations
- AES: absoluut
- AT: grammaticalized periphrasis 'at, in'
- PTQR: EUROTYP future questionnaire
- PROQ: EUROTYP progressive questionnaire
- POS: pastoral verb (construction)
- PREP: prepositional construction
- StonGrm: Slesvig High German
- Wild: Züritüütsch Frisian
- SouthGrm: SlesvGrm
- LoGrm: Widlinghiird Frisian
- RhinGrm: Dutch
- EastGrm: SlesvGrm
- AllS: all
- AT: aromatic
- FrQR: Frisian questionnaire
- PROGQ: EUROTYP progressive questionnaire
- POS: positional verb (construction)
- PREP: prepositional construction
- StonGrm: Slesvig High German
- Wild: Züritüütsch Frisian
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all friends, colleagues and students who went through the trouble to translate the questionnaire sentences: Susanne Anschütz, Antje Arfsten, Klas Danielson, Östen Dahl, Jens Edlund, Karin Gunkel, Hartmut Haberland, Ingeleine Hamann, Jarich Hoekstra, Bjørne le Ferre Jacobsen, Christa König, Ulrika Kvist, Jens Jessen, Annakarin Magnusson, Dani Marmur, Johannes Merz, Mrs. and Mr. Metzger, Jos van der Molen, Hans Fred Nielson, Adeline Petersen, Roberto Rizzi, Therese Rutishauser, Christina Taddei, Rolf Thieroff, Gunnel Tottie, Alastair Walker, Paul Zehnder, Petur Helgasson and an anonymous student from Berlin.

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Appendix

Table 4. Complete list of markers used in PROGQ

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<th>Abbreviations</th>
<th>for all languages</th>
<th>for German</th>
<th>for Frisian and Dutch</th>
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<td>holder på och + V</td>
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<td>i gang</td>
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Icelandic does not fit in with the other Scandinavian languages, as its PREP has a quite different distribution:

aö: 1, 2, 3-6, 20, 23-26, 33, 44-47, 49-50, 56-57, 64, 70a/b, 73, 75-76, 79-82
θ: 2, 4-5, 27-29, 33, 36-37, 39-43, 48, 51, 53-55, 58-63, 65, 69, 71-72, 74, 77
aö or θ: 30-31, 33-34, 38, 52, 66-68

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Notes

1. Frisian is usually regarded as one language (cf. also EUROTYP guidelines), but the distance between Frysk ("West Frisian") and the North Frisian dialects is greater than that between for example Danish and Swedish. Fering and Öömarg, the dialects of the islands Föhr and Amrum, show only minimal dialectal variation and are treated together here. The distance between these island dialects and the mainland dialects or Sölming (spoken on the island Sylt) is comparable to that between Danish and Swedish.

2. Standard colloquial German is not codified, but represents a style that is acceptable everywhere in half-oral speech, as will be heard for example in TV interviews or in seminars. Two questionnaires are from Stevign-Hofstein, Kassel, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, and Berlín.

3. See Bertinet, Ebert, and De Groote in this volume, fn. 8 for an explanation of this.

4. As the progressives have not been described as yet, answering the theoretical questions presupposed a detailed linguistic analysis of the facts, which is beyond the scope of such a paper. (The consultant who wrote that she would need six months’ work to answer the questions.)

5. The verb of the last sentence was an unhappy choice, as it is more often referred to by a nominal construction of the type *Ganz sie ist zur Arbeit, Dutch ze is aan het werk* (Fering hat as te werk ‘she is at work’). Otherwise one would specify the type of work, and some informants replaced the verb in PROGQ: 1 and 3.

6. The infinitive is used as a verbal noun in all languages considered here. Frisian has a long and a short form, e.g., Fering hêx, te hêxen ‘cook, to cook’, Teap, te beugen ‘walk, to walk’. I have glossed nominal forms with an English gerund. For a discussion of the infinitive as a separate word, cf. Bhat & Schmidt (1993: 74ff) give a number of examples as belonging to standard colloquial German, including progressives with definite objects and with postural verbs. None of the following examples, which they cite as “standard” German, was accepted by my informants:

   a) der Pilot ist den Airbus am wegfliegen
   b) er ist die Kartoffeln rob am essen
   c) er wird die Kinder am spielen lassen
   d)noch ist das Bild am hängen, aber gleich fällt es herunter

7. Incorporation is not necessary in Frysk and Dutch, as the progressives can be combined with direct objects. Object incorporation is excluded with *te in Dutch (except in the Groninger dialect. cf. Schuurrum 1987) and therefore with the POS-construction, in Frysk it is optional.

   Dutch Ze zit te aardappel-schillen ‘sits aardappels te schillen
   Frysk Hja sit te jirpel-skilen ‘sits jirpels te skilen
   *She is peeling potatoes.* (cf. PROGQ: 12)

8. Cf. also the discussion in Geerts et al. (1994: 590), who find *is aan het vliellen vangen* ‘is catching butterflies’ fully acceptable, but *is aan het olifanten vangen* ‘is catching elephants’ doubtful. (Different from other sources, the authors write the incorporated noun as a separate word.)

9. German and Fering-Öömarg speakers resort to those constructions only if aan is impossible for syntactic reasons, as in (5b). There is, however, much variation between individual speakers and much insecurity in the judgement of such sentences. Andersson (1989: 95) cites *ich war dabei, stinkeszulügen* as Standard German, but many speakers find *dabei* impossible with naked verbs and especially with infinitives:* *+ie war dabei zu schreiben (→sie war dabei, Briefe zu schreiben).*

10. In German this would be expressed without the verb ‘würfe’. *Sie sitzt auf ihrer Doktorarbeit* (*sitzt auf arbeiten*). No such constructions exist for the other postural verbs.

11. Bhat & Schmidt (1993: 74ff) give a number of examples as belonging to standard colloquial German, including progressives with definite objects and with postural verbs. None of the following examples, which they cite as ‘standard’ German, was accepted by my informants:

   a) der Pilot ist den Airbus am wegfliegen
   b) er ist die Kartoffeln rob am essen
   c) er wird die Kinder am spielen lassen
   d) noch ist das Bild am hängen, aber gleich fällt es herunter

12. Sentences like Zürichitötsch (7) and (8) were rejected by some speakers. Cf. also Bickel (1992: 75), who states that “if objects have an article, they cannot be incorporated. Therefore, speakers have to resort to a two-noun construction with *daus sit...*”

13. Most informants left out the ‘since’ phrase as it is odd to combine it with ‘his whole day’. As German *sitzt* and North Frisian *sant* ‘since’ are used with the present and not with the perfect, some of the progressives listed for PROGQ: 81 in Table 3 are present progressives.

   Per Ik sank juxaren mun lern beugen.
   Gen Ich bin seit heute morgen aus Backen
   I am since this morning AT the baking ‘I have been baking since morning’

14. There are few strictly momentaneous verbs (cf. also Comrie 1976: 47 on this point and the endless discussions of the verb ‘die’ in the literature). There is no consensus among German speakers whether einschlichen or strömen can refer to a period before one ‘really’ falls asleep or not, or whether it refers only to the transition point.

15. Hält er pd et has progressive or futimmental meaning, hält er pd och progressive or continuative. Holmes & Hinchcliffe (1994: 278) give the example:

   Hem höll på er grät / Hem höll på och grät hela vägen.
   *She kept crying all the way*.

   But only the second construction has the intended continuous reading according to my Swedish consultants. (There may be some confusion, because att and och are both pronounced [a], but the constructions are closely distinct, as the latter combines with an inflected verb.)
I tentatively used the term ‘locative’ in a paper presented at the Amsterdam meeting of the EUROTOP Tense-Aspect Group, adding examples mainly from languages outside of Europe (Ebert 1993 ms). I now call the grammaticalized motion progressive ‘ambulative’ (cf. Ebert 1994c: 56 for examples from Kikinti language). Fortescue (1992) uses the term ‘parembale’ for a similar construction in Koyukon.

This should of course not surprise us, as verbs of undirected motion function like ‘sit, stand’ etc. in the marking of durative and/or progressive in a variety of languages, e.g., Turkic, Mongolian, Kikinti languages, cf. also it., Span. andare + Gerundio.

HII and CG strongly preferred POS: HII has 19 POS vs. 11 PREP in Danish, CG has 19 POS vs. 2 PREP in Dutch. Interestingly, CG does not use POS in 3 cases, where the other Dutch informant, who has only 8 POS altogether, uses it: in PROQQ: 33, 34 with an emotive adverb, and in PROQQ: 77, where most languages have ‘stand to boil’. The Frysk expert, who listed all possible forms that came to mind, has 18 POS and 25 PREP-forms. Generally there is no confirmation that the PREP-form is the most common way to express progressive aspect (as claimed, e.g., in Donalson 1981: 1651).

The Danish consultant confirmed this interpretation. Ingressive-phasal verbs are rare in European languages, but otherwise widespread (cf. Ebert 1994c, where this type of verb was called locative-dynamic).

The factor dynamics probably accounts for the high degree of variation with certain verbs, like ‘sleep, raise’. Progressives were sometimes accepted with ‘raise’ (PROQQ: 77), especially when not negated.

Dan *Det er nu ikke ved at regne.
FerrOoi *Det er nu ikke vie trina. ‘It is not raining now’.
Germ *Se ist jetzt nicht am Regnens. ‘It is not raining now’.

1. I have a larger body of examples only for older stages of English, but cf. Gothic war du allonwanda (lit.: ‘not to begging’). OHGrm 'er stantet ci betome (lit.: ‘you stood to pray’).

2. I thank Östen Dahl for providing the examples from Karl Boyle’s Kellocatain.

3. Cf. the distinction between Bertinetti’s (in this vol., 1990–93) focalized and distributive progressive, which are distinguished in the Italian stare + Gerundio vs. oredre + Gerundio. However, the semantics of oredre + Gerundio differs from that of the Germanic POS construction in that it does not normally combine with activity verbs.

4. Again tolerance for sentences like (324) varies. Two FerrOoie informants used nur without inner in PROQ 2.

5. Hein (1994) postulates an erosion of the form oen (< an dem) in the progressive as a result of grammaticalization. However, the contracted form is most often also obligatory in locative phrases, as in the given example.

6. Compare A hon kol a hâlia dâi lepen tu blihn. ‘The dog has the whole day run/PP to barking. ‘The dog has been running around barking the whole day.’ But: ik dâi lepen ‘he has walked’.

A progressive marker originating in ‘do’ is reported for Navajo (Blansitt 1975) and Syrian Arabic (Ebert in this volume).

16. Danish ved at is here understood as ved eg (PREP + ‘and’) due to the identical pronunciation of at and eg as [e], but is still followed by the indicative. For the partial collapse of at and eg, cf. Jespersen (1905), Haberland (1978).

18. The construction POS + to + INFL was apparently more widespread in earlier German; cf. also Was zieht ihr zu horehen? (lit.: what stand you to hear?) in Sanders’ ‘Handwörterbuch der deutschen Sprache’ (cited from van der Gaf 1934: 81).
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