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Unidirectionality as a cycle of convention and innovation. Micro-changes in the grammaticalization of [BE *going to* INF]

Peter Petré (University of Antwerp / ERC)¹

Abstract: The present study combines recent interest on the impact of unconventional individual language use on grammar change (Petré & Van de Velde 2014, De Smet 2016) with research on how conventional grammar impacts on language users. To better understand their interplay, I will zoom in on the interaction of unconventional and conventional behaviour of individuals in the developments of [BE *Ving*] and [BE *going to*|GO to INF]. Apart from enhancing our understanding of the long-term effects of the urge to be expressive, an important outcome of the analysis will be that it is precisely the way in which the spiral of the conventional leads to the unconventional to the conventional again, which may help explain the phenomenon of unidirectionality in language change.

1 Introduction

Studies in syntactic change have typically treated change as happening to some kind of abstract object 'language'. Yet it is individual language users who do the talking and innovate. And innovation, when conventionalized, leads to change (e.g., Croft 2000: 166ff). In being responsible for these DYNAMICS OF THE UNCONVENTIONAL, individual language users are, even if they may not generally be aware of it, ultimately also responsible for syntactic change. It is therefore essential that historical syntacticians fully embrace this individual dimension. While historical sociolinguists have occasionally ventured into intra- and intergenerational grammatical changes in a network of individuals (Fitzmaurice 2004, Bergs 2005, Raumolin-Brunberg & Nurmi 2011, among others), they have generally made use of resources that are related to dense social networks, mostly letters, which are usually quite limited in size. Linguistic theory has also discussed the importance of the individual dimension more generally. Traugott, in her more recent work (e.g., 2010) has emphasized the importance of dialogue and the invited inferences typical of spoken language as triggers of syntactic change and grammaticalization. Keller (1994) has argued for the importance of expressivity as a trigger of change in his formulation of the social maxim 'talk in such a way that you are noticed'. Haspelmath (1999) and Detges & Waltereit (2002) reiterate on this with their notions of EXTRAVAGANCE and expressivity, and have pointed out that a number of phenomena, such as redundancy

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or the replacement of short expressions by longer ones (e.g. *with a hammer* > *by means of a hammer*), can be directly related to this. What is still largely lacking is corpus-based research that looks into how this association between grammar and the urge for social success is reflected in actual changes in the grammatical behaviour of individuals. The current paper addresses precisely this gap by examining the incipient grammaticalization of [BE *going to* INF] across four generations and, to the extent possible, in individual language users from each of these generations.

A second goal of this paper is to show how it is not only the unconventional, but also the DYNAMICS OF THE CONVENTIONAL that may feed into the incipient stages of grammaticalization. It is proposed that not all novel (unconventional) patterns are (equally) extravagant, and that degree of extravagance may depend on the status of their (conventionalized) source construction. Indeed, zooming in on unconventional behaviour of individuals must not mean losing sight of the system. Unconventional behaviour is still generally the exception rather than the rule. Most of the time, individuals adopt existing conventions, including the grammar that is used by the speech community they form part of. At this level, they are not doing anything particularly individualistic. They are specifically not trying to consciously use language to ensure social success. Yet, even at this level, the system is dynamic. These DYNAMICS OF THE CONVENTIONAL are generally well-studied. In particular the system(at)ic effect of frequency has been repeatedly recognized (e.g., Bybee 2010). What is frequent is cognitively highly accessible, and will therefore be selected more rapidly again. There also exist numerous studies arguing that at the more local level of individual texts or conversations structures may prime similar structures (cf. Pickering & Ferreira 2008 for an overview of the evidence; also, on asymmetric priming, Jäger & Rosenbach 2008, Traugott & Trousdale 2013: 54). This way, frequency is increased locally, in the short term, but may also potentially lead to more lasting frequency increase. Frequency therefore may lead to a kind of snowball effect. These types of frequency-related cognitive mechanisms typically operate without a particular motivation for social success. Instead, they act at the level of the system, the collection of constructions that are already conventionalized.

Section 2 elaborates on the key hypothesis of this paper, that part of the unidirectionality of grammaticalization may be explained as the interplay between conventional and unconventional language use. Extravagance is arguably not only a general motivation for grammaticalization, but may actually reappear in different shapes in various of its stages, and as such it adds to our understanding of the unidirectional nature of non-cyclical change. Section 3 presents a summary of a study by Petré (2016) on how the dynamic nature of the system has led to the grammaticalization of [BE *Ving*], a process which was a first important influence on the further course of the grammaticalization of [BE *going*] [*to* INF(*itive*)]. Section 4 outlines the corpus and the methodology used for the analysis. Section 5, finally, consists of a detailed analysis of the very first steps of [BE *going*] [*to* INF] towards a more grammatical function. To attain to a comprehensive picture, instances of non-progressive [GO] [*to* INF] are also included. Such instances have been neglected in studies on the grammaticalization of [BE *going*] [*to* INF], but provide crucial evidence to why precisely the progressive variant [BE *going*] [*to* INF] was more extravagant initially, which gave it a head start to go on grammaticalizing at a time when the progressive was still the minority use in English. The main conclusions and prospects for future research are presented in section 6.

2 Unconventionality creates conventionality creates unconventionality...

The main hypothesis this paper wants to test is if non-cyclical grammatical change may be explained as a series of alternations of conventionalization and innovation motivated by a desire to be extravagant. The hypothesis is tested by examining the language behaviour of generations and individuals to see if their increasing use of grammaticalized [BE *going to* INF] may be linked to an urge 'to talk in such a way that you are noticed'. In addition, the analysis will test if the different success rates of the 'progressive' and 'non-progressive' variants may be linked to the fact that the then recent changes in [BE *Ving*] made this construction a better breeding bed for extravagant uses than did the simple present.

The rules underlying the dynamics of the unconventional relate primarily to the social struggle for success. Meillet (1912) already noticed that innovation is connected to a desire for being expressive. The use of reinforcing elements such as *pas* for negation is seen as a way of being more expressive and getting one's message across more efficiently. The need for such more expressive elements is the higher the more routinized or conventionalized standard expressions are. More recently various scholars have elaborated on this argument (Keller 1994, Haspelmath 1999, Croft 2000). Keller (1994) reformulated this desire for being expressive as the social maxim 'talk in such a way that you are noticed'. Haspelmath (1999) prefers the term extravagance for the same reason, noting that all language is expressive (i.e., encodes some meaning), but this is not enough. People want to stand out, and one strategy to stand out is being extravagant. In language this means: saying more than is strictly necessary. This notion of redundancy (see also Detges & Waltreit 2002: 179) is also exemplified by the story of negation. The element *ne* is in itself sufficient to express negation, but if the speaker wants to emphasize the negation, because they are particularly emotionally involved in the (absence of) a particular situation or state of affairs (*no, I don't want you to marry me at all*, for instance), simple negation may not be enough. The urge of being extravagant also makes language users innovate, because it is harder to be extravagant if what you are saying is what everyone is saying.

And yet, as Haspelmath (1999) argues, when your extravagant expression hits the mark and is successful, it may be imitated and spread through the speech community. At some point, the expression may become so frequent so as to have become a routine. And of course routinization like this turns what was once extravagant into the conventional. Influence may also work the other way around. The more conventional a pattern becomes, the stronger the need for a more extravagant alternative, and the search for an unconventional, more expressive alternative starts all over again. Such a principle is well-known and has been called renewal (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 9, 122). The same emotional involvement of past speakers that instigated their use of the then novel form now instigates new speakers to replace it by a new novel form. Such involvement may for instance explain why intensifiers in particular are so prone to renewal. Another example is the reinforcement of the negative particle *ne* by elements such as *pas* or *ein* (> German *nein*). As Jespersen's (1917) observed, such developments bear some similarity to a cycle. The underlying principle is one-dimensional: negation, or intensification, wears out, is reinforced, wears out again, and is reinforced again.

At this level of explanation, renewal may occur at various points in history that are essentially arbitrary. No claims are made as to when precisely the expressive force of a construction has worn out to such an extent that another, more extravagant alternative is needed. However, sometimes the extravagant pattern only becomes an option because of a *specific* change in the grammatical system. This is precisely the kind of interaction which may lead to certain types of unidirectional drift that are so typical of grammaticalization too. The idea of a kind of chain-effect whereby the changing nature of the

conventional leads to innovation may in this way be used to shed new light on certain grammatical developments that have been the matter of heavy dispute, such as the development of the progressive. Crucially, the idea that what is conventional now, was unconventional before entails that the grammatical system is not static. Instead, the system is continually fed into by conventionalizing patterns. This is only one factor that makes the system dynamic, but the one that concerns us here. In being dynamically conventionalizing, the grammatical system may bring new opportunities for being extravagant at specific times in history, meaning that these opportunities did *not* exist before a specific constellation in the dynamic evolution is reached.

In sum, it is currently unclear if the principles observed for cyclical change may also be at work in non-cyclical change. This study will try to show that they are. It will do so by examining how changes in the [BE *Ving*] construction may explain why it is [BE *going to* INF] that has grammaticalized rather than [GO *to* INF], and how conventionalization of these changes was necessary for [BE *going to* INF] to be able to be used in unconventional ways again and take the next step in its grammaticalization process.

3 The semanticization of progressive aspect in [BE *Ving*]

3.1 The grammaticalizing effect of unintended system dynamics

To properly understand the grammaticalization of [BE *going to* INF] we first have to understand the grammaticalization of progressive aspect in the [BE *Ving*] construction. I have argued in Petré (2016) that this process was initially unrelated to matters of expressivity or loss of expressivity. Instead, it seems to have taken off almost as a side-effect of changes in the grammar elsewhere (called the CONSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT in Petré 2014). The following is a brief summary of the argumentation. For a recent overview of the massive literature on the history of the progressive more generally, I refer to Kranich (2010).

In Present-Day English, the [BE *Ving*] construction is known for typically encoding progressive aspect, picturing a situation as ongoing at the time of reference. Following earlier work by Killie (2008), Petré (2016) refers to this use of [BE *Ving*] as the focalized use. Focalized here means that the event expressed by [BE *Ving*] is ‘in-progress’ at a single point in time, the so-called ‘topic time’ (Klein 1994: 37), which serves as a kind of focal point for the [BE *Ving*]-event. Typical examples are (1) and (2)

- (1) Activity · *Andrew **was playing tennis** when Jane called him.*
- (2) Accomplishment · *As I **was getting into the bath** the fire alarm went off.*

However, this is not the only use of [BE *Ving*]. The construction may also be used simply to express a stative situation, as in (3), or a durative one, as in (4). While example (4) is from Old English, where it was more typical, such uses still exist marginally today.²

- (3) State · *Two Ganesh statues **are standing** in a line*
- (4) Durative · *Hie **wærun feohtende** ‘they were/kept fighting’*

² Expressions such as *They were dancing the whole night* are not uncommon in current usage. Equivalents to (4) may also be occasionally found, e.g.: *This is officially the worst motel I have ever stayed in. [...] Tenants in another room were fighting until all hours.* (https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g32737-d249899-r167295185-Rodeway_Inn_Monterey-Monterey_Monterey_Peninsula_California.html [accessed July 2016])

In both (3) and (4) the original configuration of [BE *Ving*], namely the combination of a copula and a participial adjective, was preserved. Being an instance of intransitive predication, what is expressed here is that the subject temporarily has a certain quality ('standing/upright' or 'fighting/in battle') (cf. De Smet & Heyvaert 2011 for synchronic evidence). The distinction between (3) and (4), then, is mainly a contextual one. The situation described in (4) belongs to the main action or foreground. Agentive subjects put continued effort into an action that has a purpose in the overall story. In contrast, the situation in (3) belongs to the background. It provides additional information about scenery that frames the story to the reader. Being directly related to the intransitive predication reading, and therefore original meanings of [BE *Ving*], we expect these uses to have been present from the start. This is confirmed for the data range covered in Petré (2016) in Figure 1.

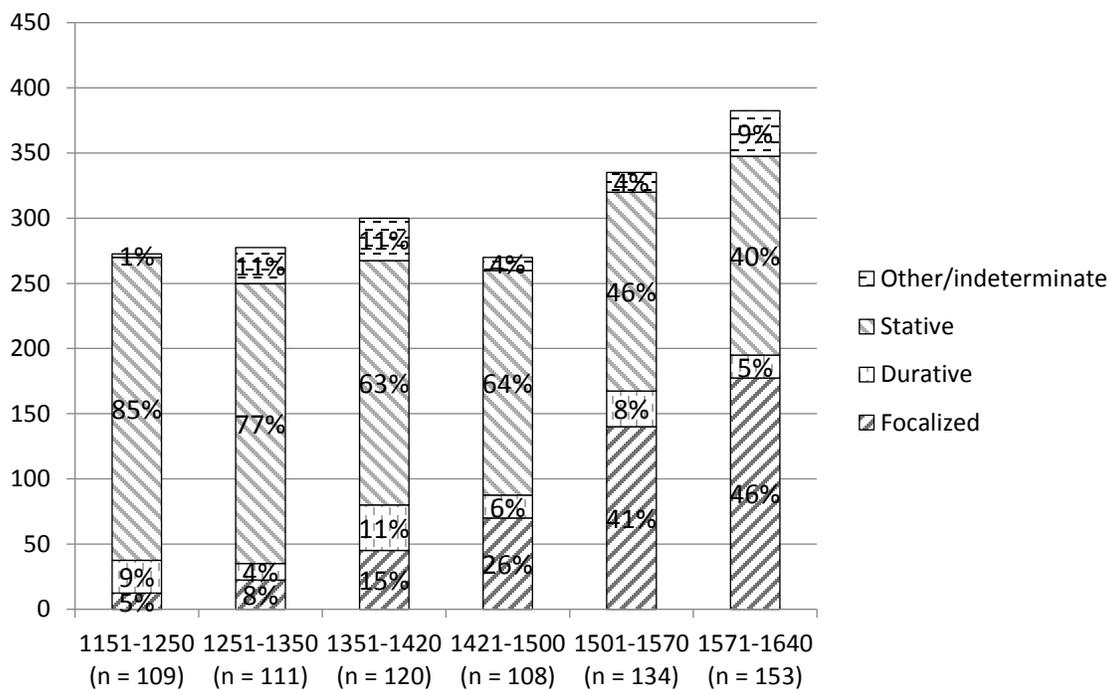


Figure 1. Functions of [BE *Ving*] · per million words

Figure 1 also shows that the 'in-progress'-use only became dominant in the 16th-17th centuries. Petré (2016), on the basis of a traditional corpus study, explains this emergence as a kind of 'side-effect' of system-change unrelated to social motivations. Figure 1 shows that the overall frequency per million words remained fairly stable throughout Middle English. Yet the focalized function gradually gained ground. This may be explained as a consequence of a transformation of the way in which background information was syntactically expressed in Middle English. In Old English, background information was still predominantly expressed by means of main clauses. Background and foreground was not systematically distinguished syntactically, although background sentences tended to be simply SVO, while foreground sentences more often were of the type XVS0, where X was an adverbial situating the foregrounded situation with respect to the preceding situation. The most frequent of such adverbials was *þa* 'then' (van

Kemenade & Los 2006: 243–244; Westergaard 2009: 93–94).

During the Middle English period, however, background clauses were connected more tightly to the foreground main clauses they supplemented, by being integrated into them in the form of subordinate adverbial clauses. Brinton (1996) provides evidence that such subordinate adverbial clauses drastically increased from late Middle English. One should keep in mind that for the purpose of this study, this shift in clausal syntax is simply taken for granted. Obviously, the shift had its own causes, which may in turn have been social (related to unconventional innovation) or syntactic (related to the system). What matters here is that this shift had a direct impact on the use of [BE *Ving*], which can only be regarded as a mechanic effect unrelated to social motivations. The stative use [BE *Ving*] typically provided background information. To the extent that background information was increasingly expressed by adverbial clauses in Middle English, it is only to be expected that stative [BE *Ving*] is also increasingly found within such adverbial clauses. This indeed turns out to be the case. Typical instances are (5) or (6).

- (5) *On a day sone aftyr, as þay wer yn þe see of Galyle fyschyng, Cryst come by hom, and callet hom.*
(a1500(a1415))
- (6) *And as they were comyng homwarde, they founde themselfe vpon the ryver of gyronde.* (c1489)

In the classification by Killie (2008), uses such as these are no longer treated as stative, but instead are considered focalized. They are focalized, because the event expressed in the main clause serves as a focalization point: it is at this foregrounded point in time in particular that the backgrounded state holds. At this stage, there is no evidence yet that the idea of ‘ongoing activity at focalization point X’ is part of the semantics of [BE *Ving*]. Instead, the temporal relationship between the two may be derived pragmatically, and/or is syntactically coded as well, at least if [BE *Ving*] occurs in a subordinate clause linked to a foregrounded matrix clause, as is typically the case. In either case, it is not necessarily part of the semantics of [BE *Ving*].

So initially, [BE *Ving*] preserves its original stative semantics. Yet on the basis of the recurrent co-occurrence of [BE *Ving*] in subordinate adverbial clauses which indicate the time frame against which some foregrounded event takes place, hearers seem to have inferred that this component of ‘ongoingness at point X’ was part of [BE *Ving*] itself. The actualization of this semanticization of ongoingness can be traced along three stages. The first stage simply consists of the original use, where [BE *Ving*] is essentially limited to truly stative situations. Such stative situations are internally homogenous. All phases of the situation are identical. Applied to (3), the standing of the statues is the same at time x as it is at time x+1. In a second stage, which is the stage in which examples like (5) and (6) are situated, ongoingness gradually becomes associated with [BE *Ving*] by pragmatic inference. At this point, while the homogenous make-up of the state expressed by [BE *Ving*] is maintained, the focus falls on the phase that is concurrent with the focalization point. All other phases are deprofiled because they are perceived as less important. In a third stage, the association of ongoingness is semanticized. At this point, [BE *Ving*] is no longer dependent on the context to express ongoingness, and as a result, its new meaning is actualized in novel uses that were not possible before. Such novel uses start to appear towards the end of the Middle English period. An example is the extension to transitive accomplishments, as in (7). Unlike what is found for states, the internal makeup of accomplishments is not homogenous. Each internal phase differs from the other, which means that a stative reading is no longer possible.

- (7) *So the meanwhile that thys knyght **was makyng** hym redy to departe, there com into the courte the Lady of the Laake. (a1470)*

A second manifestation of the actualization of ongoingness is found in the dramatic increase of [BE *Ving*] in the present tense, as shown in Figure 2.

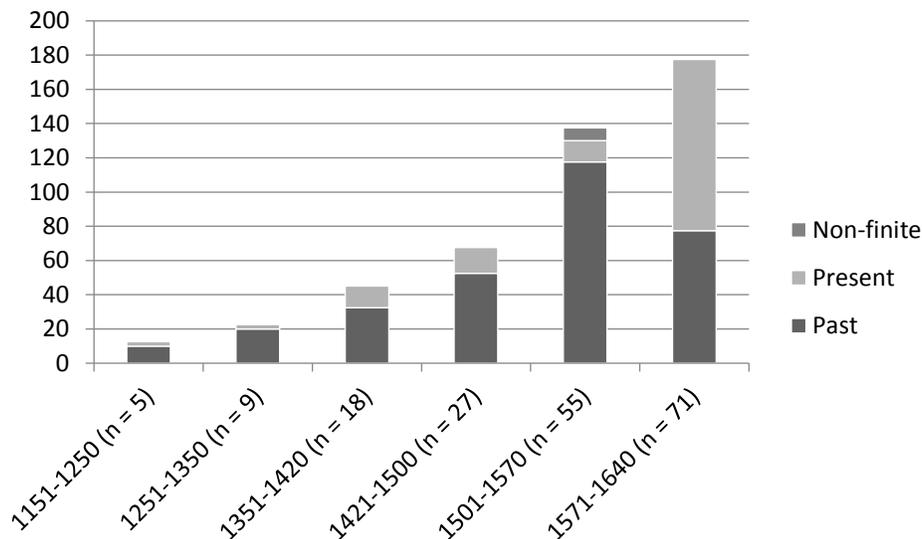


Figure 2. Tense of focalized [BE *Ving*], frequencies per million words

Note that this expansion of the present tense strongly correlates with the increased use of [BE *Ving*] in main clauses. For instance, in the period 1571-1640, 75% (30 out of 40) of the present tense instances are main clauses, whereas this is only 9 out of 31 (29%) for the past tense. An example of a present tense main clause is (8).

- (8) *Oh, sweet kisse! but ah, shes **waking!**
Lwring beautie chastens me:
Now will I for feare hence flee; (1591. Sidney, Astr. & Stella)*

The transfer of focalized [BE *Ving*] from past tense adverbial clauses to present tense main clauses is explained in Petré (2016) as a continuation of the semanticization process also visible in the expansion to non-stative verbs. The increase of adverbial backgrounding clauses from late Middle English onwards was primarily a matter of past tense narrative. Focalized [BE *Ving*] was still rare in main clauses, past or present, because such clauses lack the proper combination of syntactically marked ongoing frame (which contains the [BE *Ving*]) plus a focalizing point expressed in the main clause. In the present tense, ongoing situations themselves are typically expressed in a main clause, with the default topic time, the 'now', remaining implicit. Prior to semanticization, the lack of an implicit topic time would cause [BE *Ving*] to be understood as stative (denoting a temporary quality of the subject). Of course, the topic time may be made explicit by a time adverbial such as *now*. The importance of its use will be made clear below. The unsupported

expression of ongoingness by [BE *Ving*] in present tense main clauses, however, only becomes possible after its semanticization.

3.2 From system dynamics to unconventional innovation

In sum, according to Petré (2016), the semanticization of ongoingness probably was a largely automatic outcome of the systemic dynamics and the cognitive systems of contemporary speakers adjusting their generalizations through the form-function reanalysis (cf. Croft 2000: 117ff) of [BE *Ving*]. This new analysis of [BE *Ving*] was increasingly sanctioned by the changed system, in which the stative uses typically served as a frame for a focalizing event. What is particularly interesting for understanding the interplay between the conventional and the unconventional, is the observation that this shift in the semantics of [BE *Ving*] actually opened up an opportunity for individual speakers to be extravagant.

This opportunity consisted of the transfer of [BE *Ving*] from its preferred past tense niche to present tense main clause uses. Such main clause uses arguably stood out much more than their past tense equivalents, for the following reasons. First, the past tense equivalents, although they might also show innovative uses such as the one in (7), were largely a continuation of the original, conventionalized use. In contrast, in the present tense the focalized use of [BE *Ving*] was entirely novel. Moreover, while its novelty alone already made it stand out, it had the added quality of being more isomorphic when compared to the usage profile of the present tense at the time. Indeed, the present tense was very versatile in the Early Modern English period (as it still is today, even if perhaps somewhat less), and was used to express at least (i) current action, (ii) future (planned) action, (iii) habitual action or (iv) a generic statement (e.g., cf. De Wit & Brisard 2015 for a recent contrastive analysis of both constructions in Present-Day English). The new exclusive association of [BE *Ving*] with ongoingness, then, made the construction possibly more explicit than the simple present. This combination of novelty and functional explicitness seems to fulfil all conditions to make it into an expressive and extravagant expression: people using it were certainly noticed (as per Keller's maxim 'talk in such a way that you are noticed', 1994: 101), and they were also being more explicit than strictly necessary (Haspelmath 1999).

4 Data and methodology for identifying extravagance

4.1 In search of extravagance

In the previous section, it has been argued that the development of [BE *Ving*] up to the seventeenth century may be seen as a sequence of unintended system dynamics leading to an opportunity to be extravagant. While the corpus used in Petré (2016) is too small to examine individual patterning, these findings may serve as the basis for a more detailed look at extravagant uses of [BE *going to* INF] including some preliminary findings on individual variation or consistency. Indeed, the possible 'extravagant' nature of [BE *Ving*] in the present tense also seems to have played a role in the development of [BE *going to* INF]. This section will introduce the data and methodology to this case study. The results are discussed in section 5, which explores to what extent the first uses of *be going to* (incorporating [BE *Ving*]) instead of a simple present [GO *to* INF] are a manifestation of speakers' attempts to be extravagant.

One obvious difficulty in assessing the extent to which an expression is 'extravagant' is the very notion of extravagance itself. How can we quantify something which seems to be the epitome of the qualitative expression of self? This can only be done under the assumption that the urge to be noticed is

typically strongest when the speaker is personally and emotionally involved in what they are stating. Speakers do not always want their expressions to be noticed, but only when it matters for them.

Even under this assumption, it remains a tough task to operationalize this notion. However, there are some quantifiable criteria that may be reasonably assumed to significantly correlate with this subjective aspect that can be easily measured. A first criterion is the presence of time adverbs meaning 'now' (collectively referred to by means of small caps *now*). When the first innovative uses of 'progressive' [BE *Ving*] appear in the present tense, they are not yet conventionalized. To highlight the meaning of ongoingness in [BE *Ving*] instead of the more original one of stativity at this early stage, an explicit focalizing point such as *now* could be added. The increased use of an additional element in this pre-semanticization stage which (rein)forces the right interpretation is not unknown in the literature (see Traugott 2008 on novel cleft-constructions; van de Pol 2016 on novel uses of absolute constructions). It is noteworthy that in three out of four present tense instances in the period 1501-1570 in the data used in Petré (2016), this time adverb *now* is indeed present. Once ongoingness is semanticized and conventionalized, an explicit topic time is no longer necessary, because the use of [BE *Ving*] evokes such a topic time (the implicit 'now') independently. Subsequently, explicit *now* is expected to decrease in prominence as time progresses. This turns out to be indeed the case. Adverbs meaning 'now' (*now*, *presently*) occur in only 10% of all present tense instances in the final period examined (1571-1640). At this point one might object that the necessary co-occurrence of adverbs meaning 'now' may indicate that [BE *Ving*] itself is not sufficiently expressive to do the job, and therefore cannot be extravagant. But that would be mistaking the kind of expressivity that is at stake here. Indeed, the very fact that [BE *Ving*] fails to convey this meaning independently makes it (combined with *now*) particularly extravagant, because hearers do not expect the construction to be used in this way.³ In that sense, the presence of such a time adverb, which conveys the immediacy of the event and at the same time the lack of conventionality of the entire expression, is taken here as a formal indication of extravagance.

A second criterion that will be used concerns the opposite of extravagance. There are certain usage contexts of which it may be reasonably assumed that the speaker is rarely emotionally involved in their contents. If a construction is used in such a context significantly more often than a competing construction, this may indicate that it has a neutral connotation and does not add to the extravagant quality of an expression. Conversely, if a construction is never used in such contexts, this may be precisely because its extravagance prevents it from being used unobtrusively. Three such contexts, those of stage directions, the historical present and summary statements, will be examined.

A third criterion that will be looked at is lack of motion. This criterion is used to distinguish [BE *going to* INF] from [GO *to* INF] when the former needed to renew its extravagant power after the novelty of progressiveness itself is already wearing down a bit. Given that GO still generally meant 'move to a place' outside the construction with infinitive, non-motion uses may be assumed to have stood out, hence, to be extravagant when first appearing. As a reflection of a second innovation, examining this criterion may tell us more about unidirectionality as an effect of sequences of innovation and convention.

To make the comparison of the two competing variants [GO *to* INF] and [BE *going to* INF] as focused as possible, only main clauses are compared. Other types of clauses (complement clauses, adverbial clauses, relative clauses) typically convey background information, where the issue of extravagance is

³ Its use in a context that forces a progressive reading is therefore also an instance of coercion (cf. Michaelis 2003).

mostly absent. Other uses that are outside the competition are also left out of the sample. These are specifically the generic and habitual uses of [GO to INF], which are not found at the time in the progressive variant, as well as some idiomatic uses such as the use of *go* with the meaning ‘add up, are needed’, as in *What abundance of things go to make a Bishops or Priests right known* (generation 1, 1684). The analysis, furthermore, distinguished between four generations of users, and each generation clearly uses the construction in its own way.

4.2 Size matters

In this section, I will briefly discuss the corpus that has been used for the analysis. Most studies on individual variation and change do not deal with grammatical change, but focus on the sociolinguistic aspects of phonological and morphological change in the Labovian tradition. Such studies typically are based on one or more time slices, and reconstruct intergenerational change on the basis of the idea of apparent time, the different behaviour between members of a community of different ages (Sankoff 2006). Such research setups are largely an effect of the limitations on resources that researchers had to work with until recently. Syntactic change in adults has rarely been studied. Moreover, the few studies that dealt with syntactic change focus on changes that are already well advanced beyond the incipient stages (Fitzmaurice 2004, Bergs 2005, Nevalainen et al. 2011; an exception is Traugott 2008), and, again, involve highly frequent patterns. For instance, Nevalainen *et al.* (2011) discuss a number of instances of variation in Early Modern English, such as the replacement of the third person singular ending *-th* by *-s* (*goeth* > *goes*). They explicitly exclude the earliest stages of a new variant from their data stating that the sparsity of data at this early stages defies any quantitative analysis (Nevalainen *et al.* 2011: 7).

Recently, however, a couple of massive digitalization projects has been completed or is approaching completion, making available an enormous amount of material on an individual level. To my knowledge, the largest corpus-study published on syntactic variation with reference to change is Fitzmaurice (2004). Some of the individuals covered by her study are also included in this present study. The study looked into the variation of the progressive, and was still clearly not sufficiently large-scale to study the incipient stages of grammaticalization. This is currently changing. De Smet (2016) discusses the incipient stages of the adjectival uses of the noun *key*. For this, he made use of a selection of the *Hansard* corpus (exhaustive transcriptions of parliamentary speeches), yielding on average 540,000 words per individual, so about five times that of Fitzmaurice (2004). I will make use of two other databases in this analysis, *Early English Books Online* and *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*⁴. Together, these databases contain scans of **all** British print work that appeared between 1473 and 1800. A majority of these scans is available as manual transcriptions (EBO, small part of ECCO) or OCRed text (ECCO). As a result, the collected works of highly prolific authors in my data contain on average two million words per author, so about twenty times the size of Fitzmaurice’s study.

All the authors in the sample belong to the intellectual elite, and have spent a considerable amount of their time in London. For this study seventeen authors were analysed, whose work totals 38.5 million words. An author was selected if his work yielded more than 100 instances of the form *going*, regardless of its function (so not just progressives). Admittedly, taking such an internal factor as a selection criterion

⁴ Texts collected from this database were processed during a visiting lectureship at the University of Ghent in 2014-2015.

introduces a strong bias for early adopters into the corpus. However, I believe in this particular case this procedure is justifiable for two reasons. A practical reason is that a random selection of prolific authors would have led to the inclusion of many authors for which there would not have been enough instances to do individual-level analysis. More importantly, this paper wants to examine in what respect progressive [BE *going to* INF] competes with its non-progressive variant at this individual level, and to what extent this competition may be linked to the notion of extravagance. Such an analysis would have been impossible with authors who only use simple present *go* but never *going to* (the reverse problem does not seem to occur). Table 1 provides an overview of the corpus.

Author	Generation	Word count
Clarke, Samuel (1599-1682)	1	2276228
Baxter, Richard (1615-1691)	1	11347373
Watson, Thomas (1620-1686)	1	811568
<i>Total generation 1</i>		<i>14435169</i>
Patrick, Simon (1626-1707)	2	3526757
Swinnock, George (1627-1673)	2	968893
Bulsteel, John (1627-1691)	2	1021224
Bunyan, John (1628-1688)	2	1511780
Dryden, John (1631-1700)	2	1281322
Phillips, John (1631-1706)	2	1478867
<i>Total generation 2</i>		<i>9788843</i>
Mather, Increase (1639-1723)	3	1631594
Shadwell, Thomas (1640?-1692)	3	482500
Crouch, Nathaniel (1640?-1725?)	3	1790262
Behn, Aphra (1640-1689)	3	962353
Horneck, Anthony (1641-1697)	3	1003288
Crowne, John (1641-1712)	3	501084
Burnet, Gilbert (1643-1715)	3	5163889
<i>Total generation 3</i>		<i>11534970</i>
D'Urfey, Thomas (1653-1723)	4	1131679
Ravenscroft, Edward (1654?-1707)	4	295523
Dunton, John (1659-1733)	4	1381262
<i>Total generation 4</i>		<i>2808464</i>
Total		38567446

Table 1. Author & generation word counts

All relevant instances of *go* and *going + to* co-occurring within a span of 12 words⁵ were retrieved from the corpus making use of Perl scripts, including all spelling variants (determined on the basis of a token list). For present tense *go* the following spellings were found (in descending frequency): *go*, *goes*, *goeth*, *goe*, and once each, *goe's* and *goo*. Searches on *going* initially yielded (for the selected authors) the

⁵ This was the largest span found that yielded a relevant instance [*going to* INF] on an exhaustive search for *going* in the entire EEBOCorp 1.0 (Petré 2013).

spellings *going*, *a going*, *a-going*, *agoing* and *goin* (twice, probably typos)⁶. In a second stage, the raw data retrieved were filtered for those actually containing a [to INF]. Table 2 provides an overview of the filtering procedure.

Construction	Raw data	Instances of [GO BE <i>going</i>] with [to INF]	[+main clause] & [-generic, -habitual]	[+relative clause]
[GO to INF]	8671	651	270	31
[BE <i>going</i> to INF]	10000+ ⁷	418	181	118
Total	18000+	1069	451	149

Table 2. Dataset

The resulting number of 451 instances of specific present tense main clauses (and another 149 instances of relative clauses), out of a corpus of 38.5 million words, shows just how much data is needed to examine one specific use of a construction that is not yet conventionalized.

In the end, even the present amount of data did not allow in depth analyses of individuals, at least not when limiting the data to present tense main clauses. To be able to make principled quantitative observations on the data, I have therefore grouped the authors according to four generations, as also indicated in Table 1. The identification of generations was done somewhat pragmatically, as the data did simply not allow for a more principled selection of authors. The identification of generations 2 to 4 came fairly naturally. Each of these three consists of individuals born within less than six years from each other. In addition, there are gaps of eight and respectively ten years between these generations. Generation 1, admittedly, does not form a very coherent group in terms of their birth dates, but this could not be helped.

4.3 Brief sketch of the grammaticalization of [BE *going* to INF]

The literature on the grammaticalization of [BE *going* to INF] is very extensive, with, within the past ten years, work by Hilpert (2008), Disney (2009), Nesselhauf (2010), Garrett (2012), Traugott (2012, 2015), Traugott & Trousdale (2013), Petré & Van de Velde (2014) or Budts & Petré (2016). This section only summarizes the minimum of information required to understand the analysis. The source of [BE *going* to INF] was a fully compositional combination of [[*go*][allative motion]] + [[*be Ving*][imperfectivity/on-goingness]] + [[*to Inf*][purpose adjunct]], as in the early instance in (9).

- (9) *As he was goyng to Priscouia to mete Sigismundus themperoure, he was by the waye sodenlye taken wyth the pestilence, and so made he an ende of hys cursed life.* (1554, *An exhortation to all menne to take hede ...* [EEBOCorp 1.0])

In the course of its grammaticalization process, [BE *going* to INF] acquired characteristics of an auxiliary,

⁶ Tokens with illegible letters (represented by a dot, e.g., *g*ing*) have been included as well. For the OCRed texts, a number of heuristics involving detection of common OCR errors (e.g., *goiug* instead of *going*) have also been applied to retrieve possibly all instances. These are not included in the list of spellings, since they do not actually represent authors' spellings.

⁷ At this stage also still includes the past tense as well as instances of *going* that are not in the progressive.

and the purposive adjunct (*to buy some chocolate* in (2)) was neoanalyzed as the complement of this auxiliary, as in (3).

(10) [I am going] [to buy some chocolate] >

(11) [I am going to buy some chocolate]

There is a general consensus that this process started in the seventeenth century. Initially, the construction was still limited to contexts that required motion. The first instances where motion is probably absent date from the 1610s onwards (Garrett 2012). Until the end of the seventeenth century, however, the use of [BE *going to* INF] was still largely restricted to express imminent future (Traugott 2015: 67), as well as to intentional actions (Budts & Petré 2016). According to Traugott (2015: 69), the latest possible date where the new analysis in (11) is the only possible one, is the early eighteenth century, when sentences appear of the type in (12), where *go* does no longer have a subject of its own, and therefore can only be considered to be an auxiliary.

(12) *There is going to be such a calm among us.* (1725)

5 Analysis of the competition between [GO to INF] and [BE *going to* INF]

5.1 Introduction

It will be clear that the sketch given in the previous section does no justice at all to the insight that has been adduced in the literature. Yet one apparent gap present in all the literature is the general absence of a discussion of the combination of the verb *go* with a *to*-infinitive outside [BE *Ving*]. Instead, the grammaticalization process at issue has consistently been accounted for only by looking at progressive [BE *going to* INF]. In their handbook on grammaticalization, Hopper & Traugott (2003: 89) described the function of the progressive as follows: ‘The progressive *be -ing* indexed activity in process, and so motivated the tendency for [BE *going to* INF] to be interpreted as a purposive that was relevant to the reference time of the clause and likely to be imminent.’ What their argument boils down to is this: the use of [BE *Ving*], which encodes ongoing situations, has the effect of drawing attention to the closeness of the link between the future and the now. The most natural interpretation is that the future situation, expressed by the *to*-infinitive, will happen very soon, and is already being prepared by ongoing activity (the *going* itself). While this is essentially true, Hopper & Traugott seem to tacitly assume that the use of the verb *go* as a future marker is restricted to its combination with the progressive. Such an assumption is quite understandable from the point of view of present-day speakers of English, for whom a phrase such as *I go now to* INF is ungrammatical, but as a matter of fact it is an anachronism.

In fact, both [GO] [to INF] and [BE *going*] [to INF] were grammaticalizing concurrently, as is illustrated by sentences (13) and (14), in which GO combines with [to INF] in such a way that a motion reading is no longer possible. Both are roughly synonymous (‘the things I will explain’) and written down by the same author.⁸

⁸ The only apparent difference is that the one in the progressive postdates the one in the simple present tense by twenty-five years, but not too much weight should be attached to this difference in dates. For instance, an earlier instance like (14) (*the author that I am a going to examine*) occurs in a work from 1688. It seems true nevertheless,

- (13) *I hope you will consider what I **go to lay** before you with a mind calm and undisturbed.* (Gilbert Burnet, 1675)
- (14) *That Most Renowned Monarch WILLIAM the Third, etc. whose Life and Actions **I am now going to** relate.* (Gilbert Burnet, 1702)

Generally, it appears to be the case that simple present and progressive realizations competed with each other whenever a specific future (imminent) situation had to be expressed. They do not seem to compete in generic or habitual contexts, where the simple present was the only option. An instance of such a habitual use of the simple present is (15).

- (15) *He **goes** very often **to eat** in the Gardens of the Pachas.* (1688) (**is going* very often)

The division of labour between progressive and simple present is roughly the same as that of Present-Day English, although it is perhaps less strict in current usage due to the overall increase of [BE *going to/gonna* INF]. For instance, we can now find generic expressions like *boys are gonna be boys*, which were not yet possible in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, and show how the progressive aspectual quality is being bleached in a form such as *gonna*. Since generic and habitual uses of the simple present did not compete with the progressive, they are excluded from the analysis.

5.2 Analysis by generation

The distribution of the two variants over the four generations is presented in Figure 3. The graph clearly shows that throughout the seventeenth century, the two variants are both well-represented.

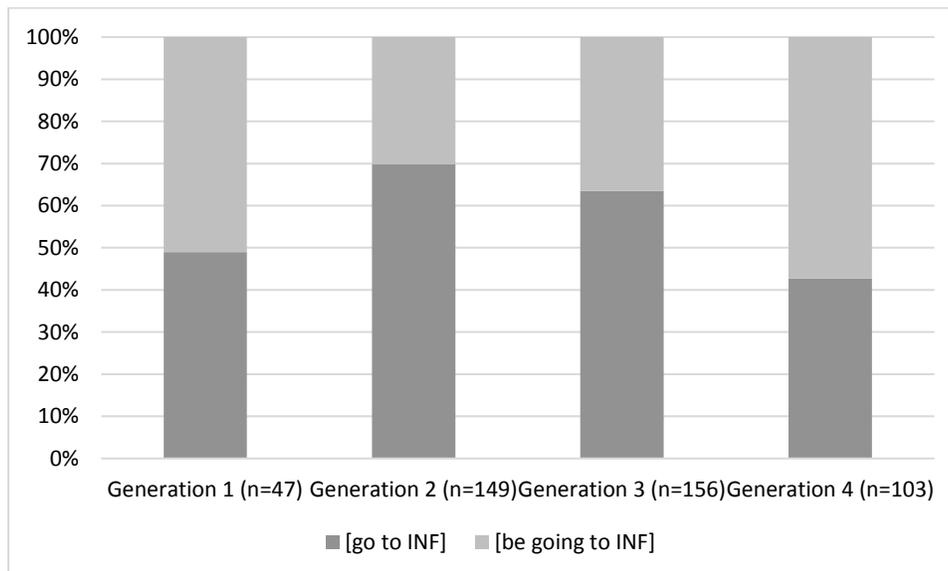
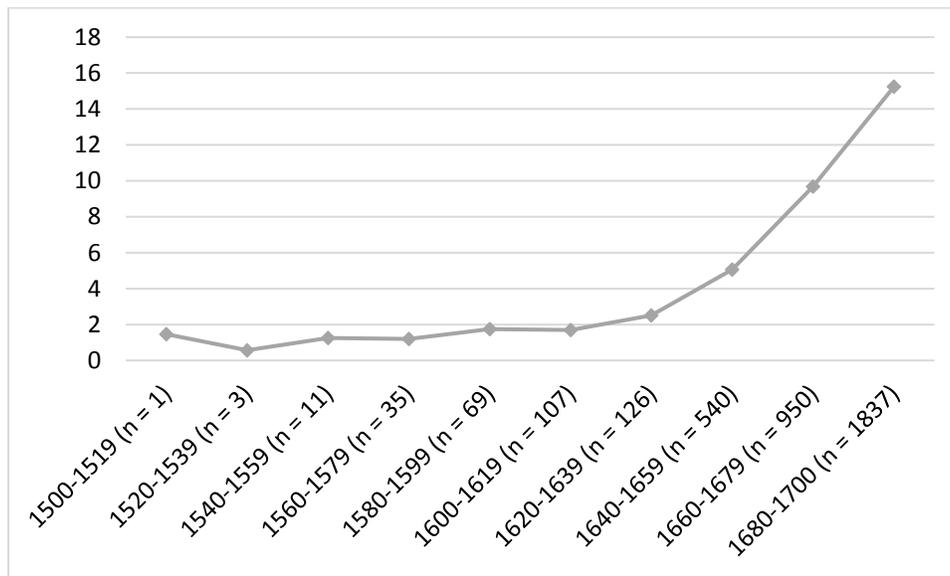


Figure 3. Competition between [GO to INF] and [BE *going to* INF]

and this will be discussed in more detail in section 5.5, that Gilbert Burnet was slow in adapting the progressive variant, and never embraced it as fully as most of his contemporaries.

So the grammaticalization of both simple present [GO] [to INF] and progressive [BE *going*] [to INF] was equally recent in the seventeenth century. This raises the question exactly along which variables they competed. I would like to argue that the variable underlying their competition was precisely the novelty of the progressive construction itself (cf. also Petr  submitted). Certainly in the first half of the seventeenth century, the progressive variant [BE *going to INF*] was still not fully conventionalized. This may be inferred from its overall frequency per million words in the larger reference corpus EEBOCorp 1.0 (Petr  2013). This corpus, totalling 525 million words, does not suffer from the bias that was deliberately introduced in our present sample. As is shown in Figure 4, [BE *going to INF*] in this corpus stays between 0.5 and 2.5 instances per million words up till about 1640, after which date it starts to increase rapidly, possibly beginning the steep ascent of the typical s-curve growth found in many types of language change (cf. Blythe & Croft 2012). Even around 1700 [BE *going to INF*] is still only beginning to unfold its potential. This is made abundantly clear by a comparison to its frequency in the spoken part of the BNC (cf. Krug 2000: 218), where the combined average frequency (over different age categories) of [BE *going to INF*] and [gonna INF] adds up to a staggering 2722 occurrences per million words, or about 180 times the (admittedly written) frequency it had acquired by 1700. In line with the hypotheses put forward by Keller (1994) or Croft (2000), the beginning of this ascent in the second half of the seventeenth century, is the stage in which extravagance may have played an important role in establishing the construction in the speech community.⁹



⁹ This idea that initially grammaticalization is motivated by reasons of extravagance might also provide an explanation for what Mair (2004) called the delayed increase-pattern in grammaticalization phenomena. Only after the extravagant quality of the construction wears down, it is conventionalized and spreads to all kinds of contexts and uses. Note, however, that the steeper increase towards the end of the 17th century is altogether different from the steep rise that Mair observes for the end of the 19th century (and which is confirmed by Budts & Petr  2016). This further attests to the possibility that extravagance (and delayed increase) may occur more than once in the grammaticalization history of a specific construction.

Figure 3. Normalized frequency (per million words) of [BE going to INF] in the reference corpus EEBOCorp 1.0

The simple fact of still being perceived as a young construction, less entrenched than the simple present, may have made [BE going to INF] more expressive already. But also the specific semantics of the progressive most likely strongly added to this effect. As Hopper & Traugott (2003) already stated, the use of the progressive puts emphasis on the fact that the future action is linked to the present. This may have had more ramifications than previously imagined. Arguably, this link to the present makes the expression more concrete, more palpable, and therefore easier to relate to.

Yet using [BE Ving] alone as a criterion would be circular. The three factors outlined in section 4.1 can help us to pin down the gain in extravagance attained by using [BE Ving]. First, it is expected that the unconventional combination of [BE going to INF] with NOW for progressive effect reflects the extravagant nature of early progressive [BE going to INF]. Conversely, it is expected that simple present [GO to INF] does not collocate particularly strongly with NOW, because its use is not emphatic to start with. These expectations are indeed met by the results in Figures 5 and 6, which show the respective frequency of NOW co-occurring with either construction across the four generations studied (*now* itself appears in 58 out of 70 of these cases).

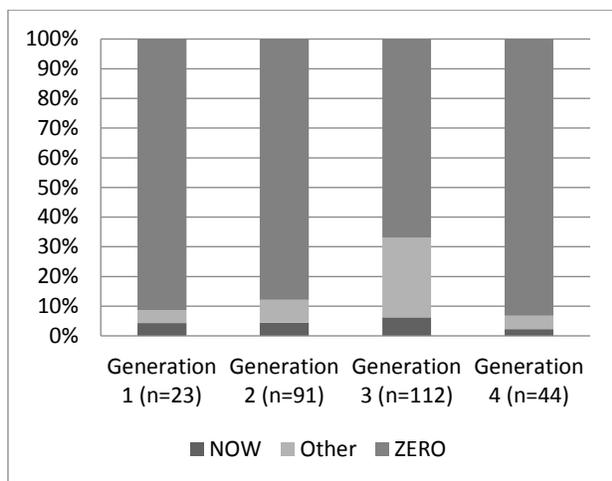


Figure 5. [GO to INF] and time adverbials

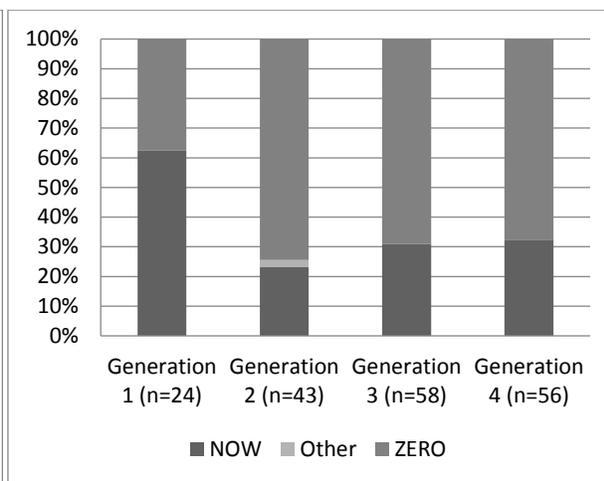


Figure 6. [BE going to INF] and time adverbials

The difference between the two variants is consistently significant, and is a first indication of the higher expressive power of [BE going to INF] as compared to that of [GO to INF]. Interestingly, the proportion of now is by far the highest in the first generation, where 62.5% of all instances have now. In the second and subsequent generations, this percentage has dropped to less than half (between 23% and 32%). The difference in distribution between generation 1 and 2 is statistically significant (Fisher's exact two-tailed $p=0.003$). This suggests that after the first generation the expressive force of redundant [be going to INF] + [NOW] started to wear out a little and the construction was conventionalized.

Before I return to the possible significance of this below, I will first turn to a different type of evidence. Besides positive evidence, even more telling may be the negative evidence that comes from those statements, in which emotional involvement, and therefore the urge to make the expression stand

out, is not at all expected. There are specifically two (or perhaps three) contexts of use, which, apart from their lack of emotional involvement, seem otherwise fully compatible with [BE *Ving*]. If these are hardly ever found in combination with the progressive, this is additional evidence that the simple present is preferred when expressivity is not an issue.

The first are stage directions. Because stage directions remain somewhat invisible to the audience, it is not expected that the author will often resort to strategies of extravagance. Examples are (16a), with a simple present, and (16b), with a progressive.

- (16) a. ***Goes to stab himself*** (Aphra Behn [generation 3], 1673)
b. ***Lifts up his Sword, is going to strike*** (John Dryden [generation 2], 1691)

The second are summary descriptions as found, for instance, in tables of contents. These are typically only there to refer the reader to the real narrative. There were four instances of these, all of them in the simple present.

- (17) *Ecclesiasticks go to Rome to visit the Holy Places.* (John Bulteel [Generation 2], 1683)

Finally, the use of the historical present, which, though formally present, encodes a situation in the past, also proves to be mostly restricted to the simple present.¹⁰ An example is (18). It has been argued that the use of the historical present may be related to attempts by authors to make the description of events livelier. However, Fludernik (1992) has shown that this is not its main use, and has argued that ‘vividness’ is an *effect* of its successive appearance rather than a motivation for its use (1992: 8; see also Pons-Sanz 2014: 148-151). The historical present may serve a variety of purposes, including marking a transition in a narrative, or stressing the duration of a certain situation. While these might still qualify as a form of emphasis, they are at least different from extravagance as directly related to the emotional involvement of the speaker. No such relationship is found in the case of the historical present. Indeed, in line with Fludernik’s (1992) analysis, most of such uses of [GO to INF] are found in a whole series of historical presents, and do not stand out in any way. To the extent therefore that they are still manifestations of the genre of historical description, the need for truly extravagant constructions, which draw attention to the speaker as well as to the content, is not asked for here.

- (18) *But at last, at the Eleventh Hour he came, and goes into the Vineyard to Work with the rest of the Labourers* (1678)

The respective frequencies of these ‘non-extravagant’ uses are presented in Figures 7 and 8. The figures clearly show that their frequency is considerably higher in the non-progressive variant than it is in the

¹⁰ There is only a single instance with the progressive: *Hitherto they had given ground to the French: but now their Strength increasing, they are going to give them Chace: The ten thousand Swisse which the Cardinal de Sion had obtained of the Cantons for defence of the Pope and the Holy See, after long deliberation whether they should follow him into Milanois, because that was to contravene their Alliance with the King, did at last joyn them near Gambara.* (John Bulteel [Generation 2], 1683).

progressive variant. Apart from generation 1 (Fisher's exact two-tailed $p = 0.11$), the difference is each time highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

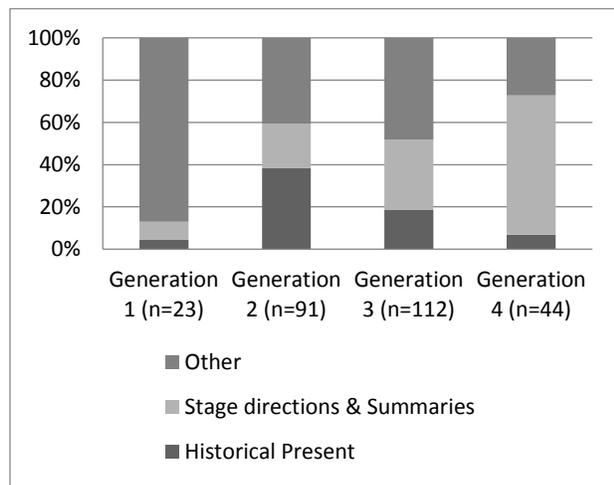


Figure 7. [go to INF] and non-extravagant use

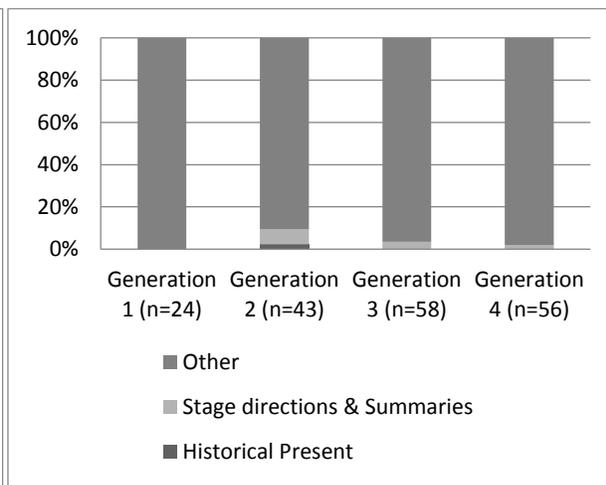


Figure 8. [BE going to INF] and non-extravagant use

Recapitulating, the co-occurrence of the progressive and the time adverbial NOW was a way of emphatically marking the ongoing nature of the activity expressed by the verb. While the emphasis on the immediacy of the activity was made precisely because the speaker wanted to express the newsworthiness, not so much of the motion, but of the intended action, it was initially still the motion encoded by *going* that was emphasized rather than the action. Once, however, the notion of ongoingness was semanticized in [BE *Ving*], and time adverbials NOW were lost, the dramatic effect of immediate motion expressed by [BE *going to INF*] was also lost to some extent. At this point, innovative speakers may have wanted to transfer the extravagant effect of [BE *going to INF*] to novel uses. Interestingly, this may arguably have stimulated a second unconventional, and most likely extravagant use of [BE *going to INF*], that of [BE *going to INF*] in contexts lacking motion. Since the original idea of immediacy was important precisely because of the imminence of the action, the logical next step would be to interpret [BE *going to INF*] as emphatically marking this imminence itself rather than the motion preceding it. Such a step is only a small one, since often only little motion was needed to proceed to the action, as in (19), where Scaramouch is entering his house to weigh some tableware that is for sale by an Italian merchant, in order to check if the price is correct.

- (19) *Scar. Aside. This is my house, I'll go in and weigh't.*
Panc. He's going to weigh't. (1677)

If this is indeed what happens, we might expect [BE *going to INF*] to appear increasingly in non-motion uses after the conventionalization of ongoingness. The extravagant effect that this use created, then, differs from the previous one, in that here it is not redundancy that leads to it. Rather, its saliency derives from the mismatch between what the entire construction actually expresses (an imminent future whose realization does not require motion) and the fact that *going* still strongly co-activates motion in the mind. Extravagance of such contexts would be guaranteed as long as the idea of motion was still saliently

present in most other uses of the construction. An instance of such a motion-less use of [BE *going to* INF] where it is urgency alone that is at stake, is (20)

(20) *Or as Carolus King of Sicily, did on his death-bed[:] Alas, alas, I **am going to dye**, and yet have not begun to live.* (Swinnock [generation 2], 1662)

When we look at the frequencies of non-motion uses of [BE *going to* INF] in main clauses (Figure 9), however, their history does not in any obvious way support the idea that extension to non-motion uses was enabled by the conventionalization (semanticization) of immediacy/ongoingness in [BE *Ving*].

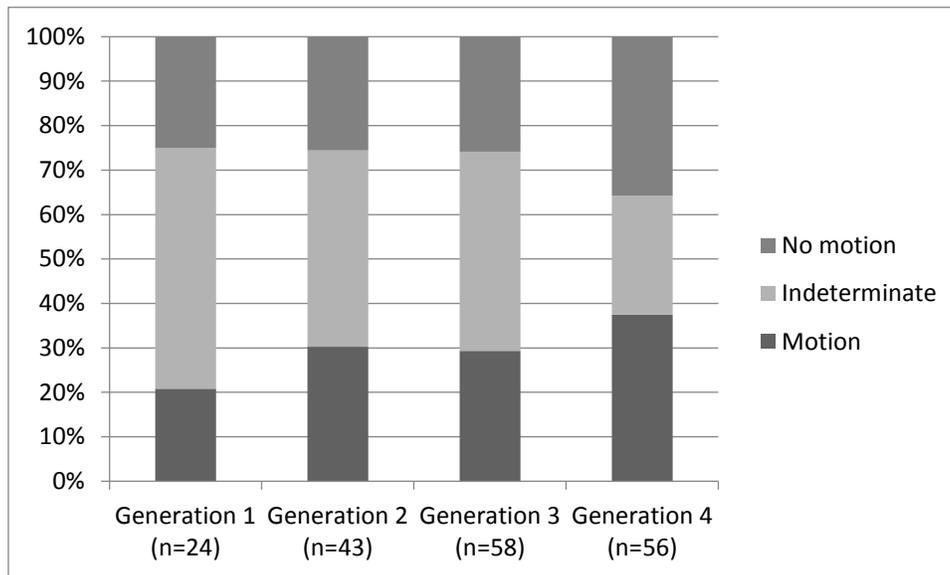


Figure 9. Presence/absence of motion in uses of [BE *going to* INF]

First, it appears that already in generation 1 contexts that can no longer easily be linked to motion constitute about 25% of all uses of [BE *going to* INF]. This seems to suggest that speakers can extend their use of [BE *going to* INF] to non-motion uses even while at the same time the progressiveness of [BE *Ving*] was still conventionalizing itself.^{11, 12} Does that mean, then, that the semanticization of immediacy and the

¹¹ It also suggests that [BE *going to* INF] started to diverge from the more general [BE *Ving*]-construction from very early on. Another interesting tendency apparent from Figure 9 is the decreasing size of indeterminate contexts, where an association of *going* with motion may or may not have been intended. While the meaning of this tendency is not easy to make out, I would tentatively relate this to an increasing divergence (already at this early stage) between the grammaticalizing construction and the regular compositional construction [BE *going*] ([to PLACE]) [to INF].

¹² Interestingly, within the first generation, 5 out of 6 non-motion uses date from 1669 or later. Only one early instance from 1654 was found. Assuming that extensions such as these are also to a high degree influenced by social factors, it might be that these first-generation authors only extended their use to non-motion contexts when such uses started to become conventional in the speech community. Because the current dataset is not big enough to do any robust quantitative analysis on intra-individual developments, I have refrained from a systematic discussion of them. Clearly, however, they are important to get at a complete picture of grammatical change.

concomitant drop of co-occurring time adverbials meaning ‘now’ is totally unrelated to the spread of non-motion uses? I would like to argue not. To see the effect of this drop on the spread of non-motion uses, however, we need to turn away from main clause usage, towards relative clauses. In principle, [BE *going to* INF] can be relativized in three ways. The antecedent may refer to the subject of the construction (type *the man, who is going to do this*), an adjunct (type *the day, on which he is going to do it*), or an element belonging to the infinitival phrase (mostly an argument, but can be an adjunct as well). Two examples of this last category, the one that concerns us here, are (21) and (22). Each time, the argument is turned into the topic of the relative clause. If it is an element of the infinitival phrase that is topicalized (or ‘fronted’), this reinforces the idea that the expression primarily encodes the imminent action expressed by the infinitival phrase rather than motion with a purpose. Such a structure is generally highly incompatible with a motion reading.

(21) *And what he did, I **am just going to tell** ye.* (1691)

(22) *I'll think of nothing but thee at present, and the Heaven I **am going to enjoy**.* (1682)

Speakers might just as well have opted for the ‘traditional’ use of [*will* INF] or [*shall* INF], but arguably, they used [BE *going to* INF] for higher effect. The significantly lower frequency of relative clauses with the non-progressive variant (31 instances, as compared to 118 with the progressive variant¹³; see Table 2) also confirms that this second extension towards more grammatical usage is largely restricted to the progressive variant. Figure 10 provides the frequency history of fronted uses of infinitival elements in relative clauses.

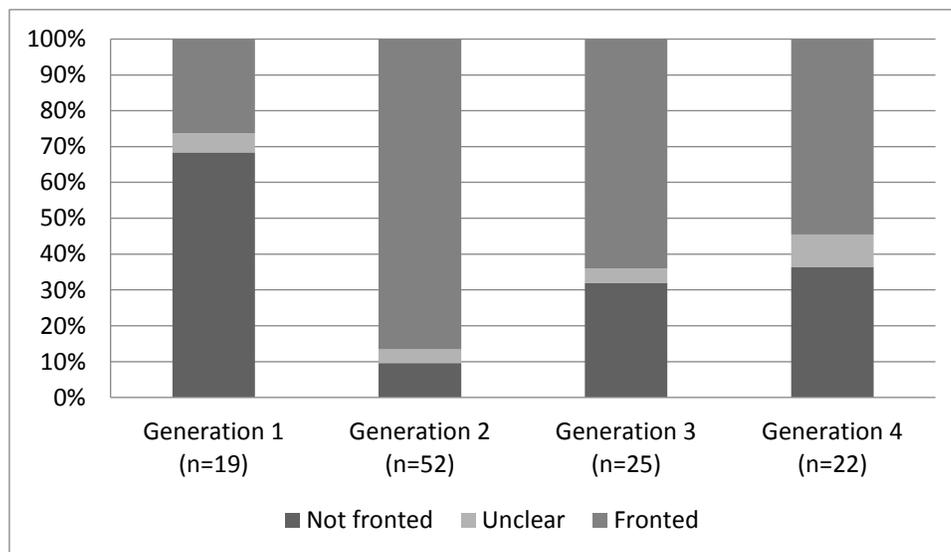


Figure 10. Fronting of elements of the infinitival clause in relative clause contexts

Clearly, there is a highly significant increase in fronted instances between generation 1 and generation 2

¹³ The difference becomes even more significant when we compare it to the main clause usage, where it is the non-progressive variant that is the most frequent one.

(Fisher's exact two-tailed $p < 0.001$). Out of the 61 instances where an element of the infinitival clause is fronted, only two appear in a wider context where motion is present as well. It is therefore clear that lack of motion and fronting are closely tied phenomena. The massive increase of the second, therefore, might be taken to be a very specific extravagant use of [BE *going to* INF], where the mismatch between *going* and the non-motion constructional meaning makes sure that the writer has the reader's attention.

As may be appreciated from the graph, the generations 3 and 4 level out somewhat, and again contain many more relative clauses where the antecedent is not an element of the infinitival clause. While this might mean that the shift between the first two generations is an artefact of the corpus, a more positive interpretation would be that this subsequent tendency signals (non-exclusively or exclusively) (i) that this pattern got entrenched as well, and was no longer much more expressive than competitors like *the thing I'll tell/I'm about to tell*; or (ii) that [BE *going to* INF] was extending further to uses where this type of fronting was not at stake. More data would be needed to make the analysis more robust at this point.

5.2 Idiosyncratic variation

The preceding sections provided some evidence that new generations may extend their use of a grammaticalizing pattern as compared to the previous generation. At the same time, most sociolinguistic models (such as that of Croft 2001) do not exclude the possibility that members of the speech community pick up innovations regardless of their age. Unfortunately, the dataset used for this analysis, even though based on an unusually big corpus, is still too small to do quantitative analyses of intra-individual developments. What we can do, however, is make some more anecdotal observations on this score.

First, it is well-known that there is much variation in the degree to which individual speakers are progressive or conservative in adapting novel uses (cf. e.g., Bergs 2005, Nevalainen et al. 2011). As pointed out in the methodology section, the nature of the dataset most likely favoured progressive authors. Hence, it is not surprising that all of them make use of [BE *going to* INF] to start with. Yet it is worthwhile to take a closer look at what this means precisely. First, we can notice that the majority of authors (16/19) indeed seems to be progressive, in that all members of this group, at one point or another, make use of the novel uses that were discussed in the previous sections. Indeed, they all extend [BE *going to* INF] to non-motion uses in main clauses, and next to fronted elements of the embedded infinitival clause in relative clause-contexts.

Three individuals do not behave according to the general pattern. First, Samuel Clarke (1599-1682) is the only author who never extended his use of [BE *going to* INF] to non-motion contexts. Samuel Clarke's birth date is by far the earliest, having been born sixteen years earlier than the next individual in the sample, Richard Baxter. In the previous figures he was consistently included in generation 1, together with Richard Baxter (°1615) and Thomas Watson (°1620). This was done mostly to make the dataset of generation 1 big enough. In a more strict view, however, he is better considered an outlier belonging to generation 0.

Next, Gilbert Burnet (°1643), a member of generation 3, goes against the grain in using the non-progressive variant [GO *to* INF] as the most grammaticalized one. His enormous corpus contains just a single instance of a present tense main clause with the progressive variant, against 39 instances of the non-progressive variant. What is more, no less than 31 out of 39 (or 79%) of these are non-motion uses. What is even more striking, is that Burnet makes heavy use of the time adverb *next* with the non-

progressive variant: 20 out of 39 instances have this *next*. Most of these are also instances of non-motion use, such as (23).

(23) *I go next to examine his opinion* (Burnet [generation 3], 1700)

There is no obvious explanation for Burnet's idiosyncratic behaviour. While he is the only author in the sample from Scotland, it seems unlikely that regional origin is the explanation here. Robert Boyle, from generation 2, for instance, is Irish, and one would not expect there to be a significant difference in the grammar of those two regions. Yet Boyle's use of [BE *going to* INF] is among the most advanced uses (including plenty of inanimate subjects) across the dataset.

Finally, Anthony Horneck (°1641) does make use of [BE *going to* INF] (9 instances, including non-motion uses, relativization, and inanimate subjects) next to three instances of [GO *to* INF]. What is surprising about his profile is that not even once [BE *going to* INF] has an accompanying time adverbial *now*. While this may be an accidental gap, it does not seem unlikely that in this case this lack is related to the imperfect learning outcome of a second language learner. Indeed, Anthony Horneck was German by birth, not British. He came to the UK in 1661, when he was 20. Obviously, by the time he started publishing (1677), his English was impeccable, but perhaps we can see a glimpse here of the kind of subtleties that are missed out on when one has not been raised in a particular language.

6 Conclusion

The main tenet of this article was to show how repeated alternations of conventional and unconventional language use may lead to progress in grammatical change. Additionally, it was argued that within unconventional language use, some patterns are more extravagant than others, and may therefore be more successful in the end. The interplay between the conventional and the unconventional is essentially the result of the dynamic nature of the complex adaptive system of language (cf. Beckner et al. 2009). The conventionalized parts of that system are as a result of this dynamic nature never stable, but always on the move. Their instability may either cause (unintentional) change itself, as in the case of the grammaticalization of the aspect of ongoingness of [BE *Ving*], or it may lead to opportunities for innovative (more intentional) language use.

An important observation is that being unconventional is done within the limits of the system. This is why extravagant non-motion instances postdate extravagant motion-instances. Related to this is the observation that the wearing out or conventionalization of one unconventional use may open up the opportunity to move on to the next. A similar observation was made by De Smet (2016), and is confirmed here. Put differently, the unconventional is a moving target. Also, once something has become conventional, it is very unlikely that it will regain its status of unconventionality. This asymmetry between conventionality and unconventionality may help explain the unidirectionality of grammaticalization.

A third aspect that has been highlighted by this paper is that there are at least two different ways in which extravagance may be manifested. While the extravagant nature of [BE *going to* INF] combined with *now* arguably derived from its being overly informative or redundant, this appeared not to be the only strategy to 'make oneself noticed'. In the case of the development of non-motion uses, another strategy of extravagance is revealed, that of the extension of an expression to something which causes a

semantic mismatch with the ‘dictionary meaning’ (expressing motion) of the key element of the construction (*going*). I do not wish to claim that semantic extensions of this type are always related to extravagance. Extravagance may not be at play in more advanced stages of grammaticalization, where more structural analogical extensions in line with alternative grammatical patterns might take over. For instance, more recent extensions of *gonna* to main clauses in conditional statements (*if I win, I’m gonna be as happy as a pumpkin*), may simply be the result of increased assimilation of *gonna* to *will*, a much less conscious process than abiding by the social maxim to stand out. The data showed, however, that the incipient stages of grammaticalization may sensibly be explained in this way.

The current analysis also leaves us with a number of desiderata for the future. A first important challenge is that of how to further operationalize wearing out of expressivity. A second one is to determine from what point onwards there is a shift from individual, conscious motivations to subconscious, cognitively driven change. And last but not least, despite the enormous amount of data that served as an input for this study, incipient syntactic change seems to require even more data before we can start doing quantitative research on intra-individual developments. Most importantly, however, while all of these challenges have been out of reach for a long time, they are now getting more and more within reach, as I hope to have shown in the present study.

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