

***Am*-Progressives in Swabian: Some evidence for pseudo-noun incorporation**

Bettina Spreng, University of Saskatchewan, bettina.spreng@usask.ca

This paper presents the initial stages of a study on the syntax and aspectual semantics of *am*-progressives in Swabian (SW, Alemannic). The data is being elicited from three speakers of differing ages speaking a variant spoken in and around Leutkirch (South Eastern Baden-Württemberg).

Progressive constructions have recently been shown to be much more common in Standard German (=written and spoken SG) than often assumed (Gárgyán, 2013). The construction consists of a combination of the auxiliary *sein* 'be' followed by a particle or preposition *am* combined with the infinitive form of the verb (1). When transitive, the object is either obligatorily preverbal (2) or may precede *am* in some dialects (Colognian) (3).

This paper discusses two properties of the construction. Firstly, there is some debate as to whether *am* is a preposition *an* 'at' fused with the dative definite article *dem* (Krause, 2002). It has been shown for SG that this analysis cannot be sustained ((Bhatt and Schmidt, 1993)=(B&S 1993)). As will be shown in this paper, the data from Swabian also supports this view. In order for *am* to be a preposition, we expect the verbal infinitive to be its nominal complement (1). Contrasting with the *beim*-progressive ('absentiv' in Krause 2002), it can be shown that the verbal infinitive does not behave like a nominal. It cannot be modified by an adjacent adjective (1)b) and the complement cannot be postverbal as prepositional *von*-complement (1)c).

The second property concerns the status of the preverbal object in the construction. In contrast to Colognian, where a full DP may precede *am* with an overt determiner (3)b), in Swabian, objects only occur preverbally (2), (3)a), disallow determiners (4), are semantically unspecified for number (2), and show frozen scope readings in contrast to regular objects.

Both properties suggest an analysis of this construction as pseudo-noun incorporation in the sense of (Massam, 2001). Since the VP in German and Swabian is head-final, the preverbal object position is common with non-finite main verbs, thus not indicating any movement. Furthermore, I argue that *am* acts as an aspectual head instead of a P-head, projecting an AspP that takes VP as complement, adapting an analysis proposed by (B&S 1993) for Colognian and SG to the Swabian data. In contrast to the analysis in B&S 1993), which argues that the object moves to get case from Asp, the frozen scope reading, the absence of determiners (4), and the obligatory preverbal position (2) in Swabian strongly suggest that an NP and not a DP merges with the V-head before the VP is merged with the AspP headed by *am*. Swabian *am*-progressives thus show one significant difference from Colognian and SG progressives. The preverbal NP has no case like its counterpart in SG and Colognian, thus has not moved to AspP, which accounts for the obligatory preverbal and post-*am* position of the object.

- (1) a. r'isch **am** schaff-a b. r'isch **am** *schnell schaff-a c. *r'isch am leas-a **vo dr'Bibel**
he is **AM** work-INF he'is **AM** quick work-INF he'is AM read-INF **of the bible**
'he is working' 'he is (quick) working' 'he is reading the bible'
- (2) a. I be **am** **Mäntel/Mantel** kauf-a b. *I be **Mäntel/Mantel** **am** kauf-a
I am **AM** coats/coat buy-INF I am coats/coat **AM** buy-INF
'I am buying coat(s)'
- (3) a. *mir sen **am de kender** spiel-a lo b. mer sin **de Pänz** **am** spill-e loß-e [Colognian]
we are the children **AM** play-INF let-INF we are **the children** **AM** play-INF let-INF
'we are letting the children play' 'we are letting the children play' (B&S1993:76)

(4) a. I be am **alte Mäntel** kaufa
I am AM old coats buy-INF
'I am buying old coat(s)'

b. *I be am **de alte Mäntel am** kaufa
I am AM **the old coats** buy-INF
'I am buying the old coats'

Bhatt, Christa, and Schmidt, Claudia Maria. 1993. Die am + Infinitiv-Konstruktion im Kölnischen und im ungangssprachlichen Standarddeutschen als Aspekt-Phrasen. In *Dialektsyntax*, eds. W. Abraham and J. Bayer, 71-98. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Gárgyán, Gabriella. 2013. *Der am-Progressiv im heutigen Deutsch: Neue Erkenntnisse mit besonderer Hinsicht auf die Sprachgeschichte, die Aspektualität und den kontrastiven Vergleich mit dem Ungarischen*: Networx.

Krause, Olaf. 2002. *Progressiv im Deutschen: Eine empirische Untersuchung im Kontrast mit Niederländisch und Englisch* vol. 462: Linguistische Arbeiten. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Massam, Diane. 2001. Pseudo Noun Incorporation in Niuean [Feb]. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 19:153-197.