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Title: How progressive is the new construction *gonna* + progressive infinitive?

Abstract:

This paper focuses on *gonna* + progressive infinitive. Following a constructionalisation process, *gonna* has evolved from the semi-modal *be going to*. It now seems to have lost its original progressive component (*going to*) and may have acquired auxiliary-like properties (Machová, 2015). An investigation of the iWeb corpus, a very recent web-based corpus of more than 14 billion words, shows that *gonna* can be followed by the progressive infinitive:

(1) *"For the first time this September you're gonna be making a whole load of new mates."*

This form is still relatively rare (6 061 occurrences vs. 322 905 occurrences for *gonna* + infinitive in the iWeb corpus), but its uses are worth investigating in order to uncover the role played by the progressive: does it encode an ongoing activity situated at some point in the future? Is it related to agentivity as may be the case for specific uses of the progressive (Ziegeler, 1999)? Or is it linked to commitment issues as suggested by Gesuato & Facchinetti (2011)? Based on the analysis of a sample of 200 occurrences extracted from the iWeb corpus, we hypothesize that in association with *gonna* the progressive no longer encodes ongoingness but assertively predicts a future event seen as independent from the speaker's intention.

References (selection):

GESUATO, Sara & FACCHINETTI Roberta (2011). "Going to vs. going to be v-ing: two equivalent patterns?". *ICAME Journal* 35. 59-94.

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ZIEGELER, Debra. (1999). "Agentivity and the history of the English progressive." *Transactions of the Philological Society*, Vol. 97, No. 1. 51-101.