

Factors behind the incipient grammaticalization of the progressive constructions alternative to *be+V-ing* in English

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In this study I argue that the English posture verb construction *sit + V*, similar to Swedish *sitta och* 'sit and' which Hilpert and Koops (2008) call a pseudo-coordination, is a case of incipient grammaticalization in English à la Mair (2010). I follow the methodology used by Hilpert and Koops (2008) to show that *sit and V* has been available as a progressive construction since the 16th century. While using corpus data from two corpora (EEBO and COHA), I look into the question to what extent *sit and V* has been grammaticalized and show that it has been a relatively stable but infrequent option used to express progressive aspect across the centuries. I link the development of *sit and V* to the development of the progressive construction *be+Ving* as described by Kranich (2010), among many others, in that the 'successful' rise of *be+Ving* accompanied by frequency boosts has hindered further grammaticalization of *sit and V*.

References:

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Mair, Christian. 2010. Grammaticalisation of new patterns of clausal subordination: 'on (the) basis (that) + finite clause' and 'on account (of) + finite clause' in present-day English'. In Markéta Malá and Pavlína Šaldová, P. (eds.), . . . *for thy speech bewrayeth thee. A Festschrift for Libuše Dušková*, Prague: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, 154–168.