

# The use of the progressive in Swedish and German advanced learner English: a corpus-based study

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In our paper we approach the following research questions from a contrastive perspective:

1. What are the differences, if any, in the use of the progressive in Swedish and German learner English?
2. What functions of the progressive do learners typically choose? Are there any functions chosen other than the purely aspectual ones?
3. What types of non-native progressives are produced by these learners?

The study is part of a cooperation project between the Chemnitz University of Technology and Uppsala University with questions of corpus comparability as its main concern. Our research draws on two learner corpora, namely the Uppsala Student English (USE) corpus (Axelsson 2000), and the German component of the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE). To facilitate comparison we have chosen one text type only – the argumentative student essay.

We have focused on the use of the progressive, since this is a feature not present in Swedish or German, and thus interesting from a contrastive point of view (cf. also Virtanen 1997, Hahn et al. 2000).

The method entails two types of investigations:

1. A qualitative study of about 12,000 words from each corpus (randomly chosen essays) discussing the choice of form (simple or progressive) by advanced learners.
2. A quantitative description of the use of the progressive in a material of about 70,000 words from each corpus.

## References

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