

Imperfectivity and Transience

The Two Sides of the Progressive Aspect in Simultaneity *as*- and *while*-clauses

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Recent research into simultaneity *as*- and *while*-clauses has shown that they tend to be used differently. *As*-clauses usually code events with a high degree of susceptibility to change, whereas *while*-clauses tend to evoke more stable temporal configurations. Following this insight, the present article studies the interaction between the progressive aspect and *as*- and *while*-clauses. It is claimed that the progressive aspect in *as*-clauses is prototypically used as a slowing-down/stretching device (i.e., an imperfectivization mechanism). It is used to establish an aspectual contrast between a prolonged *as*-event and a (relatively) punctual main event. By contrast, progressive *while*-clauses seem to behave more similarly to main clauses. The progressive is primarily used as a transience marker, that is, to signal that the (relatively) stable event coded by a *while*-clause is a temporary state.

Keywords: *as*-clause; change verb; imperfectivization; progressive aspect; simultaneity clauses; *while*-clause

Introduction

Simultaneity (i.e., total or partial temporal overlap) between two events can be marked explicitly in various ways. As the examples in (1a)–(1c) show, connectors *as*, *while*, and *when* can be used for this purpose. (In the examples that follow, I have drawn the reader's attention to relevant elements through italics).

- (1) a. An armed robber was mugged of his loot *as* he made his getaway (Biber et al. 1999:846).
- b. She said that the pain was a little better after the pethidine she had been given and she was able to rest quietly *while* she waited to be taken to theatre (Biber et al. 1999:849).
- c. *When* he was in the air force he flew Tornado jets (Summers 2003, sv. *when* "adverb").

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Little research has been carried out on simultaneity clauses (i.e., temporal clauses introduced by connectors such as *as*, *while*, and *when* signaling simultaneity) in either English or other languages. Notable exceptions, for English, are Edgren (1971), Heinämäki (1978), Silva (1991), Morris (1996), and Declerck (1997) (see also Schmiedtová [2004] on the production of Czech simultaneity clauses by German and English learners). In particular, the differences, if any, between *as*- and *while*-clauses have seldom been the topic of scholarly research. Morris (1996), who studies *as*-clauses in some detail, points out, for example, that simultaneity *as*-clauses, unlike *while*-clauses, cannot occur with stative *be*, modals, and negated verbs, as the following examples (from Broccias 2006b) show:

- (2) a. Instead, he eats his sausage *{while/*as}* it's still warm. (Faber 2003, 133)
 b. "Because I must do *something {while/*as}* I still *can* . . ." (Faber 2003,182)
 c. Fat lot of use I'd be to any girl *{while/*as}* I *don't* have a job. (British National Corpus [BNC], FRR 572)¹

This observation, at least as far as the use of copula *be* is concerned, can also be found in some English as a Foreign Language (EFL) manuals:

You cannot use *as* for *time* in [the following] sentences . . . You have to use *while* or *when*:

The doorbell rang *while* we were asleep (*not* "as we were asleep").

Angela got married *when* she was 23 (*not* "as she was 23"). (Murphy 2002:230)

However, the realization that simultaneity *as*- and *while*-clauses behave differently is not only important descriptively (and, consequently, pedagogically) but also theoretically: how can such a difference be accounted for?

Another important dimension of variation that has not received much attention concerns the use of the progressive in simultaneity clauses. Jespersen (1931:187-90) was well aware of this issue:

In clauses commencing with *while*, *whilst*, *as*, indicating the more extensive time of a state or a series of actions interrupted by the action of the main verb, we should naturally expect the expanded tenses [the progressive], and very often we do find them . . . But on the other hand the simple tenses are often used. This must be considered an instance of the economy of speech found in other cases as well (e.g. the tenses with *after* . . .): the conjunction in itself indicates this time-relation which therefore need not be expressly stated by the tense-form of the verb. (187-88)

Once more, similar remarks can occasionally be found in EFL manuals:

[Temporal] *as*-clauses usually introduce less important information, and most often go at the beginning . . . A progressive tense is usually used for the longer "background" action or situation (*was walking*; *are having*; *were playing*). But *as* and *while* can be used with a simple tense, especially with a verb like *sit*, *lie*, or *grow* which refers to a continuous action or state. (Swan 1995:73)

Given the possible variation in the use of the progressive in *as*- and *while*-clauses, it is therefore of great descriptive and pedagogical importance to study this issue more satisfactorily by relying on large corpora like the BNC. Indeed, examples like (3) below may be baffling for EFL students:

(3) That's, that's right, it's being updated now even *as we speak*. (BNC, KRT 6614)

Since EFL learners are usually taught that the progressive form is used in connection with ongoing, temporary actions or states, EFL learners (and linguists alike) may wonder why the simultaneity *as*-clause in (3) contains the present simple form of the verb *speak* rather than the progressive form *are speaking* (as is actually the case for *update* in the main clause). The lack of the progressive form in *as*-clauses such as (3) does not seem to be casual. The whole BNC contains twenty instances of *as we speak* but none of *as we are speaking*, for example.²

Finally, it should also be investigated whether any differences obtain between the use of the progressive in *as*- and *while*-clauses, as was the case with modals, *be*, and negated verbs. That this may be so is suggested indirectly by passages like the following:

[The sentence *As I left the house I remembered the key*] implies that I remembered the key before I had completed the action of leaving the house . . . *While I was leaving* would have the same meaning here. (Thomson & Martinet 1986:291)

Notice that Thomson and Martinet (1986) include a nonprogressive *as*-clause but give a synonymous *while*-clause in the progressive. Is this "accidental" or does it point to some significant difference between the two types of simultaneity clause (when used in the progressive)? Of course, an investigation along these lines may also shed light, more generally, on the nature of the progressive aspect itself.

The examples and quotations so far have highlighted at least two dimensions of variation that should be considered when studying simultaneity clauses: (a) the impossibility of stative *be*, modals, and negated verbs in *as*-clauses (vs. *while*-clauses) or, more generally, the verb types that combine with *as*- and *while*-clauses; and (b) the use of the progressive aspect in simultaneity clauses. The former dimension has been studied in some detail by Broccias (2006a, 2006b) and will be summarized here³ because it is relevant to my primary concern in this study, that is, the investigation of the latter dimension of variation by way of authentic material (mainly extracted from the BNC). However, for the sake of completeness, and insofar as they may be relevant to the present analysis, I will also touch upon other potential dimensions of variation, namely, the position of simultaneity clauses with respect to the main clause (which is mentioned in the quotation from Swan [1995] above) and the relation between the subject of the main clause and the subject of the temporal clause (i.e., whether they are identical or not).⁴

The article is divided as follows. The next section deals with verb types in *as*- and *while*-clauses. The penultimate section discusses the use of the progressive form in simultaneity *as*- and *while*-clauses. The progressive form in the former is shown to function as a “slow motion” or imperfectivizing marker (e.g., to stretch the temporal profile of the *as*-event) and to establish an aspectual contrast with the main clause event. The progressive form in *while*-clauses, by contrast, is argued to be an explicit transience marker. The main conclusions of this article are summarized in the last section.

Verb Types and Subordinators *as* and *while*

An important issue in the analysis of subordinators *as* and *while* concerns the types of verbs they tend to combine with and the (potentially different) interpretations that the selection of a specific type determines. Morris (1996) is the most detailed treatment of *as*-clauses in this respect, but, as shown in Broccias (2006b), her analysis turns out to be problematic. Morris claims that an *as*-clause is interpreted temporally if and only if a multiphase event is evoked (see also Silva [1991] for a similar point). In a multiphase event, two successive configurations in time are different from each other. In other words, the term *multiphase* implies change (i.e., what I am calling a “dynamic” event). It follows that example (4), from Morris, is correctly interpreted in temporal fashion since the event of growing implies change.⁵

(4) As she grew older, . . .

By contrast, when no multiphase event is evoked, that is, when a monophase event is depicted, allegedly only causality obtains. Since a monophase event is such that two successive configurations in time are identical to each other, the term *monophase* implies lack of change (i.e., what I am calling a “stative” event). For example, since the events in the *as*-clauses in (5), from Morris, are construed as being stative, causality is expected to obtain.

- (5) a. As you are here . . .
 b. As you know . . .
 c. As he wore a red sweater . . .

In fact, it can easily be shown that temporal *as*-clauses do occur with monophase events. Verbs of posture (see [6]–[8]), verbs of watching (see [9]), verbs of keeping (see [9]), and verbs describing bodily states (see [10]) are all found in temporal *as*-clauses. Even the verb *wear* (see [5c]) and stative *be* (see [5a]) appear in temporal *as*-clauses (see [11] and [12], respectively).⁶

- (6) The wind whips round us *as we stand* on the seafront. (Morrall 2003:281)
- (7) He says it in a whisper, with his eyes upon her, *as she sits* at the window bent over her work. (Waters 2002:237)
- (8) The company commander then moves in *as Iman lies* wounded and helpless. (*Guardian*, November 24, 2004; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1358132,00.html>)
- (9) The bottle of Sylvaner from the cellar was cool and sweet. It reminded him even more of Heidi. . . . Her slow smile *as she watched* him. The quivering strength of her grip *as she held* him to her. (Millar 2004:197)
- (10) . . . a day after eight blinging pieces of jewellery were snatched from his bedroom *as he slept* with his wife, Sharon, in their Buckinghamshire mansion. (*Guardian*, November 24, 2004; http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1358126,00.html)
- (11) He pictured her laying [*sic*] on her bed back then, he sitting beside her, rubbing her belly *as she wore* panties and a cut off sleep shirt. (www.novelguides/ClassicNotes/Titles/wutheringheights/wwwboard/messages/2123.html)
- (12) My pager went off *as I was* on the train on Nov. 3. (http://www.suntimes.com/special_sections/transplant/cst-nws-liverone26.html)

It is debatable, however, whether (12) contains a truly stative *as*-clause. One could argue that the predicate *be on the train* refers metonymically to a motion event, hence a dynamic event. Other copula *be* examples mentioned in Broccias (2006b), that is, (13)–(15), all hint at change. In (13), *less and less* evokes dynamicity; the *as*-event in (14) describes a point along a path that is being traversed; (15) contains the participial *preparing* immediately after the stative predicate *be crouched*, thus pointing at impending change.

- (13) When items are arranged in this way, most of the 1s will appear as a peak at the bottom of the scale and there will be a gradual decrease in frequency *as the attributes are less and less possible* in human performance. (Hatch & Lazaraton 1991:204)
- (14) That made me pause *as I was* halfway across the building's front plaza. (Connelly 2003:80)
- (15) *As I was crouched*, preparing myself for a quick raid on the locker, a series of waves got me thinking. (Martel 2002:169)

In sum, monophase *as*-events are compatible with temporal readings (contra Morris 1996; Silva 1991), although no truly stative *be* examples have been found in *as*-clauses.

In order to explore these facts, as well as the contrasts mentioned in (2) above, in more detail, Broccias (2006b) used authentic data obtained from the BNCWeb (<http://escorp.unizh.ch>). The data were retrieved using the BNCWeb Query System. Two text types were chosen, namely, imaginative written and leisure spoken, so as to collect examples from two (potentially) opposite types along the written–spoken continuum.⁷ The choice of these two domains was also motivated by the fact that more simultaneity *as*- and *while*-clauses (both numerically and in terms of types) are expected here because these two domains lend themselves to the description of simultaneous events more than do the others. (They have to do, more often than not, with the narration of events.)⁸

Table 1
Verb Types Occurring in Simultaneity *while*-clauses (Imaginative Written Domain)

Change Verbs		Nonchange Verbs	
Change of Position	Change of State	<i>be</i>	Others
31 (17.4%)	6 (3.4%)	34 (19.1%)	107 (60.1%)
20.8%		79.2%	

Table 2
Verb Types Occurring in Simultaneity *as*-clauses (Imaginative Written Domain)

Change Verbs		Nonchange Verbs	
Change of Position	Change of State	Stative ^a	Others
62 (62.0%)	10 (10.0%)	13 (13.0%)	15 (15.0%)
72.0%		28.0%	

a. *Stative* includes verbs of keeping, posture verbs, and verbs of watching and reflecting.

The leisure subcorpus contained a total of 241 instances of *while* tagged as a CJS (i.e., subordinating conjunction). An identical number of examples of *while* as a CJS was randomly selected from the imaginative written subcorpus.⁹ Similarly, in the case of *as* as a CJS, 241 examples were randomly selected from each of the subcorpora. Of course, not all *as*- and *while*-clauses thus obtained were simultaneity clauses, since some examples conveyed causality or contrast only. Therefore, the data had to be inspected manually so as to discard nontemporal examples.

The results can be summarized as follows. In the case of *while*-clauses in the imaginative written subcorpus (see Table 1), dynamic verbs par excellence, that is, verbs of change (of position/state, which I will also refer to as change verbs), account for only 21 percent of the data. In more detail, change-of-position verbs are much more frequent than change-of-state verbs, accounting for 17 percent of all data (i.e., 84 percent of all change verb cases).

The overall picture differs greatly when one considers *as*-clauses in the imaginative written subcorpus (see Table 2). First, only one *as* example out of a total of one hundred was found that contains the verb *be*. By contrast, *be* examples account for 19 percent of the written *while* data (which also include three negative examples, a pattern never found in the *as* data). Further, the only *as* example with *be* is actually a pseudoprogressive construction: *as [she] was there standing*. In other words, it cannot be taken as a genuine stative example on a par with *while she was there*. The second important point concerning the behavior of *as*-clauses is the fact that change

Table 3
Further Differences and Similarities between *as*- and *while*-clauses
(Imaginative Written Domain)

	<i>while</i> -clauses	<i>as</i> -clauses
Same subject	21%	54%
Punctual main clause	19%	46%
Initial vs. final	20% vs. 77%	33% vs. 64%

verbs account for 72 percent of the data. Change-of-position verbs alone account for 62 percent of the data.¹⁰

With regard to the spoken data, one observes less lexical variability (i.e., the use of fewer verb types) in both *as*-clauses and *while*-clauses, as might easily be expected. Despite this, the behavior of *as*- and *while*-clauses remains roughly constant in the two text types examined. Since the results are largely similar across the two domains, and lexical variation is much more restricted in the case of the spoken corpus (and the number of tokens is also much smaller), I refer the interested reader to Broccias (2006b) for more details. Because of such similarities and the restricted number of tokens, I have also decided to concentrate on the imaginative written domain in this article. (Future research should, of course, aim to investigate other domains as well, but larger corpora, especially in the case of the spoken language, are probably needed.)

To sum up, the data show that *as*-clauses often involve a change verb, especially in the spoken language, which might explain why previous analyses such as Morris (1996) stress that *as*-events must be dynamic. By contrast, *while*-clauses do not show any strong preference for change verbs. To put it differently, *as*-clauses combine with events that have a (relatively) high potential for change. *While*-clauses, on the other hand, evoke more stable configurations and do not necessarily point to impending change.

Before moving to the new data analyzed for this study, it is worth considering more parameters concerning the written examples from my previous study, which will be the focus of the present investigation. These include the parameters “same subject,” “punctual main clause,” and “initial vs. final position” of the simultaneity clause vis-à-vis the main clause (see Table 3; the latter two parameters were not included in my previous study).¹¹

The first parameter refers to cases where the subject of the simultaneity clause is identical to that of the main clause, but also includes (here as well as in the statistics below) cases where the relation between the subject of the temporal clause and the subject of the main clause is a part-whole one. This would be the case of sentences like *While they were talking, she was thinking that . . .*, where *she* refers to a person who is part of the group of people denoted by *they*. Table 3 shows that only about 21 percent of the *while* examples have the same subject in the *while*-clause as in the

main clause.¹² This contrasts with the behavior of *as*-clauses: in 54 percent of all *as* examples, the subject in the *as*-clause is the same as the subject in the main clause. The finding that *as*-clauses show a stronger preference for subject identity than *while*-clauses represents textual support for Silva's (1991:648) intuition that the degree of conceptual integration between an *as*-event and its main clause event is stronger than that between a *while*-event and its main clause event.

Table 3 also shows that main clause events can be construed as punctual events (i.e., as having either a negligible temporal extent or a temporal extent much shorter than that of the main clause) much more frequently if *as*-clauses are used. Further, both *as*- and *while*-clauses seem to favor final positioning (i.e., they tend to be placed after the main clause), contrary to what is claimed by Swan (1995).¹³ Both issues will be taken up again later in the article because they turn out to be of some importance when dealing with the progressive. Two examples, illustrating contrasting options, are given in (16):

- (16) a. *As she_i let herself out into the garden through the kitchen door, she_i gave a small shiver that had absolutely nothing to do with the autumnal chill in the air.* (BNC, H8F 1708)
 b. . . . and *he_i had to wait, fidgeting his hands while the Rector_j talked on.* (BNC, AD1 3278)

Example (16a) contains an initial *as*-clause (i.e., the less frequent positional pattern) whose subject, as in most cases, is identical to that of the main clause. It also contains a main clause punctual predicate (*give a small shiver*). By contrast, (16b) contains a nonpunctual main event (*wait*) as well as an extended temporal *while*-event (*talk on*). The *as*-event in (16a), on the other hand, is virtually punctual, since crossing a kitchen door is obviously almost instantaneous.

In sum, simultaneity *as*- and *while*-clauses exhibit important differences. Not only do *as*-clauses favor subject identity and tend to be combined with main clauses that describe punctual events, but perhaps even more importantly, they, unlike *while*-clauses, show a preference for change events.

Progressive Aspect and Simultaneity Clauses

As was pointed out in the opening section, a problem that deserves consideration is whether the progressive is used similarly in the two simultaneity constructions examined here. This issue must be discussed against the background of the analyses of the English progressive aspect. Of course, the literature on the progressive aspect is so large that it is not possible even to try to summarize it here if not in very broad terms.¹⁴ For our present purposes it suffices to identify two main positions. On one hand, the progressive can be viewed as an imperfectivization marker (see, e.g.,

Table 4
Simultaneity *as*-clauses Marked for Progressive Aspect (1,000 Sample)

Simultaneity Examples	Marked for Progressive	<i>just as</i> + Progressive
475 (47.5%)	15 (3.2%)	5 (out of 15)

Table 5
Simultaneity *while*-clauses Marked for Progressive Aspect (1,000 Sample)

Simultaneity Examples (excluding <i>while -ing</i>)	Simultaneity Examples (excluding <i>while -ing</i> , BE/MOD/NEG)	Marked for Progressive
733 (73.3%)	600 (60.0%)	110 (15.0% ~ 18.3%)

Note: BE/MOD/NEG = stative *be*, modalized predicates, and negated predicates.

Langacker 1991:208-11).¹⁵ Langacker (1991) claims that an imperfective process is such that its endpoints are ignored by the conceptualizer—that is, the process is viewed from an internal perspective. On the other hand, other scholars claim that transience or, rather, “susceptibility to change” (in Williams’s [2002] words) is the crucial element in the conceptual definition of the English progressive aspect, at least in the case of main clauses. They claim that the progressive signals that a certain event is about to change or, more generally, has a high potential for change. A detailed discussion of the two alternative views (imperfectivization vs. susceptibility to change) is obviously beyond the scope of this article. Still, I believe that the two characterizations are not mutually exclusive (see also Huddleston & Pullum [2002: 163], in this respect). One should avoid falling into what Langacker (1987) calls the omnipresent “exclusionary fallacy” (i.e., one explanation necessarily excludes another), but rather highlight different, though related, aspects of the same conceptualization. The progressive (in main clauses) signals both transience and imperfectivity in that it is mainly used to describe *temporary* (i.e., transient) *states* (i.e., imperfective or continuous states of affairs).

In order to investigate the use of the progressive in simultaneity clauses, I collected data, as before, from the imaginative written subcorpus of the BNC (see the previous section on the choice of this domain), but I first increased the number of randomly selected CJS *as/while* examples from 241 to 1,000. The results of this preliminary analysis are summarized in Tables 4 and 5.

Tables 4 and 5 show that the percentage of simultaneity clauses out of a sample of one thousand is much higher for *while*-clauses than for *as*-clauses (up to 73.3 percent for the former vs. 47.5 percent for the latter).¹⁶ Two percentages are offered for *while*-clauses in general, that is, 73.3 percent and 60.0 percent, and progressive-marked *while*-clauses in particular (i.e., 15.0 percent and 18.3 percent). Both exclude

cases where *while* is immediately followed by a gerund (e.g., “a research trip through Eritrea which he made in 1987 *while* gestating his new book *Towards Asmara*” [BNC, A3R 134]). This choice has been motivated by the fact that a corresponding [*as* + gerund] pattern is impossible. Similarly, as was pointed out in connection with (2) above, stative *be*, which is given as BE in Table 5 (but see also the discussion in the second section), modalized (MOD) predicates, and negated (NEG) predicates are only possible in *while*-clauses. Hence, for the sake of completeness, I have provided a percentage for simultaneity *while*-clauses with and without such cases (see the first and the second columns in Table 5, respectively). Consequently, there are two percentages for the number (i.e., 110) of simultaneity *while*-clauses marked for progressive aspect, that is, 15.0 percent and 18.3 percent. The former includes BE/MOD/NEG cases, the latter does not. Both figures show that the percentage of progressive *while*-clauses is low, although it is not as low as that of progressive *as*-clauses. Progressive *as*-clauses are roughly five times less frequent than *while*-clauses. It is also worth pointing out that in a third of the progressive *as*-examples (five out of fifteen), *as* is preceded by *just* (see the next subsection for more details).

The difference in the percentage of progressive *as*- and *while*-clauses is of particular interest because *as*-clauses show a strong preference for change verbs (see Table 1), and one might expect change verbs to trigger the use of the progressive form since they signal, like the progressive form, transience par excellence. Despite this, it can be observed that *while*-clauses, which do not exhibit any preference for change verbs, are in fact used more frequently in the progressive than *as*-clauses.

In order to offer a statistically more reliable analysis of progressive simultaneity clauses, I increased my samples of progressive examples for both *as*-clauses and *while*-clauses. In the former case, I randomly selected from the imaginative written subcorpus of the BNC twenty thousand examples where *as* is tagged as a CJS and then sorted them automatically so as to isolate only those examples where the third word after *as* was an *-ing* form.¹⁹ This form is usually tagged as VVG. That is, VVG includes any *-ing* verb with the exception of *being*, *doing*, and *having*. The latter three forms are tagged, respectively, as VBG, VDG, and VHG. For the sake of completeness, they have also been taken into consideration. The selection of *as*-clauses where the third word after *as* was tagged as VVG resulted in 352 hits, of which only 167 were classified manually as simultaneity examples. Using the same method, I found eight examples where the third word was a VBG, of which only four were simultaneity instances; twelve examples with a VDG, of which only two were simultaneity cases; and four examples with a VHG, of which only one was a simultaneity example. In total, the number of simultaneity *as*-clauses thus obtained was 174 (= 167 + 4 + 2 + 1) out of 376 (= 352 + 8 + 12 + 4) potential cases.

In the case of *while*-clauses, I randomly selected half of all examples available in the written imaginative subcorpus where *while* is marked as a CJS (i.e., 4,925 examples out of 9,850),¹⁸ and I sorted them automatically so as to isolate only those

Table 6
Summary of Findings Relative to Progressive *as*-clauses

Simultaneity Cases	Initial vs. Final Position of <i>as</i> -clause	Change event Used in <i>as</i> -clause	Punctual Main clause Event	Same Subject in <i>as</i> - and Main Clause	Simple Tense Used in Main Clause	Progressive (only) Used in Main Clause
174 (out of 376)	82 (47%) vs. 85 (49%)	119 (68%)	135 (78%)	56 (32%)	152 (87%)	4 (2%)

examples where the third word after *while* was a VVG, VBG, VDG, or VHG. This resulted in 325 hits for VVG (of which 287 were classified manually as simultaneity examples),¹⁹ eleven hits for VBG (all of which were simultaneity examples), seventeen hits for VDG (all of which were simultaneity examples), and nine hits for VHG (all of which were simultaneity examples). In total, the number of simultaneity *while*-clauses was 324 (= 287 + 11 + 17 + 9) out of 362 (= 325 + 11 + 17 + 9) potential cases. These results are discussed in some depth in the next two subsections: the first subsection discusses progressive *as*-clauses and the following subsection deals with progressive *while*-clauses.

Progressive *as*-clauses

A detailed breakdown of the results obtained for progressive *as*-clauses, especially for the VVG case (which provided the larger set of simultaneity examples), is offered in the appendix. Here it will suffice to provide a summary of all the data collected (see Table 6; it includes both the 167 VVG examples and the seven non-VVG, i.e., VBG + VDG + VHG, examples mentioned above).

Various interesting points can be made on the basis of the data in Table 6. First, progressive *as*-clauses, unlike *as*-clauses in general (see Table 3), do not exhibit any preference for final positioning. They seem to occur in equal measure both before and after main clauses. This can be interpreted as a tendency to use the initial position more often than in the general case. Second, there is no significant difference in the percentage of change verbs used in *as*-clauses with respect to the general picture outlined in Table 3 ($p \approx .05$).²⁰ That is, progressive *as*-clauses often occur with change verbs, too. Third, there is a significant decrease in the number of identical-subject cases ($p \approx .02$). Fourth, most main events are punctual when progressive *as*-clauses are used and they are coded through a simple tense (in 87 percent of all cases). That is, cases like (17), which contains a perfect form, and (18), which also contains a modal, are infrequent:

- (17) He *had* stopped her *as* she *was* walking solemnly round the small onyx coffee tables, among the guests. (BNC, FPH 3504)
- (18) Their brakes *must* have locked *as* they *were* coming down the slope, for there was a twenty-yard slice of chocolate loam where their wheels had scoured the turf. (BNC, FR3 1417)

The difference with the general case (*vis-à-vis* punctuality) in this respect is highly significant ($p \approx .004$). Finally, it should be observed that the use of the progressive in both the *as*-clause and the main clause, as in (19) below, is negligible, amounting to only 2 percent:

- (19) Denis *was trying* to comfort Carmella *as she was sobbing* in the pew. (BNC, ATE 342)

These observations allow us to view (at a sufficiently high level of schematicity or abstraction) the progressive *as*-clause as a subtype of *as*-clause used prototypically to code an aspectual opposition between an extended *as*-event and a punctual main event, as in (20) below:²¹

- (20) *As she was approaching* she *saw* his head turn slightly in awareness of her, which meant that there was no going back. (BNC, GW0 100)

It has already been highlighted (see Table 3) that main clause events tend to be punctual more frequently with *as*-clauses than with *while*-clauses (46 percent vs. 19 percent). But when the progressive is used, the percentage of punctual main clauses combined with an *as*-clause is significantly higher (78 percent vs. 46 percent). The progressive variant therefore seems to exploit a potential for an aspectual contrast that was already in some measure relevant to *as*-clauses in general. The use of the *-ing* form in *as*-clauses can often be regarded as an explicit “stretching” or “slowing down” mechanism. The progressive form can be used to extend the temporal profile of an event that may otherwise be felt to be too short if the main clause event is to be “inscribed” in it. In (20) above, for example, the (relatively) punctual event of seeing is inscribed within the approaching event, whose temporal profile is stretched or slowed down by the use of the progressive so that the approaching event can accommodate the seeing event. Two more examples, not from the BNC, illustrating this point are offered in (21)–(22) below.

- (21) But *as she was introducing* herself she *was interrupted* by Michael Beale . . .
(Heller 2003:21)
- (22) Minutes later, *as he’s stroking* her goodbye, she *kisses* his fingers, and says . . .
(Faber 2003:269)

Observe that punctuality is a matter of construal relative to the *as*-event. In (22), for example, the kissing event is not, objectively, a punctual event but can be assumed to be (much) shorter in its temporal extension than the stretched *as*-event.

Importantly, the stretching function attributed to the use of the *-ing* form can also occur when a (by default) nonpunctual event is used in the *as*-clause. This is the case of *walk* in (23) below, which speakers may by default take as referring to a temporally non-negligible event. Nevertheless, (23) does conform to the general characterization of progressive *as*-clauses advanced here. The walking event is intuitively

“slowed down” by the use of the progressive aspect so as to establish an aspectual contrast with the punctual main clause event (i.e., *catch a glimpse*).

- (23) Once, *as they were walking* down St Martin’s Lane together . . . she *caught* a glimpse of their rippling reflection in a shop window. (Heller 2003:118)

The slowing-down/stretching function of the progressive form in simultaneity *as*-clauses can of course be analyzed as an instance of the notion of imperfectivization. I have also remarked above that imperfectivization and transience (or susceptibility to change) are probably two sides of the same coin. But this does not seem to be overwhelmingly the case in simultaneity *as*-clauses. The notion of susceptibility to change does not seem to figure prominently when one has to motivate the use of the progressive aspect in *as*-clauses. As was pointed out at the very beginning of this article (see example [3]), the progressive form is not always used in *as*-clauses, even when one might naively expect it to occur. One more example is given in (24), where the progressive aspect is only marked in the main clause:

- (24) My hand *is shaking* *as I write*. (BNC, AE0 1414)

When the progressive form is used in a simultaneity *as*-clause, its major contribution seems that of slowing down or stretching the *as*-event so as to establish an aspectual contrast between the *as*-event and the (relatively) punctual main clause event, by, for example, building up a sufficiently temporally extended frame in which to inscribe the punctual main clause event. In (24), no aspectual contrast exists between the event of the hand’s shaking and the writing event because they are coextensive. Further, the main clause is necessarily marked for progressive aspect, and as was highlighted above, this is an extremely unlikely context for the use of the progressive also in the simultaneity clause. Hence, one correctly expects the lack of a progressive form in the *as*-clause in (24).

It is also interesting to observe that a fair number of progressive *as*-clauses are preceded by *just*: between 30 percent and 25 percent (see Table 4 and Table A1 in the appendix). Since *just as* intuitively forces the speaker to focus on a portion of the simultaneity clause process (i.e., to take an internal perspective on it), the occurrence of the progressive form may be expected. By contrast, *even* does not seem to have a comparable effect; only slightly more than 2 percent of the progressive *as*-clauses contain *even* (see Table A1). To be sure, *just as* cases deserve further attention in future research.

Syntactically, the progressive *as*-clause correlates with an increased use of the initial position. Further research is needed to shed light on this point, but the increase in initial positioning may be related to the fact that, at least intuitively, a contrast between an extended event and a punctual event is perhaps most effective if the extended event is introduced into the discourse before the punctual event—that is, in cognitive linguistic terminology, the ground is provided before the figure is introduced. Finally, since

Table 7
Summary of Findings Relative to Progressive *while*-clauses

Simultaneity Cases	Initial vs. Final Position of <i>as</i> -clause	Change event Used in <i>while</i> -clause	Punctual Main clause Event	Same Subject in <i>while</i> - and Main Clause	Simple Tense Used in Main Clause	Progressive (only) Used in Main Clause
324 (out of 362)	128 (40%) vs. 171 (53%)	66 (20%)	106 (33%)	90 (28%)	152 (47%)	34 (10%)

the progressive *as*-clause mainly functions as a(n aspectually) contrastive background with respect to the (relatively punctual) main clause, a decrease in the number of identical-subject cases may not be surprising after all. Whereas *as*-clauses, in general, very often rely on the existence of tight links with the main clause (established by sharing the same subject; see also Silva 1991), progressive *as*-clauses, by virtue of their typically contrastive function, may be expected to relax the need for such tight links with the main clause. Different subjects in the two clauses increase the potential for a contrastive construal. Nevertheless, tight conceptual links between the progressive *as*-clause and the main clause are still guaranteed by the fact that the main clause event is construed as being inscribed in the *as*-event.

Progressive *while*-clauses

The results of the analysis of progressive *while*-clauses extracted from the imaginative written subcorpus of the BNC are summarized in Table 7. (More detailed breakdowns can be found in the appendix.)

Progressive *while*-clauses favor final positioning, although the difference with initial positioning is not significant. What is significant, however, is the difference with the general case illustrated in Table 3. The use of the progressive form can be said to trigger a more frequent use of the initial position. The second point emerging from the present analysis is that progressive *while*-clauses behave in the same way as *while*-clauses in general when verb types and identical-subject cases are taken into account. Further, unlike progressive *as*-clause examples, progressive *while*-clauses do not show any strong preference for punctual main clause events. Still, the 10 percent difference between punctual main clauses when progressive *while*-clauses are used and when *while*-clauses are considered in general may lead us to conclude that there is a tendency to employ the progressive form in the *while*-clause when a punctual event is evoked by the main clause. This may also account for the more frequent use of the initial position, which provides a frame in which the main clause event can be inscribed, as was pointed out for *as*-clauses in the previous subsection. Finally, the use of the simple tense in the main clause is 40 percent less likely when *while*-clauses versus *as*-clauses are used (47 percent vs. 87 percent), but the use of a progressive form also in the main clause, as in (25), is still not very frequent (10 percent with a *while*-clause vs. 2 percent with an *as*-clause).

- (25) *While* Doug *was* talking she *was* wondering how Steven was managing. (BNC, H9W 2938)

All in all, progressive *while*-clauses do not differ significantly from the general case, although one may observe a tendency both to favor initial positioning (with respect to the general case) and to use the progressive form to code a difference in temporal extension with respect to the main clause (i.e., the main clause event is punctual more frequently than in the general case). Since, however, this tendency is not a very strong one (i.e., it is not statistically significant), it may be concluded that there is no entrenched abstract schema for the progressive *while*-clause that captures a contrast in aspectuality between the simultaneity clause and the main clause—or, at least, the level of entrenchment of such a schema is lower than that for progressive *as*-clauses. In other words, one often finds examples like (26), which do not involve any aspectual contrast:

- (26) . . . and *while* they *were* bowling along into the country, with a beautiful view of the landscape, Matthew *explained* the history of the school forest. (BNC, J54 2679)

Since imperfectivity (i.e., the use of the *-ing* morpheme as a slowing-down/stretching mechanism) is not as relevant to progressive *while*-clauses to the same degree as to *as*-clauses, it may be inferred that the other “side” of the English progressive aspect, that is, susceptibility to change, plays a much more important role in progressive *while*-clauses. Interestingly, since the notion of susceptibility to change can be invoked to explain most progressive patterns in main clauses—although I point out that perhaps, more cautiously, one should regard both imperfectivity and susceptibility to change as essential ingredients in the conceptual characterization of main clause progressive forms—one could conclude that progressive *while*-clauses behave more similarly to progressive main clauses than do progressive *as*-clauses. The fact that *while*-clauses exhibit a richer inventory of tense/aspect/modals, as in (27)–(28) below, than *as*-clauses (see Table A8 and the sixth column in Table 7) gives additional weight to the hypothesis that *while*-clauses are more similar to main clauses than are *as*-clauses.

- (27) She'd lost track of it *while* she *was* dealing with Anna. (BNC, FSG 2614)
 (28) It *would* involve crawling out of a window *while* nobody *was* looking . . . (BNC, EE5 1330)

In a nutshell, the progressive marker in *while*-clauses may be used primarily to signal transience explicitly, as is done in main clauses, rather than to (mainly) evoke an aspectual contrast by stretching or slowing down the *while*-event. Such observations tie in well with the finding, for example, that the progressive is used more frequently with *while*-clauses than *as*-clauses. The fact that the *-ing* form is recruited to signal transience may be due to the fact that *while*, although a transience marker by

itself, usually occurs with nonchange verbs. Hence, the *-ing* form may be used to mark the transient nature of such events explicitly.

Conclusion

Progressive simultaneity *as-* and *while*-clauses occur infrequently in the corpus examined, that is, the written imaginative subcorpus of the BNC (contra Jespersen 1931:187-88). This should not be too surprising. Narrative texts more often than not use present or past simple forms (see, e.g., the data reported in Biber et al. [1999: 461], but note that they do not discuss possible differences between main and subordinate clauses). To be sure, a detailed analysis of the spoken language and other written genres is needed to test this finding across different modes and should therefore be the focus of future research.

A tendency was also observed to avoid progressive aspect marking in both the main clause and the simultaneity clause, especially if an *as*-clause is employed. In a sense, double aspectual marking may be seen as redundant if progressive aspect is already marked in the main clause. Indeed, more elaborate tense/aspect forms are avoided in other types of subordinate clause, especially when tight conceptual links exist between the matrix clause and the subordinate clause. For example, *Collins Cobuild English Usage* (Sinclair 1992:267) notes that the present simple, rather than the periphrastic form with modal *will*, is used in a defining relative clause when the main clause clearly refers to a future event (e.g., *Any decision you make will need her approval*). And this is also the case with *when*-clauses (see Declerck 1997) and future-referring *if*-clauses. Still, I have observed that in some cases the progressive aspect can be marked in the simultaneity, rather than main, clause. This has been prototypically interpreted, in the case of *as*-clauses, as a stretching/slowing-down mechanism that results in an aspectual contrast being established between the *as*-event and the (relatively punctual) main clause event. By contrast, it has been argued that progressive aspect is probably used in a manner more reminiscent of its function in main clauses (i.e., as a transience marker) when *while*-clauses are used. The difference in the use of progressive aspect in simultaneity *as-* and *while*-clauses may be taken as symptomatic of a higher degree of semantic integration between *as*-clauses and main clauses than between *while*-clauses and main clauses—if one accepts that *while*-clauses are more similar to main clauses with respect to progressive aspect selection, of course.

The schematic characterization offered for progressive *as*-clauses neatly accounts for the absence of the progressive marker in examples such as (3) and (24) above, which I have reproduced here for ease of reference:

- (3) That's, that's right, it's being updated now even *as* we *speak*. (BNC, KRT 6614)
- (24) My hand is shaking *as* I *write*. (BNC, AE0 1414)

Since progressive aspect is already marked in the main clause, one does not (usually) expect it to also occur in the *as*-clause. Further, there is no aspectual contrast intended in either (3) or (24). The updating process unfolds together with the speaking event rather than being inscribed in it. Similarly, the hand's shaking is temporally coextensive with the writing event. The main clause events are not construed as punctual events, and hence, there is no need to stretch the *as*-clause events; speaking and writing have by default non-negligible temporal profiles.

The present analysis has therefore revealed that progressive aspect in simultaneity clauses is not necessarily used in the same way as in main clauses, especially as far as *as*-clauses are concerned. Notions like redundancy (in aspectual marking) and aspectual opposition seem to play an important role in determining when and where the progressive form is used.

Of course, it must be stressed that this study has detailed prototypical instances of progressive *as*- and *while*-clauses. This means that "exceptions" (i.e., nonprototypical patterns) are not excluded. For example, 22 percent of progressive *as*-clauses do not combine with punctual main clause events. But this is not surprising since hardly ever are linguistic facts an either/or affair. Rather, they more often than not exhibit gradience (see, e.g., Aarts et al. 2004). Ultimately, the choice of whether a progressive marker should be employed or not is a matter of construal. For example, the same verb can occur both with and without a progressive marker, as the following pair nicely illustrates:

- (29) The Germans were getting out of the city, blowing up bridges *as* they left.
(Ondaatje 1993:60)
- (30) *As I was leaving* I saw a mirror tacked up high against the skin wall . . . (Ondaatje 1993:138)

It should be stressed, first of all, that the positioning of the simultaneity clause—(29) and (30) differ in this respect—does not seem to have much impact on the use of the progressive form. Progressive *as*-clauses are slightly more frequent in final position (see Table 6), and final progressive *while*-clauses are more frequent than initial progressive *while*-clauses by over 10 percent (see Table 7). What seems to be important here is, rather, the fact that the progressive form is already used in the main clause in (29) (see also [2] and [24]). Consequently, one may (correctly) expect it not to be used in the *as*-clause. After all, no aspectual contrast is implied. The use of *leave* simply paraphrases main clause *get out*, and the event of the Germans' blowing bridges unfolds together with their leaving the city. On the other hand, the event of leaving is probably coded through a progressive form in (30) because the progressive form allows the leaving event to be stretched or slowed down so as to allow the seeing event to be inscribed in it. Similarly, one can find examples like (31) (see also note 2),

- (31) I just heard another bomb *as* we *are* speaking. (<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/001012/bn.24.html>)

where the verb *speak* is used in the progressive, unlike in (3). But this example also satisfies the characterization of (prototypical) progressive *as*-clauses given here provided that due account of construal operations is taken. In (31), unlike (3), there is an aspectual contrast between the temporally extended *as*-event and the punctual main event: the punctual event of hearing a bomb explode is inscribed in the extended event of speaking. Consequently, one may expect the progressive to be used in the *as*-clause.

Only future research across different modes and styles will be able to show whether the present analysis, which argues for a different use of the progressive form in simultaneity *as*- and *while*-clauses, is indeed on the right track. To be sure, such research is important not only for theoretical linguistics (since it may reveal the flexibility of our construal operations and shed light on the nature of the progressive) but also for EFL learners when faced with examples like (3) and (24).

Appendix

Table A1
As-clauses with VVG Forms in Third Position (20,000 Sample)²²

Simultaneity	<i>just as</i>	<i>even as</i>	Initial vs. Final	Same Subject
167(out of 352)	42 (25.1%)	4 (2.4%)	79 (47.3%) vs. 81 (48.5)%	55 (32.9%)

Note: VVG = any *-ing* verb with the exception of *being*, *doing*, and *having*.

Table A2
**Event Types in Progressive VVG *as*-clauses and
Their Relation to Punctual Main Clauses²³**

	<i>as</i> -event Type	Main Clause Events Construable as Punctual
Change of place	85	68 (80.0%)
Change of state (i.e., change	32 70.0%)	27 (84.3%)
EAT	5 (3.0%)	4 (80.0%)
REFLECT	5 (3.0%)	5 (100%)
Sound emission	11 (6.6%)	6 (54.5%)
STAND	1 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)
TRY	5 (3.0%)	4 (80.0%)
WAIT	3 (1.8%)	2 (66.7%)
WATCH	6 (3.4%)	4 (66.7%)
Others	14 (8.4%)	11 (78.6%)
Total	167	131 (i.e., 78.4% of all cases)

Note: VVG = any *-ing* verb with the exception of *being*, *doing*, and *having*.

Table A3
Tense/Aspect/Modals in Main Clauses When Progressive
VVG *as*-clauses Are Used²⁴

Simple Tense (only)	Perfect (only)	Progressive (only)	Modalized ^a
147 (88%)	5 (3%)	3 (2%)	7 (4%)

Note: VVG = example where the third word after *as* was an *-ing* form.

a. Modal verbs are used (but this figure also includes *manage to*).

Table A4
Progressive *as*-clauses Whose Verbs Are not of the VVG Type

	No. of Simultaneity Examples	Punctual Main Clause	Main Clause Tense	Initial Position of <i>as</i> -clause	Change Event Used in <i>as</i> -clause	Same Subject in <i>as</i> - and Main Clause
VBG	4 (out of 8)	1	2 simple tense + 1 modalized + 1 progressive	1	2	0
VDG	2 (out of 12)	2	2 simple tense	2	0	1
VHG	1 (out of 4)	1	0 (i.e., infinitive used)	0	0	0

Note: VVG = any *-ing* verb with the exception of *being*, *doing*, and *having*; VBG = *being*; VDG = *doing*; VHG = *having*.

Table A5
While-clauses with VVG Forms in Third Position (4,925 Sample)

Simultaneity	<i>X + while</i>	Initial vs. Final	Same Subject
287 (out of 325)	<i>at least</i>	1	76 (26.5%)
	<i>even</i>	3	
	<i>especially</i>	1	
	<i>not</i>	3	

Note: VVG = any *-ing* verb with the exception of *being*, *doing*, and *having*.

Table A6
Event Types in Progressive VVG *while*-clauses
and Their Relation to Punctual Main Clauses

	<i>while</i> -event Type	Main Clause Event Construable as Punctual
Change of place	34	19 (55.9%)
Change of state (i.e., change)	28 21.6%)	11 (39.3%)
EAT	10 (3.5%)	2 (20.0%)
REFLECT	14 (4.9%)	4 (28.6%)
Sound emission	28 (9.8%)	7 (25.0%)
STAND	23 (8.0%)	8 (34.8%)
TRY	6 (3.6%)	2 (33.3%)
WAIT	16 (5.6%)	7 (43.8%)
WATCH	13 (4.5%)	2 (15.4%)
Others	115 (40.0%)	35 (30.4%)
Total	287	97 (i.e., 33.8% of all cases)

Note: VVG = any *-ing* verb with the exception of *being*, *doing*, and *having*.

Table A7
Event Types in Progressive VVG *as*-clauses and
Their Relation to Punctual Main Clauses

	<i>as</i> -event Type	Main Clause Events Construable as Punctual
Change of place	85	68 (80.0%)
Change of state (i.e., change)	32 70.0%)	27 (84.3%)
EAT	5 (3.0%)	4 (80.0%)
REFLECT	5 (3.0%)	5 (100%)
Sound emission	11 (6.6%)	6 (54.5%)
STAND	1 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)
TRY	5 (3.0%)	4 (80.0%)
WAIT	3 (1.8%)	2 (66.7%)
WATCH	6 (3.4%)	4 (66.7%)
Others	14 (8.4%)	11 (78.6%)
Total	167	131 (i.e., 78.4% of all cases)

Note: VVG = any *-ing* verb with the exception of *being*, *doing*, and *having*.

Table A8
Tense/Aspect/Modals in Main Clauses When Progressive *while*-clauses Are Used

Simple Tense (only)	Perfect (only)	Progressive (only)	Modalized
143 (50%)	26 (9%)	27 (9%)	73 (25%)

Table A9
Progressive *while*-clauses Whose Verbs Are not of the VVG Type

	No. of Simultaneity Examples	Punctual Main Clause	Main Clause Tense	Initial Position of <i>as</i> -clause	Change Event Used in <i>while</i> -clause	Same Subject in <i>while</i> - and Main Clause
VBG	11 (out of 11)	2	3 simple tense	3	4	0
VDG	17 (out of 17)	3	3 simple tense	9	0	12
VHG	9 (out of 9)	4	3 simple tense	4	0	2

Note: VVG = any *-ing* verb with the exception of *being*, *doing*, and *having*; VBG = *being*; VDG = *doing*; VHG = *having*.

Notes

1. The British National Corpus (BNC) is a 100 million-word collection of written and spoken British English texts (see <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk> for more information). The combination of letters and numbers following *BNC* in parentheses specifies the location of the relevant quotation in the corpus.

2. One reviewer points out that instances with the progressive can be found:

- (i) I just heard another bomb as we are speaking. (<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0010/12/bn.24.html>)

Of course I am not claiming that the progressive pattern (i.e., *as we are speaking*) is never found. Rather, I contend that the progressiveless variant is the unmarked option in (3), as will be shown in detail in the text. Notice also, incidentally, that *as we speak* results in about 1,320,000 hits and *as we are speaking* in about 18,300 hits with Google (May 15, 2007). Although, of course, this is a very rough estimate since many uses may not be temporal, the difference in magnitude may be indicative of some important difference.

3. The summary is, however, only concerned with the description of the verb types found in simultaneity clauses. The reader is referred to Broccias (2006a, 2006b) for an explanation of the impossibility of stative *be*, modals, and negated verbs in *as*-clauses.

4. The importance of this dimension of variation is mentioned in Broccias (2006b) and is briefly mentioned in the next section.

5. All examples from Morris (1996) are incomplete (i.e., do not contain a main clause, hence the ellipses) in the original version.

6. While one reviewer raises the question of whether the disagreement with Morris (1996) is primarily terminological, I take the difference between Morris's approach and mine as being substantive. The examples in (6)–(11) could be categorized as denoting activities rather than states because, after all, an input of energy is needed to maintain the positions of standing, sitting, lying, and to watch, although this analysis may be problematic for *sleep*. Since an input of energy is required, following Comrie (1976:49), one could classify these cases as dynamic rather than stative. Unfortunately, Morris offers no discussion of such cases. Hence, one cannot be sure whether she would classify them as multiphase or monophase. However, since (a) the alternative analysis sketched here is difficult to reconcile with, for example, *sleep* and, possibly, (11) and (b) Morris's definition, at least taken at its face value, should exclude a multiphase classification of the examples under discussion—standing may indeed involve an energy input but does not imply any change in configuration between two successive instances of the event—I do not consider Morris's approach and mine as two terminological variants. Further, I will not use the terms *dynamic* and *stative* in Comrie's sense (i.e., as implying an energy input) but as describing presence versus lack of

change in two successive configurations (as seems to be the case in Morris's definition). At a minimum, the discussion of examples (6)–(11), as well as (12), expands on Morris's analysis by taking into account a wider range of data in terms of event types.

7. The BNC is divided into the following domains: "imaginative," "natural and pure sciences," "applied science," "social science," "world affairs," "commerce and finance," "arts," "belief and thought," and "leisure."

8. Consider, for example, that (as mentioned in Broccias [2006a]) a popular science book like Kate Fox's (2004) sociological study *Watching the English*, which is about four hundred pages long, contain only thirty simultaneity *as*-clauses, and most of them actually occur when the author narrates some past event.

9. The process of random selection is one of the options offered by BNCWeb to "thin" data. More information can be found at <http://homepage.mac.com/bncweb/manual/bncwebman-thin.htm>.

10. There is an important difference between the nonchange verbs columns in Tables 1 and 2. The category *Others* in Table 1 includes all stative verbs with the exception of *be*, while stative verbs have been factored out of the category *Others* in Table 2. I have done so in order to show explicitly that stative (i.e., monophasic) verbs are also found in *as*-clauses and, vice versa, that *be* is absent from *as*-clauses, unlike *while*-clauses, where it occurs relatively frequently. More details about the category *Others* can be found in Broccias (2006b).

11. Notice that the total percentage for both *as*- and *while*-clauses in the position row in Table 3 is not 100 percent because some examples, like (ii), cannot be classified as being either initial or final (such cases are ignored in the present analysis):

- (ii) "Better than a coffin," he whispered, adding *as* he leaned in to retrieve his fiddle: "And if my coffin is half as comfortable 'tis a smooth journey I'll be having to Paradise." (BNC, FRJ 256)

Since the *as*-clause in (ii) occurs between *add*—which is not a main clause verb, incidentally—and its direct object, I preferred to discard such cases in my tally of initial versus final simultaneity clauses.

12. This figure also includes *while -ing* cases (e.g., *while driving, she . . .*).

13. The figures in Table 3 should, of course, be treated cautiously because the choice of certain matrix verbs may bear on the positioning of the simultaneity clause. For example, main clause *watch* requires a final temporal clause, for example, *The rector . . . watched her as she fetched a vase and arranged the freesias* (BNC, ASE 1935).

14. A useful summary of the features associated with the English progressive aspect can be found in Huddleston and Pullum (2002:163–68). Some discussion of what a reviewer calls the "classics" in aspectual literature (e.g., Bach 1986; Comrie 1976; Dowty 1979; Parsons 1990) can be found in Williams (2002) and Smith (2005).

15. Langacker's (1991) position is similar to Comrie's (1976). It should also be noted that Langacker's analysis is much more detailed than my formulation may imply. Langacker (1991:209–10) claims that the use of the *-ing* morpheme (a) imposes summary scanning (see also Broccias & Hollmann [2007] on this issue), (b) restricts the immediate scope of predication provided by the verb the *-ing* morpheme combines with (by excluding the endpoints of the verbal process), and (c) construes the profiled states of the verbal process as equivalent.

16. The figures for simultaneity *as* examples also include the (very rare) pattern with stative *be* illustrated in (iii) (of which only two examples were found):

- (iii) . . . and, *as* he was there standing, he hoisted her up . . . (BNC, FP1 209)

where a "pseudoprogressive" construction, so to speak, is used. Still, this case and similar examples like (iv),

- (iv) *As I sat in the graceful room looking at Mrs Rumney . . . I couldn't help feeling how right and fitting the whole scene was.* (BNC, G3S 1070)

were not categorized as progressive examples, of course.

17. This means that the word immediately following *as* was either a pronoun or a proper noun. Of course, I cannot exclude that the use of pronominal or proper noun subjects may somehow affect the use of the progressive aspect, although I cannot see why this should be the case. Future research should address this issue.

18. I decided to choose half of all *while*-clauses because by doing so, I had previously noticed that the sets of potential simultaneity cases were roughly similar for both *as* and *while*, that is, 376 and 362, respectively.

19. The automatic procedure actually produced 326 hits, of which 1 had to be discarded because it was not properly linked to a text passage in the BNC. Hence, I had to use 325 examples.

20. All measures of significance were obtained using the chi-square test.

21. As is cogently observed by an anonymous reviewer, this formulation is reminiscent of that of Jespersen (1931:180): "The essential thing is that the action or state denoted by the expanded tense [i.e., the progressive] is thought of as a *temporal frame encompassing something else* [italics in the original] which as often as not is to be understood from the whole situation."

22. Table A1 also provides the number of progressive *as*-clauses where *as* is preceded by a modifying adverbial, that is, *just* or *even*, since I also wanted to have some preliminary indication as to whether these adverbials bear on the selection of the progressive form. Further, the total number of initial and final *as*-clauses (i.e., 160) is less than the total number of simultaneity *as*-clauses (i.e., 167) because a few examples contain *as*-clauses that cannot be said to occur either before or after a main clause (see note 11).

23. Table A2 lists the event types occurring in the progressive *as*-clauses as well as the number and percentage of cases where the main clause event is construable as a punctual event. Some of the event types coded by *as*-clauses are given by way of verbs in small capitals (e.g., STAND). Such labels stand for semantic fields and thus group various different verbs (e.g., posture verbs like *stand*, *lie*, and *sit* in the case of STAND). The labels were chosen "empirically," that is, on the basis of the verbs found in *as*-clauses so as to group them into a manageably small number of classes (a similar classification is also used in Broccias [2006a]) useful for comparative purposes. That is, the same set was later also used for *while*-clauses (see Table A6). It should also be observed that the percentages given in parentheses next to the figures for main clause events construable as punctual events in the right-hand column are relative to the corresponding *as*-event types listed in the left-hand column (e.g., the first percentage, 80 percent, in the right-hand column means that 80 percent, i.e., 68, of the main clauses used when the *as*-event is of the change-of-place type are construable as punctual).

24. The simple tense, perfect, and progressive cases reported in Table A3 refer only to those instances where no modals are used.

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