Temporal specifiers and markers of futurity: Rethinking factors of variation

Nadja Nesselhauf, University of Heidelberg

1 Introduction

It appears to be a common assumption that certain ways of expressing the future are more likely to be accompanied a temporal specifier than others. In particular the futurate simple present and the futurate progressive are often considered to co-occur especially frequently with a time adverbial, both in traditional grammatical descriptions of English and in EFL grammars. F.R. Palmer, for example, states that "future uses of both progressive and non-progressive have normally to be marked by an adverbial" (1987: 64). In a similar vein, Zandvoort points out that sentences with the simple present with future reference "usually contain an adverb or adjunct expressing future time" (1972: 76) and that in the case of the present progressive, "[t]he time of the action is often indicated by an adverbial adjunct" (1972: 57; cf. also for example Poutsma 1904–1929 Part II.II: 335, and, as one example of a recent pedagogical grammar with similar claims, Parrott 2005: 169). Typical examples to support such statements are "We start tomorrow" and "I am going there next year" (Zandvoort 1972: 76, 57). A slight modification of these claims can be found in Quirk *et al*. who state that "the simple present cannot normally refer to the future unless accompanied by a time adverbial or some other future-referring expression" (1985: 217) and that "[l]ike *be going to*, the present progressive suggests that the future happening is imminent, unless this is contradicted by a more distant time mentioned in the context" (1985: 215). A particularly extreme claim is found in Crystal (1966: 24), who seems to assume that the progressive and the simple present can only indicate future time if an adverbial or some other explicit indication of future time is present.

The starting point of this paper is a finding in Nesselhauf and Römer (2007), where it was shown that, in actually occurring speech, the progressive with future time reference does not at all frequently co-occur with a time adverbial. In a sample of progressives with future time reference from the spoken part

of the BNC containing spontaneous conversation, only 22.8 percent of the futurate progressives were in fact used with a time adverbial.

Different hypotheses may account for this discrepancy between traditional description and the corpus findings in that study. First, there may be considerable register-differences, and traditional descriptions might be primarily based on written language whereas the corpus-findings were based on informal conversation. Second, the co-occurrence of temporal specifiers with future markers might be subject to current language change, with traditional descriptions based on older usage. As there has been an increase of the use of the progressive with future time reference in recent centuries (cf. Nesselhauf 2007), one reason for a potential decrease of time specification with this construction might be an increasing degree of grammaticalization, so that there might be less call for disambiguation between the progressive referring to the future and the progressive referring to the present. A final possible explanation for the observed discrepancy is that the traditional descriptions do not reflect actual language usage accurately and might have to be revised.

The aim of the present paper therefore is to trace the connection between the co-occurrence of time specifiers with future markers and register, the connection between the use of time specifiers and the choice of the individual future marker, and to trace the development of time specification with future markers diachronically.[1] More generally, the paper attempts to identify factors that may influence the co-occurrence or non-co-occurrence of time specifiers with future time expressions (overall and individually).

2 Methodology

The investigation presented in this paper is based on ARCHER, *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers*, as this corpus allows both diachronic and register-based analyses. The corpus covers the time span from 1650 to 1999 and is subdivided into 50-year periods, each of which contains a comparable amount of text from the following registers (with the abbreviation used in the corpus in brackets): drama (d), fiction conversation (con), homilies and sermons (h), journals and diaries (j), medical writing (m), newspaper reportage (n), fiction prose (pro), science writing (s), private letters (x). For the purposes of this investigation, only the British part of ARCHER and only every other 50-year period (1650–99, 1750–99, 1850–99 and 1950–99) was considered, which means that the analysis is based on about 700,000 words in total.[2]

As both the co-occurrence and the non-co-occurrence of future time expressions with time specifiers have to be analysed in order to arrive at meaningful

results, the starting point of the analyses were the individual future time expressions rather than selected time specifiers. All major future time expressions which could be extracted from the corpus with reasonable effort were included in this study, namely *will, 'll, shall, BE going to*, *BE to,* and the present progressive (with *'ll* being treated as a separate future marker here, as its status is by no means clear). For better comparison, only the present forms of these future markers were considered (e.g. only *will* but not backshifted *would*, only the present progressive but not the past progressive etc.). All of these future markers were extracted from the corpus both in their present day forms as well as in all the forms recorded in the OED for the past four centuries. All the non-future uses of the selected future time expressions, such as the progressive referring to the present, predictions referring to the present (*They will be having lunch now*), or instances of 'obligation' (*You are not to come in here*; *You shall never come here again*) were excluded from the study.

Temporal specifiers (or time specifiers) are defined broadly in this paper. The definition includes both time adverbials (such as *tomorrow, next week, in March, on Monday, soon, never*, *at a later stage, ere long*) and adverbial clauses (such as clauses introduced by *when, until, till, as soon as*). It also includes other noun or prepositional phrases which imply a specific time (such as in *I will meet you at dinner* or *He is going to spend the summer in London.*), although this type of time specification occurs only rarely in the data. Once all true (present) future markers had been identified, the sentence in which it occurred was checked for the occurrence of some kind of time specifier.

3 The influence of register on time specification with future markers

The first part of the analysis looks at the potential correlation of temporal specification of future markers and register. As there tends to be a greater degree of shared knowledge and experience between producer and recipient in many spoken as compared to many written registers, there might in general be less need for time specification in the former. In spontaneous conversation as investigated in Nesselhauf and Römer (2007) the rate of occurrence of time specifiers might be low and the co-occurrence with the progressive therefore higher in other, in particular written, registers. On the other hand, findings by Biber suggest that it is in spoken or speech-based registers that more time adverbials may be found (cf. e.g. Biber and Finegan 1997).

As there naturally are no spoken registers in a corpus spanning the whole of the Late Modern period, the investigation must by necessity be based on written

and speech-based registers. ARCHER includes three speech-based registers, namely the more informal registers of drama and fiction conversation and the more formal register of homilies and sermons (which might be assigned to a category 'written-to-be-spoken'). Of the written registers, journals and diaries as well as private letters tend to be more informal, medical and science writing fairly formal, and fiction prose and newspaper reportage on a middle level of formality (cf. Biber *et al*. 1994).

The co-occurrence of temporal specifiers with future time expressions was investigated across the whole Late Modern period, for all of the nine registers individually. Since the numbers of future time expressions naturally varies across registers, the results are given in percent. As Figure 1 shows, the number of future time expressions co-occurring with a time specifier of some kind varies between 28 and 47 percent. The registers with the lowest percentage of co-occurrence are the two informal speech-based registers of drama and fiction conversation, whereas the registers with the highest percentage of time specification with future time expressions are the two formal written registers of science and medical writing. In between, in order of increasing co-occurrence, are fiction prose, homilies and sermons, journals and diaries, private letters, and newspaper reportage.

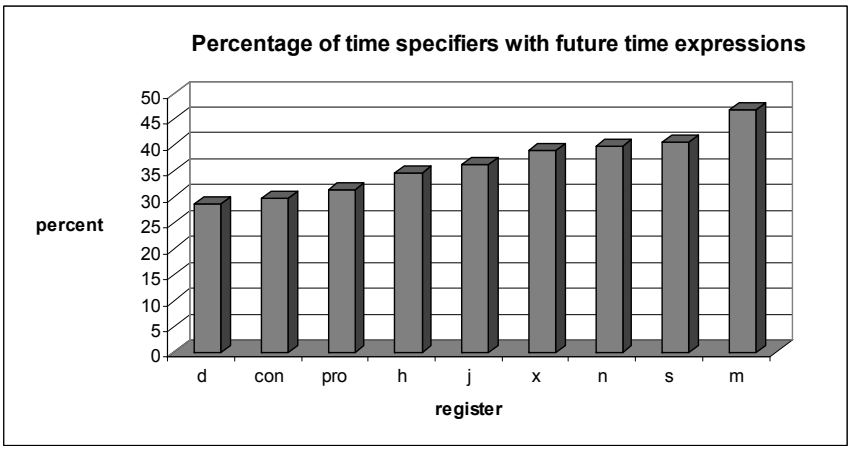

Figure 1: Percentage of time specifiers with future time expressions according to register

The results thus show a tendency for more informal speech-based registers to use time specification with future time expressions less frequently than written registers, and in particular than more formal written registers. Nevertheless, and even taking into account that co-occurrence might even be lower in the register of spontaneous conversation, the register differences are not so great as to fully explain the great discrepancy between the findings concerning the futurate progressive in Nesselhauf and Römer (2007) and the statements in the grammars (less than a quarter of co-occurrence vs. 'usually' or 'normally', cf. Section 1).

4 Time specification and the individual future markers

4.1 Dependence on the choice of future marker

The second part of the analysis will consider whether the common assumption that the progressive is accompanied particularly frequently by a time specifier accurately reflects modern language usage, and more generally, to what extent and why the use of a time specifier is influenced by the choice of future time expression. The analysis therefore focuses only on the latest period, 1950–99, and considers the use of all the future markers (i.e. *will*, *shall*, *'ll*, *BE going to*, progressive, and *BE to*) individually across all registers. As the overall frequency of the future markers also differs, results will be given in percent.

Figure 2 reveals that the assumptions in traditional grammars do not accurately describe present day language use. On the contrary, one of the future time expressions usually claimed to co-occur with time specifiers particularly often, the progressive, shows the second lowest tendency for such behaviour (about 20 percent), with only *BE going to* co-occurring relatively less frequently with time specifiers. The other future time expressions, which usually receive no special remarks in descriptive or pedagogic accounts with respect to their co-occurrence with time specifiers, show higher percentages of co-occurrence than the progressive. The highest percentage is displayed by *BE to*, which is accompanied by a time specifier in about half of the instances.

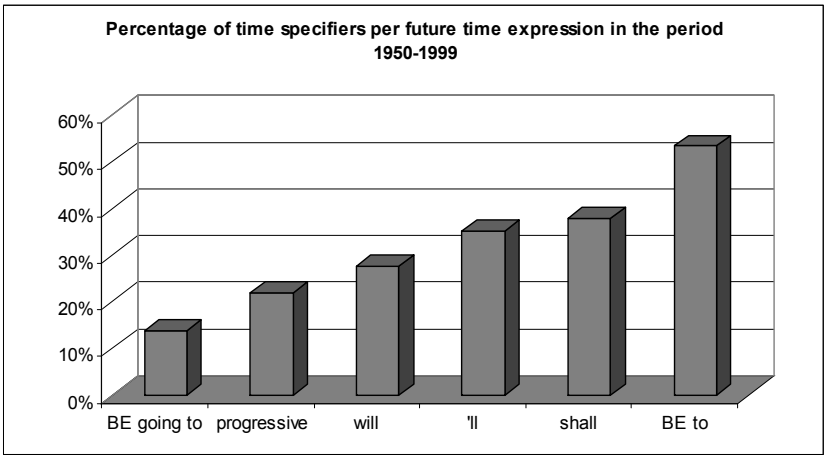

Figure 2: Percentage of time specifiers per future time expression in the period 1950–1999

This means that either there have been significant shifts in the use of time specifiers with future time expressions in the recent past (cf. Section 5) and many grammatical accounts are based on older stages of the language, or that some of the claims commonly made on the use of time specifiers with future time expressions are, and have always been, inaccurate.

4.2 Possible reasons for the different behaviour of future markers with respect to time specifier use

4.2.1 Frequency effects

The question that now needs to be asked is what might be the reason(s) for the different behaviour of the different future time expressions with respect to time specifier co-occurrence. It might be speculated that the overall frequency of the future time expressions is a factor, as a future marker might be more easily identified as such if it is frequent in general. However, a brief look at the overall numbers shows that such an explanation is inadequate: in the period 1950–99, the most frequent future time expressions are *will* (382), and *'ll* (228); followed by *shall* (87), the present progressive (59), *BE going to* (58), and *BE to* (15). A more refined hypothesis might be that the frequency of an accompanying time specifier partly depends on the number and frequency of alternative uses of the

individual expression (relative to its use as a future marker). Indeed, the two expressions which co-occur with time specifiers most frequently, *shall* and *BE to*, both have a number of alternative uses which occur frequently in comparison to the future use. For example *shall* may also be used for 'addressee's advice' (*Shall I wear the pink dress*?) or addressee's volition (*Shall I close the window?*); *BE to* may also be used, for example, for 'obligation' (*You are not to question this rule)* or 'possibility' (*She is currently to be found in London*) (cf. also Nesselhauf 2006). This hypothesis is further supported by the result that the construction which co-occurs with temporal specifiers least frequently, *BE going to* (+ inf.), does not have any alternative uses.

4.2.2 Dependence on semantics

One further possible reason for the different behaviour of the individual future time expressions with respect to temporal specification will be examined more systematically in this section, namely its possible connection with the precise semantics of a given future time expression. While expressions were only included in the analyses of the present paper if they had a strong element of 'prediction', it is by no means always the case that future markers exclusively have this semantic feature (If they do, this is often referred to as 'pure prediction', as for example in *Tomorrow will be another fine day*). Two other semantic features that are often present in future time expressions are 'intention' (as in *I'm going to tell him*) and 'arrangement' (*The Queen is to visit Japan*).

If all the future time expressions in the 1950–99 period in ARCHER are classified semantically (with respect to either one or two most dominant semantic feature(s) besides 'prediction'), three groups of future markers can be distinguished: one group in which 'intention' is the or one dominant feature (group 1 in Figure 3), one group in which 'arrangement' is the or one dominant feature (group 2), and one group which has no dominant semantic features besides 'prediction' (group 3). These groups were then investigated with respect to the use of a temporal specifier.

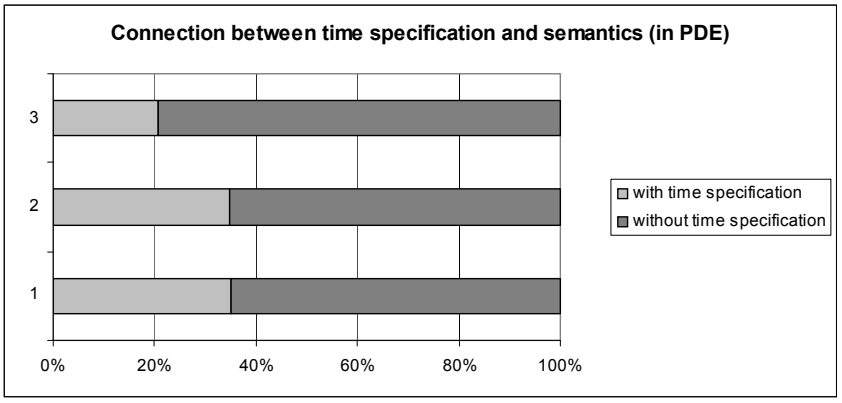

Figure 3: Connection between time specification and semantics (in PDE)
1: 'intention', 2: 'arrangement', 3: 'pure prediction'

As Figure 3 shows, the future time expressions in the latest period in ARCHER (1950–99) are more likely to co-occur with a time specifier when they either express 'pure prediction' or 'arrangement' (in addition to 'prediction') than when they express 'intention'. A possible reason for this might be that if the (or one) focus is on the (current) intention of the subject, there may often be less need or desire to specify when exactly this intention will be carried out. While these results only show tendencies and not very pronounced ones either, they might nevertheless contribute to the fact that *BE going to* co-occurs with time specifiers only very rarely, as this is the expression most frequently used with an 'intention'-sense (in over 50 percent of the cases). The other future time expressions expressing 'intention' relatively frequently in PDE are *'ll* and the progressive; the future marker expressing 'intention' least frequently is *BE to* (with about 20 percent). A connection between the frequency of an 'intention' sense and frequency of time specification therefore does not seem unlikely.

4.2.3 Dependence on degree of imminence

One aspect that has received some attention in descriptive and pedagogic accounts of future time expressions and their co-occurrence with time adverbials is the feature of imminence. The common assumption seems to be that time specifiers are particularly frequent or even necessary with the futurate progressive and/or *BE going to* if the more distant future is referred to. Leech, for example, puts this as follows: "When the clause with *be going to* contains no time

adverbial, immediate future is almost certainly implied" and, referring to the present progressive, "[w]ithout an adverbial, a time in the near future rather than remoter future is generally intended" (2004: 59, 62) (cf. also, for example, Quirk *et al*. 1985 quoted in the Introduction and the pedagogic grammar Woods and McLeod 1992: 57). If this is true, a further possible reason for the low percentage of time specifiers with the progressive and *BE going to* could be that the more distant future is only referred to very rarely with these two constructions.

What is problematic with statements referring to the immediate or near and the (more) distant future is that it is by no means clear how to define these concepts. What is more, it might even be impossible to define them independently of the context in which they are used (in the sense that, for example, everything predicted for the next week is imminent, everything predicted for a time after that is (more) distant). If the death of a person is predicted for the next two or three days or so, this event would most certainly be considered to be imminent, but if, on the other hand, rain is predicted in two or three days, this would in all likelihood not be considered imminent. So imminence clearly at least partly depends on the event/action/etc. that is predicted.

Add to this the fact that many predictions do not aim at a particular point in time and that it is often not possible for the analyst to determine for which point in time the prediction was intended, and it becomes clear that a systematic quantitative investigation of the connection between imminence and time specification is difficult if not impossible. However, a qualitative analysis of the examples of the use of the present progressive and *BE going to* in ARCHER already reveals that there are in fact a great number of instances of both the present progressive and *BE going to* without a time specifier which nevertheless do not seem to refer to the imminent or near future (but either to a more distant point in time or to a time span reaching into the more distant future). Some examples of such uses are given in (1) to (8) below (my emphasis):

(1) "I wonder so much what you <u>are going to</u> make of your life." "I wish I knew" (1952whit.con8b)

(2) "I don't think Dot's Anglo-Catholic Mission Society <u>is going to</u> have much good fortune in my country." (1957maca.con8b)

(3) news came today that it<u>'s going to</u> cost pounds 1,500 a year to send Christopher to Cambridge (1976hall.j8b)

(4) "I wouldn't want to create the expectations in the minds of the public that we <u>are going to</u> solve this case." (1989tim2.n8b)

(5) I am going to marry my son to Miss Moreland. (1775kell.d4b)

(6) I feel like Xtian when he dropped that rucksack of his in the river, now that I know I'm not BBC-ing. (1960aldn.x8b)

(7) And I shall not be in the Philippines really. I am going to Skagarak to stay with the Maharajah of Bagdepaul with the little button on top. (1922waug.x7b)

(8) After all, he said to himself, I am leaving this country (1935ishe.pro7b)

In the light of these examples, the claim that the progressive and *BE going to* without time specification usually refer to the imminent future cannot be upheld. The reason for the low percentages of time specification with these two future markers does therefore not seem to lie in their rare use for the more distant future.

4.2.4 Dependence on degree of grammaticalization

A final possible reason for the differences of time specification frequency in the different future time expressions might be the age of the future time expression or its degree of grammaticalization. Two – contradictory – hypotheses are conceivable in principle. On the one hand, a younger, less grammaticalized and less frequent future time expression might be used with time specifiers more frequently to mark its newer and rarer use as a future marker. On the other hand, the younger expressions such as *BE going to* and the progressive can be expected to retain more of their original, present-tense meaning than older expressions such as *will* and *shall* (cf. e.g. Bybee *et al*. 1994). This would mean that in many of their uses the connection to the present would still be stronger (cf. also for example Leech 2004: 58ff., Williams 2002: 106) and therefore the focus on the actual time of the prediction (expressed by a potential time specifier) made by the construction weaker.

To investigate the first of these two hypotheses, first the diachronic development of *BE going to* and the progressive with time specifiers in ARCHER was examined: in the case of *BE going to*, in the period 1650–99, one out of three occurrences had a time specifier, and in the following periods, one out of 13, three out of 13, and eight out of 58. In the case of the progressive, in the period 1650–99, one out of six occurrences had a time specifier, and in the following periods, two out of nine, 13 out of 29, and 13 out of 59. As these numbers are fairly small, an additional study was performed on the diachronic development of the *BE going to* construction and its co-occurrence with a temporal specifier in a larger corpus, namely the CLMET, the *Corpus of Late Modern*

English Texts. This corpus contains about ten million words of Late Modern British English, mainly literary fiction but also other text types such as personal letters or scientific writing. It is subdivided into three periods (1710–80, 1780–1850, 1850–1920) (for details on the corpus cf. De Smet 2005). The analysis looked at *BE going to* in the first and last period and revealed that in the period from 1710–1780 14.3 percent of the instances of *BE going to* were used with a time specifier, and in the period from 1850–1920 12.0 percent were thus used. Going even further back in time and looking at the earliest examples that have been found of *BE going to* (cf. Danchev and Kytö 1994:60–67), it also emerges that time specifiers were hardly used then. All of this provides evidence that already in the early stages of grammaticalization of the *BE going to* construction (and probably also of the progressive, although evidence is scarcer here), time specification was rare and the need or desire for disambiguation apparently very small.

The second hypothesis, on the other hand, is supported by several pieces of evidence, in addition to the results from the CLMET analysis. First, the overall results presented in Figure 2 indicate that it is indeed the younger expressions that co-occur less frequently with a temporal specifier. Second, the hypothesis is supported by the result from Section 4.2.2 that future markers expressing 'intention' (which has been shown to be a stronger tendency of younger future markers than for older ones; cf. Bybee *et al*. 1994) are accompanied by time specifiers less often. Finally, a look at the actual uses of the younger expressions also shows that the connection to the present is often strong: 'present intention' or 'present arrangement' is frequently expressed by *BE going to* and the progressive (as in examples (5), (6), (7) and (8)), and sometimes a time span starting with or very shortly after the utterance and extending into the future is expressed (as in examples (1), (2), (4) and possibly (6)).

The overall lower use of time specifiers with the younger expressions therefore might indicate that by using these expressions to refer to the future speakers do not aim to disambiguate this use from other, earlier uses, but rather might tend to choose them (and also often choose not to specify them temporally) precisely because they allow them to focus on (some aspect of) the present and the future simultaneously.

5 The diachronic development of temporal specifiers with markers of futurity

The final hypothesis that might help explain the discrepancy of traditional grammatical descriptions on time specifiers and future markers and the results from

corpus analyses is that a change might have occurred in the use of temporal specifiers with markers of futurity in the recent past. This hypothesis will be investigated by comparing the diachronic development of the co-occurrence of future time expressions and temporal specifiers since 1650 to the overall development of future time expressions since that time. Figure 4 shows the diachronic development of temporal specifiers with future time expressions in relative terms. It reveals that the proportion of *shall* + time specifier has decreased considerably in the past centuries, that *will* + time specifier first increased then decreased, and that *'ll* has increased considerably. The results also reveal that the relative proportion of both the progressive and *BE going to* + time specifiers has increased slightly. However, if these results are compared to the overall development of the relative use of future time expressions depicted in Figure 5, it becomes clear that these developments to a great extent correspond to those of future marker use in general. Together with the absolute numbers of the occurrences of *BE going to* and the progressive across the different periods given in the previous section, it must be concluded that there have been no remarkable shifts in the co-occurrence of future markers with time specifiers in the more recent past.

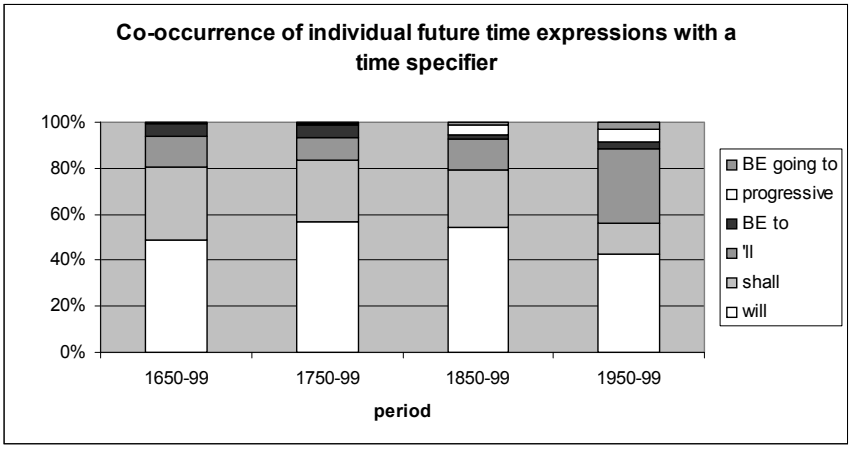

Figure 4: The development of the co-occurrence of individual future time expressions with a time specifier

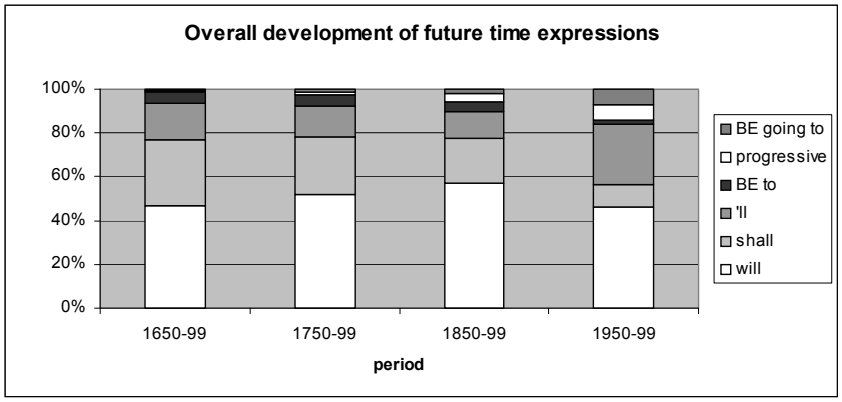

Figure 5: The overall development of future time expressions

6 Conclusion

The analysis presented in this paper has demonstrated that the most important general factor influencing the co-occurrence of temporal specifier and marker of futurity is the choice of future marker. The expressions *BE going to* and the progressive were shown to occur with time specifiers least frequently, *BE to* and *shall* most frequently. Register was also found to have some effect on co-occurrence, which was greatest in informal speech-based registers and lowest in formal written registers. It seems likely, however, that this effect does not go much (if at all) beyond the overall difference in the use of time specification in the different registers. Potential short-term diachronic change could largely be excluded as a factor of variation, as time specifier use with individual future markers does not seem to have shifted much over the past three and a half centuries.

These results also imply that neither language change nor register differences can sufficiently account for the observed discrepancies between traditional grammatical descriptions and corpus results, but that many traditional accounts somewhat misrepresent the actual state of affairs. A major reason for the observed discrepancies seems to be the methods on which the observations are based. As uncovered by countless previous corpus-analyses, there are considerable differences between the results from a systematic analysis of actual language usage on the one hand and, on the other, impressions on language elicited on the basis of intuition or inference of language use from anecdotal obser-

vation. As the progressive (like the simple present, which was, however, not investigated here) is ambiguous in principle and may be used both to refer to the present and the future, examples of the future use of the progressive are clearest and most noticeable if cited or observed together with a time specifier. In real life and actual language usage, much more context, both linguistic and extra-linguistic, is present and apparently there is often no necessity of a time specifier. What is more, the non-use of a time specifier might often arise from a desire on the part of the speaker or writer to exploit the potential of some future time expressions (notably the progressive and the *BE going to* construction) of being able to refer to the future and the present simultaneously (thus partly preserving the ambiguity that gave rise to the future time expression in question in the first place). The potential for focusing on some aspect of the present as well as on the future, then, also seems to be the most important factor of the observed variation in the use of a temporal specifier with individual future markers, which contributes to the low percentage of time specifier co-occurrence with *BE going to* and the progressive. The more frequent co-occurrence of temporal specifiers with the older and more truly polysemous expressions *shall* and *BE to*, on the other hand, might partly be the result of a greater desire to make clear that a future meaning rather than one of the many other (comparatively) frequent meanings is intended. But most importantly, their comparatively frequent use with a temporal specifier seems to be the consequence of a more exclusive future-orientation.

Notes

1. The terms ‘future marker’, ‘marker of futurity’ and ‘future time expression’ are used synonymously in this paper.
2. In this paper, the 3.1 version of ARCHER was used. This version, which was completed in 2006, is an extended and more balanced version of the original ARCHER corpus and is the result of a collaborative effort of the following universities: University of Freiburg, University of Heidelberg, University of Helsinki, University of Manchester, University of Mannheim, University of Michigan, Northern Arizona University, University of Southern California, Uppsala University, and University of Zurich. For the purposes of the present analysis, the register of fiction (‘f’ in the corpus) has been subdivided into fiction prose (‘pro’) and fiction conversation (‘con’).
3. Unlike what can be found in statements about the meaning and use of the progressive with future time reference (e.g. Leech 2004: 61f.), this construction is actually frequently used to express ‘intention’, often also without referring to an arrangement at the same time (cf. Nesselhauf 2007: 202ff.).

References

Biber, Douglas, Edward Finegan and Dwight Atkinson. 1994. ARCHER and its challenges: Compiling and exploring a representative corpus of historical English registers. In U. Fries, G. Tottie and P. Schneider (eds.). *Creating and using English language corpora*. *Papers from the Fourteenth International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora, Zürich 1993*, 1–13. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi.

Biber, Douglas and Edward Finegan. 1997. Diachronic relations among speech-based and written registers in English. In T. Nevalainen and L. Kahlas-Tarkka (eds.). *To explain the present. Studies in the changing English language in honour of Matti Rissanen*, 253–275. Helsinki: Société Néophilologique.

Bybee, Joan L., Revere D. Perkins and William Pagliuca. 1994. *The evolution of grammar. Tense, aspect, and modality in the languages of the world.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Crystal, David. 1966. Specification and English tenses. *Journal of Linguistics* 2 (1): 1–34.

Danchev, Andrei and Merja Kytö. 1994. The construction *be going to + infinitive* in Early Modern English. In D. Kastovsky (ed.). *Studies in Early Modern English*, 58–77. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

De Smet, Hendrik. 2005. A corpus of Late Modern English texts. *ICAME Journal* 29: 69–82.

Leech, Geoffrey. 2004. *Meaning and the English verb*. 3rd edition. London and New York: Longman.

Nesselhauf, Nadja. 2006. The decline of *be to* and the rise of *be going to* in Late Modern English: Connection or coincidence? In C. Houswitschka, G. Knappe and A. Müller (eds.). *Anglistentag 2005 Bamberg. Proceedings*, 515–529. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

Nesselhauf, Nadja. 2007. The spread of the progressive and its 'future' use. *English Language and Linguistics* 11 (1): 193–209.

Nesselhauf, Nadja and Ute Römer. 2007. Lexical-grammatical patterns in spoken English. The case of the progressive with future time reference. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 12 (3): 297–333.

Palmer, Frank R. 1987. *The English verb*. 2nd edition. London and New York: Longman.

Parrott, Martin. 2005. *Grammar for English language teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Poutsma, Hendrick. 1904–1929. *A grammar of Late Modern English*. 2 vols. Groningen: Noordhoof.

Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik. 1985. *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Longman.

Williams, Christopher. 2002. *Non-progressive and progressive aspect in English*. Fasano: Schena Editore.

Woods, Edward G. and Nicole J. McLeod. 1992. *Using English grammar. Meaning and form.* New York: Prentice Hall.

Zandvoort, Reinard Willem. 1972. *A handbook of English grammar.* 12th edition. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff.

Appendix

Absolute numbers for Figure 1 (time specifiers with future time expressions):

Register	**Future time expr. w. time spec.**	**Future time expression overall**
con	208	697
d	333	1166
h	54	156
j	72	199
m	29	62
n	169	426
pro	27	86
s	56	138
x	151	387

Absolute numbers for Figure 2 (time specifiers per future time expression in period 1950–99):

Future time expression	**With time specifier**	**Future time expression total**
will	106	382
shall	33	87
'll	80	228
BE going to	8	58
progressive	13	59
BE to	8	15

Absolute numbers for Figure 3 (time specification and semantics in period 1950–99):

	With time specification	**Without time specification**	**Total**
'prediction'	161	297	458
'arrangement'	30	56	86
'intention'	47	181	228

Absolute numbers for Figure 4 (individual future time expressions and time specifiers):

	1650–99	**1750–99**	**1850–99**	**1950–99**
will	133	171	151	106
shall	86	82	68	33
'll	37	29	37	80
BE to	14	17	5	8
progressive	1	2	13	13
BE going to	1	1	3	8

Absolute numbers for Figure 5 (overall development of future time expressions):

	1650–99	**1750–99**	**1850–99**	**1950–99**
will	395	469	420	382
shall	253	237	154	87
'll	141	129	90	228
BE to	44	49	34	15
BE going to	3	13	13	58
progressive	6	9	29	59