

## ***Swimming and arriving in Chinese, Japanese, and English***

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Alderson Auditorium, Kansas Union

There is a long tradition of treating tense and aspect as semantic operators such as **PAST**, **FUTURE**, and **PROG**. It is typically assumed that these operators are universal and that they are to be found in all languages. Even if there is some truth to this, as Chinese and Japanese illustrate, the operators cannot mean that same thing in all languages. In Chinese, *you yong* (游泳) ‘swim’ occurs with the progressive element *zai* (在) while *qu* (去) ‘go’ does not. **PROG**[qu(Jack)] is ungrammatical in Chinese. In Japanese, while *oyoide-iru* (from *oyogu* (泳ぐ) ‘swim’) means ‘is swimming’, *itte-iru* (from *iku* (行く) ‘go’) means ‘has gone’. It does not mean ‘is going’. While not ungrammatical, **PROG**[iku(Jack)] turns out to be perfective in Japanese.

In contrast to how the progressive is realized, the verbs themselves seem to share certain properties in all three languages. A verb like *swim* has the property that all subintervals of swimming are still swimings). It is, in a word, *homogenous*. *Go*, on the other hand, is not homogenous. No subinterval of *a going* is itself also a going.

In this paper, I argue that a close look at the morpho-semantics of the form that encodes progressive meaning in each of these three languages interacts with the (universal) properties of the verbs themselves to explain the differences in the distribution of a progressive interpretation. At the same time, a close look at the morpho-semantics of the various forms will also offer insight into why none of these forms is exclusively progressive. English *is studying*, for example, can be progressive, future (*I am studying in the library tomorrow morning*), habitual (*These days I am studying in the library, not in the student union*), or even generic (*Students these days are playing more and studying less*). The Chinese and Japanese forms have their own set of meanings.

**PARTY to follow at 7PM at Professor Gabriele’s house**