

The Alternation of *Be/Have*-Perfect Forms in Early Australian English Texts by Nineteenth-Century Settlers

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1. Introduction

The diffusion of *have* as a perfect-marking auxiliary within English intransitive verb constructions is considered by many researchers as one of the major syntactical changes in recent years. Originally, the perfect construction used the auxiliary *be*, ‘when the lexical verb is mutative (i.e. whose meaning involves a change of state)’ (Denison 1998: 135). Visser (1973: 2042) observes that the alternation between the auxiliaries *be* and *have* as resultative perfect markers for ‘intransitive verbs relating to motion or change’, such as *go* and *pass*, has been in use since the Old English period. Rydén and Brorström (1987) focus on the Late Modern English (LModE) use of intransitive perfect constructions and conclude that the major shift from *be* to *have* took place during this period. Thus, by the early nineteenth century the *have*-perfect (e.g. ‘All the people *have gone*’, ‘The time *has come*’) had become dominant over the *be*-perfect (e.g. ‘All the people *are gone*’, ‘The time *is come*’), ‘with, possibly, a paradigmatic “equilibrium” around 1810–20’ (Rydén and Brorström 1987: 213).

Studies on this topic have identified numerous factors possibly affecting the selection of either *be* or *have* as a perfect auxiliary, with dialectal or regional influences as one of the factors. Kytö’s (1997) multidimensional analysis comparing two regional varieties: i.e. British English (BrE) and American English (AmE), illustrates that the increase in the *have*-perfect usage happened earlier in AmE, in the late eighteenth century (Kytö 1997: 38–9), indicating differing regional patterns in the *have*-perfect development. To support this claim, i.e. the regional varieties have certain effects on the development of the *have*-perfect with mutative intransitives, other English varieties that were present during the LModE period need to be investigated for comparison. Therefore, the present study investigates the perfect construction usage in late modern Australian English (AusE)¹ and

¹ It is important to note that the recognition of AusE as a distinct regional variety took place at the end of the nineteenth century. Therefore, most of the nineteenth-century usage of ‘English in Australia’ should be distinguished from the present

analyses the results by comparing them with the BrE and AmE results, as well as by comparison between text authors from different places.

Two sets of corpora are incorporated in this study, representing three regional varieties of English in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries: the Corpus of Oz Early English (COOEE) for AusE and the ARCHER corpus for BrE and AmE. For detailed analyses of the various possible factors, the present study focuses on the perfect forms of two common intransitive verbs: *go* and *come*. Following Rydén and Brorström (1987) and Kytö (1997), the rate of the *have*-perfect occurrence against the whole occurrence of perfect forms is calculated as an indicator to the extent of the *have*-perfect diffusion. Multiple sociolinguistic factors, especially differences with respect to text authors' origins, will be discussed as the key topic.

2. Previous studies

2.1 The *be/have*-perfect alternation

The alternation of auxiliaries in intransitive verb constructions denoting the perfect aspect can be observed in multiple European languages, including Old English and other Germanic languages (Denison 1998: 135). According to previous studies, the *have*-perfect originated from the construction that expresses the state of a noun phrase (NP): '*have* + NP (obj.) + Past Participle (PP)', with the PP of a transitive verb as a modifier (Denison 1993: 340), whereas the construction '*be* + PP' described the resultant state due to an intransitive action (Denison 1993: 366). Carey (1994) proposes a possible path of the grammaticalisation process, from expressing the resultative state to focusing on the whole process.

Following the grammaticalisation of the *have*-perfect during the late Old English to Middle English period, perfect constructions with intransitive verbs began to alternate between the auxiliaries *be* and *have*. Visser (1973) lists intransitive verbs that show this characteristic, categorising them into five groups.² Among them are the 'verbs of motion', which include both

AusE (Fritz 2007: 14). Since the current study does not include data from the twentieth century and onwards, the term 'AusE' hereon refers to any LModE usage of English within the Australian continent, for convenience.

² The five categories of intransitive verbs with which the *be/have* alternation is possible, according to Visser (1973: 2044–85) are as follows:

I. the verbs denoting motion (e.g. *go*, *come*),

come and *go*. The *be*-perfect, however, remained in usage as the norm for intransitive verbs. McFadden and Alexiadou (2010: 399) explain that the use of the *be*-perfect in late Middle English and Early Modern English was restricted to the resultative meaning, while others such as the durative and iterative aspects and the counterfactual meaning preferred the *have*-perfect, which continued its grammaticalisation process through the LModE period, until it became the dominant form by the nineteenth century (Rydén and Brorström 1987: 196). Even in Present-Day English, the *be/have* alternation can be observed with some verbs, such as *go* and *recover* (Rydén and Brorström 1987: 211).

Large-scaled studies on the topic of the *be/have*-perfect alternation in the LModE period, particularly during the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, have been performed by Rydén and Brorström (1987) and Kytö (1997). While the former treat letters and drama scripts as sources, and the latter uses an electronic corpus (the ARCHER corpus), both studies analyse a wide range of intransitive verbs according to multiple different criteria: e.g. the tense of the auxiliary (*be/have*), the durative and iterative aspects, counterfactual conditions, collocation with the object-like adverbials, comparison between registers, gender and social status.

Kytö (1997: 38–9) also compares the perfect forms between BrE and AmE texts and discovers that the increase in the *have*-perfect rate happened earlier in AmE than in BrE, suggesting the innovative nature of the AmE perfect usage. The innovativeness of AmE regarding the diffusion of the *have*-perfect is also mentioned by Anderwald (2014: 16), that in nineteenth-century AmE ‘the BE-perfect was much less frequently attested than in the British data’.

To test the hypothesis that regional factors played a significant role in the late development of the *have*-perfect, a research including regional varieties other than BrE and AmE must be performed. In the present study, therefore, the researcher introduces AusE to see how it differs from BrE and AmE in the *be/have* alternation tendencies.

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- II. the verbs denoting changes (e.g. *change, become*),
 - III. the verbs denoting emergence (e.g. *rise, appear*),
 - IV. the verbs not denoting motion (e.g. *rest*),
 - V. the verbs denoting ending (*die, cease*).

2.2 English in Australia before the twentieth century

Present-Day AusE possesses multiple characteristics not seen in other major varieties such as AmE and BrE. Fritz's (2007) comprehensive research on the historical development of AusE suggests that it formed as a koine through the interaction between settlers with different regional and social backgrounds to acquire 'some features from other dialects and sociolects' (Fritz 2007: 27). According to the figures given by Fritz (2007: 19–20), English settlers were the most numerous from 1788 to the 1820s. The second largest group was Irish settlers, which comprised around 20% of all the settlers, whose number could have been larger due to some being convicted outside their birthplace. Settlers from the British Isles decreased during the gold rush in the 1850s, while those who were born in Australia and settlers from other areas increased (Fritz 2007: 35–43). The effect of Irish immigrants on the population may have been significant around the world during the nineteenth century. The data from Hatton and Williamson (1998: 76) show that more than 4.5 million Irish people migrated overseas from the late 1840s to the end of the century.

Using data from historical corpora, Burrige and Musgrave (2014) show some possible influences of Irish English (IrE) on early AusE. The usage of some IrE syntactical forms, such as '*be after Ving*' perfect construction, is detected, but only in certain selected contexts where the speaker is implied to be of Irish descent. Others, such as *yous* as the plural second-person pronoun, seem to indicate a feature of vernacular AusE, rather than that of IrE (Burrige and Musgrave 2014: 33–4). The IrE syntax may also have affected the development of perfect constructions. Yao (2015) compares the rate of the simple past and the present perfect usage in BrE, AmE and AusE texts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and observes that nineteenth-century AusE tends to have comparatively larger present perfect occurrence rate with intransitive verbs. As a possible explanation, Yao (2015) hypothesises that the 'medial-object perfect', which is characteristic of IrE, influenced the early AusE present perfect usage through the writings of Irish authors (Yao 2015: 260–1). As illustrated in example (1), the 'medial-object perfect' emphasises the state of an object (*the grass*) as the result of an act carried out by the agent (the PP *cut*). The usage of this construction for transitive contexts may have had an effect 'that the functionally similar PP is "pushed" towards more non-transitive contexts,

so that there is a strengthened association between non-transitive verbs and the PP in IrE' (Yao 2015: 261).

(1) I have half the grass now cut. (Carey 1994: 34)

In relation to the *be/have* alternation in perfect constructions, Filppula et al. (2008: 186) identify the *be*-perfect in IrE as 'the intransitive counterpart of the medial-object perfect' and observe that the construction is relatively common in IrE varieties. If their statement on the *be*-perfect dominance in IrE, as well as Yao's (2015) hypothesis on the Irish influence on the nineteenth-century AusE perfect, is true, then early AusE texts should exhibit a higher frequency of the *be*-perfect usage and settlers of Irish descent should use the *be*-perfect more often than other settlers.

In contrast to the above hypothesis, Moriya's (2018) study on the diary of George Fletcher Moore, an Irish settler in Western Australia during the 1830s, illustrates the significantly higher *have*-perfect frequency in Moore's texts compared with contemporary texts from COOEE and ARCHER. This result suggests the influence of some possible factors in relation to the *be/have* alternation tendency, such as the difference between early and late immigrants, and the difference between registers with different levels of formality. The present study attempts to show to what extent those factors have influenced the early AusE *be/have*-perfect usage.

3. Methodologies and results

In this corpus-based study, the *Corpus of Oz Early English* (COOEE) is used as the main corpus, with the ARCHER corpus (*ARCHER-3.2*) providing supplementary data if necessary. The former corpus contains Australian texts from 1788, when the First Fleet arrived at Sydney, to 1900, which are further divided into four 25-year periods except for Period 1 (1788–1825). The COOEE corpus has the size of 2 million words, with roughly 500 thousand words for each period, including multiple genres of texts or registers,³ as shown in Table 1.1. Since the current study investigates the uses of perfect constructions for *come* and *go* in relation to the time period as well as linguistic variants spoken by the author, the time periods and the

³ The details of each register category in Table 1.1, such as what types of texts are included, are explained in Section 4.1.

authors' background classification⁴ will be useful in analysing the changes in this relationship. The size of each section in the ARCHER corpus is shown in Table 1.2 for comparison. ARCHER does not make further regional divisions the total corpus size for all Irish authors' texts are uncertain, except for those which have been used in the present study, which include 59,000 words out of a total 765,000.

Table 1.1. Number of words in each COOEE origin and register category, according to the COOEE list of texts by Fritz (2004)

Author origin	Period 1 (1788-1825)	Period 2 (1826-1850)	Period 3 (1851-1875)	Period 4 (1876-1900)
Australia	23,294	34,612	71,714	284,799
Great Britain (England, etc.)	476,938	385,385	247,915	64,127
Ireland (North/South)	2,440	23,962	56,193	81,049
Others (+unknown)	0	58,922	126,104	70,603

Register	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4
Government English (GE)	42,571	53,214	53,197	51,219
Public Written (PcW)	201,855	197,489	201,620	202,151
Private Written (PrW)	178,485	175,268	178,774	168,364
Speech Based (SB)	79,761	76,910	68,335	78,844

Table 1.2. Number of words in each ARCHER origin category, based on ARCHER-3.2

	1750-1799	1800-1849	1851-1875	total
BrE	330,675	323,906	327,065	981,646
AmE	325,599	286,683	325,097	937,379
total	656,274	610,589	652,162	1,919,025

⁴ The authors' background classification in the current study generally follows COOEE origin sections. The author origin information given by COOEE is double checked using biographical information provided by Pike (1966) if possible. The background information of ARCHER authors is checked in the same manner, using Garraty and Carnes (1999) and Matthew and Harrison (2004) as sources.

The types of perfect construction included in the analysis are divided into the following four categories: (i) the *be*-perfect, which includes any BE + PP constructions with *come* or *go* used in the corpora, as in (2a), except for the constructions such as in (2b), in which the PP is directly preceded by a pronoun or NP in a non-interrogative construction, (ii) the *have*-perfect, which includes any HAVE + PP constructions with *come* or *go* as in (3), (iii) perfect forms with constructions such as HAVE *been* + PP, which is rarer than the *be/have*-perfect in the corpora, but does retain a considerable usage rate during the time periods examined, such as (4), and finally, (iv) indeterminate forms, referring to abbreviated form -'s as in (5), for which unabbreviated forms might be difficult to determine because of its morphological ambiguity. Following the previous studies by Rydén and Brorström (1987) and Kytö (1997), this study measures the diffusion rate of the *have*-perfect for intransitive verbs by the percentage of the *have*-perfect. Indeterminate forms are excluded from the total number used to give the *have*-perfect percentage.

- (2) a. The Commissioners Report I find *is at last come forth*, a few copies are now in the Colony, /.../ (COOEE 1–215.TXT, all italics by the writer of this research)
- b. There *are a great many settlers come out* here this season all of them the grandest people ever I saw /.../ (COOEE 1–192.TXT)
- (3) As time *has gone on*, however, the commercial structure itself, within which the wheels of Unionism revolve, has been considerably modified. (COOEE 4–199.TXT)
- (4) They left about 6 and *had not been gone* more than 20 minutes when Charles complained of sickness. . . (COOEE 2–100.TXT)
- (5) Ah well that's all *gone* and past, /.../ (COOEE 4–055.TXT)

After making comparisons according to author origins and time periods, the results are further analysed based on the following criteria. The first criterion is the use of complements after the PP. As mentioned by McFadden

(2017: 167), the *be*-perfect-like construction observed in Present-Day English, where the PP is used mostly for an adjectival function, are not compatible with ‘modification in terms of manner and goal’. Kytö (1997: 59–63) also points out that the *have*-perfect more frequently occurs with object-like complements denoting distance and measure. Based on those observations, it is possible to predict that constructions with complements such as (6a), (6b) and (6c) prefer the *have*-perfect to the *be*-perfect, compared to those without, such as (6d), under the condition in which the usage of both perfect forms is possible. The second criterion for the analysis is the difference according to registers. As suggested by Rydén and Brorström (1987: 200–1), drama scripts may exhibit a more advanced feature than letters do in general. The difference in writing conventions and formality among the text genres is also likely to affect the usage of the *be/have*-perfect. Therefore, this factor needs to be discussed as well.

(6) a. They were catechised and instructed in the afternoon by Mrs Watson, as I *had gone a few miles* to visit a sick man. (COOEE 2–107.TXT)

b. /.../ and since that time everything *has gone wrong* with our Colonies in the East. (COOEE 2–298.TXT)

c. I expected to *have gone to the top of it* to-night, but it is too late. (COOEE 3–238.TXT)

d. /.../ one of the children went out and immediately returned saying that Harry and the females *had all gone*. (COOEE 2–107.TXT)

The COOEE results for the numbers and the *have*-perfect usage rate are compared in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.⁵ The tables show that for both *come* and *go*, the use of the *have*-perfect prevails, with the IrE data illustrating a slight preference for the *be*-perfect. Indeterminate forms, such as abbreviated auxiliaries and HAVE *been* PP forms, are far more commonly occurring with *go* than with *come*. The AUS section tends to have higher *have*-perfect rate than GB and IR sections for both *come* and *go*, which was as expected,

⁵ The ratio of the perfect construction occurrences to all *come* or *go* occurrences varies among the origin sections, but not at a significant level ($p < 0.05$).

considering the historical recentness of most Australian texts in COOEE (written in Period 4). However, the Ir section is also comprised mostly of texts written in later periods and provides the lowest percentage of the *have*-perfect usage. Even though many of Ir section texts are in the Private Written (PrW) register, the Ir data do not include many abbreviated forms typically observed in speech-like genres either. The effect of author origins on the uses of perfect forms will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Table 2.1. The number and rate of *come* perfect constructions in each COOEE origin section

	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	HAVE <i>been come</i>	indeterminate
COOEE AUS (1788-1900)	4	60	93.8%	0	0
COOEE GB (1788-1900)	23	148	86.5%	0	1
COOEE Ir (1788-1900)	5	23	82.1%	0	0
COOEE others (1788-1900)	0	22	100.0%	0	0

Table 2.2. The number and rate of *go* perfect constructions in each COOEE origin section

	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	HAVE <i>been gone</i>	indeterminate
COOEE AUS (1788-1900)	26	54	67.5%	1	2
COOEE GB (1788-1900)	65	128	66.3%	7	1
COOEE Ir (1788-1900)	33	24	42.1%	0	1
COOEE others (1788-1900)	9	24	72.7%	0	0

The diachronic change of the *have*-perfect rate for each origin section shown in Figures 1 and 2 illustrates some more interesting patterns.⁶ First, the verbs *come* and *go* experience shifts in the *have*-perfect rate that are far from identical. In Figure 1, British-born authors are surprisingly shown to be more innovative than Australian-born authors in their HAVE *come* usage

⁶ The raw values used to make the graphs are given in Tables 1 and 2 in the Appendix.

rate for the first two periods. Australian authors then start to use the *have*-perfect more frequently until its usage reaches 100% in Period 3. This apparently sudden shift from the *be*-perfect to the *have*-perfect could be the result of bias caused by the scarcity of AUS texts in the first two periods. However, it may also indicate the distinct pattern of the *have*-perfect diffusion in nineteenth-century Australia.

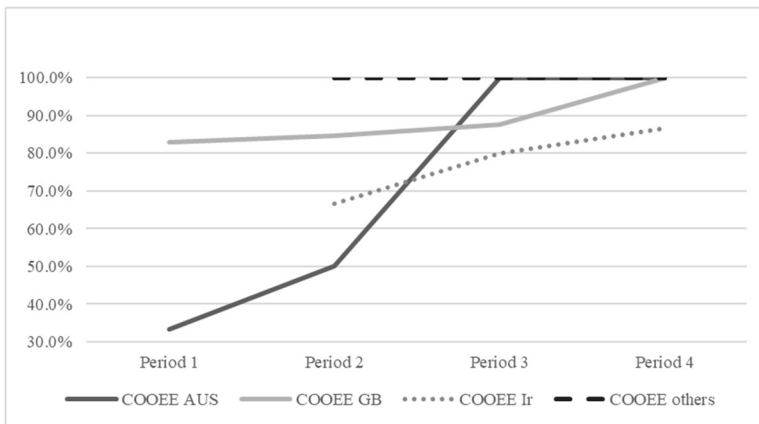


Figure 1. The rate of *have*-perfect forms for the verb *come* in COOEE

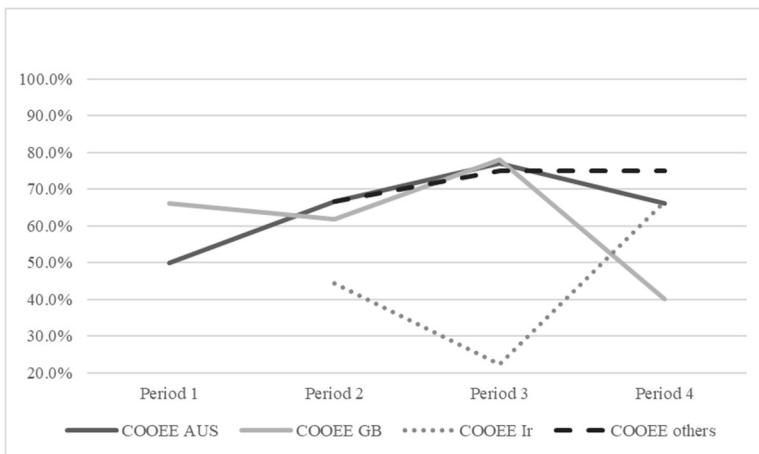


Figure 2. The rate of *have*-perfect forms for the verb *go* in COOEE

On the other hand, the change in BE/HAVE *gone* constructions illustrated in Figure 2 tells a very different story about the *have*-perfect development. The rates of HAVE *gone* never reach 100% in all the regional variants examined, while some, i.e. British and Australian variants, evidently display a decrease in the rate of *have*-perfect forms, whereas Irish authors use more *have*-perfect in their texts during the last period.

Finally, the change in the whole COOEE *have*-perfect rate is compared with that of the ARCHER corpus in Figure 3. The converging COOEE and ARCHER figures in the later periods account for the fact that the sets of data from both corpora follow a similar, possibly general trend of the *have*-perfect diffusion, at least after the late nineteenth century. However, the similarity between the two corpora does not disprove the possibility of different developmental patterns of *have*-perfect within each corpus.

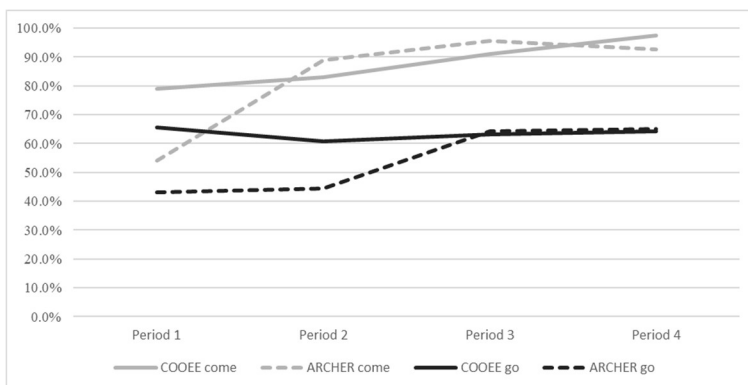


Figure 3. The diachronic change in the *have*-perfect rate in COOEE and ARCHER data

4. Discussion

4.1 Author origin and register comparison

As seen in Figures 1 and 2 in the previous chapter, the *have*-perfect rate varies considerably between COOEE origin sections. For the verb *come*, all sections seem to follow the general pattern towards *have*-perfect dominance, though at different rates. In contrast, the verb *go* demonstrates much more complex changes. Although within three different sections (COOEE AUS,

GB and Others), there seems to be a common trend that the *have*-perfect rate increases from Period 2 to 3, but not in Period 4. However, COOEE Ir is an anomaly, with its *have*-perfect rate increasing in the last period.

To reinforce the idea of the contrasting developmental paths of BrE and IrE *have*-perfect rates from Periods 3 to 4, the same method was applied to BE/HAVE *gone* data in ARCHER, the results of which are displayed in Figure 4. Again, British-born authors use less HAVE *gone* in the last period, while the opposite is true for Irish authors, although this time the increase is subtler than shown in the COOEE results. It is also important to note that American authors show a pattern similar to the IrE trend.

These findings might be related to Irish migration patterns during the late nineteenth century. Hatton and Williamson’s (1998) data on Irish people who left the country during the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century (Figure 5) indicate an interesting pattern: i.e. the number of Irish emigrants fluctuates significantly throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. Some notable decreases in emigrants are observable, particularly in the 1850s and the 1870s, with each of the declines followed by rapid increases in emigrants. The 1850s and 1870s are coincidentally placed near the borderlines between two COOEE periods: the former is in between Periods 2 and 3, and the latter between Periods 3 and 4.

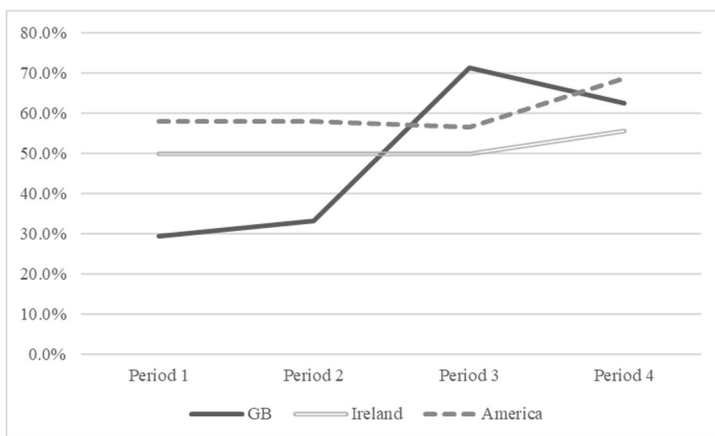


Figure 4. The rate of *have*-perfect forms for the verb *go* in ARCHER

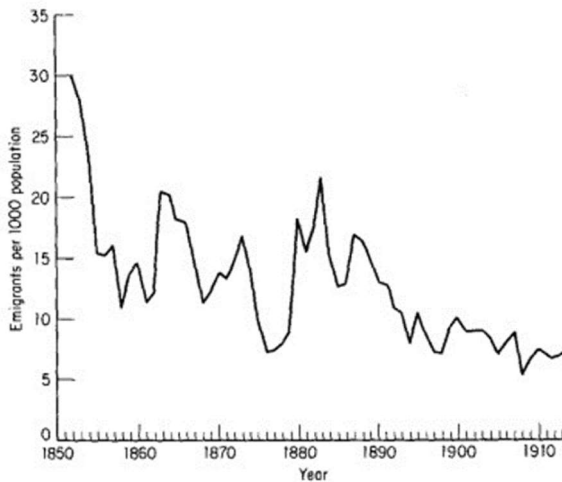


Figure 5. Irish emigration rate, 1852-1913 (originally from Hatton and Williamson 1998: 76)

The rapid increase in the Irish *have*-perfect rate in Figure 1, might therefore represent an influence by a new wave of Irish settlers, especially those after the late 1870s, who could have brought a new pattern of the *be/have*-alternation usage along with themselves.

Another interesting factor to investigate is the text genre difference, the data for which are displayed in Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.1. The number and percentage of HAVE *come* constructions in each COOEE register and origin section

HAVE <i>come</i> registers	COOEE AUS	COOEE GB	COOEE Ir	COOEE others
GE	1 100.0%	10 90.9%	0 N/A	0 N/A
PcW	34 97.1%	51 89.5%	0 N/A	8 100.0%
PrW	16 84.2%	60 80.0%	23 82.1%	2 100.0%
SB	9 100.0%	27 93.1%	0 N/A	12 100.0%

Table 3.2. The number and percentage of HAVE *gone* constructions in each COOEE register and origin section

HAVE <i>gone</i> registers	COOEE AUS	COOEE GB	COOEE Ir	COOEE others
GE	0 N/A	1 100.0%	0 N/A	0 N/A
PcW	35 61.4%	41 56.9%	2 100.0%	8 57.1%
PrW	11 64.7%	63 72.4%	22 39.3%	5 71.4%
SB	8 88.9%	23 56.1%	0 N/A	11 91.7%

The Government English (GE) section, including laws, declarations, etc., has the smallest number of occurrences, probably due to its relative scarcity in the corpus (cf. Table 1.1). Likewise, the Ir section has a significantly larger number of PrW occurrences than the other registers, due to 95% of its texts being composed of PrW texts, such as personal correspondences and diaries. The other origin sections show considerable amounts of occurrences in the Public Written (PcW) section, such as novels, newspaper articles, as well as in the Speech Based (SB) section, including minutes, plays and speeches. The uneven distribution of texts across registers and author origins renders it challenging to make a comparison. Nevertheless, Tables 3.1 and 3.2 compare the numbers and percentages of *have*-perfect forms across COOEE registers and author origins.

The above tables reveal remarkably different register preferences for HAVE *come* and HAVE *gone*. The former construction appears least frequently in PrW for COOEE AUS and GB sections, at around 80%, with the COOEE Ir section in the same range. Except for the COOEE Others section, the *be*-perfect is more frequently used in private correspondences and diaries than in public texts such as fictions, official correspondences and public speeches. The apparent preference of the *be*-perfect over the *have*-perfect in IrE texts might therefore reflect the PrW-oriented register distribution in the Ir section, rather than the general tendency of IrE.

However, the BE/HAVE *gone* construction does not seem to follow the same pattern. For all origin sections except Ir, the PcW section presents less frequent use of the *have*-perfect than the PrW section (Table 5.2). In Irish PrW texts, the *be*-perfect form is also far more frequent than any other regional variants. A considerable number of occurrences of BE *gone* are

expected to be found, even in the PcW section, because the adjectival usage of the construction persists in Present-Day English. However, the Irish preference of BE *gone* requires more detailed investigation, because the pattern is so far exclusive to the verb *go*.

4.2 Semantic properties of BE *gone* construction

The relationship between the alternation of *be/have*-perfect forms and semantic distinctions has been discussed in previous studies. This study particularly focuses on the distinction between the resultative perfect and the purely adjectival meaning of PP. The former, according to McFadden (2017: 167), may co-occur with adverbials denoting method and goal, while the latter does not. Using the data representing the *be/have*-perfect for intransitive verbs in Late Modern BrE and AmE, Kytö (1997: 62) also suggests that certain types of complements, namely ‘nouns indicating distance, measure and like concepts’, strongly prefer the *have*-perfect. Therefore, it is likely that the COOEE data also follows the same pattern: i.e. *be*-perfect forms are far more likely to appear in clauses without any forms of complementation such as infinitives, adjectives and adverbials, that complement the meaning of the perfect construction BE/HAVE + PP.

The COOEE data, as described in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, follow the expected pattern of semantic distribution of the *be/have*-perfect. The percentages represent the ratio of the *be/have*-perfect used in clauses without complements to the whole occasion of the same form. Each of the origin sections also has higher rate of the *be*-perfect selection than the *have*-perfect in clauses without complements, but the rate itself considerably varies between the sections.

Table 4.1 The numbers and percentages of the BE/HAVE *come* without complements in each COOEE origin section

	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>come</i> (w/o complements)	%	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>come</i> (w/o complements)	%
COOEE AUS (1788-1900)	2	50.0%	8	13.3%
COOEE GB (1788-1900)	5	21.7%	8	5.4%
COOEE Ir (1788-1900)	2	40.0%	5	21.7%
COOEE others (1788-1900)	0		4	18.2%

Table 4.2 The numbers and percentages of the BE/HAVE *gone* without complements in each COOEE origin section

	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>go</i> (w/o complements)	%	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>go</i> (w/o complements)	%
COOEE AUS (1788-1900)	20	76.9%	12	22.2%
COOEE GB (1788-1900)	40	61.5%	10	7.8%
COOEE Ir (1788-1900)	10	30.3%	3	12.5%
COOEE others (1788-1900)	6	66.7%	1	4.2%

In the BE/HAVE *come* results, the GB rate of both *be*- and *have*-perfect without complements are lower than the other variants, which signifies the rather frequent usage of perfect forms with complements, even for the *be*-perfect. This might be due to the GB section mostly consisting of earlier texts, thus retaining more non-adjectival *be*-perfect usages than later texts.

In contrast, the BE/HAVE *gone* results indicate a very distinct pattern for the Ir section, in which only the rate of the *be*-perfect without complements is much lower than the others. The reason behind this trend in Australian Irish texts is still uncertain and should be one of the main focuses of future studies. Currently, it is hypothesised that the difference in register distribution, especially the higher concentration of PrW types in the Ir section might be one of the factors. Some examples of *be*-perfect forms with complements in Irish texts are given in (7a) and (7b), both of which are excerpts from personal correspondences, including distinct spelling variants and possible uses of discourse markers such as ‘thank God’ in (7a) and deictic expressions such as ‘Now’ in (7b).

(7) a. How ever she is a good deal better and after she was over the worst of it one of the children took a disease called the Gastic fever which Continued on her for 4 months but thank God she is getting all right although she was given up for death by this Most Eminent Docter in this part of the Coloney. He *is* newly *come to this Town* his name is Docter Doyle. (COOEE 3–228.TXT, PrW)

b. Now I got a few Letters from Patt. Collins from townsivillia

[Townsville]. He is getting on all right he will be Coming to Brisbane shortly. & I got a few Letters from Bridget Burke & Maggie Conner from Bunderberg [Bundaberg]. The [sic] are all right. Bridget Burke is married with 6 month to a police & the tell me that Maggie Conner *is gone to be married* next month to a Carpenter (COOEE 4–026.TXT, PrW)

Those characteristics may suggest that the contexts in which *be*-perfect forms with complements are used tend to be more personal and speech-like. This hypothesis, however, contradicts an explanation given by Rydén and Brorström (1987: 200), that comedies tend to use more *have*-perfects than letters because ‘the language of the comedies (the dialogue parts) is more speech-based than that of the letters’. Other studies, such as Anderwald (2014: 25–7), mention the stigmatisation of the *be*-perfect by LModE prescriptive grammars, which could have had a larger impact on the formal language such as GE and PcW as well as plays and public speeches than on PrW, further supporting the effects of text genres discussed in the previous section. Therefore, the *be/have* alternation might not be affected by a single factor, but by the interaction between factors such as the origin of the writer and the formality of texts. There is also the possibility that, as Burrige and Musgrave (2014: 33–4) propose for some supposedly AusE vernacular characteristics, the pattern seen in the spoken English used primarily by Irish settlers has become a part of the linguistic properties of later AusE.

5. Conclusion

The choice of *be/have*-perfect forms for the verbs *go* and *come* may differ according to the origins, and presumably also to the types of variants used by the COOEE text authors, although the corpus follows the general trend of shifting towards the *have*-perfect dominance. The current study has contrasted Irish authors, who in general are more conservative considering the use of perfect forms, with British and Australian authors, who tend to use *have*-perfect forms more frequently. This tendency is reversed in the Period 4 BE/HAVE *gone* data. The Irish authors suddenly start to tend towards the *have*-perfect use. This shift might be related to the shift in Irish immigration patterns in the late nineteenth century, with a new wave of settlers bringing a new use of perfect forms into the colonies.

The data obtained in this study also strongly suggest the effect of registers and semantic distinctions. PrW texts such as personal correspondence and diaries generally have lower frequency of the *have*-perfect. Thus, it is highly likely that the COOEE Ir results are heavily affected by the dominance of PrW texts in the Ir section. The effect of complements on the choice of the auxiliaries is observed clearly, which confirms the previous studies. In this regard, the Ir section once again shows a unique trend in its relatively frequent usage of BE *gone* with complements. Further investigation on this topic is necessary to explain in detail how those three factors of author origins, registers and semantic distinctions are correlated.

The exact relationship between the early Australian usage of the *be/have*-perfect and those of British and Irish immigrants also requires further explanation. Closer analyses of PrW texts written by earlier generations of Australian writers, as well as comparison between pre-twentieth century Australian texts and later AusE texts, might provide deeper insights into the formation and spread of the AusE usage of perfect constructions, particularly in the distribution and semantic distinction of perfect auxiliaries.

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Appendix

Table 1. The number of BE/HAVE *come* occurrence and the rate of the *have*-perfect in COOEE

Period 1	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	other forms
AUS	2	1	33.3%	0
GB	6	29	82.9%	0
Ir	0	0	0.0%	0
others	0	0	0.0%	0
Period 2	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	other forms
AUS	2	2	50.0%	0
GB	11	60	84.5%	0
Ir	1	2	66.7%	0
others	0	4	100.0%	0
Period 3	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	other forms
AUS	0	16	100.0%	0
GB	6	42	87.5%	0
Ir	2	8	80.0%	0
others	0	15	100.0%	0
Period 4	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>come</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	other forms
AUS	0	41	100.0%	0
GB	0	17	100.0%	1
Ir	2	13	86.7%	0
others	0	3	100.0%	0

Table 2. The number of BE/HAVE *gone* occurrence and the rate of the *have*-perfect in COOEE

Period 1	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	other forms
AUS	1	1	50.0%	0
GB	22	43	66.2%	1
Ir	0	0	0.0%	0
others	0	0	0.0%	0
Period 2	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	other forms
AUS	1	2	66.7%	0
GB	26	42	61.8%	4
Ir	5	4	44.4%	0
others	3	6	66.7%	0
Period 3	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	other forms
AUS	3	10	76.9%	0
GB	11	39	78.0%	0
Ir	21	6	22.2%	0
others	4	12	75.0%	0
Period 4	<i>be</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect: <i>go</i>	<i>have</i> -perfect %	other forms
AUS	21	41	66.1%	3
GB	6	4	40.0%	3
Ir	7	14	66.7%	1
others	2	6	75.0%	0