

Uses of *Be/Have*-perfect Forms in Late Modern Australian Literary Texts

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1. Introduction

This study focuses on the Late Modern English (LModE) usage of the English perfect construction for mutative intransitive verbs with the alternating auxiliaries *be* and *have*. Historically, both the *be*-perfect (e.g. ‘The time *is come*’, ‘The ship *is arrived*’) and the *have*-perfect (e.g. ‘The time *has come*’, ‘The ship *has arrived*’) have been used to describe perfect meanings, with the former construction being the dominant option for a certain group of verbs up until the LModE period, around the beginning of the nineteenth century (Rydén and Brorström 1987). Multiple studies have been conducted regarding the diachronic change of the *be/have*-perfect preference by English users, and they have shown a general trend towards *have*-perfect dominance during the LModE period, particularly from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century. Multiple factors, including internal constraints such as the presence of complements and semantic distinctions (resultative or experiential) as well as external elements such as author gender and text genres, have been suggested to affect the rate of choosing either the *be*- or the *have*-perfect. The group of verbs that could occur in the *be*-perfect construction is collectively known as ‘mutative intransitive verbs’. Previous studies further categorised the verbs into those that typically signify movement of the subject (e.g. *come*, *go*) and those that represent shifts in the state of the subject (e.g. *improve*, *turn*), with the former category experiencing the shift to the *have*-perfect earlier in general than the latter. Regional differences are another possible factor suggested by Kytö (1997), who illustrates that American English (AmE) experienced the shift from *be*-perfect to *have*-perfect dominance earlier than its British counterpart. It may, therefore, be possible to find distinct characteristics in the *be/have*-perfect usage in other English variations in the same period of time, during the late eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

The formation of Australian English (AusE) as a distinct regional variation took place roughly in the LModE period and continued until the

early twentieth century, when it was regarded as a national identity by people in the colonies that had newly achieved independence. It is assumed that when Australia was first established as a set of British colonies in the late eighteenth century, settlers in general spoke an English variety native to their home region and thus were unaware of using a new, unique variety of the language; nonetheless, this may be considered the first phase of the development of AusE, according to Fritz (2007): different varieties spoken by settlers with different regional and social backgrounds intermixed and presumably formed a koine among the colonists, which was a possible basis for later AusE. In the process of the koineisation, local norms concerning the use of auxiliaries in the perfect construction might have formed, which could, in turn, affect the rate of *be/have*-perfect usage or vice versa. For example, Anderwald (2014) states that American grammar books in the nineteenth century tend to persist in the faulty explanation of the *be*-perfect as a passive construction, which she infers may be related to the earlier *have*-perfect dominance and thus a consequence of the relative scarcity of *be*-perfect usage in AmE.

The current study aims to expand Moriya's (2020) previous study, which investigates the use of two common mutative intransitives, *come* and *go*, in perfect constructions using the texts in the Corpus of Oz Early English (COOEE) as source material. In the study, the researcher found that early English in Australia also follows the general trends towards *have*-perfect dominance, although there are some differences among texts due to either the author's place of origin or the registers. It is also noteworthy that the verbs *come* and *go* express distinct trends, with [BE *come*] being almost non-existent in the late nineteenth century in most varieties but [BE *gone*], on the other hand, increasing in usage rate for certain varieties towards the end of the century. This finding is consistent with the trend observed in Present-day English, in which the [BE *gone*] construction is still a fairly common choice for expressing an adjectival meaning when not occurring with adverbials denoting methods and goals (McFadden 2017: 167). The COOEE texts also tend to use [BE *gone*] in contexts that lack such complements, excepting the texts by settlers of Irish origin. With regard to the behaviour of the verb *go*, along with *descend*, Hosaka et al. (2020) also obtained a similar result of the increasing *be*-perfect frequency, unlike most other mutative intransitive verbs investigated in their study using three large

corpora: Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), Early English Books Online (EEBO) and Google Books. They suspected that the adjectival usage of the verb *go* and *descend* have influenced on the results.

The fact that two types of mutative verbs — those with which past participles (PP) are commonly used in adjectival contexts (e.g. *go*, *recover*) and those with which PPs are rarely used in the same manner in Present-day English (e.g. *arrive*, *come*), take different developmental paths — must be taken into consideration in the research of the development of the *be/have*-perfect. Therefore, the current study expands the range of investigated verbs to twelve: *arrive*, *become*, *come*, *fall*, *get* (with two different meanings treated separately), *go*, *grow*, *improve*, *pass*, *recover*, and *return*. The verbs are chosen according to a comprehensive study on this topic by Rydén and Brorström (1987), with all of the verbs in the list occurring fairly commonly among the mutative intransitives in the LModE British and American texts investigated by those authors.

The primary focus of the present study is the differences among regional variants of English used by text authors. To minimise the influence of the register factor, the texts are taken from Australian literary works published during the nineteenth century, which are compiled in the AustLit corpus and the Novels, Drama, and Verses categories of the COOEE. The former is the main data source because of its larger size, with data from the COOEE supplementing the results obtained from AustLit when necessary. Factors other than author origin, such as syntactic restrictions, while not directly analysed in the present paper, should be a focus of discussion in future studies on this topic.

The twelve mutative verbs analysed in this paper have different trends in their development towards *have*-perfect dominance. As explained earlier, the verb *go* is more likely to occur in *be*-perfect constructions than is *come*, because the PP form *gone* can have a strong adjectival meaning denoting the state at the reference point rather than the manner or goal of a process towards it. On the other hand, the PP form of *come* is less likely to be used in the same fashion in Present-day English, which corresponds to the decline of the *be*-perfect in LModE (McFadden 2017: 171). Rydén and Brorström (1987) and a subsequent study by Mizuno (2007) imply that other state-related mutative intransitives, such as *improve* and *recover*, retained the usage of *be*-perfect until the late nineteenth century when other intransitives

denoting movement (e.g. *fall*, *pass*) took *have*-perfect forms almost exclusively. It must be noted, however, that both *improve* and *recover* can have transitive meanings, and the distinction between the transitive and intransitive meanings is not always semantically clear. This statement is also true for nineteenth-century grammarians. Anderwald (2014) states that many grammar books at the time put the *be*-perfect construction in the same category as other [BE + PP] constructions such as [S BE *possessed of* NP] and [S BE *agreed on* NP] and label them as ungrammatical sentences. Verbs such as *agree* and *possess* are not mutative intransitive verbs, and the aforementioned constructions are categorically different from the true *be*-perfect, but prescriptive grammarians tended to believe in the principle that a single form corresponds to a single meaning; thus, syntactically rare forms such as the *be*-perfect were collectively considered ‘as being an *anomaly*, *unnecessary*, or simply *incorrect*’ (Anderwald 2014: 25). The fact that constructions such as [BE *improved*] and [BE *recovered*] can be interpreted as ordinary passive forms of transitive verbs might have contributed to their avoiding stigmatisation by grammarians throughout the nineteenth century. According to Anderwald (2014), the use of [BE *gone*] was indeed stigmatised by contemporary grammarians, but Moriya (2020) illustrates that unlike the other mutative verbs of motion, this particular form remained relatively common and, in some cases, increased in usage rate, possibly because of the sheer frequency of occurrences of the phrase in speeches as well as in texts, particularly those in more informal contexts.

2. Methodologies

2.1 Corpora

The main corpus used in the present study was the AustLit corpus. This is a historical corpus containing 4,000,000 words from Australian literary texts, which range in origin from the early nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. Because the main focus of the present study is the LModE period, 40 texts written and published in the nineteenth century are selected, providing a total of approximately 2,800,000 words to be analysed in this study. AustLit contains a significant number of Australian literary works originating during the colonial period, yet most of the texts analysed were written in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This fact makes the corpus rather unsuitable for a detailed diachronic study, but the texts do provide abundant

implications of various writing conventions of late-nineteenth-century Australian literature, with the possibility for synchronic comparison with other text genres and literature written in other English-speaking areas. 34 male and six female authors are represented in AustLit¹.

To incorporate a diachronic perspective in the analysis, it is necessary to include a supplementary corpus with a set of defined time periods because AustLit does not have period divisions. The COOEE is used for this purpose. The COOEE includes various genres of Australian texts from before the twentieth century, and in the present study, only those texts classified into the following categories were analysed: Novels, Verses, and Plays (total of 26,000 words). The time periods in the COOEE are Period 1 (1788-1825), Period 2 (1826-50), Period 3 (1851-75), and Period 4 (1876-1900), which are used to classify AustLit texts into periods as well. Due to the corpus size for the COOEE literary text being quite small in proportion to the entirety of AustLit, it is expected that less-common mutative verbs are less likely to be represented in the COOEE data. Nevertheless, the supplementary data from the COOEE would be useful for examining potential biases in the AustLit texts and for confirming that the observed trend happens in the genre as a whole rather than due to the preferences of individual authors.

2.2 Verb selection

In this study, the rate of *have*-perfect occurrences was obtained from the corpus and analysed. For each verb, the percentage of *have*-perfect constructions within the entire set of perfect construction usage in the corpus is calculated, which is then used as an indicator to illustrate how much shift from the *be*-perfect to the *have*-perfect had taken place for the verb being examined. This method has been used in multiple previous studies such as Rydén and Brorström (1987) and Kytö (1997), and it also directly follows the methodology of the previous research by Moriya (2020).

A series of previous studies on the topic of the *be/have*-perfect have shown an enormous set of mutative intransitive verbs with the possibility of auxiliary alternation. Visser (1973), Rydén and Brorström (1987), and Kytö

¹ As in the case of Moriya (2020), the biographical information of both AustLit and COOEE authors are checked with *Australian Dictionary of Bibliography* as much as possible.

(1997) provide detailed lists of intransitive verbs to be analysed, which include about 260 types of intransitives when combined. However, some verbs such as *aflee* and *misgo* are likely obsolete in LModE, and others such as *bolt* and *miscarry* are highly uncommon in LModE texts. Some verbs already took *have*-perfect forms exclusively in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, the verb *die* can only be found with *have* in the data of Rydén and Brorström (1987) and is excluded from the examination by Kytö (1997). The group of verbs with an identical pair of transitive and intransitive forms, such as *get* and *improve*, is also problematic in that it is harder to distinguish the *be*-perfect form of an intransitive sense from the passive construction of a transitive sense. Rydén and Brorström (1987) illustrate such an occasion in Example (1), which could be read as an active perfect construction (the subject got out) or as a passive construction (the subject was got out by someone) depending on the context, creating semantic ambiguity.

(1) When he was got out. (Rydén and Brorström 1987: 100)

This ambiguity may be less explicit with regard to certain change-of-state or process verbs, such as *change*, because the end result will be the same for both transitive and intransitive readings, and the actual agent of an action is not always clear, unlike in the case of motion verbs. Thus far, the three previous studies mentioned earlier do not specify the criteria for distinguishing the *be*-perfect from the passive, with a small number of exceptions, such as the verb *get* in Rydén and Brorström (1987).

To avoid confusion and over-complexity in the analysis, the current study focuses on twelve types of mutative verbs which are frequently attested in the nineteenth-century data examined by Rydén and Brorström (1987), with both *be*- and *have*-perfect occurrences in the time period. The verbs are as follows: *arrive*, *become*, *come*, *fall*, *get* (action), *get* (process), *go*, *grow*, *improve*, *pass*, *recover*, and *return*. Many of these verbs may have transitive meanings that are identical in form to intransitive senses. Some, such as *pass* and *return*, are action verbs, while others, such as *grow* and *improve*, are process verbs. The verb *get* has both action (e.g. *get to the destination*) and process (e.g. *get angry*) meanings, and Rydén and Brorström (1987) count the two separately. In their study, it was also mentioned that certain

process verbs, namely *improve* and *recover*, tend to retain the use of *be*-perfect forms, opposing the general trend towards the spread of the *have*-perfect. Because it is possible to observe irregularities regarding these verbs in the AustLit data, their results will be treated separately for certain analyses and excluded from the overall data of the *have*-perfect rate analysed in this study.

3. Results

The overall rate of *have*-perfect usage in AustLit is approximately 70 to 80% throughout the four periods, with no clear trend of increase or decrease. Table 1 shows the diachronic shift of the *have*-perfect rates in AustLit from Period 1 to Period 4, excluding *improve* and *recover* (the results for which will be explored further in the next section). The results indicate that by the nineteenth century, the trend towards *have*-perfect dominance is almost complete, with the *have*-perfect rate reaching around 85% out of the total perfect occurrences, and Australian authors largely followed the same general pattern of favouring the *have*-perfect over the *be*-perfect.

Table 1. *Have*-perfect rates for the four periods (excluding the results for *improve* and *recover*)

	<i>be</i>	<i>have</i>	total	% <i>have</i>
Period 1	18	43	61	70.5%
Period 2	109	395	504	78.4%
Period 3	138	430	568	75.7%
Period 4	229	1329	1558	85.3%
total	494	2197	2691	81.6%

The *have*-perfect usage rates obtained by Rydén and Brorström (1987) show that for eight out of the twelve verbs examined in the present study, the nineteenth-century authors of letters and plays use *have*-perfect forms at a rate of around 70 to 90%. The *have*-perfect rates in the Fiction section of the ARCHER corpus, obtained by Kytö (1997), also illustrate high percentages of *have*-perfect usage in the nineteenth century (89% in the former half, 85% in the latter half). The *have*-perfect rates in AustLit, as illustrated in Table 1, generally fall in a similar range as that demonstrated

in previous studies, with few indications of distinct regional characteristics for the overall figures.

When trends for each of the twelve mutative verbs are examined, it is clear that some verbs are more likely to take *have*-perfect forms than others, as previous studies have suggested (Figure 1). While many mutative verbs appear primarily in *have*-perfect forms, the following five verbs take *be*-perfect forms rather frequently: *go* (*have*-perfect rate: 64.5%), *improve* (68.0%), *return* (69.5%), *pass* (74.1%), and *recover* (74.6%). Although, excepting *go*, these verbs have identical transitive forms, which makes it difficult to distinguish the *be*-perfect from the passive [BE + PP] construction in some cases, some verbs demonstrating lower *have*-perfect frequencies, especially *go*, *improve*, and *recover*, are consistent with the findings of previous studies. Examples of the usage of these verbs and more detailed analyses of each of them are further explored in Section 4.1.

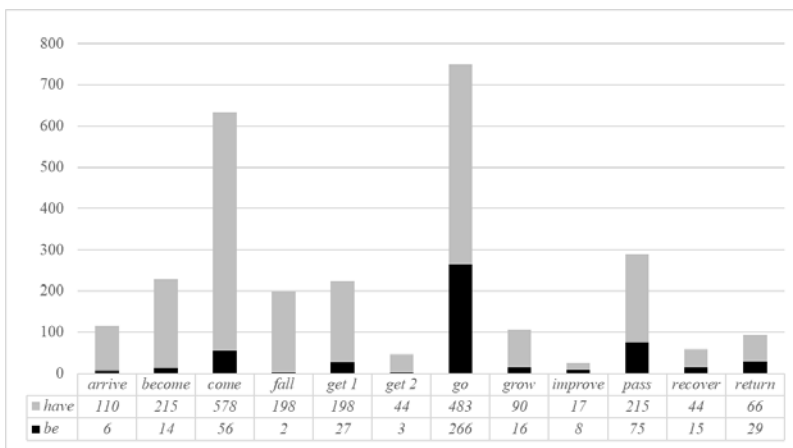


Figure 1. The number of *be/have*-perfect constructions for the 12 intransitive verbs in AustLit

In observing the diachronic changes of *have*-perfect rates for the twelve mutative verbs, it is assumed that there are several possible patterns of *have*-perfect diffusion (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

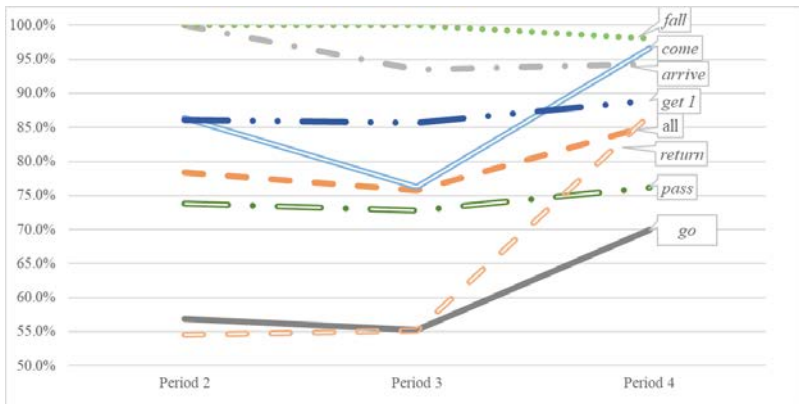


Figure 2.1. The diachronic changes for *have*-perfect frequencies for verbs of motion in AustLit

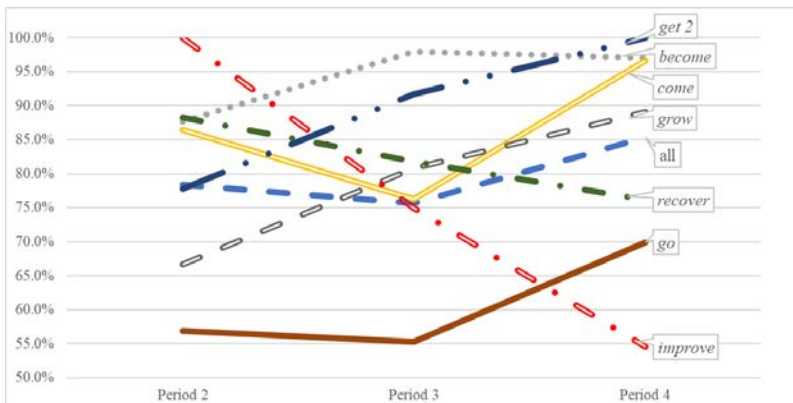


Figure 2.2. The diachronic changes for *have*-perfect frequencies for verbs of change in AustLit

Based on the graphs, the following four patterns can be observed: (1) mostly unchanged throughout the periods (*arrive, fall, get 1, pass*), (2) rapid increase from Period 2 to Period 3 (*become, get 2, grow*), (3) rapid increase from Period 3 to Period 4 (*come, go, return*), and (4) decreasing throughout the periods (*improve, recover*), among which the fourth trend appears to be drastically different from the rest. Further discussion is carried out in

Section 4.1 to account for the presence of seemingly different trends of *have*-perfect development in AustLit data.

4. Discussion

4.1 Individual verbs and their *be/have* selection

As explained in the previous chapter, the mutative verbs examined in this study do not follow a uniform pattern of changes in regard to *be/have*-perfect frequency. Some verbs, such as *come*, *go*, and *return*, seem to have developed *have*-perfect dominance during the late nineteenth century, while others, such as *improve* and *recover*, follow a directly opposite path to that of the other mutative verbs. Since the verbs in the latter category also happen to take passive forms that are identical to *be*-perfect forms, due to those verbs having either transitive or intransitive meanings, it is crucial to analyse those verbs separately and revise the contexts in which verbs like *improve* and *recover* are used.

In the AustLit data, as Examples 2 and 3 illustrate, the verbs *improve* and *recover* appeared both as the *be*-perfect (Examples 2a and 3a) and the *have*-perfect (Examples 2b and 3b). These examples are all intransitive in meaning, with no objects, but for *improve*, transitive meanings (with clear objects in the sentence) are much more commonly attested with the *have*-perfect, while *recover* was much more frequent as an intransitive verb in both *be*-perfect and *have*-perfect constructions.

- (2a) and in another minute Louis entered the room. He was so much improved in appearance that I did not know him, until he spoke to me; (AustLit hourura-plain.txt, *be*-perfect)
- (2b) Our morals, it will be said, have vastly improved. (AustLit tucthin-plain.txt, *have*-perfect)
- (3a) On the second day I was much recovered, and Abiasi, the Dyak who had just spoken to me, was sitting by my side showing me how to use the blow-pipe, when a strange old man came from the jungle and advanced in the clearing. (AustLit favlast-plain.txt, *be*-perfect)

- (3b) /.../ for in 1888 he had so far recovered that he determined to come to Victoria. (AustLit gaycomp-plain.txt, have-perfect)

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) (s.v. *improve*, *recover*), the first attested meanings of both *improve* and *recover* are transitive, as are some other verbs examined in the present study, such as *pass*. In addition, these verbs describe changes in state rather than actions such as *come* and *return*. As illustrated in Example (1), action verbs and phrases such as *get out* tend to have semantically different interpretations based on whether the subject is the agent (i.e. the person gets out without others to cause that action) or the recipient of an action (i.e. the person is got out through an action by other agents). The necessity of further clarifying this distinction is considered by Rydén and Brorström (1987) to have been one of the factors leading to the decline of the *be*-perfect because it would be difficult to distinguish the active, *be*-perfect construction from the passive construction without context. Although the same can be said in regard to change-of-state verbs such as *improve*, that distinction might have been less important as ongoing actions are not visible, unlike verbs of motion, and the agent-recipient relationship would, therefore, be less clear to the perceivers.

The potential ambiguity between the *be*-perfect and the passive construction could have been a factor limiting the contexts in which change-of-state verbs occurred to a present situation in which the result of the change is focused, rather than durative and iterative contexts in which the focus is on the process. Previous studies such as McFadden and Alexiadou (2010) explain that there was a semantic distinction between the *be*- and *have*-perfects prior to the LModE period. Contexts that mainly focus on the present state and the result of an action, or the resultative perfect, have favoured the use of the *be*-perfect, while in other contexts, the use of the *have*-perfect was becoming dominant. For motion verbs such as *come* and *go*, the perfect construction can commonly be used in multiple contexts, from the resultative perfect to the experiential perfect. State verbs such as *improve* and *recover* focus on the state by definition; therefore, those verbs would appear in durative contexts much less frequently, such as *My health is/has improved since yesterday*, or in iterative contexts, such as *I am/have recovered from the illness three times this year*. The state verbs' tendency

to appear in resultative contexts, along with the existence of an identical passive form, might have contributed to the retention of the *be*-perfect for those verbs even after the *have*-perfect became a dominant choice for other mutative verbs.

For motion verbs such as *come* and *go*, another fundamental change might have been taking place during the nineteenth century, which affected not only the use of the *be*-perfect but also the use of PPs as modifiers. According to McFadden (2017), the participial form of some mutative verbs such as *come* used as a modifier decreased, at the same time as the *have*-perfect diffusion throughout perfect contexts. McFadden suspects that this may be correlated with the decline of the *be*-perfect in favour of the *have*-perfect. The verbs that retained the *be*-perfect construction into the present, such as *go*, *improve*, and *recover*, do seem to possess more adjectival characteristics than other mutative verbs in their PP form, appearing frequently as modifiers and participial phrases.

The *be*-perfect seems to be considered unnatural even by contemporary grammarians. Anderwald (2014) observed that grammar books of the nineteenth century fail to properly describe the *be*-perfect amid the confusion regarding the classification of the verbs (which changed from traditional ACTIVE-PASSIVE-NEUTER to TRANSITIVE-INTRANSITIVE), and some books labelled such constructions simply as errors that should be avoided. It is unknown whether there was a correlation between prescriptive grammarians' views on the *be*-perfect and the fact that the PPs of mutative verbs were becoming less tolerable as modifiers. Nevertheless, the same changes might have occurred in Australian colonial societies, as inferred from the results of the present study. For some verbs such as *arrive* and *become*, the change must have taken place somewhere before the nineteenth century, while other verbs such as *come* and *go* experienced a significant shift away from the *be*-perfect and the modifier PPs as a whole near the end of the century (Period 4).

The results obtained from the AustLit texts are illustrated in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 as a set of graphs representing the diachronic change in the *have*-perfect rate for every type of mutative intransitive examined. Some verbs of motion in Figure 2.1, such as *come*, *go*, and *return*, show rapid increases in the *have*-perfect rate in Period 4, indicating some changes within AusE that affected the perfect auxiliary choice for those verbs. Interestingly, the verbs

improve and *recover* show the opposite change, with the *be*-perfect rate increasing instead of the rate of the alternative *have*-perfect form. Previous studies such as Rydén and Brorström (1987) and Mizuno (2007) found that those verbs retained the use of the *be*-perfect after other mutative intransitives had shifted towards the *have*-perfect. Therefore, it is somewhat expected that those verbs would retain the *be*-perfect form in AusE as well. However, it is interesting to note that for *improve* and *recover*, the *have*-perfect rate steadily decreases from Period 2 to Period 4, which cannot be explained by those verbs' simple resistance to the diffusion of the *have*-perfect. Contextual or synsemantic factors may have caused the apparent increase in the *be*-perfect rates.

To identify the factors behind the behaviour of *improve* and *recover*, a more thorough contextual analysis will be necessary, which should be the primary focus of future studies on this topic.

4.2 Sociolinguistic factors

Because early AusE was primarily spoken by new settlers and first-generation Australians who were influenced by them, it is likely that the settlers' native language varieties had some impact on language usage in the corpora. In a corpus-based study by Burrige and Musgrave (2014) using AustLit and the COOEE, several characteristically Irish dialectal constructions were observed, such as *be after V-ing* in (4), implying the possible influence of Irish on the early Australian usage of English.

- (4) I am afther thinkin' about yerself jist now 'I've just thought of you now'
(AustLit hourura-plain.txt)

Among the 40 AustLit authors, nearly half were from England, as shown in Figure 3.1. Therefore, the results could be heavily biased due to the perfect auxiliary selection patterns of the authors from England, while those from other regions, such as Ireland, may be underrepresented. To better analyse the effect of settlers' birthplaces on the usage of the *be/have*-perfect, the *have*-perfect rate for each of the regions mentioned in Figure 3.1 was calculated. The rates, displayed in Figure 3.2, show regional differences to some extent, with Scotland and Australia having slightly higher *have*-

perfect rates, while Irish authors used the *be*-perfect more often than authors from all the other areas.

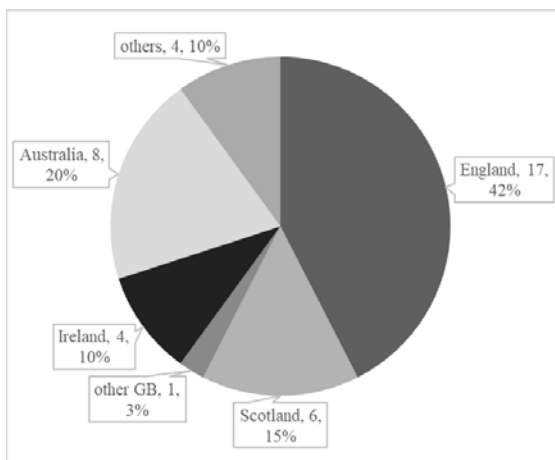


Figure 3.1. Birthplaces of AustLit authors

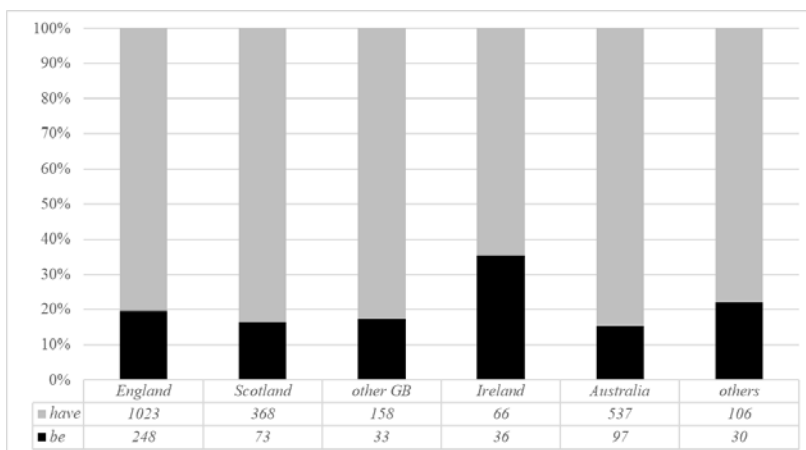


Figure 3.2. The number and rate of *be*/*have*-perfect constructions for the 12 intransitive verbs according to the AustLit authors' places of birth

It is necessary to note that the number of samples is significantly different among the regions and distributed unevenly across the four time periods.

The preference of the *be*-perfect by Irish authors is particularly visible in the usage of the verbs *go* (*have*-perfect rate 47.1%), *pass* (54.5%), and *recover* (40.0%). Examples (5), (6), and (7) show examples from a Period 1 text written by an Irish author, George Barrington.

- (5) they said he was gone to his tribe; that the wound was but of little consequence, and soon would be healed. (AustLit barvoya-plain.txt)
- (6) /.../ but when the ordeal is once passed, they think no more of it, but shake their ears, and assist on carrying on the joke. (AustLit barvoya-plain.txt)
- (7) at first he was under great apprehensions, but on the governor's taking him by the hand, and promising that when he was recovered he should live with him again, his fears subsided. (AustLit barvoya-plain.txt)

Most of the Scottish and Australian authors' texts are from Period 4, which is the latest of the periods examined; therefore, it is expected to have more advanced characteristics in terms of *have*-perfect development. On the other hand, the Irish data consist of texts by four different authors, two of whom were from Period 1. Therefore, it is likely that the data are biased to a certain extent due to the characteristic that Period 1 data, as seen in Examples (5) to (7), are expected to include more *be*-perfect occurrences than are later texts. Because half of the Irish texts are from Period 1, this fact, rather than regional differences, may have contributed to the lower *have*-perfect rate by Irish authors. In addition, instances such as Example (6) could be regarded as passive constructions of transitive meaning rather than instances of the *be*-perfect.

To determine whether the data obtained from AustLit reflect regional differences, the same data were collected from COOEE literary texts for comparison (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). This comparison shows a higher *have*-perfect rate in Scottish authors' texts, but this time, texts from Periods 2 and 3 are included as well. Unfortunately, the corpus did not provide samples for Irish authors; thus, to proceed with this sociolinguistic analysis, more

data across different time periods as well as sourced from a wider variety of author birthplaces are needed.

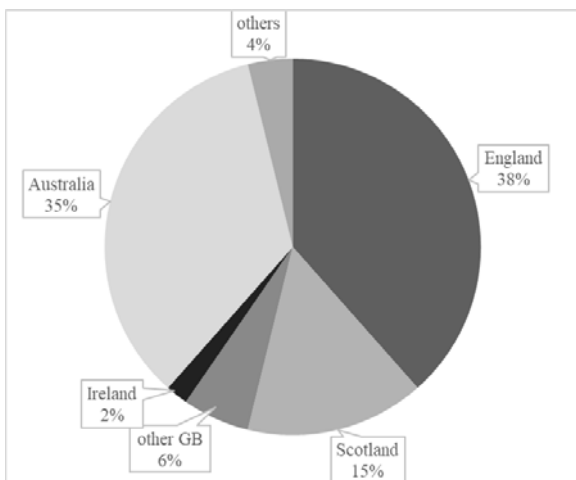


Figure 4.1. Birthplaces of the COOEE authors

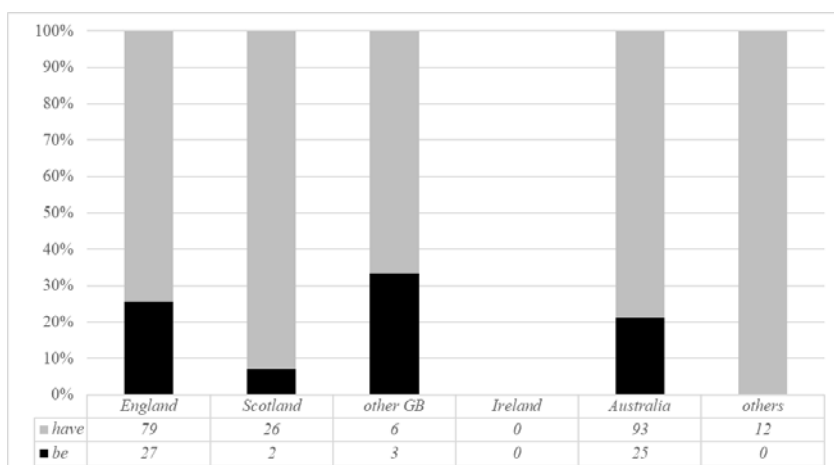


Figure 4.2. The number and rate of *be/have*-perfect constructions for the 12 intransitive verbs according to the COOEE authors' places of birth

5. Conclusion

The research based on AustLit suggested the generally stable nature of perfect auxiliary selection for mutative intransitives among nineteenth-century Australian literary texts. However, notable increases in the *have*-perfect rate were observed in Period 4 for certain verbs such as *come*, *go*, and *return*. On the other hand, for the verbs *improve* and *recover*, a change in the opposite direction occurred; that is, the *be*-perfect became more prevalent. Although these two verbs have been known to show resistance to the spread of the *have*-perfect among mutative intransitive verbs in Rydén and Brorström (1987), the trend which involves an increase in the use of the *be*-perfect may be characteristic of early AusE. Further investigation of these two verbs as well as perfect auxiliaries during the nineteenth century should be conducted to improve the understanding of the nature of the change observed in the present study.

The results also suggested that authors' places of birth are related to the selection of the *be/have*-perfect forms to some extent. Although the relationships found in this study did not reach significant levels, Scottish and Australian AustLit authors showed relatively higher frequencies of the *have*-perfect usage, while those of Irish origin tended to use the *be*-perfect more often. To examine the influence of author origin on the choice of the *be/have*-perfect more closely, an increased number of text samples across a variety of text genres as well as time periods will be necessary. In future studies, it will also be important to analyse synsemantic elements in detail, such as the presence of complements and the animacy of subjects, for comparison with the sociolinguistic analysis that has been carried out here.

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