

## **Women writers in the 18th century: The semantics of motion in their choice of perfect auxiliaries**

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### **Abstract**

The present study analyses perfect auxiliaries combined with a set of verbs that semantically encode an idea of motion, either physical or metaphorical (*arrived, become, come, departed, entered, fallen, gone, got, grown, passed, returned* and *run*) in a corpus of eight novels written by four women in the 18th century, Burney, Inchbald, Radcliffe and Wollstonecraft. The focus is on whether the semantics of the components of motion situations conditioned their choice of auxiliary, and on whether there are differences within the texts depending on where the perfect structures appear, in the narration or in the dialogue. The conclusion indicates that the semantics of motion situations, particularly the different types of FIGURE and GROUND, may have conditioned their choices.

### **1 Introduction**

The present study concentrates on the choice of auxiliary verb, either *be* or *have*, in perfect tenses and the possible reasons for such a choice. Four English women writers of the Late Modern English period are the focus of attention, namely Fanny Burney, Elizabeth Inchbald, Ann Radcliffe and Mary Wollstonecraft.

Twelve verbs were chosen for the analysis. These are *arrived, become, come, departed, entered, fallen, gone, got, grown, passed, returned* and *run*. The reason for this choice lies in the fact that they were the twelve most frequent verbs used in combination with *be* in the study carried out by Kytö (1997). All these verbs lexicalise the idea of motion, either in a physical (i.e. *go* or *come*) or a metaphorical (i.e. *become* and *grow*) way. Consequently, the first question that arises concerns the possible influence of the components of motion situations (e.g. MOTION, FIGURE, GROUND and PATH) in the choice of auxiliary. While some of these components are always present in the surface structure, i.e. in the statement as such, others may be present or not in such a structure. These are the GROUND and the PATH, which despite being essential components of motion events may not be represented in the surface structure, but they will always be present in both the semantic and the syntactic analysis of the motion situation (see section 3).

Two more specific questions derive from the main question. First, whether the different types of motion components may contribute to the choice of auxiliary. For instance, it is important to distinguish between human and non-human FIGURES (i.e. *John* or *a letter*), as well as between physical or metaphorical GROUNDS (i.e. *somebody's house* or *old*, as in *grow old*). Second, to what extent each of the components and its presence or absence in the surface structure have an influence on such a choice. In other words, not all the components may influence the presence of one auxiliary verb or the other.

Finally, since the instances analysed were extracted from novels, it is essential to take into account the possible differences between the language used in the narration and the language of the speakers in conversations. This leads to the final question that concerns the possibility that the writers might have opted for different auxiliaries to represent speech and the higher intervention of editors in the narration of the texts rather than in the dialogic sections.

## 2 Previous studies on perfect tenses in Late Modern English

It was not until the late 1990s that more attention began to be paid to the Late Modern English period by researchers (Beal 2004: xi). This was also the time when perfect tenses in Late Modern English became the subject of study although these structures had been the object of attention for years from a syntactic point of view (Mustanoja 1960; Traugott 1972; Visser 1963–1973, Denison 1993). The first scholars to offer a detailed description of perfect tenses with mutative verbs, i.e. verbs that indicate motion or change of state, in the 18th and 19th centuries were Rydén & Brorström (1987). Their study includes two types of texts, letters and comedies, as well as numerous authors of both centuries. They provide a description of the uses of the two auxiliaries along the period analysed, and they also identify differences depending on the type of sentence or complementation present in the sentence. The type of complementation is to some extent connected to what is described in the present study as the GROUND (see section 3). However, whereas complementation only refers to syntax, a deeper analysis is considered in the present study, since both syntax and semantics are taken into account. In addition, despite the in-depth study carried out by Ryden & Brorström in terms of number of authors and tokens analysed, it is restricted to two genres, which as they indicate ‘probably come reasonably close to the “real” speech of the day’ (Rydén & Brorström 1987: 13). They draw several conclusions regarding the choice of auxiliary verb, that is, *be* or *have*. These include that the use of *have* is conditioned by specific contexts, such as some hypothetical sentences, iterative/durative contexts and some verbal forms. However, they also acknowledge that some authors seem to follow their own patterns. Furthermore, when comparing the works

written by men and women, they conclude that generally women tend to use *be* more often than men and for a longer time, even in the 19th century, when *have* had become fully established as the auxiliary verb used in combination with the past participle form of the verbs in this kind of structure.

Kytö (1997: 17) also carried out a study of perfect tenses with intransitive verbs of ‘transition or change’. Her study covers a long period of the history of the English language, from Middle to Modern English, and the mid-18th century proves to be ‘the final turn-over in the history of the paradigm’ (Kytö 1997: 32). Her study presents an in-depth detailed analysis of both external and internal factors influencing the choice of auxiliary verb in perfect tenses. The author considers differences in text type, gender, sentence type and complementation in general, but she also acknowledges the need for further studies to rule out other possible influences.

Sorace (2000) investigates the different types of intransitive verbs and their possible influence on the choice of auxiliary. This study involves several Western European languages, including English. The focus is on the type of motion and as the author suggests, ‘the choice of auxiliary with particular verbs is characterised by gradience: some verbs more consistently select a particular auxiliary than others’ (2000: 886).

Werner et al. (2016) investigate the perfect tenses from a diachronic and a synchronic point of view. They include both theoretical and empirical studies on these structures in different varieties of English around the world. One of the most significant results (Werner 2016) is that the *be*-perfect structure is still productive in many English varieties around the world. The author concludes that the prevalence of this structure cannot be explained only by the continuation of the Old English structure since auxiliary *be* is found not only in combination with intransitive verbs, but also with transitive verbs in some of these varieties.

More recently, McFadden (2017) examines the disappearance of *be* as an auxiliary with perfective structures in the Late Modern English period, which is dated to have taken place around 1800. The author describes the possible reasons for this disappearance and he concludes that it ‘must have involved the loss of a particular stative-resultative participial structure’ (McFadden 2017: 172). Similarly to other authors, the need for further studies is also acknowledged.

Finally, the use of perfect tenses in Jane Austen’s novels and letters has been analysed (Calvo Cortés 2019). Two new aspects are considered in connection with the choice of auxiliary. The first aspect refers to the influence of the components of motion events in the choice of auxiliary. The author concludes that the different types of FIGURE, GROUND and PATH (see section 3), particularly regarding their semantic content, might condition the type of auxiliary used. The second aspect concerns possible editorial intervention in this choice, since a discrepancy can be observed between the use of these auxiliaries in the novels and in the letters. In general, in the letters *be* is used more often than *have*. In fact, when the results for different verbs are compared, it can be observed that there are some verbs that show a clear preference for *be* (e.g. *go* and *grow*), and others for *have* (e.g. *fall* and *pass*). Despite the possible manipulation of the letters by editors, this type of text is more likely to show a personal way of writing and less likely to have undergone such manipulation in comparison to the novels.

### **3 Basic motion situations**

Talmy’s description of lexicalization patterns (1987) initiated the interest in motion situations from a Cognitive Linguistics perspective. The analysis of motion situations has basically described the elements of factive and fictive motion situations, i.e. real or

metaphorical motion events (Talmy 1975, 1987, 2000; Ramsar et al. 2009). These studies have also classified the languages of the world depending on the representation of the different components of motion situations in the surface structure (Matsumoto 1996; Slobin 1996; Talmy 2000). Additionally, the change of meaning in the PATH and GROUND components in some motion situations has been investigated (Calvo Cortés 2014).

A basic motion situation (see Figure 1) involves the following elements: the MOTION (*is running*), which could be represented either by a deep Be-located verb (e.g. *stand*) or a deep Move verb such as *go* (Talmy 2000: 340); the FIGURE (*the girl*), or object that moves or is located somewhere; the GROUND (*the church*), the place where the FIGURE is moving to or where it is located; and the PATH (*to*), which refers to the trajectory of the movement.

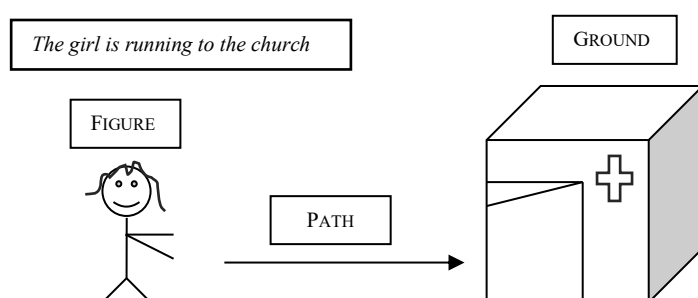


Figure 1. Basic motion situation<sup>1</sup>

The elements described for the motion situation in Figure 1 represent ‘cognitive functions’ (Talmy 2000: 311). They are always present in the deep structure of any motion event, although they do not necessarily have to be present in the so-called surface

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<sup>1</sup> This is the only example that has not been extracted from the corpus. The reason for this is that a verb in present continuous form was thought to be clearer to explain the concepts of a basic motion situation rather than a verb in a perfect tense.

structure (Talmy 2000), which is connected to the representation of such motion events. As will be seen in the analysis of the examples in the present study, the components of MOTION and FIGURE are always present in the surface structure in English, unless the sentence is imperative, i.e. ‘come here’, where the FIGURE (*you*) is implied, but not present in the surface. In contrast, the components of PATH and GROUND are sometimes omitted in such a structure, for instance, in ‘they have come’, the statement finishes with the verb although the PATH and the GROUND can be inferred. In addition, this difference in surface representation might determine the presence of one auxiliary or the other.

The twelve verbs included in the present study are deep Move verbs. As a result, they all share the notion of motion, and they all involve some kind of movement in their deep semantic structure, but this movement is not always physical. The different components of each motion situation (i.e. MOTION, FIGURE, GROUND and PATH) may be more or less physical in themselves, and they may also convey a more or less metaphorical meaning when combined with the rest of the components. For example, the verb *go* clearly has a physical meaning of motion, but in combination with a GROUND implying a change of state, such as *mad*, as in *go mad*, the meaning changes from a physical to a metaphorical movement. Nevertheless, in the deep structure there is an underlying semantic content of motion independently of the metaphorical meanings of the different elements involved. In other words, in the case of *go mad*, there is a motion event implying some kind of movement from a state of not being *mad* to one of being *mad*.

When the twelve verbs (*arrived, become, come, departed, entered, fallen, gone, got, grown, passed, returned* and *run*) are analysed more closely, it can be clearly observed that although some of them refer only to physical types of movement (e.g. *depart*), most of them are very often used in a metaphorical context (e.g. *enter* in 1a, and *fall* in 1b),

even some apparently very physical ones, such as *run* (2), where the *eyes* are the ones that move while reading the *letter*, but the person does not physically *run* anywhere. In contrast, verbs like *become* or *grow* are always expected to appear in a metaphorical context in which there is a change of state (3).

- (1) a. he has *entered* into no verbal engagement (*Camilla*, Burney)  
b. Angelo had *fallen* in a foreign engagement (*A Sicilian Romance*, Radcliffe)
- (2) she had *run* over this letter (*Camilla*, Burney)
- (3) a. he was already *become* a Methodist (*Maria or The Wrongs of Woman*, Wollstonecraft)  
b. Miss Woodley is *grown* old (*A Simple Story*, Inchbald)

It is clear that all the chosen verbs share the same semantic characteristics of motion in their deep structure and that very often the FIGURE and the GROUND elements are the ones that will determine the change from a physical to a metaphorical meaning. On the contrary, the PATH component may be the same in physical and in metaphorical contexts, for instance, *to* is the same PATH both in 4a and in 4b, but while in the former the meaning is understood as physical because of the GROUND, *place*, in the second example the GROUND is metaphorical, *any resolution*, which confers a metaphorical meaning on the whole expression. As a result, the differences shown in the components of motion events are expected to contribute to the choice of auxiliary verb in perfect tenses.

- (4) a. I should never have come to this vastly horrid *place* (*Camilla*, Burney)  
b. they had come to *any resolution* (*Camilla*, Burney)

#### 4 Method

The first step to carry out the present study was to choose a corpus and extract the perfect tense instances to analyse. Since an analysis had been previously carried out on Jane Austen's novels and letters (see section 2), because she had been said to be particularly conservative in her use of auxiliary verbs with perfect tenses (Rydén & Brorström 1987), an analysis of other women writers was thought to be important to observe if they were also conservative or influenced by the components of motion events. For these reasons, a corpus of novels written by women contemporaries of Jane Austen was compiled especially for the present study, but for reasons detailed below, only the novels they had written at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were selected.

The chosen writers were Fanny Burney, Elizabeth Inchbald, Ann Radcliffe and Mary Wollstonecraft. The corpus comprises 1,095,640 words in total and it was compiled by downloading two novels by each of the four writers from the Guttenberg Project. There were several reasons why two novels by each were chosen. First, even though these women were contemporaneous with each other, they lived for a longer or shorter time and the idea was to choose novels that had been written in a similar span of time. Secondly, by choosing the same number of novels, the number of words was expected to be relatively similar, which would ideally have facilitated the comparison of results. This proved to be wrong, and in the end there was a considerable disparity in the size of each woman's subcorpus of novels, as can be seen in Table 1.

The eight novels chosen were all written over a period of twenty years, between 1778 and 1798. Table 1 shows the life span of these four writers as well as the novels selected by each of them for the corpus.

Table 1. Selected women, novels and number of words

Woman writer	Novels <sup>2</sup>	Total number of words
Fanny Burney (1752 – 1840)	<i>Evelina</i> (1778) <i>Camilla</i> (1796)	513,593
Elizabeth Inchbald (1753 – 1821)	<i>A simple Story</i> (1791) <i>Nature and Art</i> (1796)	153,714
Ann Radcliffe (1764 – 1823)	<i>A Sicilian Romance</i> (1790) <i>The Mysteries of Udolpho</i> (1794)	359,329
Mary Wollstonecraft (1759 – 1797)	<i>Mary: a Fiction</i> (1788) <i>Maria or The Wrongs of a Woman</i> (1792)	69,004

Once the corpus had been compiled, the next step was to extract the tokens of the perfect tenses to analyse. The participial forms chosen were the following twelve: *arrived*, *become*, *come*, *departed*, *entered*, *fallen*, *gone*, *got*, *grown*, *passed*, *returned* and *run*. Since these were the most frequent verbs in combination with *be* in Kytö's study (see section 1), it was expected that there would be enough examples to analyse in the corpus.

The *AntConc* program was used to extract the examples. Some of the participial forms are also past simple forms of the same verbs (e.g. *departed*, *entered*) or infinitive forms (e.g. *come*, *run*). Additionally, the participle is occasionally used on its own, without an auxiliary introducing it, and contracted forms of auxiliary verbs, such as *- 's* or *- 'd* were also encountered. All this led to a process of discarding the examples that would not be valid for the analysis. In the end, the discarded forms were the following: (1) verbal forms clearly being used as the past simple tense of verbs (5) or infinitive and/or present simple (6a and 6b respectively); (2) participles on their own (7); (3) examples of clear passive voice, in which the verb *be* was not an auxiliary of perfect forms but of passive voice (8); (4) the structure *have been* + participle, which usually does not show a

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<sup>2</sup> The date of publication is the one given in brackets here, whereas the date in the reference list is the release date as e-books on the Gutenberg Project's webpage.

clear perfect tense meaning (9); and (5) tokens that included the contracted forms -'s or -'d when it was not clear what the contracted form was (10a and 10b).

(5) they all *departed* for Elmwood Castle (*A Simple Story*, Inchbald)

(6) a. to *become* a wife (*A Simple Story*, Inchbald)

b. how I *come* to be so stupid (*Evelina*, Burney)

(7) the heart once *gone* (*A Simple Story*, Inchbald)

(8) the race should *be run* at five (*Evelina*, Burney)

(9) you might *have been got* off (*Camilla*, Burney)

(10) a. He *'s* gone away (*Camilla*, Burney)

b. I thought you *'d* come to (*Evelina*, Burney)

The third step was to analyse all the remaining examples. Each verb was analysed manually within each subcorpus. The first analysis involved the distribution of auxiliaries in the four subcorpora. This was followed by the analysis of the components of motion situations. Finally, the distribution of auxiliaries was also analysed in relation to the sections of the text where they appeared, the narration or the dialogue parts.

## 5. Results

As shown in Table 2, despite the discrepancy in the size of each subcorpus, when instances are normalised, three of the four authors use these expressions in a similar way. Only Mary Wollstonecraft uses perfect tenses in general with a frequency of less than half when compared to the rest. As described in this section, it is precisely Wollstonecraft's results that differ slightly from the others. This may be partly explained by the lower number of instances found in her subcorpus.

Table 2. Corpus size, instances and normalised frequency

Author	Corpus size	Instances	Normalised frequency <sup>3</sup>
Fanny Burney	513,593	476	92.680
Elizabeth Inchbald	153,714	152	98.885
Ann Radcliffe	359,329	423	117.719
Mary Wollstonecraft	69,004	29	42.027

Although the present study shows both similarities and differences among the four selected women writers, more similarities than differences are present. This can be observed even when the raw numbers of occurrences vary considerably.

Table 3 includes the raw data and the corresponding percentages of the distribution of auxiliaries in the four subcorpora. Such a distribution indicates variation and the preferences of each writer for one auxiliary or the other. Whereas Burney, Inchbald and Radcliffe do not have a considerable preference for *have* or *be*, Wollstonecraft clearly prefers *have*. Since these results are not very conclusive, the analysis of the motion situation components is expected to provide an explanation for the choice in the different instances.

Table 3. Distribution of auxiliaries

Author	Instances of <i>have</i>	Instances of <i>be</i>
Fanny Burney	212 (45%)	264 (55%)
Elizabeth Inchbald	76 (50%)	76 (50%)
Ann Radcliffe	237 (56%)	186 (44%)
Mary Wollstonecraft	20 (69%)	9 (31 %)

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<sup>3</sup> The normalised figures are by 100,000 words.

Total	545 (51%)	535 (49%)
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### 5.1 *The motion situation components*

The choice of the auxiliary is expected to be influenced by the type of the motion situation components involved in each occurrence. For the purpose of the present analysis, the FIGURES were divided into human and non-human FIGURES. The division of the types of GROUND and PATH were established as follows: (1) no explicit GROUND and/or PATH in the surface structure (11); (2) physical GROUND (12, where *bed* is the GROUND); (3) metaphorical GROUND (13); (4) GROUND referring to change of state<sup>4</sup> (14, in which *tired* is the change of state); (5) GROUND indicating an action (15, in which there has been a change of location to a place where some specific action takes place); and (6) PATH on its own (16, where *out* is the PATH). Interestingly, the results found in all the authors in relation to these components show appreciably more similarities than differences.

(11) I am gone (*Nature and Art*, Inchbald)

(12) my wife had ... gone to bed (*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe)

(13) a lady who had gone out of her mind (*Camilla*, Burney)

(14) others ... are become rich (*A Simple Story*, Inchbald)

(15) the old housekeeper, who was come to shut the windows (*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe)

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<sup>4</sup> The metaphorical GROUND and the GROUND referring to change of state are similar in the sense that the two indicate abstract GROUNDS. The difference lies in the verb: whereas in the metaphorical GROUND the abstract concept is present only in the GROUND, the change of state affects both the verb and the GROUND in combination.

(16) the others were gone *out* (*Evelina*, Burney)

### 5.1.1 The FIGURE

Most FIGURES in motion events are realised by humans, but it is not uncommon to find non-human FIGURES in these structures. These non-human FIGURES either refer to objects that people can carry or move (e.g. *packet* in 18a, or *boat* in 18b), or they encode a metaphorical meaning (e.g. *darkness* in 19a, or *fortune* in 19b). As a result, it is not surprising to find that both auxiliaries are more frequently found in combination with human FIGURES, with the exception of Mary Wollstonecraft, where a clear preference is shown for *have* with non-human FIGURES (see Table 4). All the authors prefer to use *have* rather than *be* with non-human FIGURES. The results indicate that whereas Radcliffe's preference for *have* is slight, the other three writers show a considerable difference in the use of both auxiliaries, with almost 50% or more instances with *have* than with *be*.

(18) a. a *packet*, which ought to have arrived (*Camilla*, Burney)

b. the fishing *boat* was come in (*Camilla*, Burney)

(19) a. *Darkness* had long fallen upon the earth (*A Sicilian Romance*,  
Radcliffe)

b. that small *fortune* was gone (*Camilla*, Burney)

Regarding the human FIGURES, Burney is the only author who seems to have an appreciable preference for *be*. Inchbald also appears to use *be* more often, but the difference between both auxiliaries is not so sharp. On the contrary, both Radcliffe and Wollstonecraft opt for *have* slightly more often than for *be* when human FIGURES are present. Table 4. Verb distribution by type of FIGURE

Author	<i>Have</i> – human	<i>Be</i> – human	<i>Have</i> – non-human	<i>Be</i> – non-human
Fanny Burney	138 (39%)	214 (61%)	74 (60%)	50 (40%)
Elizabeth Inchbald	46 (46%)	55 (54%)	30 (59%)	21 (41%)
Ann Radcliffe	173 (57%)	132 (43%)	64 (54%)	54 (46%)

Mary Wollstonecraft	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	13 (81%)	3 (19%)
Total	364 (47%)	407 (53%)	181 (59%)	128 (41%)

### 5.1.2 The GROUND and the PATH

The GROUND and the PATH are more complex components than the FIGURE since they display more variation, in other words, there are more types of them than of the FIGURE.

Six categories were established (see sections 4 and 5), and the results show many similarities when the four writers are compared, as shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Distribution of the types of GROUND and PATH with *have*

Author	No explicit ground	Physical ground	Metaphorical ground	Change of state	Action	Path only
Fanny Burney	57 (27%)	92 (43%)	33 (16%)	12 (5%)	4 (2%)	14 (7%)
Elizabeth Inchbald	22 (29%)	31 (40%)	10 (13%)	9 (12%)	1 (1%)	4 (5%)
Ann Radcliffe	66 (28%)	114 (48%)	30 (13%)	9 (4%)	7 (3%)	11 (5%)
Mary Wollstonecraft	8 (42%)	7 (37%)	3 (11%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
Total	153 (28%)	244 (45%)	76 (14%)	31 (6%)	12 (2%)	30 (5%)

Table 6. Distribution of the types of GROUND and PATH with *be*

Author	No explicit ground	Physical ground	Metaphorical ground	Change of state	Action	Path only
Fanny Burney	158 (60%)	37 (14%)	5 (2%)	32 (12%)	16 (6%)	16 (6%)
Elizabeth Inchbald	43 (56%)	10 (13%)	2 (3%)	12 (16%)	6 (8%)	3 (4%)
Ann Radcliffe	117 (63%)	35 (19%)	0 (0%)	12 (6%)	5 (10%)	6 (12%)
Mary Wollstonecraft	5 (56%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)	3 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	323 (62%)	83 (16%)	7 (1%)	59 (11%)	27 (6%)	25 (4%)

In general, the results indicate the preferences of *have* for physical and metaphorical GROUNDS, and *be* for no explicit GROUNDS, GROUNDS indicating change of state and GROUNDS referring to action. Apart from the presence or absence of an explicit GROUND, the most important differences concern metaphorical contexts, which prefer the combination with *have* (20), and actions, which tend to be combined with *be* (21).

(20) a nun she had entered *into conversation* with (*Mary a Fiction*, Wollstonecraft)

(21) a surgeon being come *to examine* his wounds (*A Simple Story*, Inchbald)

Whereas Burney, Inchbald and Radcliffe show more similarities, Wollstonecraft differs from the rest particularly in the case of *have*, where a similar distribution can be observed for the uses of *have* with no explicit GROUND and with a physical GROUND.

Finally, it is not very common to find the structure of the PATH component without a GROUND. The results indicate no preference for one auxiliary or the other, with the exception of Radcliffe, whose instances with *be* + PATH are more frequent than the ones of *have* + PATH. This is not surprising, as the PATH component can often be used similarly in physical and metaphorical contexts.

## 5.2 *Narration versus dialogue*

Novels usually contain a combination of narration and dialogue. Perfect tenses are generally more frequently used in the narration sections of the novels as opposed to the dialogue ones. This is the case in all the authors analysed, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Distribution of auxiliaries in narration and in dialogue

Author	<i>Have</i> in narration	<i>Be</i> in narration	<i>Have</i> in dialogue	<i>Be</i> in dialogue
Fanny Burney	159 (49%)	162 (51%)	53 (34%)	102 (66%)
Elizabeth Inchbald	59 (54%)	51 (46%)	19 (45%)	23 (55%)
Ann Radcliffe	209 (65%)	113 (35%)	28 (28%)	73 (72%)
Mary Wollstonecraft	17 (74%)	6 (26%)	3 (50%)	3 (50%)
Total	444 (41%)	332 (31%)	103 (9%)	201 (19%)

In a close analysis of the results displayed in Table 7, it can be seen that when both auxiliaries are compared, *be* is preferred in the direct speech sections of the novels, with the exception of Wollstonecraft, who uses both auxiliaries identically in this respect. This is especially the case in Burney and Radcliffe, whose percentage of *be* in conversation is double that of *have* in the same contexts. Inchbald also prefers the use of *be* in conversations, although the difference between the use of *have* and *be* is not as considerable as in the case of the previous two authors. As regards the choice of auxiliary in the narration sections, whereas Burney only displays a slight preference for *be*, the other three writers clearly prefer to use *have*. This is particularly evident in the cases of Radcliffe and Wollstonecraft.

## 6 Discussion

The two factors that have been suggested as possibly contributing to the choice of auxiliary in perfect tenses have been confirmed to do so, particularly the variation in the components of motion events. Previous studies had indicated that *have* was more frequently used in combination with a complement in the sentence (Rydén & Brorström 1987; Kytö 1997). While this has proved to be the case in the present study, as the **GROUND** component is often realised by a complement in the surface structure, it has also

been demonstrated that not all the complements are the same, and that semantics also plays an important role in the choice discussed. In other words, the semantic analysis of the different components of motion events has shown that the more abstract a context is, the more likely it is for the structure with *have* to be present. This is the case for both the FIGURE and the GROUND components. Although differences can be observed when the four authors are analysed, some similarities are also found. When FIGURES are non-human all the writers analysed prefer *have*, and when the GROUNDS are metaphorical the same occurs. Similarly, when an action is part of the GROUND, *be* is the preferred auxiliary.

The manipulation of editors had also been pointed out in relation to the choice of auxiliary verbs (Calvo Cortés, 2019). The differences shown in the uses of *have* and *be* in dialogue and in narration within the same novels suggest two possible explanations. First, the writers may have wanted to reflect dialectal variation in the speech of some characters in particular by using *be* more often, as this auxiliary was in the process of being replaced by *have*. Second, the editors may have intervened especially in the narration sections of the novels so that the text would conform to the common usage of the time, i.e. *have* becoming more frequent than *be*. They would not have altered the dialogues so as to allow the writers' representation of everyday speech in these sections of the novels.

## **7. Conclusion**

The twelve verbs analysed behave similarly in the four authors in relation to the auxiliary verb chosen depending on the semantics of the components involved in each motion event. Burney and Inchbald show more similarities in relation to the FIGURE and GROUND

components. However, they differ in the distribution of auxiliaries depending on the section of the novel where they appear. Whereas Burney shows a clear preference for *be* both in the narration and in the dialogue sections, Inchbald prefers *have* in the narration and *be* only slightly in the direct speech parts of the novels. Radcliffe and Wollstonecraft's results also reflect a clearer preference for *be* in conversation, as opposed to *have*. Similarly, whereas Radcliffe's results regarding the different types of FIGURES only indicate slight differences between the two auxiliaries, although she follows the same tendency as the others regarding the use of *have* more frequently with non-human FIGURES than *be*, the GROUND component in her instances is the one that determines the choice more significantly than in any of the other writers. Wollstonecraft is clearly the most different author. She has a higher preference for *have* with non-human FIGURES than the others, although Burney's and Inchbald's preference is also high, whereas her uses of *be* are similar to the other writers in this respect. As regards the GROUND component, despite the results being similar to the others, she uses *have* similarly to *be* when no GROUND is present in the surface structure.

Although the results regarding Wollstonecraft need to be taken with caution due to the lower number of occurrences found in comparison to the other authors, it can be concluded that she was the least conservative of the four, as she uses *have* more often and also without a GROUND represented in the surface structure. For this reason, an analysis of more texts written by her will provide more conclusive results.

Finally, all the verbs display differences if the analysis is carried out individually for each of them. Due to the presence of few instances of some of them, and particularly in some of the authors, it has not been possible to point out these differences. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that physical and metaphorical GROUNDS favour the presence of *have*, while the motion situation involving a change of state, the absence of

GROUND in the surface and the GROUNDS involving an action favour the combination with *be*. Likewise, although some verbs are more easily combined with non-human FIGURES than others (e.g. *fall* and *pass*), the general analysis has shown the tendency of *have* to be combined with these more frequently than *be*. As a result, those verbs that are almost exclusively used with non-human FIGURES probably began to be used with *have* earlier than the rest.

This study requires further research in order to confirm the influence of the components of motion events in the choice of auxiliary verb. Since women have been considered conservative in the use of *be* in perfect structures, a comparison with novels written by men authors is required. The analysis needs to be extended to novels written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both by women and men, and not only at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which seems to have been the turning point in the decline in the use of *be* as a perfect auxiliary. If the semantics of motion events show similar results, more definite conclusions could be drawn. Also, it is essential to analyse these structures in other genres, particularly personal documents, such as diaries and letters, since they will probably show a more personal style, and they are less likely to have been manipulated by editors. Original manuscripts would be the ideal resource for research on these expressions to confirm or rule out such manipulation.

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