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Developments in the Use of the English Present Perfect: 1750-Present

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Abstract

This article examines developments in the use of the present perfect (PP) with the auxiliary *have* in standard British and American English from 1750 to the present day, drawing data from the drama section of A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (ARCHER). Multivariate analyses were conducted to examine changes in the type of linguistic contexts that favor the choice of the construction over its main competitor, the simple past tense. A number of significant changes were identified, including a stronger tendency for the *have*-PP to occur in temporally specified and negative contexts, and to become less favored by transitive verbs and events with direct results (e.g., *break, kill, lose, arrive*). The findings are interpreted as an indication of a slow functional reconfiguration that contours the construction's continued grammaticalization. It is suggested that there has been, since the Late Modern English period, a gradual shift in the nature of the construction's "current relevance," from the persistence of the present result of a past event to the situational constitution of the "extended-now" interval.

Like many other Indo-European languages, English has a distinction between the periphrastic present perfect construction (auxiliary *have* + past participle, henceforth PP) and the inflectional simple past tense (SP). The function of the English PP is often associated with the meaning of "current relevance"—a connection between a past situation and the present moment (Quirk et al. 1985:190). On the other hand, the English

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SP merely describes a past situation and does not express current relevance—at least explicitly. This functional division between the two verb forms tends to vary cross-linguistically. For example, in contemporary French, the formal equivalent of the English PP, the *passé composé*, has largely lost the current relevance meaning and has replaced the SP in many contexts. It is used in narrating sequences of past actions and in describing the exact temporal location of a situation, as shown in (1) taken from the French novel *L'Étranger*. The italicized *passé composés* translate into English SPs. The PP could not have been used in the English translation since the past events are not described by virtue of their relevance to the narrator's "present."

(1)   J'*ai pris* l'autobus à deux heures. Il faisait très chaud. J'*ai mangé* au restaurant, chez Céleste, comme d'habitude. Ils avaient tous beaucoup de peine pour moi et Céleste m'*a dit*: "On n'a qu'une mère."

I *took* the bus at two o'clock. It was very hot. I *ate* at Céleste's restaurant as usual. They all felt very sorry for me and Céleste *told* me, "There's no one like a mother."

(*L'Étranger*, in Swart 2007:2297)

As a narrative tense, the French *passé composé* encodes perfectivity: the situation is viewed as a single whole and is mentioned for its own sake, independent of its relation to other times or situations (Comrie 1976; Hopper 1982). Accordingly, compared with its English formal equivalent, the SP in French is more distributionally and functionally restricted, occurring only in formal and written registers. Other Indo-European languages such as German, Italian, and Spanish are at different stages in the same historical process, in which the SP eventually loses ground to the PP (Harris 1982; Dahl 1985; Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994).

   With respect to the development of the English PP and SP, some questions still remain. Elsness (1997) compared a set of multigenre texts produced at various periods in the history of English. He found that a reverse historical trend may have been taking place since the Late Modern English (LModE) period. In his data, the ratio of the PP to the SP has undergone a substantial decrease, suggesting that PP has actually been losing ground to the SP. Furthermore, this process appears to be proceeding at a faster rate in American English (AmE) than in British English (BrE). Such findings nicely corroborate the results of a number of corpus-based studies (e.g., Elsness 1997, 2009; Hundt & Smith 2009) that the preference for the SP over the PP is stronger in contemporary AmE than BrE. One may therefore wonder, if the historical path of PPs replacing SPs is cross-linguistically valid, how do we account for the relative frequency decline of the English PP? Has the English PP also shown signs of grammaticalizing into a past tense or perfective marker, or does its frequency decline imply an entirely different evolutionary path?[1] The aim of the present study is to provide answers to these questions by examining the development of the PP (and the SP) from the LModE to the contemporary English period. It seeks to identify functional changes as shaped

by patterns of their co-occurrence with various contextual elements. It also examines similarities and divergences between changes occurring in BrE and AmE. Methodologically, this study differs from previous corpus-based studies of the PP such as Elsness (1997) and Van Herk (2010) in that it focuses only on early dramas, as opposed to a range of text types representing language use in diverse social domains.[2] Dramas have sometimes been used by researchers as a channel to gain insights into the properties of spoken interaction of an earlier period (e.g., Culpeper & Kytö 2010; Copple 2011), although it is undeniable that there may be considerable variation in the extent to which dramas resemble actual speech. The reason why speech—as opposed to writing—is of particular interest is that, first, grammatical differences across dialects have often been found to be more pronounced in speech than in writing (Biber 1995). Second, diachronic change is often found to occur first in speech before spreading to the written language (Leech et al. 2009:239).

I begin this article with a brief sketch of the evolution of the PP in the history of English. I then examine its distribution since the LModE period in a diachronic corpus, ARCHER. I then present the results of a contextual analysis using multivariate methods. Finally, I discuss the implications of the findings for the PP's grammaticalization.

The PP in the History of English

Historically, in the selection of an auxiliary for constructions indicating change or transition from an event to its resultant state, there has been a correspondence between *be* and intransitive verbs and between *have* and transitive verbs in English. In the transitive *have* + past participle construction (which later evolved into the Modern PP), the lexical verb *have* originally denoted a state of possession. The past participle acted as a complement to the object which may precede it, and its adjectival nature is reflected in the fact that it sometimes inflected for agreement with the gender and number of the object in accusative form. Therefore *I have my work finished* in Old English (OE) would express 'I possess or have my work in a finished condition' (Visser 1973:2819).[3]

As a predominantly resultative construction, the *have* + past participle construction in OE expressed a result that follows directly from the lexical semantics of the verb phrase. The inference of the result requires minimal pragmatic enrichment on the part of the addressee. This type of result is referred to as "direct result" in this article. (1) and (2) serve to illustrate:

(1) . . . and we *habbað* Godes hus ine and ute clætne *berypte*.
       . . . and we *have* completely *despoiled* God's houses inside and out.
                                                (*Wulfstan's Address*, in Elsness 1997:260)
(2) gyt ge *habbaþ* eowre heortan *geblende*?
      yet you *have* your hearts *blinded*?
                                                (*Gospels of Mark*, in Visser 1973:2189)

The direct results of (1) and (2) consist in, respectively, the inherent endpoints or goals of the past events, that is, 'God's houses are despoiled' and 'your hearts are blind,'

which are specified by the semantics of the verbs *despoil* and *blind*. Naturally, it is not possible for the resultative *have* + past participle construction to be used for describing atelic situations, that is, situations which do not have inherent goals or endpoints (a more detailed discussion can be found later in the section on conditioning factors). Carey (1994) found only one instance of the *have* + past participle construction with an atelic verb in her data taken from the works of Alfred and Ælfric. Another piece of evidence in line with the resultative character of the construction is that the overwhelming majority of temporal modifiers found in Carey's data were adverbials describing the time of the resultant state, for example, *nu* 'now'.

The Middle English (ME) period saw a shift of the *have* + past participle construction from being predominantly resultative to becoming a perfect as defined in contemporary grammars. The possessive meaning was gradually lost, while the object-verb order lingered on until Early Modern English (Fischer & van der Wurff 2006:140). There was also an increasing tendency for *have* to occur with transitive verbs without an overt object, which further paved the way for an increase in the combination of the *have* + past participle construction with nontransitive verbs. This contributed to the gradual decline of the rival *be* + past participle construction over time (Carey 1994:24; Kytö 1997). Other areas of grammaticalization in the transition from OE to ME include the extension to atelic situations and the emergence of manner adverbials in conjunction with the *have* + past participle construction, as well as adverbials denoting frequency and duration, such as *often, for X*, and *since X* (Carey 1994:68; Elsness 1997:280).

The above changes are concomitant with, or reflexive of, a functional shift of the *have* + past participle construction to what Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca (1994) refer to as an "anterior," a construction expressing the current relevance of a past situation. Current relevance is commonly understood as a graded notion (Dahl & Hedin 2000:391; Davydova 2011:66), involving various types of connection between a past situation and the present moment. PPs expressing direct results represent the most central form of current relevance (cf. Comrie 1976:56). A less central but also explicit form of current relevance—if explicitness is measured by the degree to which the connection is lexicalized in the PP clause—is the continuation of the past situation to the present, as expressed by continuative PPs. In continuative PPs, the time of the situation coincides with a time span beginning from a certain point in the past and extending to the present, the "extended-now" (McCoard 1978), as illustrated by (3).

(3) Ich am kinges dohter . . . & *habbe ihauet hiderto* swiðe hehe meistres.
    I am a king's daughter . . . and *have had hitherto* very high powers.
                                    (*St Katherine of Alexandria (1)*, in Carey 1994:51)

Here the extended-now is encoded in the meaning of the adverb *hitherto*. Its left boundary is vague, and its right boundary coincides with the present moment. The situation is atelic and its connection with the present is established temporally, as opposed to via a cause-effect relationship.

Compared with resultative and continuative PPs,[4] experiential PPs mark an implicit form of current relevance. They express an experiential state following the occurrence of a past situation, which can be either telic or atelic. The current relevance typically consists in a pragmatically implicated present result, whose nature is inferred by the addressee based on the immediate discourse context. Implicated results differ from direct results in that their inference heavily relies on pragmatic mechanisms. Consider (4) from ME.

(4) Ye us *habbeð* ofte *imaked* wrað þer uore inne Rome ye beoð lað
     But you have often made us wrath, therefore in Rome you are odious
                                                    (*Layamon's Brut*, in Carey 1994:71)

Here the nature of current relevance lies in the validity of the implicature that the addressees are now odious in Rome, as specified in the following clause. The extension from direct to pragmatically implicated results signals a generalization of meaning, as direct results are much more semantically restricted and specific than implicated results.[5]

One of the possible consequences of semantic generalization is increased textual frequency over a certain time period (Hopper & Traugott 2003:129-130). With regard to the PP (with both *have* and *be* auxiliaries), Elsness (1997) has shown that rapid and consistent frequency increase was evident from OE through ME up until Early Modern English, from a very humble beginning in the earliest times to accounting for an average of over 19 percent of all verb forms in his 1750-1800 data. However, as mentioned at the beginning of this article, Elsness's data also suggested that the SP had gained ground again from the eighteenth century onward: the PP versus SP ratios for contemporary drama texts were only around half of those for the 1750-1800 counterparts in both BrE and AmE. For news and direct speech in fiction, the ratios also dropped significantly in AmE. Based on these findings, Elsness (1997:358) concluded that within the Modern English period the increase of the PP at the expense of the SP had not only been arrested but in fact reversed in AmE, and a decreasing trend of the PP had even started in BrE.

The Data

The data for this study are drawn from the drama section of ARCHER. The corpus was first constructed in the early 1990s by Douglas Biber and colleagues to facilitate diachronic research on linguistic features across more than three centuries of Modern BrE and AmE. As a multigenre corpus, ARCHER represents a wide range of written and speech-related genres. In its initial design, the corpus covered the period from 1650 to 1990, divided into seven 50-year periods for BrE, and three centuries for AmE. In most cases each genre is represented by ten randomly sampled texts, each containing at least 2,000 words (see Yáñez-Bouza 2011 for corpus composition).

The latest version of the corpus, ARCHER 3.2, was accessed in November 2012 at Northern Arizona University. To facilitate comparison with previous studies, in

Table 1. Total Number of Words Selected for Each Variety and Time Period from the Drama Section of ARCHER 3.2.

	BrE	AmE
1750-1799	24,236	27,558
1950-1999	26,682	25,838

particular Elsness (1997), the periods 1750-1799 and 1950-1999, which represent respectively LModE and contemporary English, were selected. Comparing texts produced in the two periods enables us to draw inferences about general diachronic tendencies over the past few centuries. It must be borne in mind that this type of comparison does not lend itself to inferences about paths of change at a finer level of granularity.

Table 1 shows the composition of the data set. The word counts were generated by the WordList function of *Wordsmith Tools 4.0*. Nondialogic sections in the drama texts were excluded using the original corpus mark-up.

The Variable Context

In defining the variable context, a "broad" approach was adopted, following the practice of recent variationist studies on grammaticalizing items (Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008; Aaron 2010; Copple 2011). While traditional variationist studies look at linguistic items that have strict semantic or functional equivalence—"alternative ways of saying the same thing" (Labov 1982:22)—this approach includes in the variable context forms that are in competition with each other along the path of grammaticalization. To illustrate, in their study of the grammaticalizing PP in Spanish, Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos (2008) examined all uses of the PP and the SP, inasmuch as they represent two competing variants along the anterior-to-perfective path. By defining the variable context more broadly, they were able to provide a comprehensive profile of factors that condition the use of both items.

In the present study, all PP and SP forms were first manually extracted from the data set. Only PPs with the *have* auxiliary were coded. Those with *be* were not included for two reasons. First, *be*-PPs were already greatly outnumbered by *have*-PPs in LModE. The frequency of the former is only less than one-tenth that of the latter in Elsness's (1997) eighteenth-century data, and no single instance of *be*-PPs was found in the twentieth-century data. Second, the wide functional range of *be* makes the analysis of some tokens very difficult. (Consider, for example, *it is changed*, which can be viewed as either a *be*-PP or a passive, and *the sun is set*, where *be* can be viewed as either a copular verb or a perfect auxiliary.) It should be noted that excluding *be*-PPs in the analysis may affect not just the total number of PPs coded, but also the relative frequencies of transitive and intransitive PPs, particularly in the eighteenth-century data where (intransitive) *be*-PPs are presumably more frequent.

Table 2. Frequencies of the PP and the SP (as Proportions of All Verb Forms Coded for Each Period/Variety).

	BrE			AmE		
	PP	SP	Total	PP	SP	Total
1750-1799	130 (30%)	298 (70%)	428 (100%)	188 (35%)	344 (65%)	532 (100%)
1950-1999	194 (27%)	517 (73%)	711 (100%)	127 (16%)	676 (84%)	803 (100%)

The coding of *have*-PPs allowed for variation in the form of the past participle, which was less predictable in earlier English than it is today (for example, *we have forgot your rashness* was analyzed as a PP). Two types of constructions were excluded in the coding process: those that are ambiguous between the present tense and its perfect counterpart (e.g., *he's gone*), and idiomatic expressions developed from the verb *get* (e.g., *have got* and *have got to*). All subjunctive uses of the SP (e.g., *if I were you, I would disagree*) were also excluded because we are concerned with only the SP's function of expressing temporal relations, not modal meanings.

Given that our focus is on the functional contrast between the *have*-PP and the SP, the term PP will be used in what follows to refer to *have*-PPs only unless specified otherwise. The frequencies of the two constructions are presented in Table 2. It can be seen that in both varieties the PP has lost ground to the SP, with its proportion falling from 30 percent to 27 percent in BrE, and from 35 percent to 16 percent in AmE. The magnitude of decline is much greater in AmE, which also shows a stronger preference for the PP over the SP in the late eighteenth century, a picture that tallies nicely with the finding of Elsness (1997). However, unlike Elsness (1997), who finds the PP's frequency decline in both BrE and AmE drama to be significant on the chi-square test, we find a significant change only in AmE, not BrE (BrE $\chi^2 = 1.10$, $p > .05$; AmE $\chi^2 = 59.07$, $p < .001$). This result therefore casts some doubt on the purported decline of the PP in BrE. Another point to note in Table 2 is the substantive increase of the total number of coded verb forms over time, which is likely due to the process of "colloquialization"—a stylistic drift toward speech norms (Leech et al. 2009). As Biber et al. (1999:65) show, for conversations the frequency of verbs relative to text length is considerably higher than that for (informative) writing.

The Conditioning Factors

This section discusses the linguistic factors coded for the multivariate analysis, which were selected on the grounds that they are known to be involved in PP grammaticalization. The factors are temporal specification, situation type, transitivity, and negation. The temporal distance between the past situation and the present, which is also a highly relevant factor, is not coded due to the difficulty in operationalization: the lack of information about the precise temporal location of the situation makes the coding inconsistent and unreliable. Subject type (animate versus inanimate subject) and clause

type (main versus relative clauses) have also been shown to be relevant (e.g., Elsness 1997; Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008; Copple 2011). They are not included either because the text type examined features only a very small number of tokens for the categories inanimate subjects and relative clauses.[6]

PPs and SPs were first coded for temporal specification, that is, whether the clause in which they are contained is modified by temporal adverbials of various types. Temporally specified PPs and SPs are generally outnumbered by unspecified ones (Schlüter 2006). In this study, they constitute a total of 18 percent of the coded verbs. A number of semantic types have been proposed for temporal adverbials modifying PPs and SPs (McCoard 1978; Elsness 1997; Davydova 2011). It has been suggested that adverbials expressing the temporal duration of a situation (e.g., *for five years, since 1900, all these years*) or a strong present time orientation (e.g., *now, at present*) tend to favor the PP, while those expressing a past time disconnected with the present (e.g., *three days ago, yesterday*) tend to co-occur with the SP. Adverbials with less distinctive co-occurrence patterns include temporal quantifiers (*always, never, ever*), adverbials expressing frequency (e.g., *often, three times*), recent past time (e.g., *before, just, recently*), or the speaker's evaluation of a situation in relation to the present (*already, yet*).

In view of the diverse range of meanings expressed by temporal adverbials, a "code fine, merge later" strategy was adopted, inspired by Van Herk (2010). Initially individual codes were created for all of the above semantic categories. Temporal specifiers that do not fit into these categories (e.g., *today, this afternoon*, and adverbial clauses led by *when*) were labeled as one group.[7] Cross-tabulation reveals that only two types of temporal adverbials, duration and *always/never/ever*, register viable frequencies with both PPs and SPs in the two varieties. The frequencies of others categories in each variety/period are smaller than ten. They are therefore merged into one category, labeled as "other specifiers", for the multivariate analysis.

Situation type was also coded as a predicting factor because, as discussed previously, the extension from telic to atelic situations is one of the hallmarks of the PP's continued grammaticalization. A chief distinction was thus made between telic and atelic situations, by applying linguistic tests for telicity discussed in previous works (e.g., Vendler 1967; Binnick 1991), such as whether the situation can occur as the complement of the verb *finish*, and whether it can by modified by *in*-adverbials or *for*-adverbials. In the coding process consideration was only given to lexical contents expressed by the "central elements of the clause" (Quirk et al. 1985:45), that is, the subject, verb, object, and complements, excluding such "peripheral" elements as adverbials. This approach, previously adopted in Davydova (2011), is motivated by the need to tease apart the respective roles played by situation type and various interacting linguistic factors. To illustrate, the situation expressed by *I have written this letter* was coded as telic, irrespective of whether it occurred in a sentence like *I have written this letter for two hours*. Similarly, clauses in the progressive aspect such as *He was running to school* were coded consistently as expressing telic situations regardless of the atelicizing function of the *-ing* form.

In order to probe the development of the PP's resultative meaning (which is directly linked to its historical origin), a further distinction was made within the category of

telic situations, or events, between those with and without direct results. The notion of direct result, which has not been clearly delineated in the literature, was operationalized as manifested mainly in the following types of events: change of mental states (e.g., *agree, discover, forgive*), directed motion (e.g., *come, fall, go*), creation and destruction (e.g., *break, build, create*), appearance and disappearance (e.g., *begin, end, occur*), and carrying and transfer of possession (e.g., *buy, give, send*). In these cases, a lexically specified result is invariably available. They are contrasted with events without direct results, such as cognitive processes (e.g., *dream of, feel, hear*), communicative events (e.g., *argue, ask, discuss*), and those expressed by such punctual verbs as *hit, kiss* and *touch*. These events may impinge on the patient, but they do not imply any internal change.[8]

Eighty-eight clauses (or 4 percent of the total number of clauses analyzed) were labeled as unclear because a decision could not be made about the situation types they express. The difficulty in the classification of situation types arises sometimes from interpretive indeterminacy. For example, in (5), the situations can be taken to have an eventive or a stative interpretation, depending on whether the emphasis is on the transition to or persistence of the mental state in question.

(5) The poor youth was introduced to my apartment—*took it for granted* that I was Viola; (ARCHER 1786cowl.d4b)

In other cases, indeterminacy results from a lack of information about the precise nature of the situations, as in (6).

(6) This, madam, was your situation; and what *have* I *done* for you? (ARCHER 1777sher.d4b)

Finally, transitivity was coded to investigate signs of the PP expanding from transitive to nontransitive contexts. Verbs were classified depending on whether they take objects (transitive) or not (nontransitive). The category of transitives includes monotransitives (e.g., *feed* [*the dog*]), ditransitives (e.g., *give* [*him a present*]), and complex transitives (e.g., *consider* [*it wrong*]). Nontransitives include copular verbs (e.g., *be, become*) and intransitive verbs (e.g., *smile, die*). Phrasal verbs such as *brush off, take away*, and *go down* were classified into the two categories in the same fashion. Negation was also coded, as negation is said to have an atelicizing effect on the general aspectual character of the sentence (cf. Squartini & Bertinetto 2000:412). Clauses coded as negative contain either clausal or subclausal negators (e.g., *not, never, nobody, nowhere, no longer*).

Multivariate Analyses

The multivariate analyses were conducted on *Goldvarb X for Windows* (Sankoff, Tagliamonte & Smith 2012). *Goldvarb* is an application of logistic regression, or the variable rule program commonly used in sociolinguistics (for a detailed introduction

of the methodology, see Tagliamonte 2006). Cross-tabulation of the data points to some obvious interaction between factor groups. For example, atelic situations tend to correlate with nontransitive verbs and with durative temporal adverbials. Because the statistical model assumes that all predicting variables are noninteractive, each factor group was examined independently of other factor groups in this study.

The results of the analysis are presented in Tables 3 and 4. Figures for the same variety are grouped together to show changes in factor weight (in bold), that is, changes in the influence that the various factors have on the choice of PP over the SP.

Temporal specification tends to be the most significant factor group across varieties and time periods. Its range varies between seventy-three and thirty-six in BrE, and seventy-four and thirty-seven in AmE. Durative adverbials such as *for three days* and *since 1900* show a strong favoring effect for the PP at both time periods. The significance of such effect in the 1750-1799 data indicates that the function of locating the past situation in an extended-now interval was already well established in LModE.[9] We also find that while these adverbials still strongly favor the PP in the late twentieth century, they have become slightly more SP-friendly over time, in particular in AmE. This can be seen if we examine the proportions of PPs in verb forms that co-occur with these adverbials, presented in Table 3. BrE experienced a decline from 80 percent to 56 percent, and AmE from 91 percent to 42 percent. Such falls are likely the result of the general expansion of the SP: as its frequency increases, it also takes over parts of the former functional territory of the PP.

Unlike durative adverbials, significant differences can be found in the co-occurrence patterns of *always, never*, and *ever* over time. In the late eighteenth century they tend to disfavor the PP (BrE .15; AmE .18). By the late twentieth century the situation was reversed, as they had overtaken "other specifiers" and become the second most favoring factor for the PP (BrE .64; AmE .60). *Always, never*, and *ever* have in common the capacity to quantify over a contextually defined time span: with *always* the situation holds for all subintervals of this time span, with *never* there is no subinterval for which the situation is true, and with *ever* the situation is true for at least one subinterval. When they co-occur with the PP, the right boundary of the contextually defined time span coincides with the present moment, yielding an extended-now, as shown in (7) through (9).

(7) And of course I*'ve always lived* in what you might call a medical milieu. (ARCHER 1959elot.d8b)

(8) All my life I've been accused of things and I*'ve never been* able to answer back. (ARCHER 1951andr.d8a)

(9) *Have* you *ever attended* a serious trial where it was not done? (ARCHER 1951andr.d8a)

As temporal quantifiers, *always, never*, and *ever* differ from *for-* and *since-*adverbials in that they make reference to the extended-now implicitly. The exact duration or temporal location of the extended-now is recovered from the shared knowledge of the interlocutors, whereas in the case of *for-* and *since-*adverbials, such information is

Table 3. Factors Contributing to the Choice of the PP over the SP over Time
(Nonsignificant Factor Groups within Brackets).

(a) BrE

	1750-1799			1950-1999		
	Total *N* = 428			Total *N* = 711		
	Factor weight	% PP	*n*	Factor weight	% PP	*n*
TEMPORAL SPECIFICATION						
unspecified	**.45**	31	366	**.28**	23	585
always/never/ever	**.15**	9	22	**.64**	58	33
duration	**.88**	80	5	**.62**	56	16
other specifiers	**.49**	34	35	**.48**	42	77
Range	73			36		
SSITUATION TYPE						
telic with direct results	**.69**	51	129	**.57**	38	193
telic without direct results	**.50**	32	96	**.54**	36	169
atelic	**.26**	14	187	**.29**	16	328
unclear	**.56**	38	16	**.62**	43	21
Range	43			33		
TRANSITIVITY						
transitive	**.62**	37	287	**.59**	33	434
nontransitive	**.38**	18	141	**.41**	19	277
Range	24			18		
NEGATION						
positive	[.58]	32	381	**.42**	25	622
negative	[.42]	19	47	**.59**	40	89
Range				17		

(b) AmE

	1750-1799			1950-1999		
	Total *N* = 532			Total *N* = 803		
	Factor weight	% PP	*n*	Factor weight	% PP	*n*
TEMPORAL SPECIFICATION						
unspecified	**.38**	35	439	**.31**	13	652
always/never/ever	**.18**	17	30	**.60**	33	42

(continued)

Table 3. (continued)

| | 1750-1799 | | | 1950-1999 | | |
| | Total *N* = 532 | | | Total *N* = 803 | | |
	Factor weight	% PP	*n*	Factor weight	% PP	*n*
duration	**.92**	91	11	**.68**	42	26
other specifiers	**.39**	37	52	**.41**	19	83
Range	74			37		
SITUATION TYPE						
telic with direct results	**.68**	50	163	[.51]	19	194
telic without direct results	**.51**	33	126	[.46]	16	210
atelic	**.43**	27	225	[.42]	14	366
unclear	**.37**	22	18	[.60]	24	33
Range	31					
TRANSITIVITY						
transitive	**.61**	43	332	[.54]	17	501
nontransitive	**.39**	24	200	[.46]	18	302
Range	22					
NEGATION						
positive	[.55]	36	485	[.47]	15	698
negative	[.45]	28	47	[.53]	19	105
Range						

specified in the lexical semantics. It is probably because of this difference that the PP developed its use with *always, never*, and *ever* only after its co-occurrence with durative adverbials had stabilized: the conventionalization of the PP's association with a definite, lexically specified extended-now serves as the basis for its generalization to association with an indefinite, pragmatically inferred extended-now.

We also find regional differences in the rates of change in the co-occurrence patterns with *always, never*, and *ever*. Elsness (1997:360) suggests that the more frequent use of the SP with these three adverbs in contemporary AmE may lead to a further replacement of the PP by the SP. This prediction is not supported by this study. As shown in Table 3, the increase of the PP at the expense of the SP in contexts containing the three adverbs is actually faster in BrE (9 percent to 58 percent) than in AmE (17 percent to 33 percent), suggesting that the stronger preference for the SP in contemporary AmE reflects a retention of the grammatical patterns of an earlier period. Correspondingly, we find that many of the contexts in LModE in which the three adverbs co-occur with the SP are clearly those where speakers of contemporary English (especially BrE) would prefer the PP. In examples (10) through (12), taken from the historical texts, the contexts feature strong present-time orientation, a concern with the "now" for the speakers, as indicated by the use of present tense verbs.

The situations described by SPs can invariably be understood to extend up to the present.

(10) Thou *always wast* a Coward, and hated War, and lov'st to loll on the soft Lap of Peace. Thou art a very Woman in thy Heart, and talk'st of Snakes and Bugbears in the Dark, till all is Horror and Amaze about thee, and even thy own Shadow makes thee tremble. (ARCHER 1766roge.d4a)

(11) I swear I *never did* that: I deny the butler and the coach-horse. (ARCHER 1777sher.d4b)

(12) *Did* you *ever* know a lawyer to be concerned with religion, unless he got a fee by it? (ARCHER 1770munf.d4a)

A final point to note regarding temporal specification is that there is a significant overall increase in the number of temporally specified PPs as a proportion of all PPs. This can be seen by examining the embedded figures of Table 3, represented in Table 4.

The extent of increase of temporally specified PPs is slightly greater in BrE (14 percent to 31 percent) than AmE (18 percent to 32 percent), and is significant in both varieties on the chi-square test (BrE $\chi^2 = 11.51$, $p < .001$; AmE $\chi^2 = 7.66$, $p < .01$). By contrast, the percentage of temporally specified SPs has remained relatively stable over time (BrE 15 percent to 13 percent; AmE 17 percent to 16 percent), suggesting that the observed increase must be explained by functional changes of the PP itself, as opposed to general stylistic drifts affecting the whole spectrum of verbal categories. We will return to this issue in the next section.

Table 3 also shows changes in how situation type influences the choice of the PP over the SP over time. For both BrE and AmE, situation type is selected as significant in the eighteenth-century data. Telic situations with direct results is shown to have the strongest favoring effect (BrE .69; AmE .68), suggesting that the PP in LModE was most compatible with situations having a direct impact on the present. When comparison is made with the contemporary English data, it can be seen that situation type constraints appear to have weakened over time in BrE (range 43 to 28), if the category "unclear" is excluded. This weakening process is more apparent in AmE: situation type no longer has any significant effect on the choice of the PP by the late twentieth century. These changes can be taken as indication for a subtle shift in the nature of the PP's current relevance, which becomes less restricted to the direct present result of a past event. Furthermore, unlike in the case of temporal specification, the AmE PP appears to be ahead of its BrE counterpart in the functional shift away from its resultative roots.

Further insights about the changing role of situation type can be gleaned from Table 5, where PP and SP frequencies by situation type are presented. In line with the changes discussed above, the two varieties exhibit a decrease in the proportions of PPs expressing telic situations with direct results (BrE 51 percent to 38 percent, $\chi^2 = 4.96$, $p < .05$; AmE 44 percent to 28 percent, $\chi^2 = 6.91$, $p < .01$), a tendency accompanied by relative increases of telic situations without direct results, and of atelic situations. The changing picture for PPs forms a sharp contrast with the general stability of the distribution

Table 4. Frequencies of the PP and the SP by Temporal Specification (Percentages Calculated as Proportions of Verbs of the Same Form).

(a)   BrE

	PP		SP	
	1750-1799	1950-1999	1750-1799	1950-1999
specified	18 (14%)	60 (31%)	44 (15%)	66 (13%)
unspecified	112 (86%)	134 (69%)	254 (85%)	451 (87%)
total	130 (100%)	194 (100%)	298 (100%)	517 (100%)

(b)   AmE

	PP		SP	
	1750-1799	1950-1999	1750-1799	1950-1999
specified	34 (18%)	41 (32%)	59 (17%)	110 (16%)
unspecified	154 (82%)	86 (68%)	285 (83%)	566 (84%)
total	188 (100%)	127 (100%)	344 (100%)	676 (100%)

of SPs by situation type. As shown by Table 5, the percentage of SPs expressing telic situations with direct results almost remained invariant in both varieties (BrE 21 percent to 23 percent; AmE 24 percent to 23 percent)

The results for transitivity in Table 3 represent a prototypical case of grammaticalization. In the eighteenth-century PPs were strongly favored by transitive verbs (BrE .62; AmE .61) and disfavored by nontransitive verbs (BrE .38; AmE .39), as predictable from the PP's transitive origins. By the twentieth century, transitivity is no longer selected as significant in AmE, and its significance has also decreased somewhat in BrE (range 24 to 18), suggesting that AmE is again ahead of BrE. If we examine changes in the percentages of transitive verbs of all verbs of the same form, as shown in Table 6, we find in AmE a decline of transitive PPs (75 percent to 69 percent) and a complementary rise of transitive SPs (56 percent to 61 percent). The situation for BrE is slightly different. The percentages of transitive verbs in both PP and SP forms have decreased, but the decrease occurred at a faster rate with PPs (81 percent to 73 percent) than with SPs (61 percent to 57 percent). Together these tendencies are indicative of the PP's generalization from transitive to nontransitive contexts. The process can be seen as consistent with the PP's move away from its resultative roots, as transitivity is associated with the affectedness of the object (Hopper & Thompson 1980), and an affected object constitutes one type of direct result.[10]

Table 5. Frequencies of the PP and the SP by Situation Type (Percentages Calculated as Proportions of Verbs of the Same Form).

(a) BrE

	PP		SP	
	1750-1799	1950-1999	1750-1799	1950-1999
telic with direct results	66 (51%)	73 (38%)	63 (21%)	120 (23%)
telic without direct results	31 (24%)	60 (31%)	65 (22%)	109 (21%)
atelic	27 (21%)	52 (27%)	160 (54%)	276 (53%)
unclear	6 (5%)	9 (5%)	10 (3%)	12 (2%)
total	130 (100%)	194 (100%)	298 (100%)	517 (100%)

(b) AmE

	PP		SP	
	1750-1799	1950-1999	1750-1799	1950-1999
telic with direct results	82 (44%)	36 (28%)	81 (24%)	158 (23%)
telic without direct results	42 (22%)	33 (26%)	84 (24%)	177 (26%)
atelic	60 (32%)	50 (40%)	165 (48%)	316 (47%)
unclear	4 (2%)	8 (6%)	14 (4%)	25 (4%)
total	188 (100%)	127 (100%)	344 (100%)	676 (100%)

Further evidence for the PP's functional shift appears in the negation factor group, where BrE and AmE share the same reversal of constraint ranking. In the eighteenth century, there was in the two varieties a tendency for the PP, in comparison with the SP, to occur more frequently in positive than in negative contexts, although such tendency is not statistically significant. By the twentieth century, however, the ranking of factors has reversed in both varieties: negation tends to favor the choice of the PP over the SP, and this favoring effect has even become statistically significant in BrE. Consistent with these findings are the results gained from comparing the proportions of PPs and SPs in positive and negative forms, as shown in Table 7.

Overall, the proportions of negative SPs of all SPs display relative stability over time and across varieties (BrE 13 percent to 10 percent; AmE 10 percent to 13 percent), which contrasts with significant rises in the proportions of negative PPs (BrE PP 7 percent to 19 percent, $\chi^2 = 7.86$, $p < .01$; AmE 7 percent to 16 percent, $\chi^2 = 5.40$, $p < .05$), with BrE this time ahead of AmE. The PP's shift toward more negative contexts can be interpreted as illustrative of an increase of its continuative use, or a stronger association with the extended-now. As (13) and (14) illustrate, negative PPs are

Table 6. Frequencies of the PP and the SP by Transitivity (Percentages Calculated as Proportions of Verbs of the Same Form).

(a) BrE

	PP		SP	
	1750-1799	1950-1999	1750-1799	1950-1999
transitive	105 (81%)	141 (73%)	182 (61%)	293 (57%)
nontransitive	25 (19%)	53 (27%)	116 (39%)	224 (43%)
total	130 (100%)	194 (100%)	298 (100%)	517 (100%)

(b) AmE

	PP		SP	
	1750-1799	1950-1999	1750-1799	1950-1999
transitive	141 (75%)	87 (69%)	191 (56%)	414 (61%)
nontransitive	47 (25%)	40 (31%)	153 (44%)	262 (39%)
total	188 (100%)	127 (100%)	344 (100%)	676 (100%)

continuative by default, for the negation of the situation is normally taken to continue at the present moment.

(13) We *haven't seen* her yet, but the chambermaid referred to a nurse. (ARCHER 1959elot.d8b)

(14) Well then that's fine, because no harm *'s been done*. (ARCHER 1975gray.d8b)

A final point to be noted regarding the results of the multivariate analyses is that, at each time period, the constraint rankings of the four factor groups for BrE and AmE are almost the same, suggesting that the two varieties have shared a common "core" in their choice of the PP over the SP.

Discussion

Emerging from the data is the tendency for the PP in BrE and AmE to move away from its resultative use (which is attributable to its semantic roots), as indicated by the decreasing proportions of telic situations with direct results and transitive verbs. This runs in parallel with a strengthened association with linguistic factors contributing to continuative and experiential uses, such as *always, never*, and *ever*, and negators of

Table 7. Frequencies of the PP and the SP by Negation (Percentages Calculated as Proportions of Verbs of the Same Form).

(a)   BrE

	PP		SP	
	1750-1799	1950-1999	1750-1799	1950-1999
positive	121 (93%)	158 (81%)	260 (87%)	464 (90%)
negative	9 (7%)	36 (19%)	38 (13%)	53 (10%)
total	130 (100%)	194 (100%)	298 (100%)	517 (100%)

(b)   AmE

	PP		SP	
	1750-1799	1950-1999	1750-1799	1950-1999
positive	175 (93%)	107 (84%)	310 (90%)	591 (87%)
negative	13 (7%)	20 (16%)	34 (10%)	85 (13%)
total	188 (100%)	127 (100%)	344 (100%)	676 (100%)

various types. It can therefore be suggested that the Modern English PP has advanced along the grammaticalization path of resultative > anterior > perfective (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994; Harris 1982). Crucially, grammaticalization in this case consists in a slow internal reconfiguration of functional subclasses which occurs long after the basic meaning of the PP was established. There was a subtle shift in the nature of the PP's current relevance, from an obvious, tangible present result that directly follows from the semantics of the verb phrase, to a more generalized connection between the past and the present. The linguistic contexts that increasingly favor the PP are those that are concerned with the situational constitution of the extended-now interval, as opposed to the resultant state of a past event. Therefore, from a diachronic perspective, it can be concluded that the PP has assumed a stronger temporal character, behaving more like a tense than a (resultative) aspectual marker.

We also find that BrE and AmE have moved along the same direction in terms of the PP grammaticalization. In many areas, we have noted similar tendencies, and the difference between the two varieties lies mainly in specific rates of frequency change. If we examine the overall frequency decline of the PP relative to the SP, AmE is obviously more advanced than BrE. However, in some areas of functional change such as the increase of the temporal specification and negation, the AmE PP shows a slower rate of change, an indication of "extraterritorial conservatism" (Hundt 2009:32).

It is important that we understand the PP's continued grammaticalization (and the BrE–AmE differences) in light of the overall frequency increase of the SP at the expense of the PP. Similar to Elsness (1997), our frequency findings imply that, on the whole, the SP has been making inroads into the functional territory of the PP, a tendency that is more remarkable in AmE than in BrE. This provides an explanation for why the PP has given way to the SP even in contexts with durative adverbials, which have traditionally been seen as prototypical PP modifiers.

Moreover, it is highly possible that some of the resultative contexts where the PP was formerly used have now become contexts for the SP. In face-to-face communication, the persistence of a present result is normally apparent for both communicators, and it would therefore seem superfluous for the speaker to assert the connection between the past event and its result, using the PP. Consider (15), taken from the Santa Barbara Corpus of contemporary spoken AmE.

(15) DORIS: Is your cigarette out . . . everybody's.
         ANGELA: Yeah, it's out.
         DORIS: You *smoked* it down into the . . . cork, didn't you?
         ANGELA: Pardon?
         DORIS: You *smoked* it down into the cork. (SBC 011)

This use of the SP represents what Vanneck (1958) calls "the colloquial preterite," as it is typical of spoken AmE. Replacing the SP with the PP in (15) makes little difference to the hearer's understanding of the current state of affairs. Arguably, PPs occurring in such resultative contexts are most vulnerable to losing ground to the SP.

Finally, the findings of this study point to an increasing level of markedness of the PP as a verb form for referring to past situations. According to Schwenter and Torres Cacoullous (2008), the marked (as opposed to unmarked, default) status of tense-aspect expressions is indicated by their lower relative frequency in (a) the most frequent contexts and (b) the least semantically specified contexts. In this study, the most frequent contexts can be determined by identifying within factor groups the type of contexts with the highest number of verb forms, which are no temporal adverbials, atelic, transitive, and positive. Contexts with no temporal adverbials are also the least semantically specified, providing no lexical information about the temporal properties of the situation. In all these contexts, we find that the frequency of the PP started at a lower level (compared with the SP) and has been decreasing since then. The parameter of temporal specification is particularly revealing. Our findings show that, as the PP's markedness increases, its use is more heavily dependent on the availability of certain contextual cues. Accordingly, if the construction continues to fall out of favor in English, temporally specified contexts are likely to become the last type of context it may appear in.

We have so far left unanswered the question of why exactly the English PP has been in decline, especially in AmE. One plausible explanation, as has been suggested by Defromont (1973) and Elsness (1997, 2009), is that certain language-particular factors may be relevant here. The gist of their argument is that, unlike in French, Spanish, and

other languages, the auxiliary *have* usually appears in spoken English as a highly reduced form (*'ve* or *'s*) and is sometimes below auditory level. Furthermore, with the vast majority of the verbs in Modern English, the past participle and the preterite share the same form. The combined effect is a leveling of phonological differences between the PP and the SP in speech, which might have paved the way for the PP's losing ground to the functionally similar SP. This explanation is appealing if we consider the higher frequency of the PP in eighteenth-century AmE. From a diachronic perspective, high frequency is often closely related with phonological reduction (Bybee 2001). Thus the frequent use of the PP in the United States might have contributed to a subsequent phonological reduction process, through which the auxiliary was gradually lost in some contexts. It is hoped that future research can shed light on this issue by investigating whether the decline of the PP is indeed faster with verbs having similar PP and SP forms.

Conclusion

This study has examined developments in the use of the PP (with the *have* auxiliary) and the competing SP in standard BrE and AmE from 1750 to the present day, focusing on the drama section of ARCHER. We have seen a significant decline in the frequency of the PP relative to that of the SP in the AmE data. However, the BrE data exhibit only a mild decrease, a finding somewhat different from the result of previous studies, which needs to be investigated by future research. More importantly, by conducting multivariate analyses of the PP and the SP, this study has identified changes in the use of the PP that can be explained as evidence of continued grammaticalization along the resultative > anterior > perfective path. These patterns include, inter alia, a tendency for the PP to occur more frequently in temporally specified and negative contexts, and to become less favored by transitive verbs and telic situations with direct results (e.g., *break, kill, lose, arrive*). The diachronic perspective adopted in this study expands our understanding of the PP's current relevance: as the PP grammaticalizes, the nature of its current relevance also undergoes a subtle shift, from the salient present result of a past event to the situational constitution of the extended-now interval. Viewed together, the findings of this study provide support for a collocation-shaped view of grammaticalization (e.g., Diewald 2002, Torres Cacoullos & Walker 2011), on which the process is seen not simply as semantic reanalysis, but also as gradual shifts in the co-occurrence patterns of a construction with other linguistic features. These shifts affect and restructure the functional domain of the construction, and eventually lead to the loss of old meanings and the emergence of new meanings.

Acknowledgments

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Notes

1. I follow Hopper and Traugott (2003) in using the term "grammaticalization" to refer to either the process by which originally lexical items develop grammatical functions, or the process by which grammatical items develop new grammatical functions. The corpus-based analysis deals only with the latter process.

2. In Elsness (1997), texts of various genres were merged into one category in the exploration of the role of contextual factors. In Van Herk (2010), observations of historical tendencies were drawn from a comparison between early African American letters (written by African American settlers in Liberia between 1834 and 1866) and contemporary Quebec English interviews.

3. In an alternative account, de Acosta (2013) argues that the link between possession and OE *have* + past participle construction is only indirect, on the grounds that OE *habban* was used to express not only possession, but more generally relations of pertaining, befalling, etc. In his view, it is these broad semantic relations that paved the way for the emergence of the *have*-perfect.

4. The term "resultative perfect" is used in this article to refer to PPs with direct results only. In the literature it is sometimes used in a different sense, to also include PPs that convey an implicated result (e.g., Depraetere 1998; Michaelis 1998).

5. Current relevance is even less explicit in the "hot news" use of the PP, which describes a past situation that is of sufficient significance or "newsworthiness" to the addressee (e.g., *A man has been shot during a police operation* [in news report]). Schwenter (1994) argues that the hot news perfect marks the last stage of the PP's grammaticalization into a perfective, on the grounds that its current relevance is highly generalized and is most prone to erosion. He also suggests that the hot news perfect most approximates the SP in its ability to introduce a new topic into the discourse. Nevertheless, because whether a situation is significant to the addressee is subjectively determined and cannot be easily operationalized in the type of data used in this study, the hot news perfect is not treated as a functional category that is on a par with the resultative, continuative, and experiential perfect.

6. The hypothesis is that with continued grammaticalization, the PP will be more frequently used to express past situations that are temporally disconnected with the present. It will also show weaker preferences for relative clauses (which present background information) and animate subjects (which are associated with its original meaning of possession).

7. Adverbials such as *today* and *this afternoon* were not coded as expressing strong present time orientation. The reason is that, unlike in the cases of *now* and *at present*, their temporal references do not coincide with the time of utterance but can be interpreted as extending into the past.

8. The distinction between situations with and without direct results is congruent with Mittwoch's (2008) distinction between "target state" and "non-target-state" results. As

Mittwoch suggests, a key feature of events with target state results is that the internal argument of the event sentence is the theme and subject of the state sentence. Compare the following untensed event sentences and their corresponding target state sentences:

    a.   Ann leave her driving license at home // Ann's driving license be at home
    b.   John arrive in Paris // John be in Paris
    c.   Mary lock the door // the door be locked
    d.   Someone break my cup // my cup be broken(Mittwoch 2008:328)

Mittwoch argues that events expressed by *read a book, see Mary, knock on the door, have lunch* are telic, but do not have target states. In none of these cases is there an internal argument that may become the theme of a state sentence.

9.   Admittedly, when modified by *for*-adverbials, the PP may also express a situation located wholly in the past and disconnected from the present (as in *I have lived in Melbourne for three years* [*and in Sydney for two years*]). However, such uses have not been observed in my data.

10. A closer examination of the PPs did not reveal any obvious impact of individual verbs on the changing distribution of situation types, probably due to the relative small size of the data. The raw frequencies of the top-five most frequent verbs in the PP form are as follows:

    1750-1799 BrE: *be* (9), *make* (8), *do* (7), *give* (4), *see* (4), *tell* (4)
    1950-1999 BrE: *be* (13), *do* (8), *make* (7), *have* (6), *see* (6), *give* (5), *hear* (5)
    1750-1799 AmE: *be* (18), *hear* (12), *give* (7), *make* (6), *have* (4)
    1950-1999 AmE: *be* (14), *see* (9), *have* (7), *come* (4), *give* (4), *look* (4)

Corpora

ARCHER 3.2 = A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers version 3.2. 1990-2013. Originally compiled under the supervision of Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan at Northern Arizona University and University of Southern California; modified and expanded by subsequent members of a consortium of universities. Current member universities are Bamberg, Freiburg, Heidelberg, Helsinki, Lancaster, Leicester, Manchester, Michigan, Northern Arizona, Santiago de Compostela, Southern California, Trier, Uppsala, Zurich. Examples of usage taken from ARCHER were obtained under the terms of the ARCHER User Agreement. URL: http://manchester.ac.uk/archer/

Santa Barbara Corpus = The Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English. Transcripts of Parts 1-4 of the corpus are publically available. URL: http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/research/santa-barbara-corpus

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