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Maria Edgeworth's choice of auxiliary verb in perfect tenses

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ABSTRACT

The present study concentrates on Maria Edgeworth's use of auxiliary verbs (*have* or *be*) in combination with the participle *gone* in perfect tenses and the possible reasons for the choice of one or the other. A corpus containing most of her novels and moral tales was compiled and all the examples in which *gone* appeared were extracted and later analysed manually. The results show a clear preference for *be*, even in her later works, dating from when *have* was already well-established in the language as the auxiliary verb for perfect tenses. As for the reasons, while Maria Edgeworth was thought to have been influenced by the Irish English variety in her choice, a comparison between her use of auxiliaries in the narrative sections of her works and in the voice of the characters might indicate a possible manipulation by editors or an intention to show differences in speech. Similarly, it is also likely that some of the components of motion situations may have motivated her choices.

Keywords: Late Modern English, perfect tenses, choice of auxiliary, motion situations, editors' manipulation.

1. Introduction

Maria Edgeworth wrote her novels and moral tales between the end of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. She lived most of her life in Ireland, and her writings often reflect the variety of English spoken in Ireland at that time (Hollingworth 1997; Ó Gallchóir 2005; Manly 2007).

The period when Edgeworth wrote coincided with the time in which the verb *have* became more frequently used in combination with past participles to create perfect tenses (Rydén – Brorström 1987). Until then, *be*

had been the most common auxiliary verb in such structures, particularly when combined with intransitive verbs of motion.

Although perfect tenses and their evolution in British English have been analysed (cf. 2.1), Edgeworth has not been included in those studies, probably due to her being classified as an Anglo-Irish writer. Similarly, most of these studies have not taken into account the semantic components of motion situations despite the fact that most of the verbs taking longer to be used in combination with *have* are verbs that refer to some kind of motion (e.g. *go*, *come*, *become* or *grow*). From a cognitive linguistics perspective, a typical motion situation involves the presence of a *figure* that moves along a *path* in relation to a *ground* (cf. 3.1). For instance, in *The girl ran into the park*, *The girl* is the *figure*, *into* lexicalises the *path* and the *ground* is represented by *the park*. Semantics and syntax are connected and some of the complementation patterns observed in previous studies (cf. 2.1) represent the *path* and the *ground*. However, whereas the semantic components are always present, they may not be reflected in the surface representation of the sentence. This can be observed in *The girl ran in*, where the *ground* is not present in the surface structure, but semantically it is obvious that the girl has moved into a particular *ground*, which is probably omitted because it can be inferred from the context.

The present study focuses on the analysis of the choice of auxiliary verb in perfect structures with the participle *gone* in Maria Edgeworth's main works. In order to observe if she might have been influenced by Irish English, whether her choices might have been motivated by the components of motion situations, or if a possible intervention of editors may explain the auxiliaries found in her works, a corpus-based study was carried out. The results were compared to equivalent usage by other British female writers of the same period, since they were supposed to be more conservative than male authors in the introduction of *have* in this particular grammatical structure. The high number of similarities among the writers leads to the conclusion that Edgeworth was probably following the same pattern as other female writers. This might have been due to the presence of specific components of motion situations, rather than to the influence of the Irish English variety of the language. The differences between the results found in the narrator's and the characters' voices also point to the possibility that the editors intervened and changed some of the auxiliary verbs in the narrator's voice to conform to the usage that was becoming common at the time, that is, the increase in the use of *have* as opposed to *be* in these structures. Alternatively, Edgeworth may have wanted to reflect these differences herself in order to show different types of speech.

The study is limited to the verb *go*, as it is one of the verbs that was used in combination with *be* in perfect structures for a longer time (Kytö 1997). Also, it is present in both physical and abstract contexts. Even today in some English dialects it is still fairly common to use expressions such as *he is gone* with a physical locative meaning as well as a metaphorical one (Anderwald 2014).

2. Previous studies

2.1 Perfect tenses in Late Modern English

Perfect tenses in Late Modern English became the subject of study in the 1980s and 1990s coinciding with the time when this specific period of the English language attracted the attention of researchers (Beal 2004).

Rydén and Brorström (1987) were the first to offer a comprehensive description of the structure of perfect tenses with mutative verbs in the 18th and 19th centuries, including in their study two types of texts, letters and comedies, as well as numerous authors of both centuries. They offer a detailed description of the uses of both auxiliaries during the period analysed and, as regards the verb *go*, they show that whereas in the 18th century *be* is used more frequently than *have* in expresions such as *she is gone somewhere*, in the first half of the 19th century the uses of both auxiliaries seem to be balanced, and it is in the second half of the 19th century when *have* is more commonly used, and examples as *they have gone somewhere* become the norm. Rydén and Brorström (1987) also identify differences in the usage of the two auxiliaries depending on the type of sentence or complementation present in the sentence. In some ways, the categories that they establish are fairly similar to the ones used in the present study, with the difference that here the components of motion events are considered. In addition, despite the comprehensive study in terms of number of authors and tokens analysed, it is restricted to two types of genre, which as they indicate "probably come reasonably close to the "real" speech of the day" (Rydén – Brorström 1987: 13). They come to several conclusions regarding the choice of auxiliary verb. The use of *have* appears to be conditioned by specific contexts, such as those of some hypothetical sentences, iterative/durative contexts and some verbal forms. They also acknowledge that there are some authors who seem to follow their own patterns. Furthermore, when comparing the works written by men and by women, in general, women tended to use *be* more

often than men did so, 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.

Kytö also concentrates on the study of perfect tenses with intransitive verbs of "transition or change" (1997: 17). Her treatment covers a long period in the history of the English language, from Middle to Modern English, and the mid-18th century is suggested to be "the final turn-over in the history of the paradigm" (Kytö 1997: 32). The study presents a detailed analysis of both the external and the internal factors influencing the choice of auxiliary in perfect tenses. They include differences in text type, gender, sentence type and complementation in general. Some of these aspects had already been discussed in Rydén – Brorström (1987), but as in that previous study, the components of motion situations are not considered. Finally, the author also acknowledges the need for further studies to rule out other possible influences.

The 21st century has witnessed additional studies of this issue. One such is Sorace (2000). English is among the European languages analysed, and the focus is on the choice of auxiliary possibly being motivated by the differences shown by the types of intransitive verbs used. A number of varieties of English are studied by Werner et al. (2016), who conclude that the auxiliary verb *be* is still commonly used by speakers of some of these varieties. McFadden (2017) dates the disappearance of *be* as a perfect auxiliary to the beginning of the 19th century, slightly earlier than do Rydén – Brorström (1987). However, all these studies emphasise that further investigation is required.

More recently, the perfect tenses of Jane Austen's novels together with those of her letters have been analysed (Calvo Cortés 2019). Although the present enquiry takes previous work into consideration, it also adds two new aspects in connection with the choice of auxiliary. First, that choice might have been influenced by editor manipulation since there is a considerable difference between the use of these auxiliaries in the novels and in the letters. Whereas in the letters *be* is used in 87.06% of the cases, in the novels this figure is reduced to 71.59%, which is still higher in comparison with the use of *have*, but not as high. At the same time, the letters display a more personal way of writing, which could have made them less likely to have undergone such alteration. The second aspect refers to the influence of the components of motion events (cf. 3.1) on the choice of auxiliary. In this respect, the analysis of Jane Austen's work suggests that it is the different types of *ground* that seem to condition the type of auxiliary used whereas the *figure* does not appear to have much influence on this.

Finally, other British women writers of the 18th century have also been studied in relation to their use of these two auxiliaries to form perfect tenses and the possible connection of their choices with the components of motion situations (Calvo Cortés 2020). This study shows variation among the different writers although some similarities can be observed. For instance, there seems to be a preference for non-human *figures* to combine with *have* more often than with *be* together with verbs such as *fall*. Similarly, the type of *ground* appears to condition the type of auxiliary. In addition, most of these authors show differences between the narrator's and the character's voice in relation to their use of *have* or *be*, as *have* is the preferred auxiliary verb of the narrator, as opposed to *be*, which tends to be more frequently used by the characters.

2.2 Irish English and perfect tenses

Regarding Irish English, much has been discussed about perfect tenses in this variety of the English language, including the extent to which the Irish language might have influenced the perfect tense forms found in the English variety spoken in Ireland (Harris 1993; Filppula 1999; Siemund 2004; Hickey 2000, 2007; Ronan 2012; McCafferty 2014). These studies refer to the variety of forms used for perfect tenses in Irish English, and the different meanings that they express depending on the contexts where they are used.

In Irish there is no equivalent to the English verb *have*, therefore, the perfect aspect structures with this auxiliary verb could only have come from English. On the other hand, in Irish there are structures with the verb *be* expressing meanings similar to those of some of the English perfective structures (for instance, indicating either an absent state, e.g. *Tá sé imithe* ('Is he/it gone'), or a more dynamic or resultative state, e.g. *Tá sé imithe abhaile* ('Is he/it gone home'), which might imply the influence of Irish on the English variety spoken in Ireland. Nevertheless, it is not clear to what extent this influence contributed to the permanence of the perfective structures with *be* in Irish English, since in Early Modern English *be* was the most common auxiliary verb used in these structures, and there are other European languages, e.g. German, which have maintained the distinction between the auxiliaries depending on the lexical verb that accompanies them.

All in all, most of these studies conclude in some manner that the perfect tenses with *be*, as used in Ireland, probably came from English but they would have been reinforced by the Irish language (Filppula 1999).

2.3 Maria Edgeworth and Irish English

Despite having been born in England, Maria Edgeworth spent most of her life in Ireland. This has caused her to be classified as an Anglo-Irish writer, who has been regarded as a clear example of a writer who used vernacular Irish English. According to Ó Gallchóir (2005: 132), she was a "faithful and innovative recorder of vernacular speech", and Hollingworth (1997) also indicates that she used the vernacular language at least in some of her writings. In addition, she has been considered a defender of the richness of the Irish language, as Manly (2007: 160) explains: for Maria Edgeworth, Irish speakers "from the highest to the lowest, in daily conversation [...] employ a superfluity of wit and metaphor [...] astonishing and unintelligible to a majority of [...] English yeomen', and the Irish language was 'one of pristine purity".

3. The present study

Due to her interest in the vernacular Irish English speech, Maria Edgeworth was expected to reflect in her writings the language that the people around her would have spoken in Ireland at the time. Consequently, regarding perfective structures, she was supposed to offer the possibility to discover if Irish English was different from the English spoken in England in the same period, as well as from the English used by some of her contemporary English female writers.

Since the verb *go* is a clear example of a motion verb, probably the most basic one signifying its main semantic concept (cf. 3.1), it seemed to be the logical starting point for the present study.

3.1 Features of a basic motion situation

Before providing a detailed description of this investigation, it is essential to clarify the concept of motion situation. So far, the analyses of perfect structures do not seem to have considered the possible influence of motion situations, with the exception of the mentioned studies of Jane Austen (Calvo Cortés 2019), and of 18th-century British women writers (Calvo Cortés 2020). Given the fact that the verbs that resisted the use of *have* for a longer time are verbs that encode some semantic content of motion, an analysis of these structures is vital.

After Talmy's description of lexicalization patterns (1987), motion situations became prominent in cognitive linguistics studies. These studies have mainly concentrated on the description of the elements of motion situations (Talmy 1975, 1987, 2000), in their connection with metaphorical contexts (Ramscar et al. 2009), and in the classification of languages in the world depending on the representation of the different components of a motion situation in the surface structure (Matsumoto 1996; Slobin 1996; Talmy 2000).

A basic motion situation (cf. Fig. 1) involves four main semantic concepts. They are the *figure*, or object that moves or is located somewhere; the *ground*, the place where the *figure* is moving to or where it is located; the *path*, which refers to the trajectory of the movement; and the motion, which can be represented in the syntactic structure either by a *deep Be-located* verb (e.g. *be*) or a *deep Move* verb such as *come* (Talmy 2000).

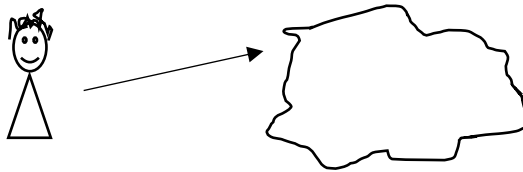The girl (*figure*) is going (*motion*) to (*path*) the park (*ground*)

Figure 1. Basic motion situation

The verb analysed in the present study, *gone* (base form *go*), is a *deep Move* verb. This means that the situations in which it is present are motion situations or motion events, which implies the presence of the other components that have been described above. The analysis of these components in the examples found will be essential in order to understand the choice of the auxiliary.

Gone is a very basic verb of motion in the sense that it does not lexicalise any element involved in the motion event apart from motion. In other words, the *figure*, the *ground* and the *path*, as well as any other possible co-events, such as *manner*, are realised by other words or phrases, as long as they are present in the syntactic representation. This explains, for example, the need to use a prepositional phrase after *go* to indicate the *path* and the *ground* as in *he has gone into the room*, whereas a verb such as *enter* does not

require the same kind of complement phrase since it incorporates the *path* in the semantic content of the verb, and only the *ground* requires to be represented by a separate component, a noun phrase in this case, as in *he has entered the room*.

Apart from the component of motion, which is clearly present in the instances analysed here, the components of *figure* and *ground* will be those considered in the present study as they may be responsible for the variation shown in these structures. However, the *path* component does not seem to influence the changes in these types of structures unless it is combined with the *ground* in one lexical element, as for instance in *aboard* (Calvo Cortés 2014), therefore, this component will be mentioned only in relation to the *ground*.

3.2 Research questions and hypotheses

The choice of auxiliary verb used in perfect tenses found in Maria Edgeworth's work may have been motivated by various reasons. In the present paper, four questions and hypotheses are suggested and they will become the focus of the analysis. It is probable that not just one but a combination of several reasons contributed to Edgeworth's choices.

First, the probable intervention of the editors. Differences found in other writers (Calvo Cortés 2020) regarding the use of the two auxiliaries in the narrator's or the characters' voices were also thought possibly to be present in Maria Edgeworth's works. Although access to the original manuscripts would be required to confirm this, if notable differences are observed in this respect, the editors' influence may be considered as a possible cause of differences.

Second, the potential variation according to the type of verbal forms in which the auxiliaries appear. Previous studies have pointed at these differences (cf. 2.1). It is expected that Maria Edgeworth's use of *be* and *have* will also vary according to whether the auxiliary verb is in the infinitive, gerund, past or present.

Third, the likely effect of the different components of motion events. As the semantics and syntax of motion events may have contributed to the choice of auxiliary made by other writers (Calvo Cortés 2019, 2020), Maria Edgeworth might have been influenced by this in a similar way. This implies that the structures in which *be* or *have* are present will be connected to different types of *figures* and/or *grounds* present in each structure.

Fourth, the possible influence of the Irish English variety. As mentioned above, in Irish there is no verb *have* equivalent to the English verb *have*

used in perfect tenses, whereas structures similar to the ones with *be* are present and they are commonly used to indicate an absent state, or a more dynamic or resultative state (cf. 2.2). Even though there is no agreement on the extent of the influence of the Irish language on Irish English, it may have contributed to the use of *be*-perfect structures for a longer time in Irish English. Consequently, it is not unreasonable to think that this might have influenced Maria Edgeworth's writings, which means that it was expected to find more examples with *be* in the corpus.

3.3 Method

In order to carry out the present study, a corpus of works by Maria Edgeworth was compiled. This compilation of moral tales and novels was obtained from texts available in *the Guttenberg Project*, and the total number of words in the corpus is 1,813,408.

The *Antconc* software programme was used to extract all the tokens containing the participle form *gone*, 540 in total. The first step was to discard the examples that were not suitable for the study. They included: all the tokens where the participle verb appeared on its own, that is without an auxiliary verb, and those amounted to 66; the examples that included *'s*, which were 22, since it was not possible to determine if those instances of *'s* represented *has* or *is*, as they could be either; and finally, the 4 occurrences of the combination *have been gone*, since it incorporates both auxiliaries and the meaning could differ.

All the remaining examples, 446, were then analysed manually, and a Fisher Exact test was carried out to calculate the p value and therefore, the significance of the different results. A Fisher Exact test was chosen as opposed to a Chi-square test because some of the data are 5 or fewer, which impedes the use of the latter. The analysis started with the division of the examples into two groups, the ones with *be* and those with *have*. A distribution was also established taking into account whether the perfect structures were found in the narration of the texts or in the sections corresponding to the voice of the characters. This was followed by an analysis of the different verbal forms used, which included present perfect tenses (*have/has gone* and *am/is/are gone*), past perfect tenses (*had gone* and *was/were gone*), an infinitive (*have gone* and *be gone*) and *-ing* forms (i.e. *having gone* or *being gone*).

Next, since the components of motion events were expected to influence the choice of auxiliaries, the *figure* and the *ground* present in the extracted examples were all analysed and grouped according to separate

categories. As regards the *figure*, the examples were divided into those containing a human *figure* (e.g. *he* in *He had gone directly to the inn*) and those containing a non-human *figure* (e.g. *things* in *things have gone so far*). As for the *ground*, it was important to distinguish at first if the *ground* was present in the surface structure (e.g. *he was gone to a neighbouring town*, where *neighbouring town* is the *ground*) or not (e.g. *he is gone*, where there is no explicit *ground* in the sentence, although it might be implied in the context). Secondly, the examples that contained an explicit *ground* displayed a wide variety of *grounds*. However, a major distinction was established between those that were physical, i.e. *into the church* in *He had gone into the church*, and those that were metaphorical, i.e. *mad* in *He has gone mad*.

Finally, a comparison was established between Maria Edgeworth's use of *be* and *have* in perfect structures with *gone* and those of four contemporaneous English female writers, namely Jane Austen, Fanny Burney, Elizabeth Inchbald and Ann Radcliffe.

3.4 Results and discussion

The results included in this section refer to the four main aspects analysed. Firstly, the general results of the presence of both auxiliaries in the total examples are quantified and presented. This section also includes the results of the distribution of examples according to the voice, that is, the narrator's or the characters'. Secondly, the combinations of the two auxiliary verbs with *gone* are compared considering the different types of verbal forms used, namely present, past, infinitive or present participle (*-ing*). Thirdly, the *figure* and *ground* elements present in each of the examples are described. Finally, the results found in Maria Edgeworth's corpus are compared to the ones found in some of her contemporary female writers.

3.4.1 General results and voice

The data analysed in the corpus show a clear preference for the use of the auxiliary verb *be* as opposed to *have*. A total of 141 of the 446 examples analysed, that is, 31.61%, include *have* as the auxiliary verb, whereas this figure increases dramatically to 68.39%, that is 305 examples, in the case of the auxiliary verb *be*.

Although *be* is the predominant verb in the whole corpus, the use of the two auxiliaries displays measurable variation when the variable of voice is considered. As shown in Table 1, despite the higher number of tokens with *be* in both the narrator's and the characters' voices, it is in the latter where

the use of *be* surpasses amply that of *have* (79% versus 21%). In contrast, the difference between the two auxiliaries is much reduced in the narrator's voice, as *be* is present in 58% of the examples as opposed to 42% in the case of *have*. The statistical analysis shows a p value of 0.0001, which means that this result is significant, as it is < 0.05. Therefore, it can be stated that the presence of the two auxiliary verbs in the different voices is not random, and either the editors or Maria Edgeworth herself would have opted for indicating this difference. The editors may have wanted to change the *be*-perfect forms for *have*-perfects to reflect the tendency of the time whereas Edgeworth may have intended to show differences between the characters and the narrators, with the characters' speech reflecting a variety closer to Irish English.

Table 1. Distribution of examples according to voice

	Be	*Have*
Narrator's voice	58% (128)[1]	42% (93)
Character's voice	79% (177)	21% (48)

[1] Raw figures are all presented in parentheses in all the tables.

3.4.2 Verbal forms

Since the corpus used for the present analysis contains tales and novels, many of the verbs used are in past perfect tenses and present perfect tenses. Past perfect tenses are usually embedded in the narration, while present perfect tenses are the ones more often used by the characters in their own speech.

In addition, two other verbal forms were present in the corpus, the perfect infinitive, *be gone* or *have gone*, and the present participial form, *having gone*. As regards the perfect infinitive form, in most cases it appears following a modal verb, i.e. *She could have gone earlier*.

As shown in Table 2, some differences can be observed in the use of both auxiliaries in combination with one type of structure or another. The first result that stands out is that the forms with *have* are scattered and used in all the contexts. However, the distribution is not balanced. If the uses of the infinitive and the participial form are not considered to begin with, there seems to be a fair discrepancy in the use of *have* in present and past tenses, as *have* appears more often in past than in present form. On the contrary, when the results of *be* are observed, there seems to be a much more even distribution between the uses in present and past tenses.

In addition, although both *be* and *have* are used in the infinitive form, *have* is used almost twice as frequently as *be* in perfect infinitive forms, and *being gone* is never used in the corpus, whereas just a few examples are present with *having gone* (cf. Table 2). These results align with those of previous studies (Rydén – Brorström 1987; Kytö 1997) which have also shown that *have* tends to be the preferred verb in the infinitive form, as opposed to *be*. Furthermore, they are significant since the p value after the statistical test is applied is 0.0001, that is < 0.05. This means that the choice of auxiliary is not random, but in this case motivated by the verbal form.

Table 2. Distribution of examples according to verbal forms

	Be	*Have*
Present perfect tense	44.59% (136)	31.21% (44)
Past perfect tense	45.90% (140)	48.94% (69)
Infinitive (have/be + gone)	9.51% (29)	17.02% (24)
-ing (having/being + gone)	0%	2.83% (4)

3.4.3 Figure and Ground

3.4.3.1 Figure

All motion events include a *figure* that moves or is located somewhere, as described in 3.1. This *figure* coincides with the syntactic subject of the sentence in all the examples found, which is the most common function of the *figure*. Due to the fact that in English the subject always has to be present in the syntactic structure, the *figure* is also always present in the surface structure of the motion events analysed here.

The idea of motion could imply that either a *figure* moves by itself or is moved by somebody else. However, in all the examples analysed, the *figure* is the one that moves, independently of it being human or non-human, for instance *a letter*. Because of this, it was expected that most of the *figures* would be human, since non-human *figures* do not tend to physically move by themselves, unless they are animals or a metaphorical meaning is implied, as in *a letter has gone in the post*.

As can be seen in Table 3, even though the human *figures* dominate in combination with both auxiliary verbs, when a non-human *figure* is present the use of *have* is slightly preferred to the use of *be*. This difference is not significant, as shown by the p value of 0.1907, which implies that this element of the motion situation does not affect the type of auxiliary. However,

when considered together with the rest of the results, it may contribute to indicating a possible pattern. As shown in 3.4.3.2, the fact that metaphorical *grounds* seem to favour the use of *have* could also explain the higher presence of non-human *figures* with *have*, because, unlike human *figures*, non-human *figures* often move in a metaphorical way, and they can even be metaphorical themselves (e.g. *swearing has gone out of fashion*).

Table 3. Distribution of human and non-human *figures*

	Be	*Have*
Human *figure*	78% (238)	72% (102)
Non-human *figure*	22% (67)	28% (39)

3.4.3.2 Ground

As opposed to the component of the *figure*, the *ground* is not always present in the surface structure of the sentence in English, that is, in the syntactic representation of the motion event (e.g. in *The girl is gone* there is no indication of where the motion event ends). However, it is always present in the deep structure, the semantic content of the sentence (e.g. although in *The girl is gone* there is no 'external' ground, in the deep structure a location can be inferred). Usually, the context contributes to the understanding of what the *ground* is if it has been left out of the surface structure, but at the same time a variety of interpretations may arise when the *ground* is not explicitly present.

In addition, when the *ground* is present, it is represented by many different words or phrases, sometimes with a physical meaning (e.g. a place) and sometimes with a metaphorical one (e.g. a state of being, such as *red* in *he has gone red*, implying embarrassment). Furthermore, there is such a range of subtleties of meanings that a further distribution proved essential.

The categories established were as follows: *no explicit ground*, when there was no *ground* present in the surface structure (e.g. *he is gone*); *physical location* (e.g. *Mr Henry was gone to Amsterdam*); *to action*, which includes a verb, but it implies that there is a physical place where that particular action takes place (e.g. *the old gentleman was gone to dine*); *intransitive preposition*, that is, when the *ground* is represented by a preposition functioning on its own rather than accompanied by a complement, and it incorporates both *path* and *ground* (e.g. *all the reports that have gone abroad*); *intransitive preposition + prepositional phrase*, in which as well as the intransitive preposition, there is a prepositional phrase referring to the *ground* more specifically (e.g. *Mr Hope and the band is gone up to the castle*), and these are examples incorporating a complex *path*,

as it is expressed both in the intransitive preposition and in the preposition introducing the complement *ground*; *intransitive preposition + to action*, which is similar to the previous category but incorporates an action rather than a physical place (e.g. *he had gone out to take a solitary walk*); *noun phrase*, where the complement is not preceded by any preposition, but it refers to some kind of *ground* (e.g. *they have gone a single step*); *preposition + metaphorical location*, which functions as *ground* but it is abstract or metaphorical (e.g. *he has gone through certain mysterious preparations*); the word *far* or any form containing it, such as *farther*, *so far* or *too far* (e.g. *she had gone too far*), and this could have been incorporated into the category of intransitive prepositions, as the term *far* can have different functions, however, since it was only used with *have* it was considered important to keep it as a separate category, in order to see if it could contribute to a better understanding of the choice of auxiliary; *to a state*, in which the *ground* is represented by an abstract concept referring to *a state of being* (e.g. *Zadig should have gone blind*).

Table 4 shows that *have* is used in a wider variety of contexts as regards the type of *ground* present, whereas *be* is much more restricted to certain *grounds*. Not only does the type of *ground* appear to condition the type of auxiliary, but the lack of explicit *ground* in the surface structure also seems to show a preference for *be*. Contrastingly, *be* is not used in combination with metaphorical locations, with the word *far*, and when the *ground* refers to a *state of being* (e.g. *something must have gone wrong*). On the contrary, the most frequent combination with *have* is the category of *preposition + metaphorical location*, followed by the *intransitive preposition* category.

Table 4. Distribution of different types of *grounds* with both auxiliaries

Type of ground	Be	Have
No explicit ground	77.05% (235)	7.10% (10)
Physical location	9.18% (28)	17.02% (24)
To action	5.57% (17)	7.10% (10)
Intransitive preposition	4.59% (14)	16.31% (23)
Intransitive preposition + prepositional phrase	2.62% (8)	3.54% (5)
Intransitive preposition + to action	0.66% (2)	3.54% (5)
Noun phrase	0.33% (1)	7.10% (10)
Preposition + metaphorical location	0%	26.24% (37)
Far	0%	9.22% (13)
To a state	0%	2.83% (4)

As shown in Table 4, the use of *be* is mainly restricted to those examples in which the *ground* is not explicitly represented in the surface structure, representing 75.96% of the total. The *physical location* is the second most common *ground* in combination with *be*, although the percentage is appreciably low compared to the first category. The rest of the combinations present lower percentages compared to the results with *have*.

As opposed to the results of the *figure* element, which did not prove to be significant, the results of the *ground* component are different. As shown by the p value of 0.0000, the differences between the uses of *be* and *have* in relation to the types of *grounds* that have been identified in the present study are significant, in other words, they are not combined randomly with one auxiliary or the other.

3.4.4 Comparison with some contemporaneous female English writers

In general, Maria Edgeworth seems to have had a preference for *be* as the auxiliary of perfect tenses, as shown in 3.4.1. As can be observed in Table 5, the equivalent usage patterns found in works of other contemporaneous female writers are in agreement with Edgeworth's, in the sense that *be* tends to be the preferred verb in all of them. Previous studies have shown that this also occurs with other intransitive verbs of motion (Calvo Cortés 2019, 2020). However, the case of *gone* is particularly interesting as it prevails in combination with *be* for a longer time. For this reason, and since this verb is the focus of the present study, a summary of how Edgeworth's results compare to those of some of these other writers is provided here.

The figures presented in Table 5 include both the raw data and the normalised data since there is a discrepancy in the size of the five corpora used. The percentages of uses of both auxiliaries provide a clear insight into the differences between them. They also help in observing the similarities and/or differences between the usage of the two auxiliaries and the five writers. The normalised data indicate that, in general, Austen uses perfect tenses more than the other authors, whereas the other four writers display very similar total figures regarding their use of perfect forms.

Table 5 shows that Maria Edgeworth's results are very similar to those found in Jane Austen in relation to the distribution of the two auxiliaries in perfect tenses. Both authors coincided in time although Edgeworth lived longer and, therefore, continued writing, and published her last novel, *Helen* (the last work included in the present corpus), in 1834. Nevertheless, both writers had works published or republished after their deaths and different later editions may have reflected changes in the novels, including

adaptations of grammatical features, such as changing *be* for *have* in perfect tenses. Access to the original manuscripts would provide clarification on this and could confirm if the editors had indeed manipulated the grammar or not. Since these original documents have not been accessed, this remains a speculation.

Table 5. Distribution of auxiliaries in Maria Edgeworth and in other contemporaneous female English writers

	Be	*Have*
Maria Edgeworth	68.39% (305) [1.68][1]	31.61% (141) [0.77]
Jane Austen	71.59% (247) [3.16]	28.41% (98) [1.25]
Fanny Burney	82.43% (122) [2.38]	17.57% (26) [0.51]
Elizabeth Inchbald	78.57% (33) [2.15]	21.43% (9) [0.58]
Ann Radcliffe	80.39% (82) [2.28]	19.61% (20) [0.56]

[1] Normalised data by 10,000 words is presented in square brackets.

The results from the three other writers included in this comparison, Burney, Inchbald and Radcliffe, reveal an even higher preference for *be*. All the chosen novels written by these women were published between 1778 and 1798. Although a period of 20 or 30 years may not have been too long in other contexts, in this particular situation it is a factor to be considered, since this is precisely the period when the use of *have* (as opposed to *be*) starts to dominate the perfective structures. This could explain the slightly higher percentage of *be* in these three authors when compared to Edgeworth and Austen. However, differences are slight and the five writers can be said to have behaved similarly in relation to their choices of auxiliaries.

4. Conclusions

The present paper has attempted to further our understanding of the uses of auxiliary verbs in perfect tenses by Maria Edgeworth. Her general preference for *be* as an auxiliary can be explained due to certain factors. Similarly, her choice of *have* in specific contexts may be connected to her conceptualization of motion situations.

The intervention of editors in the changes of auxiliary verbs cannot be demonstrated by analysing the examples in the printed works alone. However, the discrepancy in the data found in the analysis of the voices in

Maria Edgeworth's works may provide some insights into this issue. The fact that there are many more instances of *be* than *have* in the characters' voices as opposed to a more balanced result in the narrator's voice could indicate manipulation of the texts by the editors, since they would be more likely to maintain the direct speech of the characters, which may reflect more variation and features of the vernacular language. The significance of the results in this respect contributes to the supposition that if the editors did not change the auxiliaries, Maria Edgeworth likely chose *be*-perfects on more occasions in some characters' speech with a particular intention.

When verbal tenses are analysed, *be* is the preferred choice in the present perfect tense, while a more balanced percentage can be observed in the past perfect tense. In the statistical tests, the differences shown by the two auxiliaries have been demonstrated not to be random but possibly motivated in part by the type of verbal forms used.

Although it has been thought that Edgeworth's usage may have been influenced by Irish English, this does not seem to have been true of her choice of auxiliary, as her uses match those of other female writers of the time, who were likely virtually unfamiliar with this variety of English. All these writers prefer the usage of *be* to *have* when combined with the participial form *gone*.

The fact that Maria Edgeworth's results regarding auxiliary choice are closer to Jane Austen's than to the ones of Burney, Inchbald and Radcliffe could be due to the relative proximity of their lifespans. In other words, their writings were published between two and three decades later than the novels chosen for analysis written by the latter three writers. Nevertheless, the similarity of results with Austen's may simply have been due to chance.

One of the most influential factors seems to be the components of motion situations. Although the *figure* does not appear to play an important role in the selection of auxiliary, the non-human *figures* tend to slightly prefer *have* as the auxiliary of perfect tenses, which might indicate that abstract *figures* or *figures* that do not typically move by themselves combine with *have* better. However, no significant results were found for this variable. What seems to condition the type of auxiliary used most is the *ground*. Whenever no explicit *ground* is present in the surface structure, *be* is usually the preferred option, whereas when metaphorical locations are implied in the *ground*, *have* is the chosen verb. Previous studies (e.g. Kytö 1997) had associated *have* with the presence of a complement, which can be understood similarly to the presence of the *ground* in the surface structure. However, this study suggests that not only do complements influence the choice, but more specifically that the presence of metaphorical or abstract semantic content

is what determines which auxiliary is used in many situations, since both metaphorical *figures* and *grounds* tend to prefer *have* in perfect structures, even if only slightly in the case of the *figures*.

Similarly, it remains unknown to what extent Edgeworth might have been influenced by her reading of English literature, and despite wanting to reflect the Irish English variety in her texts, other influences may also have been present. Her use of either auxiliary may have been motivated by some of the factors suggested here, but she seems to have been a fairly conservative author in this respect.

Further studies are required to understand the uses of both auxiliaries. They include perfect structures with other verbs in Maria Edgeworth, other Irish writers (both female and male), and English male writers of the same time. Additionally, in order to rule out the influence and manipulation of editors, other types of texts need to be examined, for instance private correspondence, and when possible in the original manuscripts.

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