

Older English formed periphrastic ‘perfects’ with *be* as well as *have*, with the choice between the two based largely on the semantic class of the main verb (compare 1a and 1b). We will argue in this paper, however, that the constructions with the two auxiliaries were distinct in ways that they are not in languages like modern German, and that this was in part responsible for the ultimate disappearance of one with *be*. The main evidence for this claim is that the use of auxiliary *be* was subject to a series of restrictions which have nothing to do with familiar factors like agentivity and telicity and find no parallel in the modern European languages. E.g., it was not used in durative, iterative and certain modal contexts (see e.g. Rydén and Brorström, 1987). Crucially, in these contexts *have* appeared instead, even with verbs like *come* which otherwise took only *be* (2a). This is distinctly unlike German, where such factors play no role, and a verb like *kommen* ‘come’ can only ever appear with *sein* ‘be’ (see 2b). We propose that *have* and *be* did not alternate within a single unified ‘perfect’, but were used to form syntactically and semantically distinct temporal/aspectual constructions. The *have* perfect was similar to the Modern English perfect, expressing a relationship of anteriority in addition to the temporal relationship denoted by the finite tense on the auxiliary (as e.g. Klein, 1992, puts it, the Topic Time set by T is after the temporal interval of the eventuality expressed by the VP/vP). The *be* perfect, on the other hand, was a simple copular construction with a stative resultative participle (target states in the terms of Kratzer, 2000). Any implication of anteriority to the Topic Time was derived from the resultativity of the participle, not encoded in the clausal tense/aspect system. More concretely, the *be* perfect had a structure like that proposed by Embick (2004) for resultative participles, where the root combines first with a FIEN(T) (or BECOME) head creating the resultative, and then a stative head. The *have* perfect, on the other hand, involved an aspectual head denoting Klein’s perfect aspect, i.e. the anteriority relationship. Couching our analysis in terms of Distributed Morphology, we will show that it is possible to handle the various uses of past participle form by using underspecified Vocabulary Items to spell out distinct but relatable underlying structures. We will then show that *be* was impossible in just those contexts where a (potentially eventive) past is required rather than a result state, presenting evidence from a corpus study showing that the restrictions noted above are essentially categorical once correctly identified in these terms. This analysis receives further support from a comparison with the Modern German stative passive in 3a, which differs from the formally identical *sein* ‘be’ perfect in 3b not only in voice, but also in lacking the layer of anteriority below finite T (see Kratzer, 2000). What is especially interesting is that the past subjunctive form of this stative passive yields a **present** counterfactual meaning in conditionals (see 4a), while that of the *sein* perfect yields a **past** counterfactual (see 4b). Corpus data show that older English behaves in this respect as our analysis would predict: past subjunctive forms with *have* yield past counterfactuals, while those with *be* yield present counterfactuals of a resultative state. Now, our analysis of the *be* perfect corresponds to what is generally thought to be its historical origin: a predicative use of the stative resultative participle. Of course, a similar origin is typically assumed for the *have* perfect – the predecessor to *I have prepared the food* meaning something like ‘I have the food in a prepared state’. We will claim that while the construction with *have* was grammaticalized fairly early in its temporal/aspectual use, the one with *be* essentially remained as it was, restricted to resultatives. As periphrastic forms came to express things like anteriority in non-finite environments, it was only the construction with

have that was extended, even with verbs which formed their resultatives with *be*. It is thus not the case that *be* was simply replaced by *have* the perfect. Rather, *be* was never extended to most types of the perfect in the first place, which were the domain of *have* from their first appearance, and it was lost only from the resultative construction. This development is especially clear with the past counterfactuals, as our corpus data demonstrate. Around 1350, the *have* perfect first appears in past counterfactuals. Crucially, the *be* perfect is never used in this capacity. With verbs like *come* which combined exclusively with *be*, this is the time when *have* first starts to appear, and in just these novel contexts. This development is in contrast to languages like German, where the construction with *be* was also grammaticalized as a temporal form, expanding its use in parallel with the one with *have* rather than being ultimately lost.

- (1) a. as ha þreo **weren** ifolen onslepe...
 when they three were fallen asleep...
 ‘When the three of them had fallen asleep...’ (CMANCRIW-2,II.272.440)
- b. ... huanne hi **heþ** wel yuoꝛte
 ... when he has wel fought
 ‘... when he has fought well’ (CMAYENBI,252.2315)
- (2) a. And if þow **hadest** come betyme, he hade yhade þe maistre
 and if you had come timely he had had the master
 ‘And if you had come in time, he would have prevailed.’ (CMBRUT3,227.4102)
- b. Wenn du gekommen **wärest/*hättest**...
 if you come were/*had
 ‘If you had come...’
- (3) a. Das Buch ist geöffnet.
 the book is opened
 ‘The book is opened.’
- b. Das Buch ist angekommen.
 the book is arrived
 ‘The book has arrived.’
- (4) a. Wenn das Buch geöffnet wäre...
 if the book opened were...
 ‘If the book were opened...’
- b. Wenn das Buch angekommen wäre...
 if the book arrived were...
 ‘If the book had arrived.’

References

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