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INFERENTIAL SEMANTICS OF HISTORICAL 'BE-PERFECT'

Summary. The present paper is focused on the recipient's inference interpreting sentences with the 'historical be-perfect' in the Present-Day English. The fact is that the inferential semantics much depends on the recipient's conceptual system scope, i.e. his/her worldview. The historical perfect comes from Old English periphrastic constructions and finds its perfection in the only form of 'be + past participle of the verb intransitive go' as the outcome of the transformation of grammaticalization. There are two ways of its further development, first, adjectivization of the past participle, second, lexicalization of the verb analytical form to actualize the concept of 'resultativity'. Though, the choice of the tendency mainly depends on the scholars' linguistic school. So far the 'be-perfect of go' withstood a long history of grammaticalization in the internal history of English. The semantic analysis is based on the OE and ME texts and the British National corpus.

Key words: inference, contrastive semantics, recipient, aspect, perfect, perfective, resultative, lexicalization, grammaticalization language corpus, diachrony.

INTRODUCTION. The term 'aspect' is used to refer to the morphosyntactic representation of those properties of an event which may be termed, according to Bernard Comrie, as the internal temporal structure of a situation, specifically whether it is bounded (looking at the verbal activity from outside as having a beginning and an end) or unbounded (looking at the verb activity from the inside, without specifying a beginning or an end to the activity) [1, p. 1–3; see also: 2, p. 313]. The loss of perfect auxiliary *be* in English has received a great deal of attention in historically-oriented works, see in particular: Ture Johannisson (1958), Tauno F. Mustanoja (1960), Elizabeth C. Traugott (1972), M. Rydén and S. Brorström (1987), Merja Kytö (1997), Thomas McFadden and Artemis Alexiadou (2014). Specifically, *be* appears only in examples that would be characterized as perfects of result, while *have* appears everywhere else, in particular with what would be characterized as experiential perfects [see: 9; 10]. Wayne Harbert considers that all modern Germanic languages have developed periphrastic constructions involving the past participle and an auxiliary such as *have* or *be*, which correspond formally to the English perfect and Pluperfect [11, p. 301; see also in Latin: 12].

In addition to being coded grammatically for aspect, every verb also has an inherent aspect, which is called its lexical aspect [see: 13, p. 419–435]. Following Zeno Vendler (1974) there are two principal categories of lexical aspect, dynamism and telicity. All verbs are either stative or dynamic. Stative verbs describe internal states as opposed to actions, such as *to know* and *to like*.

DISCUSSION. Inference is the recipient's ability to process the author's message and draw out his/her message, no matter how scarce linguistically the message may be. Let's say, whether the category is expressed grammatically or lexically or both the recipient's entailment will be action completion. Specifically, the construction "be + past participle" in OE and ME is a relatively frequent unit

to express 'completeness'. In the course of time the construction underwent grammaticalization and due to formal homonymy became a standard means of expressing the passive voice category. However, the recipient's inference is based on the writer's message and on his/her own knowledge of the world, wherein grammar has its niche.

In discourse inference is a literary device used commonly where logical deductions are made based on premises assumed to be true [see: 15, p. 152–171]. Another definition of inference suggests that it is rational but non-logical, which means that through the observation of facts presented in a particular pattern, one ultimately sees different or new interpretations and perspectives, e.g.: Paul J. Hopper and Elizabeth C. Traugott [16, p. 2], Joan Bybee et al. [17, p. 4]. The function of inference is important not only in literature but in daily life to make sense of things people say and do. The strategy of inference gives us an opportunity to make out the underlying meanings of phrases and arguments as well as to perceive the implicit concealed meanings that enhance the overall quality of a text [see: 18; 19]. But primarily we would like to pay attention to 'grammaticalization' as one of the main dynamos of both perfect (term introduced by Antoine Meillet) [20, p. 131], see further: Paul J. Hopper [21, p. 17–35]. Broadly speaking, grammaticalization is the development of grammatical morphemes, either from lexical morphemes or from other grammatical morphemes.

One approach to the role of semantics in grammaticalization is proposed by Bernd Heine (2002), as this is based in part on the model proposed by Gabriele Diewald (2002) who defines grammaticalization as a process of semantic shift [see also: 24; 25] involving three main stages characterized by the contexts in which the form in question occurs:

- (1) the earliest stage, that of untypical contexts, in which the meaning that forms the semantic basis for grammaticalization as a pragmatically specific interpretation of the construction's original sense;
- (2) a later stage, that of critical contexts, in which there are no contextual cues favouring either the older or the newer interpretation;
- (3) the final stage, that of isolating contexts, in which the construction is used in a way that definitely excludes the possibility of interpretation in the original sense [23, p. 259–306].

INVESTIGATION. The central point of our analysis is the distinction between *have* and *be* 'perfects'. The majority of historical linguists believe that the construction with *have* was like the Modern English and German perfects denoting anteriority at the clausal level, while the construction with *be* lacked this character - instead it was a copular construction built around a stative resultative participle.

On the contrary, our hypothesis is the Old English periphrastic construction 'be + past participle (intransitive)' hardened into the analytical perfect form and crystallized into 'historical be-perfect (past participle of *go*).'

Th. Visser depicts the periphrastic perfect with *have* as having developed over the course of the Old English period from a stage in which it could occur only with transitive verbs to a later stage, first visible around the turn of the eleventh century, in which ellipsis of the object became possible, and then to a stage in which these constructions could be used with intransitive verbs. He considers this last stage to have been reached only at the beginning of the twelfth century, and suggests that such constructions began to reach their modern level of productivity within Middle English [26 (III), p. 189–193]. Morgan MacLeod [27, p. 1–25] underlines that periphrastic perfects are formed using a variety of auxiliary, generally derived from verbs with such predisposing factors as semantic vagueness and generality [see also: 22; 28, p. 77]. As a result of the semantic differences between these verbs, *be* and *have*, their grammaticalization as auxiliaries takes place along very different paths. The temporal anteriority that was originally denoted only by the participle comes to be the primary meaning of the construction as a whole, and the noun is no longer the object of *have* but of the verb that appears morphologically as a past participle [e.g.: 17, p. 68–69]. In this way, to state the matter simply, constructions that originally meant ‘to have something done’ came to mean ‘to have done something’. The perfect periphrases using an auxiliary meaning ‘*be*’ are based upon past participles with active meaning, a type occurring in many Indo-European languages [e.g.: 29, p. 97–98].

We must admit that predicate constructions involving such active participles used to express the past action and, additionally, to actualize the component of the result of a past action denoted by the participle. On the basis of the additional resultative component Östen Dahl suggests that constructions with this semantic content may form a distinct category within a language, and the term ‘resultative’ has been applied to categories of this sort [30, p. 133–135].

The ‘resultative’ component may differentiate the ‘*be*-perfect’ from ‘*have*-perfects’ in that the former necessarily entail the persistence of the relevant state at the time in question [see: 31, p. 44] as the following Modern English examples illustrate:

1. *I see that my father and mother are gone already beyond the brook.* A7C 735.

2. *The sooner this business is done, Master Clerk, the sooner you are gone and that will make me very happy!* BMN 2657.

In (1-2) the subjects were there but they will never come back to that place, while in (3-4) the subjects were there they were absent at the moment of speaking, that is the component of ‘anteriority’ is stressed, cf.:

3. *Today the trees have gone but the lead cast of the Stephen Tomlin sculpture of her head stares out from the garden towards the marshes.* ANP689.

4. *Mr. Lennis and his secretary have gone home.* HOD1603.

It should be noted that the application of the term ‘resultative’ to English constructions such as that in (1-2) follows the practice of Östen Dahl (1985) and Joan Bybee et al. (1994). The use of ‘*be*’-auxiliaries with intransitive verbs denotes ‘a change of place or state’. Investigating their use as passive auxiliaries, see: David Perlmutter (1978); Luigi Burzio (1986), Laurel J. Brinton (1988). and of ‘*have*’-auxiliaries with other verbs, Bruce Mitchell, concludes that the development of the periphrastic forms was complete by the time of the earliest texts and that these grammatical categories remained stable throughout Old English [15, p. 152–171].

According to some historical linguists, e.g., Tauno F. Mustanoja (1960) and K. Carey (1994), the early English *have* + past participle construction had only one meaning, namely, the resultative perfect

[4, p. 499–500; 35, p. 103–117; 36, p. 355–392]. However, recent research has demonstrated that the Old English *have* + past participle construction has much more in common with the Modern English present perfect than was previously thought [37, p. 813–825]. Žic Fuchs shows that there are four constructions each reflecting a specific meaning, the most frequent two being the resultative and the experiential, which are primarily aspectually marked [38; see also: 39, p. 45–77]. Charles M. Carlton stresses that a combination of *habban* + past participle occurs fairly frequently in Old English. The verb *habban* is usually used in the past tense denoting the completion of an action in relation to the present. He found only one example of *beon/wesan* + past participle in the Old English Charters which could be interpreted as perfect [40, p. 114].

The semantic perfect (completed event with present relevance) and pluperfect (past of past) were often rendered in OE by the simple past. Adverbs were frequently employed to make the meaning clear, e.g.:

5. *Fæder, Ic syngode Father “I have sinned”.* Lk WScp 15.18.

6. *þær manna lic lagon þe wæran ær acwealde on Dam cweart-erne gefyrn*

“*there of-men bodies lay ...were before killed in that prison distant*”.

(= *the bodies lay there of the men who had been killed in that distant prison*). (ÆLS 4.210)

Bridget Drinka thinks that the Germanic perfect periphrases have their origin in calques of similar Latin constructions [41, p. 101–121]. On the contrary, Th. Visser points out that the periphrastic perfect with *have* as having developed over the course of the Old English period from a stage in which it could occur only with transitive verbs to a later stage [26 (III), p. 189–93]. There were two phrasal constructions in OE: *habban* ‘to have’ + past participle, *beon/wesan* ‘to be’ + past participle. The inflected forms of past participle were probably first analysed as adjectives [see also: 27]. It was never inflected with GEN or DAT objects, prepositional phrases or sentential complements functioning as objects. The number of inflected forms decreased in the OE period. ⇒ It could be used both with transitive (7-8) and intransitive (9) verbs, though the latter favoured *be*-perfect, e.g.:

7. *þa þa ge hiene gebundenne (infl.) hæfdon “then when you him-ACC bound had ...then when you had bound him/ had him in the state of being bound.”* Or 6 37.296.2.

8. *Ic hæbbe gebunden þone feond þe hi drehte. “Them afflicted I have bound the enemy who afflicted them”* ÆCHom I, 31.

9. *æfter þæm þe hie gesyngod habba þæc “...after they have sinned”.* Hom I, 39.

It is difficult to say whether the inflected forms were understood as truly adjectival (stative) in meaning, especially since the inflected forms are sometimes co-ordinated with non-inflected participles, e.g.:

10. *Fela Godes wundra we habbaþ gehyred (uninfl.) and eac gesewene (infl) æc “Many God’s wonders we have heard and also seen” (= We have heard and also seen many of God’s wonders).* Hom I, 39.

However, since the inflected forms occur only with accusative objects, it seems that they were adjectival in meaning; the adjectival construction originally consisting of the main verb *habban*, the object possessed and an adjectival past participle, e.g.:

11. *þonne hæbbe we begen fet gescode (acc.pl.) suiþe untælli-ce. “then have we both feet shod very blamelessly then let us have both our feet very well shod” (=in the state of having been shod).* CP 5.45.10.

As for be-perfect OE possessed also a second (plu) perfect construction consisting of a be-verb + past participle, [see: 42]. This was mainly restricted to intransitive verbs of the type involving change of place or state. Like the 'habban-perfect', the 'be-perfect' could be inflected (10), but often was not (11):

12. *Craccuse wæron monege cyningas (pl) to fultume cumene (pl)*. "To-Gracchus were many kings as help come" (= Many kings had come to Gracchus as support. Or 5 4.224.5.

13. *Hie wæron cumen (uninfl) LeoniDan to fultume* "They were come to-Leonidas as help" (=They had come to Leonidas to help him.) Or 2 5.82.13.

The inflected participial constructions with *habban* and *beon/wesan* were probably truly adjectival in PrOE. As indicated, in the OE period the construction could still involve adjectival meaning, but the signs of the ongoing reanalysis (*habban*, *beon* were interpreted as auxiliaries + past participle being part of the verb complex) are already present. Pishghadam Reza, Ziaei Sima in their article on "The Interaction of Lexical and Grammatical Aspects in English as a Foreign Language for Iranian Farsi Speaking Learners" specify that periphrastic perfect was absent or sporadically present in Old English, *be* was used as auxiliary for the intransitive verbs. Bernard Mitchell admits that HAVE-perfect is well established in Old English and it denoted only one function of Modern English perfect – indefinite past [43, p. 149–156]. According to Johan Elsness perfect points out unindented period of past time, it is prior the deictic zero point and differs from preterite in expressing 'resultative' connotations [44, p. 81–103; see also: 45; 46]. Reza Pishghadam [43, p. 149–156] and Robert E. Diamond [47, p. 25] support the idea that present perfect and past perfect composed of the verbs 'be' – 'have' + participle were being developed during the Old English period, see also: [44, p. 81–103].

In ME the development of *habban* as an auxiliary seems to be complete as evidenced by the frequent alternation between the perfect and the preterite in different manuscript versions of the same text and the random use of the inflected past participle (the plural ending –e used with singular nouns). The ME construction reflects its origins in word order, placing the object before the past participle (common until the 16th c.), e.g.:

14. *þe feader hwen he haueþ inoh ibeaten his child ant haueþ hit ituht wel warpeþ the gerde i þe fur*. "The father when he has enough beaten his child and has it taught well throws the rod into the fire." (= The father when he has beaten his child enough and has brought him up well, throws the rod into the fire.) Ancr.

Then the *habban* + participle construction was free to be extended to formerly inflected transitive contexts as well as intransitive contexts. The construction with *be* (ME *ben*) is still present; the general tendency is to prefer *have* when attention is focussed on the action indicated by the verb, while *be* when the emphasis is on the state or result of the action, e.g.:

15. *That we ben entred into shippes bord*. (CT)

16. *Arcite unto the temple walked is*. (CT)

Possible reasons why *have* ousted *be* in the formation of the perfect:

(1) the greater functional load of *be* (used as passive, progressive and perfect auxiliary);

(2) the ambiguity – *be* + past participle: could be perfect as well as passive;

(3) the neutralising effect of the contracted 's which can be interpreted as either *is* or *has*.

In the 16th c. *have* became the sole auxiliary with transitive verbs and the predominant with non-mutative intransitives. It still varied with *be* in mutatives. In the 18th c. *have* gained ground steadily at the expense of *be*. The final establishment of *have* as the auxiliary of the (plu)perfect took place in the early 18th c.

In Modern English the verb *go* is one of the last verbs to permit the *be* perfect, e.g.:

17. *When the children are gone, and no longer require parental help and support, how is their time to be filled?* CE11301.

The reader's inference: 'to be gone' is the past action + the result (= no return to the then family life). Here is an illustration of the past event related to the present moment.

The corpus analysis of the sentences with the 'be + past participle of the verb *go*' reveals its frequency usage in Modern English:

BE (present, 3rd p.sg.) + gone = 184

18. *The standard equipment list extends to electric everything, anti-lock brakes and a CD player, while the chrome bonnet strip is gone*. BM5 1430.

BE (past,sg.) + gone = 676

19. *The woman had a car at Ealing in which she would drive them all home after the last train was gone*. EDN2036.

BE (past,pl.) + gone = 162

20. *For two and a half months Saragossa, a poorly fortified town, resisted a good siege train, and when the walls were gone the inhabitants fought in the streets*. FB71141.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES. The present/past dichotomy of the Germanic verbal system was supplemented by the development of periphrastic forms such as the perfect and pluperfect. However, the inflected past tense continued to be used beside these newer forms to express similar temporal content.

The rise of the perfect tenses is also closely linked with its aspectual function, although there was a clear morphological distinction between perfective and imperfective verbs.

Our hypothesis perfect of the 'historical be-perfect' functioning in Modern English finds its proof due to the contrastive semantic analysis of OE, ME, and Mod.E data. It is also based on the functional semantics of the perfect form which component actualization is contest dependent.

The predicate constructions involving such active participles express a past action related to the moment of speaking and may actualize the component of 'completeness of action' or the component of 'resultative action'. Despite the referred data some linguists support the thesis which emphasizes the use of the given construction as a means of expressing the 'resultative category' [30, p. 133–135]. Then, this construction would be transferred from the verb paradigm to the adjectival phrase denoting 'result.'

Consequently, once the construction 'be + past participle of intransitive verbs' underwent the transformation of grammaticalization into the analytical perfect tense form and hardened into a historical rarity limiting to the use of the only verb 'go'. Now it may undergo the transformation of lexicalization in case there will be sufficient data.

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Михайленко В. В. Інференційна семантика історичного 'Be-Perfect'

Анотація. У фокусі статті – інференція реципієнта у процесі інтерпретації текстових фрагментів із конструкцією be-perfect у сучасній англійській мові. Інференційна семантика залежить переважно від обсягу концептосфери реципієнта – його/її структурованої картини світу. Історичний перфект походить від давньоанглійських перифрастичних словосполучень і набув завершеної форми аналітичного перфектного часу поодинокого дієслова 'go': 'be + дієприкметник неперехідного дієслова go' – у результаті трансформації граматикалізації. Можливі два шляхи його подальшого розвитку: (1) ад'єктивізація дієприкметника; (2) лексикалізація аналітичної форми дієслова як актуалізатора концепту результативності, проте вибір залежить в основному від лінгвістичної школи дослідника. Що стосується внутрішньої мовної історії, то 'be-perfect of go' пройшов довгий процес граматикалізації в англійській мові й продовжує функціонувати в сучасному англійському дискурсі, про що свідчать кількісні результати корпусного аналізу.

Ключові слова: інференція, контрастивна семантика, реципієнт, аспект, перфект, перфектив, результатив, лексикалізація, граматикалізація, корпус, діахронія.

Михайленко В. В. Инференциальная семантика исторического 'Be-Perfect'

Анотація. У фокусі статті – інференція читателя в процесі інтерпретації текстових фрагментів, що містять be-perfect в сучасній англійській мові. Інференційна семантика во многом зависит от объёма концептосферы реципиента – его/её структурированной картины мира. Исторический перфект развился из древнеанглийских перифрастических конструкций и получил завершённую форму в аналитическом перфектном времени единственного глагола 'go': 'be + причастие II непереходного глагола go' – в результате трансформации грамматикализации. Возможны два пути его дальнейшего развития: (1) адъективизация причастия прошедшего времени; (2) лексикализация аналитической формы глагола как актуализатора концепта результативности, хотя выбор зависит в основном от лингвистической школы исследователя. Что касается внутренней лингвистической истории, то 'be-perfect of go' прошёл долгий путь грамматикализации в английском языке и продолжает функционировать в современном английском дискурсе, что подтверждается корпусным анализом фактического материала.

Ключевые слова: инференция, контрастивная семантика, реципиент, вид, перфект, перфектив, результатив, лексикализация, граматикализация, корпус, диахрония.