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Etre ou ne plus être:
Auxiliary Alternation in Ottawa-Hull French

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Être ou ne plus être? Auxiliary Alternation in Ottawa-Hull French **Abstract**

Although a small class of verbs prescriptively requires the auxiliary *être* in French *composé* tenses, as in (1), speakers often conjugate these verbs with *avoir* in natural conversation, as in (2).

- (1) Elle *est morte* en cinquante-deux. (060/1159)
'She died in fifty-two.'
- (2) Je *suis revenu* - j'*ai* *revenu* à seize ans, j'*ai* *revenu* à Ottawa. (055/153)
'I came back- I came back when I was sixteen, I came back to Ottawa.'

Indeed, examination of historical grammars reveals that though the alternation between *avoir* and *être* has been attested since the 1600s, little consensus obtains about the function it serves or even which verbs require *être*. In fact, the class of "*être* verbs" ranges from 1 to 95 verbs depending on the grammar consulted. Contemporary grammars now admit that for many "*être* verbs", *avoir* is used as well, variously attributing the alternation to semantic, syntactic and/or stylistic distinctions. Sankoff and Thibault (1980, 1997), Canale et al. (1978) and Russo and Roberts (1999) confirm that variable *avoir* usage in Montréal, Welland and Sudbury and Vermont French respectively, is conditioned by such factors.

In this thesis I extend the analysis of *avoir/être* variation to another variety of North-American French. From the speech of 45 informants selected from the Ottawa-Hull French Corpus (Poplack, 1989), I extracted every token of every verb admitting auxiliary variation, distributed across 21 verbs. Each of these was coded for a number of linguistic and non-linguistic factors hypothesized to affect variability in auxiliary choice. Some replicate those used in the earlier studies. Others are operationalizations of factors suggested to favour *avoir* use over the course of the development of the French language including type of complement if any, and whether the verb was also used reflexively.

Variable rule analyses reveal that a number of the constraints conditioning *avoir* selection in Ottawa-Hull French (e.g. adjacency, ability to be used transitively, and ability to be used adjectivally) are shared with other varieties of French. Others (e.g. type of complement, and ability to be used reflexively), are new findings reported for the first time in this thesis.

Results of non-linguistic analyses confirm results of previous studies showing that younger speakers favour *avoir* more than older speakers. While the effect was small in Montréal French, it is very strong in Ottawa-Hull French in the same direction. Furthermore, speakers with less education favour *avoir* as reported in previous studies. Finally, this thesis shows that knowledge of English has no effect on choice of auxiliary.

I conclude that because education and speaker age play a much larger role than linguistic factors in conditioning auxiliary choice, this points to a neutralization in the meaning of *avoir* and *être* in *composé* contexts, if indeed there ever was a distinction. *Être* usage with the "*être* verbs" is clearly something that must be learned -- a marker of higher education -- and not a meaningful semantic distinction.

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Etre ou ne plus être: Auxiliary Alternation in Ottawa-Hull French

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Introduction

One of the most perplexing features of the French language is the alternation between the auxiliaries *avoir* ‘to have’ and *être* ‘to be’ as in (1), taken from the Ottawa-Hull French Corpus (Poplack, 1989). The general view is that while most verbs take *avoir* in *composé* or compound tenses, a smaller group of mainly intransitive verbs of motion, fondly known to many second language French teachers as The *Vandertramp* family, shown in (2), requires *être*. In the spoken language, however, we observe that native Francophones use both *avoir* and *être* with verbs traditionally requiring exclusively *être*, and there exists a case of linguistic variation in these contexts which dates at least as far back as 1625 (Maupas, 1625).

(1) Je *suis* *revenu* - j’*ai* *revenu* à seize ans, j’*ai* *revenu* à Ottawa. (055/153)¹
 ‘I came back- I came back when I was sixteen, I came back to Ottawa.’

(2) The Vandertramp Family: Dr. and Mrs. Vandertramp

D <i>devenir</i> ‘to become’	M <i>monter</i> ‘to go up’	V <i>venir</i> ‘to come’
R <i>revenir</i> ‘to come back’	R <i>rester</i> ‘to stay’	A <i>arriver</i> ‘to arrive’
+	S <i>sortir</i> ‘to go out’	N <i>naître</i> ‘to be born’
		D <i>descendre</i> ‘to go down’
		E <i>entrer</i> ‘to enter’
		R <i>rentrer</i> ‘to re-enter’
		T <i>tomber</i> ‘to fall’
		R <i>retourner</i> ‘to return’
		A <i>aller</i> ‘to go’
		M <i>mourir</i> ‘to die’
		P <i>partir</i> ‘to leave’

In this thesis, I document *avoir/être* variation in the French spoken in the Ottawa-Hull region, and situate this contemporary variation within the evolution of its prescriptive treatment in French grammars published over the last four centuries. Through my examination of these works

¹ Examples are identified by speaker number and line number in the transcription in the Ottawa-Hull French Corpus (Poplack, 1989). Transcription protocol reproduces that of the Ottawa-Hull French Corpus.

as well as a quantitative analysis of the alternation in Ottawa-Hull French, I show that while the verbs constituting the so-called *être* class have fluctuated dramatically over the past 400 years, a number of the constraints that were operative on this class centuries ago still hold today.

Moreover, examination of historical grammars reveals that though the alternation between *avoir* and *être* has been attested since the 1600s, little consensus obtains about the function it serves or what the variation means, if anything. In this thesis, I address the question of why grammarians attribute a number of different meanings to the two auxiliaries for some *être* verbs, while offering no explanation of the variation with others. I also show that contemporary grammars now admit that for many *être* verbs, *avoir* is used as well, variously attributing the alternation to semantic, syntactic and/or stylistic distinctions.

Canale et al. (1978), Sankoff and Thibault (1980) and Russo and Roberts (1999) confirm that variable *avoir* usage with *être* verbs in Welland and Sudbury, Montréal and Vermont French respectively, is conditioned by such factors. Where possible, I operationalize factors found to be significant in previous studies of auxiliary alternation in French to permit comparison across varieties. I also operationalize new hypotheses, based on claims by four centuries of prescriptive grammarians, and test them on data representative of Ottawa-Hull French.

Chapter 1 Research Overview

1.1 Research Goals

In this thesis, I extend the analysis of *avoir/être* variation to a new variety of spoken French, with the goal of comparing these results to findings from previous studies. Such a comparison will help us understand why regularization of the French auxiliary system to *avoir* has not gone to completion, as it has, for example, in Spanish. It will also allow for comparison of the rates of *avoir* between different Francophone speech communities, to determine if the process of regularization is more advanced in some varieties of French than in others.

A further goal is to test claims made about auxiliary alternation by the prescriptive enterprise over the past 400 years against actual usage in contemporary speech. This will allow us to confirm if, as Levitt (1979) stated, “while the two auxiliaries were often used interchangeably, the grammarians of the time sought to make subtle distinctions that were not necessarily observed in real usage” (p 26). In a number of cases, this thesis represents the first time these claims have been empirically tested against spontaneous speech.

1.2 Hypothesis

Given that auxiliary alternation in French has been attested in a small yet ever-changing subset of *être* verbs by grammarians since at least 1625, and that there are between 9 and 16 verbs displaying this alternation in different varieties of contemporary speech, I hypothesize that there is significant variation in Ottawa-Hull French as well. I further hypothesize that since the various speech communities studied (Montréal, Welland and Sudbury, and Vermont) tend to share the same classic grammars as the basis for their French instruction, there will be similarities in the behaviour of auxiliaries in these varieties. Specifically, I predict that a number of *être* verbs will

be common among varieties, and that a number of the constraints operating on Montréal, Welland and Sudbury and Vermont French will also be operative in Ottawa-Hull French. .

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Linguistic Analysis

Since *avoir* and *être* are used interchangeably by speakers without an apparent change in meaning, as shown in (1) above, a methodology that treats such a phenomenon is required. In this thesis, I adopt the variationist approach, developed by William Labov in the 1960's and refined by numerous distinguished linguistics researchers. As explained in Section 3.2, this framework allows us to study the inherent variability of language in order to predict the extent and direction of linguistic change. The data, described in detail in Section 3.1, is analyzed by means of a variable rule application for the Macintosh called Goldvarb, which performs a sophisticated step-by-step regression analysis. This tool enables us to determine the conditions in which one auxiliary is chosen over another when all are considered together, and with what relative frequency.

Before subjecting the data to analysis with Goldvarb, however, significant care is taken to accurately circumscribe the variable context -- the situations in which the auxiliaries vary without a change in meaning. As I explain in Section 3.3, this is especially difficult in the case of auxiliary alternation, since the auxiliaries also alternate in cases where they mean different things. I use Sankoff and Thibault's temporal and non-temporal indices, outlined in their classic study of Montréal French (1980), as the model for circumscribing the variable context in this thesis.

Rationale for the selection and coding of tokens extracted from the Ottawa-Hull French Corpus is provided in Section 3.4. Results of the variable rule analysis for both linguistic and non linguistic factors are presented in Chapter 4.

1.3.2 Prescriptive Grammar Analysis

In order to study the treatment auxiliary alternation has received from the prescriptive enterprise over the evolution of the French language, I consult 32 prescriptive French grammars, dating from 1625 to 1993. These works represent a subset of a comprehensive annotated bibliography we compiled at the University of Ottawa as part of an ongoing SSHRC project into the relationship between prescription and usage (Poplack, LeBlanc and Willis, 1999). As outlined in Section 3.6, the 32 works selected provide a good representation of the different time periods, as well as a majority of references with examples from actual usage of the day.

1.4 Main Findings and Implications

In this thesis, I show that lexical and semantic factors do not adequately explain the extent or nature of the variation with the 21 *être* verbs in Ottawa-Hull. The lexical effect is explored in Section 4.1 while Section 4.2 reports on semantic influences.

I therefore perform variable rule analyses on over 2000 *composé* tokens from spontaneous Ottawa-Hull speech, to determine the linguistic and non-linguistic factors conditioning auxiliary choice. Results reveal that five linguistic and two social factors are operative in constraining this variation. Interestingly, three of the linguistic factors favouring *avoir* in the direction predicted, parallel adjectival use, locational complements, and lack of parallel reflexive use, have been attested to condition auxiliary choice by prescriptive grammarians over the past 400 years. Two others, non-adjacency of the auxiliary to the participle, and parallel transitive use, also favoured *avoir* as predicted. Results of the linguistic analyses are presented in detail in Section 4.3.

Two social factors also constrain auxiliary alternation: age and educational attainment. Younger speakers, and speakers with less education, favour *avoir* as predicted. Section 4.4 reports on results of the social factors analyses.

Several of these factors, such as reflexive use and locational complements, are tested and reported on for the first time in this thesis. Others, including the social factors as well as parallel adjectival and transitive use, have been attested to condition the variation in other varieties of French, thus confirming previous results.

In addition to examining the influence of linguistic and non-linguistic factors, I explore the treatment the prescriptive enterprise has afforded auxiliary alternation over the past four centuries. As reported in Chapter 5, by consulting 32 prescriptive grammars spanning the period from 1625 to 1993, I am able to posit three stages in the treatment given to the *être* verbs over time. When comparing the rates of *avoir* usage with these three stages in treatment, I conclude that there is indeed a relationship between number of explanations offered for auxiliary alternation by grammarians, and the rate of *avoir*. As explained in Section 5.2, the verbs with the highest rates of *avoir* usage in Ottawa-Hull have all received numerous explanations from grammarians. On the contrary, verbs with the lowest rates of *avoir* usage have received few or no explanations. This leads me to conclude that once a verb reaches a certain rate of *avoir* usage, grammarians respond by assigning a distinct meaning to each auxiliary. A discussion of this phenomenon is presented in Section 5.3. At the end of the thesis, there is a summary and discussion of all research conducted and results reported in this thesis.

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

Before turning to my own socio-linguistic analysis of auxiliary alternation in Ottawa-Hull, it is helpful to review the existing literature on this topic. Historical, syntactic, acquisition and variationist approaches have all been used to trace and/or explain this phenomenon in French and other Romance languages.

Most of the literature, with the notable exception of the variationist studies, assumes that there is indeed auxiliary variation between different verbs, but that no single lexical verb permits both auxiliaries in the same *composé* context. Clark (1987), for example, in a paper on language acquisition asserts simply that “Different words mean different things. That is, wherever there is a difference in *form* in a language, there is a difference in *meaning*. That is what, in 1980, I called the *Principle of Contrast*”. This quest for symmetry between form and function, typical of many linguistic approaches, is extremely problematic in the case of *avoir/être* alternation given the over 2000 examples from 45 Ottawa-Hull native French speakers who used the two forms *avoir* and *être* interchangeably with 21 different verbs with no apparent difference in meaning. Keeping this underlying problem in mind, the historical and syntactic literature is presented in Section 2.1.

Subsequently, variationist studies of this alternation that have been undertaken in Welland and Sudbury, Montréal, and Vermont are discussed in Section 2.2. In addition to the prescriptive treatments, the linguistic literature provides insights into factors influencing auxiliary choice. Where possible, these factors have been operationalized and tested quantitatively in this thesis. All the linguistic and non-linguistic factors studied in this thesis are outlined in Section 3.4.

2.1 Historical and Syntactic Literature

In his 1979 paper, Levitt notes that the general tendency of French to replace *être* by *avoir* parallels the behaviour of Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan. Indeed, the findings in Ottawa-Hull French reflect the trend shown in other varieties of French, as I report in Chapter 4. Importantly, Levitt asserts that *être* has survived in French as an auxiliary for many intransitives only because “the Academy [*Académie française*] and grammarians tried to ‘fix’ the language in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (p 26). I confirm this assertion in Chapter 5, where I trace the evolution of the prescriptive treatment of *être* verbs through a number of grammars spanning approximately 400 years.

Levitt explains that in the 1600’s, usage was hesitant, or variable as we would call it, and writers freely used one auxiliary or another for the verbs: *aborder* ‘to reach’, *accoucher* ‘to give birth’, *apparaître* ‘to appear’, *avancer* ‘to go forward’, *cesser* ‘to stop’, *déchoir* ‘to lower’, *demeurer* ‘to live’, *descendre* ‘to go down’, *échapper* ‘to escape’, *échouer* ‘to fail’, *entrer* ‘to enter’, *expirer* ‘to breathe out’, *monter* ‘to go up’, *partir* ‘to leave’, *périr* ‘to perish’, *retourner* ‘to return’, *sortir* ‘to go out’ and *tomber* ‘to fall’. Levitt states, “while the two auxiliaries were often used interchangeably, the grammarians of the time sought to make subtle distinctions that were not necessarily observed in real usage [emphasis mine]” (p 26). For example, he tells us that alongside *il est sorti* ‘he left’ (*être*), the 17th century grammarian, Ménage, defended *Monsieur a sorti* ‘Mister left’ (*avoir*) as an indication that the man left and subsequently returned.

In the 1700’s, grammarians such as Condillac proclaimed that *avoir* should be used for actions while *être* should be used for states. Levitt states that they made this rule to fit with their passion for logic and order. In the 1800’s, this rule was repeated, but grammarians had more and more difficulty reconciling actual usage with the rule. Levitt makes reference to Girault-Duvivier,

the standard authority of the nineteenth-century writers, who claims in his first edition (1812) that although the verbs *arriver* and *venir* express an action, one perceives only a state in the participles, and thus *être* must be used. In the second edition (1819), he finds that *un usage bizarre* ‘a bizarre usage’ requires *être* with certain intransitive verbs expressing an action, such as: *aller* ‘to go’, *arriver* ‘to arrive’, *mourir* ‘to die’, *naître* ‘to be born’, *tomber* ‘to fall’ and *venir* ‘to come’.

Levitt concludes that despite the general tendency to replace *être* with *avoir* in *composé* tenses in French, a process which he states has gone further in French than Italian, but not as far as Spanish which has eliminated *ser* ‘to be’ altogether in the active compound tenses, the position of *être* is secure since it has become obligatory with some of the most frequently used verbs in the language. (p 30)

In this thesis I will show that Levitt’s assertions are confirmed by previous quantitative studies on auxiliary alternation as well as the findings of this thesis. For example, in several studies, frequent *être* verbs have been shown to retain more *être* than infrequent *être* verbs (Canale et al, 1978; Sankoff and Thibault, 1980; Russo and Roberts, 1999). As well, all of the studies done to date, including this thesis, confirm Levitt’s hypothesis that many of the subtle distinctions posited by grammarians to explain the variation, such as the action versus state distinction, fail to be “observed in real usage”.

While Levitt accurately reports that in most cases, French is replacing the auxiliary *être* with *avoir* in *composé* contexts, he offers no explanations other than verb frequency and semantic distinctions, which he admits are frequently ignored, to explain why *être* has not disappeared completely as it did in Spanish. There were no doubt frequent verbs in Spanish that were regularized, and we must ask the question of why the frequent verbs are not being completely

regularized in French. By examining additional factors that have been suggested in both prescriptive grammars and quantitative linguistic studies, I will provide a clearer answer to this question, at least in the case of Ottawa-Hull French. The factors that I consider in this thesis are outlined in detail in Section 3.4.

Turning now to a syntactic approach, in a paper on HAVE/BE alternation, Cocchi (1994) observed that many linguists have tried to define criteria according to which one or the other auxiliary is selected, but very few have focused on why each auxiliary is selected in that particular context and not, for instance, vice versa. Even though Cocchi uses examples from Italian rather than French, her arguments are relevant to this thesis since since both Italian and French are romance languages with a class of BE verbs. To show that Italian has a class of BE verbs, she states that “Italian, in fact, is a language which shows a very high number of occurrences of BE-selection, as we find BE not only in unaccusative and passive verbs, but also in all the reflexive and impersonal constructions” (p 87).

Cocchi notes that Benveniste (1966) was one of the first linguists to deal with HAVE/BE alternation. Benveniste indicated that many languages don't use a possessive HAVE; instead they express possession with BE and a prepositional element (p 96). Cocchi claims that even if a copular HAVE is present in some languages, it can be considered as combination of BE + P° [a prepositional element]. Cocchi summarizes Kayne's (1993) proposal that the basic BE form and HAVE are obtained through incorporation of the functional head (D/P). Kayne extends this to HAVE and BE used as auxiliaries in compound tenses following suggestions by Benveniste. Cocchi states that “in Kayne's model the participle clause, headed by AgrObj°, is not selected by T° but by the functional head D/P° :

AgrSubjP TP D/PP AgrObjP VP” (p 97).

She notes that this is how Kayne accounts for the split in auxiliary selection among different languages or among different auxiliary constructions within the same language, as in Italian.

Cocchi provides derivations for HAVE and BE selection. In the case of transitive verbs, both English and Italian select HAVE. In her derivation, BE is spelled out as HAVE for these cases, as would also be the case in French. On the other hand, for BE selection as in Italian unaccusatives such as (3), BE remains BE in the absence of a D/P^o node with unaccusatives.

(3) Maria è venuta. ‘Maria has come’ (p 98)

According to Kayne, the past participle of Italian unaccusative verbs should be regarded as an adjective and the auxiliary BE should be no more than a copula. Cocchi thinks it’s unsatisfactory to treat Italian unaccusative past participles as adjectives when in English they’re very verb-like and other past participles in Italian are treated as verbs. Her argument is supported by the fact that we can distinguish copula + adjective constructions from *composé* contexts with past participles in contemporary French, as shown in Section 3.3. Cocchi also raises the question of why the DP^o node can disappear just for these cases in Kayne’s model.

She proposes the solution of the presence versus absence/complete inactivity of an AgrObjP-projection in ergative structures. She states that “this AgrObj^o head, present in Italian unaccusatives and absent in English and Spanish ones, can be deemed responsible for the surfacing of the aux as BE in Italian” (p 99).

While her paper provides a syntactic explanation of how different auxiliaries can be used within the same romance language, namely Italian, she doesn’t explain how different auxiliaries can be used with the same verb in the same language, as we observe in Ottawa-Hull French. This

could be because she did not consider the case of French, or because her proposal does not address auxiliary alternation as we observe it in contemporary speech. Either way, we are unable to use her proposal to explain the observed variation between *avoir/être* in Ottawa-Hull French.

In a much broader attempt to account for auxiliary alternation in French, Huffman (1977) concludes that the traditional grammar treatment of *avoir/être* alternation can be summarized as follows:

1. Distribution of *avoir/être* is historically determined, thus no synchronic explanation is possible.
2. Certain verbs take certain auxiliaries, i.e. a lexical explanation.
3. Distribution has to do with the semantic content in which the form appears, however grammarians have given a number of explanations which seem to contradict each other.

My investigation of the prescriptive treatment of auxiliary alternation over the past several centuries, presented in Chapter 5, confirms that Huffman's summary is partially complete.

Section 5.1.4 exemplifies how some grammarians provided no explanation for the observed variation, while Section 5.1.2 provides support for Huffman's view that grammarians sometimes attributed different semantic meanings to the two auxiliaries. The fact that the grammars included lists of *être* verbs confirms his second point. In addition to Huffman's summary, I show that prescriptive grammarians also attributed the variation to syntactic and stylistic differences, as shown in Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.3 respectively.

After examining the treatment of *avoir/être* distribution by grammarians such as Le Bidois (1962), Benveniste (1965), Chevalier (1964), Grevisse (1964) and Guillaume (1965), Huffman notes that most grammars attribute the choice of *avoir* or *être* to an action/state opposition. At the same time, many grammarians state that auxiliary alternation with the same lexical verb is a mere morphological irregularity. Huffman points out that one shouldn't be able to associate a factor such as 'state' with only one form if it is simply a morphological irregularity. Similarly, one

shouldn't be able to use *être* when a verb is intransitive, and *avoir* with the same verb when it is transitive if there is no action/state distinction.

He concludes that the classes of verbs outlined in the grammars are merely consequences of the semantic properties of the two auxiliaries and not an explanation in and of themselves. His stated goal, therefore, is to search for an understanding of the characteristics of *avoir* and *être* that determine the difference in their distributions (p 81).

The central hypothesis of Huffman's proposal is that auxiliaries are not "mechanically selected by classes of verbs", in other words are not selected lexically, but rather have different characteristics that "determine the differences in their distribution" (p 81). While this thesis confirms that auxiliaries are not selected by speakers simply according to a list of *être* verbs, it does not find, contrary to Huffman's proposal, that different auxiliaries mean different things. In fact, as I show in Chapter 4, the data point to a neutralization in the meanings of *avoir* and *être* in *composé* contexts.

Huffman's problematic proposal is as follows. He groups all cases of *être* use in *composé* tenses together, based on his observation that *être* is the verb containing least activity in lexicon of French. He writes that "whenever the combination *être* + participle is used, the *activity* involved in the 'verb' (= the lexical item signalled by the participle) is being *deemphasized*" (p 85). In other words, *être*'s lexical meaning is preserved in the verb so it is not strictly speaking an "auxiliary" but rather an independent signal. According to Huffman, the effect of putting *être* into the message and relegating activity to the status of participle is to downplay the activity contained in the meaning of the participle.

On the other hand, he states that *avoir* gives up lexical meaning when combined with the participle and represents merely part of the inflection of the verb. Under this explanation, the

choice isn't between two auxiliaries, but rather between *être* or the verb represented by the participle. He states that speakers use *avoir* to emphasize the lexical verb they have chosen, while they choose *être* to deemphasize the same verb.

One initial problem with his proposal is that it doesn't hold for the verb *devenir* 'to become' which he states unequivocally "*never* occurs in the combination *avoir* + participle" because it "is a word whose very lexical meaning draws attention to a new state" (p 89). While they are rather rare, we do find several examples of *avoir* + participle in the Ottawa-Hull Corpus, as in (6) and (7), discounting his proposal in the case of this verb.

(6) *ma mère elle a devenu malade* 'my mother she got sick' (025/1478)

(7) *ils ont devenu mormons parce que ...* ' they became mormons because ..' (004/2289)

The main difficulty, however, with Huffman's explanation is that it is impossible to operationalize his assertions and test them quantitatively. In most cases, we simply cannot determine what the speaker intended to emphasize. Even if we could question speakers about their intentions in uttering a particular sentence, it is not clear they could tell us accurately what they intended. While Huffman proposes a theory that seems to unite all cases of *être* use in *composé* tenses, he does not provide a quantitatively verifiable explanation of this phenomenon. For quantitative studies, we must turn to the research that has been done on auxiliary alternation in several varieties of North-American French.

2.2 Previous Quantitative Studies on Auxiliary Choice in French *Composé* Tenses

Studies of French spoken in Welland and Sudbury (Canale, Mougeon and Bélanger: 1978), Montréal (Sankoff and Thibault: 1980, 1997) and Vermont (Russo and Roberts: 1999) have shown that 1) *avoir/être* variation is widespread, and 2) that various semantic, syntactic, stylistic and social factors contribute to speakers' decisions to use *avoir* or *être* in *composé* contexts. Table 1 provides a comparison of these studies on several relevant criteria.

Table 1 - Comparison of Previous Quantitative Studies on Auxiliary Alternation

Study Author(s) and Variety of French	# and Type of Informant	# of <i>Composé</i> Tokens	# of verbs displaying variation	Range of % <i>avoir</i>	Factors contributing to choice of <i>avoir</i> in <i>composé</i> tenses
Canale et al. (1978) Sudbury and Welland	170 high school students	533	9 (excludes reflexives)	3% - aller ¹ 86% - rester	1. Lexical counterparts conjugated with <i>avoir</i> (i.e. transitive use permitted) 2. Adjectival use with copula permitted 3. Frequency of use 4. Morphological properties Note: None of these factors was selected as statistically significant by a quantitative analysis tool such as Goldvarb.
Sankoff and Thibault (1980) Montréal	119 adults	2650	16	0.7% - aller 90% - passer	Selected as statistically significant: 1. Frequency of use 2. Education 3. Socio-Economic Class 4. Gender Not tested quantitatively: 1. Transitive use permitted 2. Adjectival use with copula permitted
Russo and Roberts (1999) Vermont	22 adults	453	13	24% - venir 90% retourner	Selected as statistically significant: 1. Transitive use permitted 2. Frequency of use

¹ only percentages of grade 13 students are provided here to give most accurate comparison with adult informants in other studies

In comparing these studies, we observe that not only do the number of verbs displaying auxiliary alternation vary between 9 and 16 verbs, the verbs with the highest percentage of *avoir* are different in all three varieties of French. This suggests that a purely lexical explanation, as

many prescriptive grammars offer with their lists of *être* verbs, does not fully explain this phenomenon. It is possible, however, that there is a lexical effect with the verbs differing across varieties. Interestingly, all three studies conclude that parallel transitive use of the verb and its frequency contribute to a high percentage of *avoir* usage. Russo and Roberts (1999), however, were the only ones to test parallel transitive use quantitatively. Unfortunately, they did not base their coding on actual usage in Vermont French, but rather on whether Canadian French dictionary entries for the verbs in question permitted transitive use. This is problematic because the Canadian French dictionaries are not designed to accurately reflect Vermont usage, and more importantly because dictionary entries in general do not necessarily mirror current vernacular usage in a given speech community.

Sankoff and Thibault (1997) conducted an unpublished follow-up study of auxiliary alternation and found that factors including: subject pronoun, animacy of subject, type of predicate, presence versus absence of intervening element, and tense of the auxiliary contributed to auxiliary choice with some verbs. In this thesis, I code for these new factors, in addition to the factors examined in the three published studies in order to compare the results of Ottawa-Hull French accurately with other varieties of French.

At this point, I turn to a discussion of the data and methods used to conduct a quantitative sociolinguistic analysis of auxiliary alternation in Ottawa-Hull.

Chapter 3 Data and Method

3.1 Data

The data for this thesis are extracted from spontaneous speech of 45 native francophones, interviewed as part of the Ottawa Hull French Corpus (Poplack, 1989)¹. To compile the data, I select every token of every verb admitting auxiliary variation, distributed across 21 verbs. These verbs were located in the corpus by examining all *composé* instances of the 95 *être* verbs mentioned by Goosse (1993) and selecting only those displaying auxiliary alternation. Determination of the variable context of auxiliary alternation is discussed in detail in Section 3.3.

This corpus is ideal for sociolinguistic analysis because of the vast quantity of approximately 3.5 million words of vernacular speech data collected as well as the fact that the speakers are stratified according to gender, age, education, occupation, proficiency in English and neighbourhood of residence.

The subset of speakers studied here, representing approximately one third of the Ottawa-Hull corpus, reflects the diversity in the speech community as can be seen in Table 2. Included in the sample are 22 males and 23 females, ranging in age from 15 to over 65. The legend at the bottom of the table explains the codes used for each column.

Table 2 - Profile of Subset of Speakers from Ottawa-Hull Corpus

Speaker Number	Sex	Age	Educ- ion	Socio- economic Class	English Proficiency	Neighbour- hood
001	M	I	S	UNSK	1	VAN
004	M	II	S	SK	3	VAN
005	M	III	P	UNSK	3	VAN
007	M	IV	P	UNSK	3	VAN
010	M	V	S	SK	2	VAN

1 Poplack, Shana (1989). The care and handling of a megacorporus: The Ottawa-Hull French Project. In *Language Change and Variation*, Ralph Fasold and Deborah Schiffrin (Eds.). Amsterdam: Benjamin. 411-451.

Speaker	Sex	Age	Educational	Socio-ec Class	English Proficiency	Neighbourhood
011	M	VI	S	PROF	4	VAN
013	F	I	S	UNSK	4	VAN
016	F	II	S	S/S	3	VAN
017	F	III	S	S/S	4	VAN
020	F	IV	S	SK	1	VAN
021	F	V	S	UNSK	4	VAN
022	F	VI	S	PROF	4	VAN
023	F	VI	P	PROF	2	VAN
028	M	II	S	UNSK	3	BV
030	M	III	PS	SK	1	BV
031	M	IV	S	SK	2	BV
035	M	VI	S	PROF	1	BV
037	F	I	S	S/S	3	BV
040	F	II	P	UNSK	3	BV
042	F	III	S	SK	4	BV
045	F	V	P	UNSK	3	BV
050	M	I	PS	S/S	2	WE
052	M	II	S	S/S	4	WE
059	M	VI	P	UNSK	4	WE
060	M	VI	P	UNSK	1	WE
064	F	II	S	UNSK	3	WE
065	F	III	P	UNSK	2	WE
068	F	IV	P	S/S	3	WE
069	F	V	S	UNSK	1	WE
075	M	II	PS	PROF	4	VH
078	M	III	S	PROF	3	VH
080	M	IV	P	UNSK	3	VH
082	M	V	S	SK	4	VH
085	F	I	S	UNSK	1	VH
087	F	II	S	UNSK	4	VH
092	F	IV	P	UNSK	1	VH
094	F	V	S	S/S	1	VH
098	M	I	PS	S/S	1	MB
100	M	II	S	SK	2	MB
101	M	III	S	SK	1	MB
106	M	V	S	PROF	3	MB
111	F	II	S	S/S	3	MB
115	F	IV	S	UNSK	2	MB
116	F	IV	S	S/S	1	MB
119	F	VI	P	S/S	1	MB

Legend

Sex M = male F = female

Age I = 15 - 24 II = 25 - 34 III = 35 - 44
 IV = 45 - 54 V = 55 - 65 VI = 65+

Education
 P = Primary S = Secondary PS = Post Secondary

Socioeconomic Class

UNSK = unskilled workers and chronically unemployed
 SK = skilled workers
 S/S = sales and service
 PROF = professional and managerial

English Proficiency

1 = low English proficiency 2 = mid low English proficiency
 3 = mid high English proficiency 4 = high English proficiency

Neighbourhood

Ontario: VAN = Vanier BV = Basse-Ville WE = West End
 Québec: VH = Vieux Hull MB = Mont Bleu

The informants also have diverse educational backgrounds, with 12 having completed only primary school, 29 having completed secondary school, and only 4 having completed post-secondary education.

Even more varied are their occupations: 18 speakers of the subset are considered unskilled, working in positions such as: cleaning lady, truck driver, bellboy, street sweeper, garbage collector, dishwasher, house painter, janitor or construction worker². Skilled informants, in positions such as: printer, computer technician, machine operator, plumber, locksmith, ironmonger, cabinetmaker, video technician, bus inspector and fireman, account for 9 speakers of the subsample. Another 11 speakers work in sales and services jobs, such as: cashier, saleslady,

² All occupations mentioned under each classification are taken from Poplack (1989), p 440-441.

waitress, cook and child care worker. The remaining 7 speakers of the subsample are classified as professionals, working as: tax supervisor, assistant manager, businessman, banker, engineer, accountant, justice of the peace, army aviation commissioner, owner of business or public servant of level AS1 or higher.

In addition to representing diverse ages, educational backgrounds and occupations, the speakers also reflect varying degrees of proficiency in English. Given that Francophones in the National Capital Region of Canada are often in close proximity with English, Poplack (1989) developed an index of anglicization in order to test the impact of proficiency in English on Ottawa-Hull French. She considered the following four items in order to classify speakers as having low, mid-low, mid-high or high English proficiency:

- a) self report of language used most frequently overall
- b) cumulative index of reported language use to: parents, children, spouse, boss, friends, neighbours
- c) cumulative index of reported skills in reading, writing, speaking and understanding English
- d) proportion of schooling in which both English and French were the medium of instruction

In the sample I selected for this thesis, there is a good mix of levels of English proficiency. The speakers are distributed as follows: 13 individuals rate low, 7 rate mid-low, 14 rate mid-high and the remaining 11 rate high.

The final measure of diversity is neighbourhood of residence, shown in the last column in Table 2. There are five neighbourhoods represented in the Ottawa-Hull corpus, and all are present in the sample. The neighbourhoods range in their contact with English starting with the most contact in the West End, followed by Basse-Ville and Vanier. On the Québec side of the border, the communities of Mont Bleu and Hull both have less contact with English than the

three communities on the Ontario side, with Hull having the least contact of all. In the sample, there are 13 speakers from Vanier and 8 speakers from each of the other neighbourhoods.

Having shown that the data reflect the diversity found in the Ottawa-Hull speech community, I turn now to a discussion of the variationist model which forms the framework for this research.

3.2 The Variationist Method

As outlined in the introduction, there exists a case of linguistic variation in French *composé* tenses, where *avoir* and *être* covary with certain verbs without an apparent change in meaning. In this thesis, I adopt the variationist framework developed by William Labov in the 1960's to examine this variation in spontaneous speech.

The variationist framework enables us to predict the direction and degree of language change in a speech community at a given point in time, based on the assumption that variation in language is a precursor to linguistic change. Since it is a commonly accepted fact that language is constantly changing, it follows that there is always variation in language which can be studied scientifically.

The variationist method differs from other linguistic approaches in several critical ways. Unique to this approach is that it rejects "free variation", a concept many linguists espouse. As Labov (1972) explains:

The basic postulate of linguistics (Bloomfield 1933:76) declared that some utterances were the same. Conversely, these were in free variation, and whether or not one or the other occurred at a particular time was taken to be linguistically insignificant. Relations of *more* or *less* were therefore ruled out of linguistic thinking; a form or a rule could only occur always, optionally, or never. The internal structure of variation was therefore removed from linguistic studies and with it, the study of change in progress. (xiv)

Rejecting the concept of “free variation”, the variationist method holds that every type of variation is constrained or determined by linguistic and/or non-linguistic factors in the environment. After careful determination of the context in which a speaker can choose between different ways of saying the same thing without an apparent change in meaning, the variationist framework allows us to explain the conditions in which one variant is chosen over another. In order to do this with a specific variable such as auxiliary alternation, we include cases where the variation could occur but doesn't, as well as cases where the variation actually occurs.

To learn which factors influence auxiliary choice in a statistically significant way when they are all considered together, an analytical tool for the Macintosh performing variable rule analyses on the data, called *Goldvarb* (Rand and Sankoff, 1990), will be used. The functioning of this program is discussed in detail in Section 3.5.

Before performing any type of analysis, however, it is essential to accurately circumscribe the variable context, so as to include only those cases where the variation can occur without a change in meaning. Section 3.3 outlines the circumscription of the variable context in the case of auxiliary alternation.

3.3 Circumscribing the Variable Context

Determining the variable context for *avoir/être* alternation is problematic given that the two auxiliaries coexist not only in contexts where they mean the same thing, as in (8), but also in contexts where they clearly have different meanings, as in (9) and (10). Since only cases where the two auxiliaries mean the same thing, as in (8), are eligible for variable rule analysis, we must find a systematic way to exclude cases such as (9) from the variable context.

- (8) *Je suis revenu- j'ai revenu à seize ans, j'ai revenu à Ottawa.* (055/153)
 'I came back (*être*)- I came back (*avoir*) when I was sixteen, I came back (*avoir*) to Ottawa.'

- (9) *Attends minute, je pense que lui est sorti dehors. ... (elle part à la recherche de son petit).* (013/1498)
 ‘Wait a minute, I think he’s outside...(she goes looking for her child).’ - present tense
- (10) *...comme quand-qu’ on était jeunes ils ont parti mais ceux...* (001/97)
 ‘...like when we were young **they left** but those...’

In this thesis, I rely on Sankoff and Thibault’s monumental 1980 study, which still represents the model for determining the variable context of auxiliary alternation in *composé* tenses. Specifically, I use their clearly defined temporal and non-temporal indices to isolate *composé* contexts as opposed to copula and adjective constructions.

The first of their temporal indices situates the point of reference at the time of the event, signalling a *composé* tense. These could be in the immediate environment of the verb, as in (11), where we find indices such as: *à midi* ‘at noon’, *hier* ‘yesterday’, *une fois* ‘once’, *un jour* ‘one day’, *la semaine suivante* ‘the next week’, *à l’âge de 12 ans* ‘at the age of 12’, *en 1922* ‘in 1922’, *à matin* ‘this morning’, *souvent* ‘often’, *bien des fois* ‘many times’, *trois quatre fois* ‘three or four times’. Alternatively, they could emerge from the sequence of discourse, as in (12), so that the action is set within a sequence of actions in the past. A sequence is often signalled by lexical items such as: *puis* ‘then/and’, *là* ‘there’, *après ça* ‘after that’, *alors* ‘so’ and *par après* ‘after’.

- (11) *J’ai sorti puis j’ai arrivé chez nous à mi-- à midi.* (119/909)
 ‘I left then I arrived home **at noon**.’
- (12) *Bien moi, me suis faite lire une fois la main puis toute a arrivé. So, je la fais plus lire.* (065/2352)
 ‘Well I, I had my palm read once and **then** everything came true. So I don’t get it read anymore.’

Also distinguished are temporal indices that situate the point of reference after the time of the event, which point to copula and adjective constructions. Lexical items such as *maintenant*

‘now’ and *à cette heure* ‘now’ alert us to these cases, which are outside the variable context. A present time reference in another proposition that is just a paraphrase, as in (13), where the speaker is discussing gifts children used to receive, is another indication that the point of reference and the time of the event coincide, thus excluding them from our context.

- (13) *Une chose- des choses serviables, pas des choses comme aujourd’hui, je veux dire aujourd’hui ils l’ont, puis cinq minutes après il est- il est brisé, il est parti.* (036/800)
 ‘Something- useful things, not things like today, I mean today they have it, then five minutes later **it’s- it’s broken, it’s gone.**’

Furthermore, Sankoff and Thibault state that “in narratives where the speaker is recounting past events, the copula in the *imparfait* ‘imperfect’ accompanied with an adjective represents a state that prevailed at the time of the past events”, as in (14).

- (14) *A ce moment-là, mes parents étaient partis en Europe puis eu...je sortais pas.* (MTL/117/381)³
 “at the time my parents were away in Europe and, uh ... I didn’t go out.” (p 1)

Temporal indices within complex sentences further assist in circumscribing the variable context. The first of these signals copula and adjective constructions. Sankoff and Thibault state that “when the verb of the higher sentence is in a simple (non-*composé*) tense that is the same as the tense of the verb *être* in the sentence embedded under *quand*, this verb is interpreted as a copula and not as an auxiliary” (p 321-322). Sentence (15) illustrates this.

- (15) *Quand je serai partie, ma petite, tu pourras rien savoir.* (MTL/57/844)
 ‘When I’m gone (= dead), my little one, you won’t be able to find out anything.’ (p 322)

On the other hand, “when the verb of higher sentence is in any *composé* tense, or in a simple tense other than that of the *être* embedded in sentence under *quand*, this embedded *être* is interpreted not as a copula but as an auxiliary” (p 322), as in (16).

³ Examples from the Montréal Corpus are identified in the format (MTL/speaker number/line number) as distinguished from the Ottawa-Hull Corpus which I use the format (speaker number/line number).

- (16) *Fait quand qu'il a parti, j'ai pogné des rashes icitte et là hein.* (040/1226)
 'So when **he left**, **I got** rashes here and there eh.'

Non-temporal indices are also used by Sankoff and Thibault as ways of identifying *composé* constructions. The first of these involves reponse to the question "how" and includes a prepositional phrase indicating manner or instrument, as in (17).

- (17) *la maison était assez vieille que ça a passé pareil comme du carton.* (069/2387)
 'the house was old enough that it went **just like cardboard**.'

A second is a reponse to the question 'why' which includes a prepositional phrase indicating a reason, goal or cause, as in (18).

- (18) *Puis là je suis retourné depuis ma deuxième année là, pour un cours d'informatique et gestion.* (050/34)
 'So then I returned after my second year there, **for a computer and management course**.'

A third non-temporal index is identified with a response to the question "under what circumstances" as in (19) where the circumstances of an act are made precise.

- (19) *Avoir pris le trou là, le bord là, le champ là, on aurait tombé dix pieds quelque chose de même, tu sais?* (001/1972)
 'Having gone in the ditch there, off to the side there, in the field there, we would have fallen **ten feet something like that**, you know?'

Indicators of duration, such as *toutes les fins de semaine* 'every weekend' in (20) help identify copula and adjective constructions. Here the state of absence during the weekends is highlighted and *être* in the imperfect situates the act of departure before the reference point.

- (20) *Toutes les fins de semaine en été, on était toujours partis.* (MTL/14/105)
 'Every weekend during the summer, we **were** always away.' (p 326)

With respect to other tenses, Sankoff and Thibault observed that the *plus-que-parfait* and the *futur antérieur* don't refer to acts in the past unless they are in narrative sequence that consists of a series of verbs in tense in question, as in (21). In (21), the sequence is signalled by

the word *puis* ‘then’. Sankoff and Thibault note that these *composé* tenses are usually copula and adjective constructions.

- (21) *Sur la rue Kirk, j’avais parti d’icitte puis j’avais mové sur la rue Kirk.* (007/1020)
 ‘On Kirk Street, I’d left here **then** I’d moved to Kirk Street.’

Negation also gives a good indication if the utterance merits inclusion in the variable context. The lexical item *jamais* means ‘not a single time’ so it’s usually found in a *composé* context as in (22).

- (22) *j’ ai sorti puis j’ ai jamais retourné.* (017/679)
 ‘I left and I **never** went back.’

As outlined above, for the majority of verbs I extract only those *composé* utterances clearly describing an action in the past since this is where the variation occurs (Sankoff and Thibault, 1980). The temporal and non-temporal indices outlined by Sankoff and Thibault help in determining these contexts. *Demeurer* ‘to live’ and *rester* ‘to live, to stay’, however, require different treatment since they always describe a state instead of an action. Sankoff and Thibault found that both these states exhibited auxiliary variation in Montréal French, and I found the same to be true for Ottawa-Hull French. For this reason, all *composé* instances of *demeurer* and *rester* are extracted and coded for either a terminated state as in (23) or a perduring state as in (24). Here we make the distinction between a state that is terminated and one that is perduring, again using temporal and non-indices, as well as the discourse context to make an accurate distinction. Terminated states, as in (23), can usually be identified by a temporal index, such as “three, four years”, signalling how long the state existed. Perduring states, as in (24), are clearly still in existence. In (24), the present tense of the verb *connaître* ‘to know’ as well as the word *toujours* ‘always’ indicate that the state still exists and the woman still lives in Lower Town.

- (23) *Ah j'ai resté là à peu près comme trois, quatre ans.* (007/1023)
 'Well I stayed there about maybe three, four years.'
- (24) *Je connais une dame au bout s-- qui a toujours demeuré dans Basse-Ville elle aussi.*
 (035/589)
 'I know a woman at the end -- who has always lived in Lower Town too.'

Following Sankoff and Thibault (1980), I do not include copula and adjective constructions as in (25) where the auxiliary functions as a copula, as these describe a state and not an action and *être* is always used.

- (25) *Le Flats, je sais pas, le Flats c' est changé depuis que c' est- c' est toute rebâti dans ce boutte là.* (065/1643)
 'The Flats, I don't know, the Flats are different since it's- it's all rebuilt in that part there.'

Also excluded from the variable context are the verbs *aller*, *naître* and *mourir* which are invariant, always using *être* in *composé* tenses in Ottawa-Hull.

Finally, *composé* constructions with a following direct object, as in (26), always use *avoir* and were thus also excluded from the variable context.

- (26) *Puis il a commencé ça, puis il a commencé voir.* (065/1330)
 'Then he started **that**, then he started to see.'

3.4 Coding of Tokens

Each of the *composé* tokens extracted was exhaustively coded for a series of factors hypothesized to influence auxiliary choice both in prescriptive and descriptive literature for a total of 15 linguistic and 6 social factors. Rationale for inclusion of each factor is outlined below and factor codes are provided in Appendix 1. The linguistic factors, presented in Section 3.4.1, encompass morphosyntactic, semantic and processing elements. Some relate to the subject: grammatical person and number, and animacy; while others relate to the verb: conjugation class, frequency, shape of the onset, transitive, adjectival and reflexive use. On a syntactic level, I

consider polarity, type of complement and tense of the auxiliary while at a broader discourse level, adjacency of auxiliary and past participle, as well as proximity in the pastt are examined. This comprehensive coding of tokens allows for testing of the way *avoir* and *être* are used unreflectingly by speakers compared to the way in which grammarians prescribe their usage.

3.4.1 Linguistic Factors

Factors relating to the subject

1) *Person*

Given that Poplack and Turpin (1999) found the formal subject pronoun *vous* to favour the inflected future tense over the periphrastic future in Ottawa-Hull French, I wanted to determine whether *vous* favoured either *être* or *avoir* in *composé* tenses. Assuming *être* is the more formal variant, my expectation is that it will favour *être* over *avoir*. I also wanted to determine whether any other subject pronouns had an impact on auxiliary choice. For that reason, I coded the *être* verbs according to the subject pronouns *je* 'I', *tu* 'you', *elle/il* 'she/he - singular', *ce, c'*, *ça* 'this/that', singular noun phrase, plural noun phrase, *on* 'we', *qui* 'who-singular', *qui* 'who-plural', *vous* 'you', *ils/elles* 'they', a group including *rien* 'nothing', *tout(e)* 'everything/all', *personne* 'no one' and *quelque chose* 'something' and null subjects and infinitivals together as shown in (27) through (39). Note that there were no instances at all of the subject *nous* 'we'. In Ottawa-Hull French, this subject pronoun is overwhelmingly replaced by *on* 'we' in the spoken language.

Following Sankoff and Thibault (1997), I code singular and plural subject pronouns separately as shown in (31), (32), (34) and (35). Similar to results obtained by Sankoff and Thibault, I expect to find no effect between singular versus plural subject pronouns.

- (27) *Je peux pas dire que j' ai déménagé souvent.* (119/79)
 'I can't say that **I** moved often.'
- (28) *À quelle heure tu as rentré? J' étais après watcher mon programme.* (065/1558)
 'What time did **you** come in? I was watching my program'
- (29) *elle est allée au Cégep- elle est partie au Cégep hier.* (119/2131)
 'She went to Cégep- **she** left for Cégep yesterday.'
- (30) *...opérer pour ses amygdales. Bien ça là ça a toute- ça a tombé sur les nerfs, hein?*
 (119/736)
 '...tonsils operated on. Well that there that all- **that** got on his nerves, eh.'
- (31) *Il l' a demandé puis le Saint esprit est descendu, hein?* (060/2011)
 'He asked then the **Holy Spirit** came down, eh?'
- (32) *Les assurances de- d' auto, depuis l' année passée, a monté de soixante-et-huit piasses.*
 (031/3579)
 '**Car insurance (plural)**, since last year, has gone up sixty-eight bucks.'
- (33) *De delà on a déménagé sur la rue Wurtemberg,* (031/33)
 'From there **we** moved to Wurtemberg Street.'
- (34) *Je le sais pas qu'est-ce-qui est arrivé, ils ont resté ça* (031/299)
 'I don't know **what** happened, they stayed that'
- (35) *c' est plutôt juste des couples avec leurs enfants qui sont partis là.* (100/782)
 'It's more or less just couples with their kids **who** left there.'
- (36) *c' est tu le plus long qui a parlé là, que vous avez passé à-travers?* (075/2220)
 'is that the longest who spoke, that **you** got through?'
- (37) *Là ils ont commencé à faire des travaux dedans pour les chambres* (075/743)
 'So **they** started to do work inside for the rooms'
- (38) *c' est le dernière journée. Rien a arrivé. Trois jours après, je m' en retourne au bingo*
 (065/2329)
 'It's the last day. **Nothing** happened. Three days later, I went back to bingo.'
- (39) *Je pense que j' ai- sont venus au monde dans Ontario.* (031/3469)
 'I think that I've- were born in Ontario.'

2) *Animacy*

In Montréal French, Sankoff and Thibault (1997) found that in the case of the verb *partir* ‘to leave’, inanimate subjects favoured *avoir* (personal communication). Goosse (1993) states that the verb *monter* ‘to go up’ in particular prefers *avoir* with a human or animate subject and *être* with an inanimate subject. In order to test the hypothesis that animacy has an impact on the choice of *avoir* with *être* verbs, I code for animate, inanimate, impersonal and null subjects as shown respectively in (40) through (43).

Because Sankoff and Thibault found an animacy effect with only one verb, and that effect is contradictory to the effect outlined by Goosse, I do not expect to find a consistent overall animacy effect with the *être* verbs in Ottawa-Hull French.

(40) *celui qui est à Saint Vincent, il a retourné il est venu ... premier là,* (023/1809)
‘the one at Saint Vincent, he returned he came back ... first eh,’

(41) *puis moi j' ai- quand-que le questionnaire est arrivé, hey j' ai dit, lâche toute ça.* (101/1735)
‘So me, when the questionnaire arrived, eh I said, forget all that.’

(42) *Ça m' a arrivé deux fois de même.* (101/87)
‘It happened to me twice like that.’

(43) *Sont dé-- sont déjà venus l' an passé* (101/203)
‘Came al-- already came last year.’

Factors relating to the verb

3) *Conjugation Class*

In studies on the French subjunctive, Poplack (1992) found that verbs with irregular morphology maintained use of the subjunctive more often than verbs with regular morphology. It is possible that verbs with irregular morphology may command more *être*, the auxiliary used with many fewer verbs, because speakers are aware that these verbs do not fit the normal conjugation

patterns. Given that speakers must memorize irregular forms, they are more likely to have memorized them with the auxiliary *être* as grammar books prescribe. Unlike the subjunctive, however, in which the form of the verb changes for each subject, participles in *composé* tenses are the same for every subject and may therefore be less influenced by this factor. By coding for the three verb classes outlined in *Bescherelle, l'Art de conjuguer* (1991), I test whether verb morphology has a significant effect on auxiliary choice. In fact, only verbs in the first and third conjugation classes appear as *être* verbs. The first conjugation *être* verbs are listed in (44) while the third conjugation *être* verbs are outlined in (45). My expectation is that morphology does not have a significant effect, given that the past participle of a verb does not change for each subject in the *passé composé* in French.

- (44) First conjugation group (ER verbs ending in e for 1st person present of indicative)
arriver, commencer, décéder, demeurer, déménager, entrer, monter, passer, rentrer, rester, retourner, tomber.
- (45) Third conjugation group (*aller, ir* verbs where present participle ends in ant, oir and re verbs)
apparaître, descendre, devenir, partir, repartir, revenir, sortir, venir.

4) *Frequency of the Verb*

It has been observed that “frequent forms tend to be more resistant to variation than infrequent ones” (Martinet (1969) in Russo and Roberts (1999)). This was indeed the case in the original Montréal French study where frequent verbs disfavoured *avoir* and infrequent ones favoured it with *être* verbs. Similar results were recently reported in Ontario French (Canale et al., 1978), Vermont French (Russo and Roberts, 1999). In order to test for a frequency effect in Ottawa-Hull French, I code verbs with a total N from 312 to 60, shown in (46) as frequent and verbs with a total N of less than 40 shown in (47) as infrequent. There are no verbs with N's

between 41 and 59. Table 3 shows the N's for each *être* verb studied. I hypothesize that infrequently used verbs will be more likely to favour *avoir*; and that frequently used verbs will tend to favour *être* in Ottawa-Hull French as well.

- (46) *commencer/recommencer* 'started', *venir* 'came', *arriver* 'happened', *rester* 'ended', *arriver* 'arrived', *déménager* 'moved', *partir/repartir* 'left', *passer* 'passed', *venir* 'was born', *rentrer* '(re)entered', *revenir* 'came back', *sortir* 'left', *rester* 'stayed - perduring'.
- (47) *demeurer* 'lived - ended', *retourner* 'returned', *monter* 'went up', *tomber* 'fell', *tomber* 'became', *rentrer* 'joined', *descendre/redescendre* 'went down', *sortir* 'dated', *demeurer* 'lived - perduring', *devenir* 'became', *sortir* 'appeared', *décéder* 'died', *venir* 'became', *venir* 'came to the end', *partir/repartir* 'started', *entrer* 'entered', *revenir* 'came back to the end', *apparaître* 'appeared', *entrer* 'joined', *partir* 'died'.

Table 3 - Lexical Verb Frequencies
Ranked by Total N in the Corpus

Lexical Verb	Total N in Corpus
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Frequent

commencer/recommencer	312
venir - came	200
arriver - happened	163
rester - ended	145
arriver - arrived	131
déménager	125
partir/repartir - left	120
passer	99
venir - was born	88
revenir - came back	70
rentrer - (re)entered	70
sortir - left	62
rester- perduring	60

Infrequent

retourner	40
demeurer - ended	40
monter	39
tomber - fell	32
tomber - became	25
rentrer - joined	24
descendre/redescendre	22
sortir - dated	20
demeurer - perduring	18
devenir	17
sortir - appeared	17
décéder	13

Lexical Verb	Total N in Corpus
--------------	-------------------

Infrequent (cont'd)

venir - became	12
venir - à bout	9
partir/repartir - started	8
entrer - entered	6
revenir - à bout	4
apparaître	3

5) *Shape of Onset*

In *Le bon usage* (1993), Goosse writes that “*certain* estiment qu'on dit toujours à la 3^e pers. du sing. est apparu parce que a apparu serait cacophonique. Cette raison a pu jouer un rôle” ‘some believe that we always say *est apparu* ‘appeared - être’ in the third person singular because *a apparu* ‘appeared - avoir’ would be harsh. This reason could have played a role’ (1182). Furthermore, from Sankoff and Thibault’s study (1980: 331), we observe that *aller*, *arriver* and *entrer* all have vowels as onsets and have a very low probability of *avoir* (.002, .04 and .07 respectively)⁵. In this thesis, I will determine whether verbs starting with a vowel, as in (48) use less *avoir* in Ottawa Hull French than those starting with a consonant, as in (49).

(48) *apparaître, arriver, entrer*

(49) *commencer, décéder, déménager, demeurer, descendre, devenir, monter, partir, passer, redescendre, rentrer, repartir, rester, retourner, revenir, sortir, tomber, venir*

⁵ Note however that *venir* and *revenir* start with consonants and disfavour *avoir* as well. Nevertheless, none of the verbs preferring *avoir* with a probability of over .37 start with a vowel.

6) *Transitivity*

Goosse (1993) states that if verbs typically requiring *être* in the *passé composé* have a direct object, *avoir* must be used as in (50)

- (50) “*On a descendu plusieurs passagers dans cette île.*”
 ‘We took a number of passengers down to that island’ (1182).

He admits variability however, by stating that “*on dit dans une langue assez relâchée: Il EST descendu L’ESCALIER*” ‘in fairly casual speech, we say: He IS come down THE STAIRS’ (1182). Some linguists claim that “the stairs” is not a direct object at all, rather an adverbial complement thus not requiring *avoir*” (Damourette and Pichon in Grevisse and Goosse (1993)). One can imagine that speakers may extrapolate from the fact that verbs with direct objects require *avoir* in the *passé composé*, and use *avoir* with those verbs capable of taking direct objects even in cases where they do not. For this reason, I expect that if a verb is used with a direct object in the *passé composé* with *avoir* in the corpus, it may prefer *avoir* even when used intransitively. Sankoff and Thibault (1980) suggested this, however did not operationalize it as a factor in their study. Russo and Roberts (1999) did test for this quantitatively, however not based on actual speaker usage in their corpus. I code all *être* verbs as either permitting transitive use or not based on actual usage in the Ottawa-Hull corpus. I must stress, however, that I include only intransitive verbs in my variable context since this is where the variation occurs. To determine the coding protocol for this factor group, I examine all instances of each *être* verb in the corpus. If an *être* verb is used transitively at least once, as in (51), I code the verb as permitting transitive use. If a verb is never used transitively in a *composé* tense in the corpus, it is coded as not permitting transitive use. Verbs that are actually used transitively in the corpus, and thus coded as permitting transitive use when used intransitively, are listed in (52). Verbs not permitting parallel transitive

use are shown in (53). A sample sentence from the corpus for each verb in (52) is provided in Appendix 2.

- (51) *je t'ai sorti **une affaire** là moi.* (001/1032)
'I got **something** out for you there.'
- (52) *commencer, déménager, descendre, devenir, monter, partir, passer, redescendre, rentrer, rester, retourner, sortir.*
- (53) *apparaître, arriver, décéder, demeurer, entrer, repartir, revenir, tomber, venir.*

7) *Adjectival Use of Past Participle*

In 1753, the grammarian Antonini wrote:

[...] des verbes neutres qui prennent tantôt l'un & tantôt l'autre auxiliaire, sont seulement ceux dont les participes passifs sont déclinables.

'[...] intransitive verbs that sometimes take one auxiliary and sometimes the other, are only those whose past participles can be inflected [in gender and number].'

(p. 317)

This suggests that if a verb's past participle is also used as an adjective in the corpus, there will be a greater tendency to see *avoir* in contexts typically reserved for *être*. Canale et al. (1978) and Sankoff and Thibault (1980) also suggested this, however did not operationalize it as a factor in their study. Russo and Roberts (1999) operationalized parallel adjectival use as a factor, however they did not base their factor group on actual speaker usage. I test this claim empirically based on actual speaker usage for the first time in this thesis.

To code this factor, I examine each of the *être* verbs in the corpus to determine which past participles were also used as adjectives. It is important to note that past participles actually used adjectivally, as in (54), are excluded from the variable context because here the verb acts as a copula not an auxiliary. When used as a true past participle as in (55), they are included, but

coded as having been used adjectivally in the corpus. Verbs used adjectivally at least once in the corpus are listed in (56) while those not used adjectivally are shown in (57). Sentences showing adjectival use for the verbs in (56) are provided in Appendix 3.

- (54) *Pis deux jours avant- deux, trois jours avant que les checks ils sortent là, je sais pas si m'a avoir mon check temps- en temps. Les checks sont pas sortis encore, attends! Ah bien, quand-que les checks arrivaient là bien là drive moi à banque là là.*
 ‘So two days before- two, three days before the checks they come out there, I don’t know if I’ll have my check in time. The cheques aren’t out yet, wait! So well, when the checks arrived there well then drive me to the bank’ (065/1459)
- (55) *Quand je me suis marié, j’ai déménagé, là j’ai parti.*
 ‘When I got married, I moved, then I left’ (035/77).
- (56) *commencer, décéder, déménager, demeurer, monter, partir, passer, rentrer, repartir, rester, retourner, revenir, sortir, tomber*
- (57) *apparaître, arriver, descendre, devenir, entrer, redescendre, venir*

8) *Reflexive Use of Verb*

Levitt (1979) points out that pronominal verbs may have influenced the fact that old French tended to prefer *être* with intransitive verbs. Quoting J.A. Fontaine (1888), he explains that the use of *être* with intransitives may in some cases reflect a shortened form of a formerly pronominal verb. He writes:

Another possible explanation for the widespread use of *être* with intransitive verbs in old French may be the influence of pronominal verbs. [...] The use of *être* with intransitives may in some cases reflect a shortened form of a formerly pronominal verb. - Levitt (1979), p. 26, quoting J.A. Fontaine (1888)

It is of note that verbs actually used reflexively, as in (58), are not included in the variable context because they do not exhibit auxiliary alternation. However, by examining whether speakers also use the *être* verbs reflexively in the corpus, I will attempt to discern the impact of parallel reflexive use of *être* verbs on the alternation of auxiliaries. If an *être* verb is used

reflexively at least once in the corpus, I code it as also being used reflexively. These verbs are listed in (59) and examples of their use in the corpus are provided in Appendix 4. All other *être* verbs listed in (60) are coded as not also being used reflexively. Importantly, this is the first time reflexivity has been quantitatively tested as a factor influencing auxiliary alternation in French.

The prediction is that verbs also used reflexively in the corpus will favour *être*.

(58) *On s'en est revenus.* (018/381)
'We came back.'

(59) *s'arriver, se passer, s'en redescendre, se retourner, s'en revenir, s'en sortir, s'en venir*

(60) *apparaître, commencer, décéder, déménager, demeurer, descendre, devenir, entrer, monter, partir, rentrer, repartir, rester, tomber*

9) *Category of Verb or Predicate*

In Montréal French, Sankoff and Thibault (1997) found that unaccusatives, benefactives and intransitives favoured *avoir*, while copulas and auxiliaries disfavoured it. In the interest of comparison, five verb categories, exemplified in (61) through (65) have been coded in Ottawa-Hull French to determine if similar results obtain.

(61) Unaccusative
le crash est arrivé en mille-neuf-cent-vingt-neuf. (106/385)
'the crash happened in 1929.'

(62) Intransitive
J' ai jamais arrivé puis dire bien je suis nouveau dans paroisse là, non. (101/987)
'I never arrived and then said well I'm new in the parish here, no.'

(63) Benefactive
Comme de raison ça m' est jamais t arrivé, ça fait que tu sais c' est difficile,
(111/1086)
'As it should be that's never happened to me, so you know it's difficult.'

(64) Copula
Mon père est devenu veuf à trente-neuf ans, avec dix enfants. (115/255)
'My father became a widower at 39 years old, with ten children.'

- (65) Auxiliary
un moment donné là, son- son- son gendre est venu rester là. (098/987)
 ‘a particular time there, his- his- his son in law came to stay there.’

10) *Lexical Verb*

I code each of the 21 verbs showing alternation in the Ottawa-Hull corpus separately to discover if there are any patterns exhibited by specific verbs. In addition, each verb having multiple semantic distinctions is broken down and coded in finer detail. Given that Sankoff and Thibault (1997) found that the semantic meaning was significant to variant selection with the verbs *partir*, *rester* and *venir*, I expect that semantic meaning may be significant to auxiliary choice in Ottawa-Hull as well. The 21 lexical verbs, broken into their semantic distinctions are listed in (66).

(66)

<i>apparaître</i> ‘appeared’	<i>arriver</i> ‘arrived’	<i>arriver</i> ‘happened’
<i>commencer/recommencer</i> ‘started’	<i>décéder</i> ‘died’	<i>déménager</i> ‘moved’
<i>demeurer</i> ‘lived - ended state’	<i>demeurer</i> ‘lived - perduring state’	
<i>descendre/redescendre</i> ‘went down’	<i>devenir</i> ‘became’	<i>entrer</i> ‘entered’
<i>entrer</i> ‘joined’	<i>monter</i> ‘went up’	<i>partir/repartir</i> ‘left’
<i>partir/repartir</i> ‘started’	<i>partir</i> ‘died’	<i>passer (se)</i> ‘passed’
<i>redescendre</i> ‘went down again’	<i>rentrer</i> ‘(re)entered’	<i>rentrer</i> ‘joined’
<i>repartir</i> ‘left’	<i>rester</i> ‘stayed - ended state’	
<i>rester</i> ‘stayed - perduring state’	<i>retourner</i> ‘returned’	<i>revenir</i> ‘came back’
<i>revenir (à bout)</i> ‘came back to the ??’	<i>sortir</i> ‘left’	<i>sortir</i> ‘dated’
<i>sortir</i> ‘appeared’	<i>tomber</i> ‘fell’	<i>tomber</i> ‘became’
<i>venir</i> ‘came’	<i>venir</i> ‘was born’	<i>venir (à bout)</i> ‘came back to the end’
<i>venir</i> ‘became’		

Syntactic Factors

11) Polarity

Given that negation was proven to strongly favour selection of the inflected future in Ottawa-Hull French (Poplack and Turpin, 1999), I code the *être* verbs according to whether the auxiliary is used in the negative declarative, as in (67), in the affirmative declarative, as in (68), in the negative interrogative, as in (69) or in the affirmative interrogative, as in (70).

Assuming *être* is the more formal variant, i.e. the one taught in schools and used widely in written communication, I expect negation to favour *être*. However, because negation in French inserts an element between the auxiliary and the past participle (ex: *je n'ai jamais sorti, je ne suis pas revenue*), and it was shown in Montréal French (1997) that *avoir* is preferred when the past participle of the verb *rester* is separated from its auxiliary by intervening material such as negation or an adverb, I expect the overall effect of negation will be to favour the use of *avoir* in Ottawa Hull French.

- (67) *Ils ont pas- ils ont pas rentré ici puis ils ont été en-bas dans le sous-sol* (119/1594)
 'They didn't- they didn't come in here and then they were down in the basement.'
- (68) *quand je suis arrivée ici, les enfants étaient quand même des adolescents.* (115/112)
 'when I arrived here, the kids were already adolescents.'
- (69) *Tu as pas commencé en anglais?* (031/3259)
 'You didn't start en English?'
- (70) *Il y a tu longtemps que tu as commencé ce travail là?* (115/282)
 'Has it been a while since you started that job?'

12) Type of Complement

In the early 1800's, Blondin and Barthelemy stated that *avoir* should be used with complements of location while *être* is required for infinitival complements. In (71a), the

expression vicieuse ‘vicious expression’ using *être* with a locational complement is corrected by Blondin with the use of *avoir*.

(71a) *Expression vicieuse: Le Roi est passé par Compiègne.*

‘The King passed via Compiègne.’ (*être*)

Correction: *Le Roi a passé par Compiègne.*

‘The King passed via Compiègne.’ (*avoir*) - Blondin (1823)

Conversely, (71b) shows that while *être* is not normally permitted with the verb *aller* ‘to go’, when *aller* is followed by the infinitive form of the verb *voir* ‘to see’, *être* is perfectly acceptable.

(71b) Incorrect: *Je suis allé à Rome.*

‘I went to Rome.’ (*être*)

Correct: *J’ai été à Rome.*

‘I went to Rome’ (*avoir*)

Accepted: *Je suis allé voir le Capitole.*

‘I went to see the Capitol.’ (*être*)

- Barthelemy (1839)

In order to test Blondin’s assertion that verbs such as *passer* ‘to pass’ take *avoir* when used with a locational complement, while those with no complement at all take *être*, I code for locational complements, as in (72), and no complement, as in (73).

(72) *après il m’a- on a déménagé d’Aylmer* (065/2523)

‘after he- we moved from Aylmer’

(73) *rien a arrivé elle ...* (065/2374)

‘nothing happened she...’

Based on Blondin’s claim, my expectation is that verbs with a locational complement will indeed favour *avoir*.

Furthermore, to test Barthelemy’s (1839) statement that the verb *être* was permitted with a following infinitive, while *avoir* was required otherwise, I code for following infinitives, as in

(74). My hypothesis here is that verbs with a following infinitive will prefer *être*.

(74) *Il a commencé voir.* (035/1330)

‘He started to see.’

In order to ensure no complement is left uncoded, I classify all other complements as “other”, as in (75).

- (75) *dans trente-trois ans on a déménagé, une, deux, trois. Trois fois dans-* (031/55)
 ‘in thirty-three we moved, one, two, three. Three times in-.’

13) *Tense of Auxiliary*

When the auxiliary is in the present tense, as in (76), Sankoff and Thibault (1997) found that *avoir* was very slightly disfavoured over instances when the auxiliary is in a tense other than the present such as the past conditional, as in (77), or the pluperfect. It is unclear exactly why this result obtains, however I code the factor in the Ottawa-Hull data for the purposes of comparison.

- (76) *je te dis qu’ ils ont arrivé à une place puis ils étaient mal pris,* (031/1675)
 ‘I’m telling you they arrived in a place and they were in a bad situation,
- (77) *je voulais pas prendre le bus parce j’ aurais arrivé trop vite chez nous.* (065/1141)
 ‘I didn’t want to take the bus because I would have arrived home too quickly.’

Discourse Factors

14) *Adjacency of Auxiliary and Past Participle*

The presence of intervening material may take speakers thoughts away from the choice of auxiliary since it is more distant from the verb than in the absence of intervening material. Since *avoir* is the auxiliary for 99% of French verbs, this does not seem unusual. Sankoff and Thibault (1997) obtained this finding in Montréal French for the verb *rester* ‘to stay’. Furthermore, Poplack (1992) found that the subjunctive was disfavoured in “traditional” subjunctive contexts with *falloir* when the matrix verb was separated from the verb in question by intervening material (p 247). I hypothesize that when the past participle of a verb typically requiring *être* is separated from the auxiliary by one or more words, as in (78), there will be a greater tendency to use *avoir* in composé tenses.

- (78) *On a toujours resté dans Mechanicsville, hein?* (065/822)
 ‘We’ve always lived in Mechanicsville, eh?’

15) *Proximity in the Past*

Antonini (1753) stated that the choice of auxiliary with certain verbs such as *aller* ‘to go’, *demeurer* ‘to live’, *monter* ‘to go up’, *passer* ‘to pass’ and *sortir* ‘to go out’ expressed different circumstances of time, either less distant or more distant in the past. (317). We know that historically, the *preterit parfait*, or the *passé simple* as we know it, alternated with the *preterit imparfait*, or what we now know as the *passé composé*. The *preterit parfait* was used for actions completed in the past, while the *preterit imparfait* was used for actions started in the past but not yet completed. Antonini does not clarify whether *avoir* or *être* would represent the *passé éloigné* ‘the distant past’ but given the fact that *il est sorti* ‘he went out’ is provided as an example of someone having gone out and not yet returned, I would predict that *être* would be the auxiliary of choice for the recent past, as in (79) and by default *avoir* would express the distant past, as in (80). When the time is unknown, the proximity to the past is not coded.

- (79) *Elle est venue me demander ça à matin.* (045/529)
 ‘She came to ask me that *this morning*.’
- (80) *J’ ai commencé à parler anglais moi quand j’ ai commencé à travailler à l’ Université d’ Ottawa.* (045/187)
 ‘Me, I started to speak English when I started working at the University of Ottawa.’

Furthermore, Platt (1835) quoting Laveaux, stated that *avoir* should be used for the distant past, as in *il y a 6 jours* ‘6 days ago’ or *l’année dernière* ‘last year’; while *être* should be used for the recent past, as in *ce matin* ‘this morning’. It is of note than when followed by the locational complement *dans la Seine*, he asserts that the auxiliary *avoir* should be used regardless

of the proximity to the past. This fits the hypothesis outlined in a previous factor group that a complement of location prefers *avoir*.

With respect to proximity in the past, I will examine if indeed *avoir* is the auxiliary of choice for any event occurring in the distant past, which I define as more than 24 hours ago, in Ottawa-Hull French.

3.4.2 Social Factors

1) *Gender*

In Montréal French, men favoured *avoir* slightly more than women, indicating a slight preference for the non-standard on behalf of men. Because the difference was so small, I hypothesize that a similarly small finding will obtain in Ottawa-Hull French if one shows up at all.

2) *Age*

The original Montréal study on auxiliary alternation (1980) as well as a study of Ontario French (Canale et al, 1978) both showed an age effect whereby younger speakers favoured *avoir* and older speakers disfavoured it. This age effect may suggest a linguistic change in progress, although Sankoff and Thibault did not feel this interpretation was accurate given the small result and the fact that many more young people are completing higher levels of education – a factor disavouring *avoir* usage. I predict the same age effect will be apparent in Ottawa-Hull French, however the magnitude of this effect remains to be determined.

3) *Socioeconomic Class*

Féraud (1787) noted that the verbs *descendre* ‘to go down’ and *monter* ‘to go up’ required *être* when intransitive, but that the *Académie française* gave an example of *descendre* with *avoir*: “*La Justice a descendu en un lieu ...*” ‘Justice came down in a place...’. He clarified

that *avoir* was in the “*style du Palais, qui est souvent l’antipode du discours ordinaire*” ‘style of the Palace [the magistrates not royalty], which is often the exact opposite of ordinary speech’ (p 714). In 1787, the use of *avoir* at least with these two verbs was attributed to a pretentious class of individuals. Conversely, in his *Grammaire des fautes*, Frei (1929) wrote that while *il est mort* ‘he is dead/he died (*être*)’ is the correct form, *il a mouru* ‘he is dead/he died (*avoir*)’ can be found but “*cela seulement dans le plus bas peuple, complètement inculte*” ‘only by people of the lowest class, completely uncultivated’ (p 86). Clearly, *être* is the more prestigious variant according to Frei.

Similarly, Sankoff and Thibault (1980) found that “the higher one is on the social hierarchy, the less likely one is to use *avoir*” (p 340). They used linguistic market indices to determine where speakers fit on the social hierarchy. In this thesis, I use the occupational divisions outlined in the Ottawa-Hull French Corpus (Poplack, 1989) to reflect socioeconomic class. Since auxiliary alternation has historically been a socially conditioned linguistic variable, I expect that the same will hold true in Ottawa-Hull French and that the non-standard form *avoir* will be favoured by unskilled workers and disfavoured by professionals and skilled workers.

4) *Education*

Since education and socioeconomic class are so closely related, we would expect that as results of the Montréal study showed, people with post-secondary education will disfavour *avoir* whereas speakers with primary school education will favour *avoir*.

5) *Level of English Proficiency*

Given the fact that there is a great deal of contact between French and English in the Ottawa-Hull area, I wanted to test whether English proficiency at the individual level has an

impact on auxiliary choice. The Ottawa-Hull French Corpus (Poplack, 1989) includes an index of anglicization based on the following four items:

- a) self report of language used most frequently overall
- b) cumulative index of reported language use to: parents, children, spouse, boss, friends, neighbours.
- c) cumulative index of reported skills in reading, writing, speaking and understanding English.
- d) proportion of schooling in which both English and French were the medium of instruction

The level of English proficiency was not selected as significant in previous studies of Ottawa-Hull French suggesting that other factors influence variation more strongly than bilingualism. Therefore, I expect English proficiency not to be significant in auxiliary choice either.

6) *Neighbourhood*

Poplack (1997) notes that in the Ottawa-Hull Corpus, neighbourhood is a good measure of intensity of contact with English at the community level. One might expect contact with English to influence the way native francophones speak French. In fact, language contact in the Ottawa-Hull region has been studied extensively by Poplack (1987, 1988, 1997). Contrary to the general belief that Francophones are using more and more English structures in areas where there is extensive contact between French and English to the detriment of French, Poplack (1997) reminds us that she did not succeed in “verifying the replacement of the grammatical structure of French by more English-like mechanisms” (p 286). Furthermore, since contact with English has not been a significant factor in variant selection in previous studies of the French subjunctive (Poplack, 1997) or the French conditional in Ottawa-Hull (LeBlanc, 1999), I predict that it will not be a significant factor in determining whether speakers choose *avoir* or *être* with the *être*

verbs in Ottawa-Hull. In other words, I do not expect neighbourhood to be a significant factor in determining auxiliary choice.

3.5 Analysis with Goldvarb

Each token falling within the variable context described in Section 3.3 is coded for each of the factors outlined in the 15 linguistic and 6 social factor groups above. In order to determine which of these factors contributes a statistically significant effect to the choice of *avoir* when all are considered simultaneously, they are analyzed by means of Goldvarb (Rand and Sankoff, 1990). Goldvarb is a variable rule application for the Macintosh, which uses stepwise multiple regression to determine which factors are significant to variant selection, as well as the relative importance of each. As Rand and Sankoff explain, at an initial stage, it indicates the factor weights, or “the degree to which the factor favours marker presence rather than deletion” (p 5) for each factor within each factor group. “Higher numbers indicate that the corresponding factor favours marker presence more than the other factor(s) within the same factor group” (p 5). It also shows an “input value” allowing for comparison between an average tendency for marker presence and the actual results obtained. To determine statistical significance, it performs a step-by-step analysis, adding one factor group at a time until “it finds no group whose inclusion would significantly ($p < 0.05$) increase the log likelihood” (p 25). It subsequently reverses the process taking one factor group away at a time “until it can no longer find a group whose exclusion does not significantly decrease the log likelihood.” (p 25). Results obtained through use of this variable rule analysis software are reported in Chapter 4.

3.6 The Historical Grammar Component

To conduct the historical component of this project, I consult 32 prescriptive French grammars, dating from 1625 to 1993. I selected these works from a comprehensive annotated bibliography compiled at the University of Ottawa as part of an ongoing SSHRC project into the relationship between prescription and usage (Poplack, LeBlanc and Willis, 1999). To date, this bibliography consists of 164 works, which have all been consulted and added to a computerized database to facilitate rapid searching on a number of different criteria. They are distributed as follows:

1500-1599	6 works
1600-1699	28 works
1700-1799	24 works
1800-1899	60 works
1900-1999	46 works

35 of these works were written and published in North America and 129 in different European countries. The répertoire of grammars was compiled by initially consulting a number of bibliographic works on the French language, such as Chervel, A. (1982) *Les grammaires françaises 1800-1914 répertoire chronologique*. From this initial consultation, a list of commonly mentioned grammars and classic works on the French language by authors such as: Vaugelas, Ménage, the *Académie française*, Noël and Chapsal, Brunot, and Grevisse, was compiled and serves as the core of the bibliography

Subsequently, we consulted the *Archives linguistiques de la langue française* ‘Linguistic Archives of the French Language’ by Bernard Quémada, in order to systematically add references to our bibliography. Given that we were interested in grammatical works with examples of actual

usage of the period, we applied a unique coding system to each reference consulted. The following provides a sample of the system used:

- U** = The reference relates to actual usage
- U1** = Refers mainly to grammatical usage of the period and provides numerous examples
- L** = The reference describes mainly the literary norms
- L2** = General grammar with invented examples
- 4** = A work whose consultation serves little use for our purposes (ex: lexical, theoretical or philosophical work)
- *** = Classic work that must be consulted
- 15A** = 1500-1549
- 15B** = 1550-1599 etc

The last step involved finding works that weren't part of the collection of the *Archives linguistique de la langue française* and consulting them in order to classify them according to the above system.

In choosing a subset of 32 works from this annotated bibliography, I ensure good representation from each time period. The distribution of works I consulted is as follows:

1600 - 1699	7 works
1700 - 1799	6 works
1800 - 1899	13 works (reflecting the increased number of works published during this period)
1900 - 1999	6 works

This subset of references includes 24 works coded U, meaning they give examples of actual usage from the period; and 8 works coded L, indicating that they refer to the literary norms of the day. Care is also taken to include frequently cited works such as Vaugelas, Ménage, the *Académie française*, Noël and Chapsal, Brunot, and Grevisse. The year of publication, the author and the number of *être* verbs mentioned in each of the 32 works consulted are provided in Table 4. A complete bibliographic reference for each of these works is given in the References section.

Table 4 - Number of *Etre* Verbs Mentioned in Grammars Consulted

Year French Grammar Published	Author	Code for Usage or Literary Examples	Number of <i>Etre</i> Verbs Mentioned
1625	Maupas	U	22
1647	Vaugelas	U	5
1660	Arnault	L	7
1675	Ménage	U	4
1675	Bouhours	U	1
1680	Chiflet	U	19
1690	Vaugelas	U	1
1704	<i>Académie</i>	U	4
1709	Buffier	L	14
1744	Vallart	L	6
1753	Antonini	U	7
1766	Desgrouais	U	7
1787	Féraud	U	17
1800	Lhomond	U	21
1810	Fréville	U	14
1810	Molard	U	5
1823	Blondin	U	2
1825	Boniface	U	5
1829	Reynier	U	6
1830	Lequien	U	32
1835	Platt	U	1
1839	Barthelemy	U	12
1845	Noël et Chapsal	U	11
1845	Wey	U	9
1860	Carpentier	U	25
1890	Legendre	U	4
1955	Grevisse	L	75
1968	<i>Glossaire</i>	L	3
1969	Brunot et Bruneau	U	3
1980	Grevisse	L	83
1986	Grevisse	L	86
1993	Goosse	L	95

My goal was to discover how grammarians prescribed and explained auxiliary alternation and in particular, whether or not they believed it corresponded to differences in meaning.

Because these grammars do not necessarily refer to *composé* tenses in the same terms we use

today, I systematically search each volume under a large number of key words, a sample of which is provided in (81). I subsequently cross reference the meanings attributed to *avoir* and *être* in the 32 grammars for all 95 verbs mentioned, yielding a 3000 cell table (Appendix 5).

(81) *preterit indéfini, verbe neutre, verbe sans régime, passé indéfini, parfait composé, auxiliaire*

The results of my research into the evolution of prescriptive treatment, and my interpretation of these findings, are presented in Chapter 5. I turn now to a discussion of results of linguistic and social factor analyses I performed on the Ottawa-Hull data.

Chapter 4 Analysis and Results

4.1 Overall Results

Despite the strong prescriptivist history requiring *être* with a small although varying class of verbs, Table 5 shows that *avoir* is clearly the preferred auxiliary for the *être* verbs in the National Capital Region, accounting for a full 66% of the data.

Variant	%	N
<i>Avoir</i>	66	1327
<i>Etre</i>	34	674
Total		2001

A first interesting finding is that a number of the 21 *être* verbs showing variation in Ottawa-Hull, listed in (82), differ from the verbs exhibiting auxiliary alternation in other empirical studies. In fact, only the seven bolded *être* verbs: *arriver*, *partir*, *rentrer*, *rester*, *sortir*, *tomber* and *venir* show variation in all four varieties of French studied to date, while a number of others are shared by two or three varieties. As you can see in (82), Canale et al. (1978) found variation in only 9 verbs (and reflexives) in Welland and Sudbury French, Sankoff and Thibault (1980) reported variation in 16 verbs in Montréal, and Russo and Roberts (1999) found 13 verbs alternating in Vermont French.

(82)

<i>Etre</i> Verb	Ottawa-Hull (2000)	Welland and Sudbury (1978)	Montréal (1980)	Vermont (1999)
<i>aller</i> 'go'		✓	✓	✓
<i>apparaître</i> 'appear'	✓			
<i>arriver</i> 'arrive'	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>commencer</i> 'begin'	✓			
<i>décéder</i> 'die'	✓			
<i>déménager</i> 'move/ relocate'	✓		✓	✓

<i>Être</i> Verb	Ottawa-Hull (2000)	Welland and Sudbury (1978)	Montréal (1980)	Vermont (1999)
<i>demeurer</i> 'live'	✓		✓	✓
<i>descendre</i> 'go down'	✓		✓	
<i>devenir</i> 'become'	✓			
<i>entrer</i> 'enter'	✓		✓	
<i>monter</i> 'go up'	✓		✓	✓
<i>partir</i> 'leave'	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>passer</i> 'pass'	✓		✓	✓
<i>redescendre</i> 'go back down'	✓			
<i>rentrer</i> 'return'	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>repartir</i> 'leave again'	✓			
<i>rester</i> 'stay'	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>retourner</i> 'return'	✓		✓	✓
<i>revenir</i> 'come back'	✓	✓	✓	
<i>sortir</i> 'go out'	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>tomber</i> 'fall'	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>venir</i> 'to come'	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total # <i>être</i> verbs displaying auxiliary alternation	21	9	16	13

Shading indicates *être* verb displays variation in all varieties of French studied to date.

Somewhat surprisingly, given that there are more verbs displaying this variation in Ottawa-Hull than in the other varieties of French studied, the verb *aller* 'to go', which varied in all other studies, although very infrequently in Montréal, does not show any variation in the National Capital Region: it is used exclusively with *être*. Although I do not have an explanation for this, it is possible that Ottawa-Hull French speakers prefer using *j'ai été à* 'I was in' instead of *j'ai allé à* 'I went to', however this question would need to be addressed empirically before a definitive answer would emerge.

There are four verbs exhibiting variation in Ottawa-Hull: *apparaître* 'to appear', *commencer* 'to start', *devenir* 'to become' and *décéder* 'to die', that do not show variation in

other varieties of French studied to date. Traditionally, the verb *commencer* has not been considered by grammarians to be an *être* verb at all. However, Grevisse (1986) states that a certain group of verbs, which for the first time in 1986 includes *commencer*, “*se conjuguent avec avoir quand ils expriment l’action – et avec être quand ils expriment l’état résultant de l’action accomplie*” ‘are conjugated with *avoir* when they express an action – and with *être* when they express a state resulting from a completed action’ (1220). Because verbs that have shown variation in other varieties of French, such as *descendre*, *déménager*, *monter* and *passer* are also included by Grevisse in this group, and because there is observed variation in Ottawa-Hull in only the completed action interpretation, the verb *commencer* is included in this thesis.

These findings may suggest that the choice of auxiliary in French *composé* tenses is not simply determined by the lexical verb used, as prescriptive grammarians assert with their lists of *être*-selecting verbs. If that were the case, we would expect the verbs showing variation in the different varieties of French to be identical. On the other hand, these results may instead be indicative of a lexical effect with the relevant verbs differing across communities; an effect that is not uncommon. We must therefore examine the individual verbs in more detail and consider other explanations to account for auxiliary alternation.

Similar to findings reported for Montréal, Vermont, Sudbury and Welland French, the individual *être* verbs in Ottawa-Hull show a dramatic spread of *avoir* usage as illustrated in Table 6, ranging from 8 to 98% *avoir*. Interestingly, the rates of *avoir* for the majority of *être* verbs are moderately to significantly higher in Ottawa Hull French, than in the other varieties studied. This suggests that Ottawa-Hull French may be closer to complete auxiliary regularization to *avoir* than the other varieties of French. Of note is that the relative frequency of *avoir* for most verbs in both

Montréal and Ottawa-Hull French is quite similar, indicating that common constraints may condition the speech of these two communities.

Table 6a - Percentage of *Avoir* by *Etre* Verb (in order of decreasing % *avoir*)

Lexical Verb	Total N in O-H	N <i>Avoir</i> in O-H	% <i>Avoir</i> in O-H	Used Adjectivally	Used Transitively	Used Reflexively
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High % *Avoir* Verbs

commencer/recommencer	312	306	98	yes	yes	no
rester - ended state	145	136	94	yes	yes	yes
demeurer - ended state	40	37	93	no	yes	no
rester- perduring state	60	56	93	yes	yes	yes
monter	39	36	92	yes	yes	no
passer	99	90	91	yes	yes	yes
demeurer - perduring state	18	16	89	yes	no	no
tomber	57	50	88	yes	no	no
déménager	125	105	84	yes	yes	no
rentrer	94	79	84	yes	yes	no
sortir	99	80	81	yes	yes	yes

Medium % *Avoir* Verbs

partir/repartir	128	84	66	yes	yes	no
retourner	40	24	60	yes	yes	yes
descendre/ redescendre	22	13	59	no	yes	yes
entrer	6	3	50	no	no	no

Low % *Avoir* Verbs

arriver	294	125	43	no	no	yes
apparaître	3	1	33	no	no	no
revenir	74	18	24	yes	no	yes
venir	309	62	20	no	no	yes
devenir	17	2	12	no	yes	no
décéder	13	1	8	yes	no	no

This vast span of *avoir* usage across verbs in all varieties of French studied prompts us to ask why some verbs use *avoir* so much of the time while others use it only infrequently. By dividing the verbs into high, medium and low frequency *avoir* verbs, as I do in Table 6, we are able better able to determine, for example, what is common to all the high frequency *avoir* verbs.

An interesting observation emerges when we consider parallel adjectival use of the *être* verbs. As outlined in Section 3.4, one will recall that while verbs actually used as adjectives are excluded from the variable context because they do not appear in *composé* contexts, all *être* verbs also used adjectivally in the Corpus are identified and coded accordingly. Table 7 shows that 100% of high frequency *avoir* verbs are also used adjectivally in the corpus. Furthermore, medium frequency *avoir* verbs are used adjectivally only 50% of the time followed by low frequency *avoir* verbs at 33%. We conclude that high frequency *avoir* verbs share the fact that they are all also used adjectivally in the corpus, while low frequency *avoir* verbs show the opposite tendency. A report of the empirical test of this observation using variable rule analysis follows in section 4.3.

Table 7 - Percentage of High, Medium and Low Frequency *Avoir* Verbs Also Used Adjectivally, Transitively and Reflexively in the Corpus

Percentage <i>Avoir</i>	Used Adjectivally	Used Transitively	Used Reflexively
High (81 - 98% <i>avoir</i>)	100% 11/11	73% 8/11	36% 4/11
Medium (50 - 66% <i>avoir</i>)	50% 2/4	75% 3/4	50% 2/4
Low (8 - 43% <i>avoir</i>)	33% 2/6	17% 1/6	50% 3/6

When we examine parallel transitive use of the *être* verbs, the high and medium frequency *avoir* verbs share a tendency to permit transitive use (73 and 75% respectively, as seen in Table

7), contrasting dramatically with the only 17% of low frequency *avoir* verbs permitting parallel transitive use. Clearly, verbs that show higher percentages of *avoir* tend to permit parallel transitive use much more than verbs with low percentages of *avoir*. As with adjectival status, empirical results for parallel transitive use will be presented in Section 4.3.

A third observation is that frequency of *avoir* usage tends to vary depending on whether or not the verb is also used reflexively. We note that it is very rare for *être* verbs with a high percentage of *avoir* usage to be also used reflexively. For example, as Table 7 shows, only 36% of high percentage *avoir* usage verbs are also used reflexively in the corpus. While the trend is not as dramatic as parallel adjectival use, the number of verbs allowing parallel reflexive use increases when we examine verbs with low percentages of *avoir*. Again, this observation is tested quantitatively, and the results reported in Section 4.3.

Contrary to findings by Sankoff and Thibault, and Russo and Roberts, high frequency of use, as indicated by the Total N column in Table 6b, does not seem to correlate directly with verbs showing a low percentage of *avoir*. As presented in Chapter 2, studies on Montréal and Vermont French found that infrequent *être* verbs used more *avoir* and that conversely, frequent *être* verbs used less *avoir*. As will be confirmed by variable rule analysis results in Section 4.3, this is not the case in Ottawa-Hull French. Table 6b shows that the most frequent verb, *commencer* ‘to start’ (N = 312) exhibits 98% *avoir*. However, as previously explained, *commencer* has not traditionally been considered an *être* verb, so it is not surprising that it displays such a high percentage of *avoir*. The second most frequent verb, *venir* ‘to come’ (N = 309), shows 20% *avoir*. However, with the third most frequent verb, *arriver* ‘to arrive’ (N = 294), the percentage of *avoir* rises back up to 43%, and climbs to 94% *avoir* for the fourth most

frequent verb, *rester* 'to stay - ended state' (N - 145). Clearly, in Ottawa-Hull French, it is not the case that the more frequent a verb, the lower the percentage of *avoir* usage.

Table 6b - Lexical Verb Frequency in Ottawa-Hull (by decreasing Total N)

Lexical Verb	Total N in O-H	N <i>Avoir</i> in O-H	% <i>Avoir</i> in O-H	Used Adjectivally	Used Transitively	Used Reflexively
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High Frequency Verbs

commencer/recommencer	312	306	98	yes	yes	no
venir	309	62	20	no	no	yes
arriver	294	125	43	no	no	yes
rester - ended state	145	136	94	yes	yes	yes
partir/repartir	128	84	66	yes	yes	no
déménager	125	105	84	yes	yes	no

Medium Frequency Verbs

passer	99	90	91	yes	yes	yes
sortir	99	80	81	yes	yes	yes
rentrer	94	79	84	yes	yes	no
revenir	74	18	24	yes	no	yes
rester- perduring state	60	56	93	yes	yes	yes
tomber	57	50	88	yes	no	no

Low Frequency Verbs

demeurer - ended state	40	37	93	no	yes	no
retourner	40	24	60	yes	yes	yes
monter	39	36	92	yes	yes	no
descendre/ redescendre	22	13	59	no	yes	yes
demeurer - perduring state	18	16	89	yes	no	no
devenir	17	2	12	no	yes	no
décéder	13	1	8	yes	no	no
entrer	6	3	50	no	no	no
apparaître	3	1	33	no	no	no

In the same way that no apparent frequency effect is observed, there does not appear to be a semantic connection distinguishing the *être* verbs with high percentages of *avoir* from those showing low *avoir* usage. Investigating further, we note that eight of the 21 *être* verbs in Ottawa Hull have a number of different semantic meanings associated with the same lexical verb. Interestingly, there appears to be a slight semantic effect on variant choice within these eight verbs, which confirms findings reported on Montréal French (1997) for *partir* and *venir*. This effect is discussed in detail in Section 4.2.

4.2 Verbs with Multiple Meanings

Displayed in Table 8 are the eight *être* verbs in Ottawa-Hull that have multiple semantic interpretations. Note that for the six shaded verbs, the rates of *avoir* vary according to different semantic meanings of the verb. For the other two verbs: *rester* and *arriver*, the different semantic meanings do not show a different percentage of *avoir* usage.

Table 8 - Percent *Avoir* by Lexical Verb with Different Meanings (by decreasing % *avoir*)

Lexical Verb and Meaning	% <i>Avoir</i>	Total N in Corpus	N <i>Avoir</i>
sortir - dated	95	20	19
sortir - appeared	88	17	15
<i>sortir - left</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>46</i>
rester - ended state	94	145	136
<i>rester - perduring state</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>56</i>
demeurer - ended state	93	40	37
<i>demeurer - perduring state</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>16</i>

Lexical Verb and Meaning	% <i>Avoir</i>	Total N in Corpus	N <i>Avoir</i>
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rentrer - joined	88	24	21
<i>rentrer - (re)entered</i>	83	70	58

tomber - became	92	25	23
<i>tomber - fell</i>	84	32	27

partir/repartir - started	75	8	6
<i>partir/repartir - left</i>	65	120	78

<i>arriver - arrived</i>	43	131	56
arriver - happened	42	163	69

venir - became	25	12	3
<i>venir - came</i>	21	200	41
venir - was born	19	88	17
venir - à bout	11	9	1

Shading indicates that different semantic interpretations of the same verb yield different rates of *avoir*.

Italics indicate the semantic interpretation corresponding to the one prescribed by grammarians to require être.

The most dramatic difference is seen in the verb *sortir* which when used to mean 'dated', as in (83a) selects *avoir* 95% of the time. When used to mean 'appeared', as in (83b) shows 88% *avoir* and when used to mean 'left', as in (83c) selects 74% *avoir*. The verbs: *demeurer*, *rentrer*, *tomber*, *partir/repartir* and *venir* also show differing percentages of *avoir* for different semantic meanings, as illustrated in (84) through (90), however these differences are generally very slight.

Sortir

- (83a) *Bien j' ai sorti quatre ans avec lui avant de le marier, hein?* (065/697) :
 'Well I **dated** him for four years before marrying him, eh?' (to date)
- (83b) *la loi a pas sorti dans- dans le journal,* (075/95)
 'the law didn't **appear** in- in the newspaper,' (to appear)
- (83c) *Je pense il était onze heures moins vingt, elle a sorti, puis j' étais déjà rendu là.*
 (030/1647)
 'I think it was twenty to eleven, she **left**, then I had already made it there.' (to leave)

Rester

- (84a) *...puis il avait une femme, lui il a passé- il a resté peut être cinq ans.* (001/32)
 '...so he had a wife, he died- he **stayed around** maybe five years.' (to stay - ended state)
- (84b) *...puis comme moi j' ai resté icitte toute ma vie,...* (031/248)
 '...so like me I've **lived** here all my life,...' (to stay - perduring state)

Demeurer

- (85a) *Ah bien, j' ai demeuré à d'autres places avant ça.* (031/26)
 'So well, I **lived** in other places before that.' (to live - ended state)
- (85b) *Me suis marié en cinquante-sept puis j' ai toujours demeuré... tout près du boulevard Sacré Coeur.* (103/194)
 'Got married in fifty-seven and I've always **lived**... near Sacré Coeur boulevard.' (to live - perduring state)

Rentrer

- (86a) *Ouais, il s' est divorcé, il a rentré dans l' armée,* (004/3011)
 'Ya, he got divorced, he **joined** the army,' (to join)
- (86b) *J' ai rentré dans sa classe.* (075/1611)
 'I **went back** into his class,' (to re-enter)

Tomber

- (87a) *après ça, lui il a tombé malade, ils ont été obligés de vendre,* (007/817)
 'After that, he **got** sick, they had to sell,' (to become)
- (87b) *Il y avait mis ça là puis j' ai monté là-dessus puis j' ai tombé en-bas.* (007/47)
 'He'd put it there then I got on top of it then I **fell** down. (to fall)

Partir/Repartir

- (88a) *Mais là la guerre a parti vois-tu, puis là le monde avaient besoin d' argent hein,* (007/580)
 'But there the war **started** you know, so people needed money eh,' (started)
- (88b) *Mais toutes les enfants ils ont pleuré quand ils ont parti.* (065/223)
 'But all the kids cried when they **left**.' (to leave)

Arriver

- (89a) *Puis le lendemain, mon beau-frère a arrivé puis c' est comme ça que ça avait arrivé.* (017/1231)
 'Then the next day, my brother in law **arrived** and that's how it happened.' (to arrive)
- (89b) *Et puis, ils pensent que c' est ça qui a arrivé, hein?* (013/1424)
 'And so, they think that that's what **happened**, eh?' (to happen)

Venir

- (90a) *quand-que papa est décédé, bien c' est moi est venu propriétaire.* (035/117)
 'when dad died, well, I **became** the owner.' (to become)
- puis le commerce est venu tranquille une période là.* (035/1067)
 'Then the business **became** quiet for a while there.' (to become)
- (90b) *Deplus surtout que De Gaulle est venu là.* (059/1961)
 'And also especially because De Gaulle **came** there.' (to come)
- (90c) *Quarante-quatre, puis moi j' ai venu au monde en trente-huit.* (065/886)
 'Forty-four, then me, I **was born** in thirty-eight.' (to be born)
- (90d) *J' ai eu de la misère à la réchapper, mais je suis venue à bout.* (110/865)
 'I had trouble catching it, but I **succeeded**.' (to reach the end)

Interestingly, with the exception of *venir*¹, it is the traditional intransitive verb of motion interpretation of each of these verbs, indicated in Table 8 by bold italics, (or the continuing state interpretation in the case of the stative verb *demeurer*) that shows the lowest percentage of *avoir*. This is not surprising, because as I will show in Chapter 5, when grammarians used examples to educate French speakers about the *être* verbs, it precisely these intransitive verb of motion

interpretations, or the continuing state for stative verbs, they exemplified. It is therefore unlikely a coincidence that the lowest percentage of *avoir* for verbs with multiple meanings corresponds, with one exception, to the meanings exemplified over time by grammarians. Even though speakers use a substantial percentage of *avoir* with most of these six verbs in Ottawa-Hull, they appear to have maintained a trace of the prescriptive teachings by using the least amount of *avoir* with the traditional intransitive verb of motion interpretations.

Given that different semantic interpretations of the same verb yield different percentages of *avoir*, one might conclude that semantic meaning influences auxiliary choice, at least with these six verbs. We have no way of knowing, however, if speakers consider each of these verbs to correspond to a single lexical entry, or to a number of separate lexical items. If speakers consider each meaning of each verb to represent a separate lexical item, there would be no semantic effect whatsoever.

In comparing the Ottawa-Hull results of the stative verbs *rester* and *demeurer* with those reported by Sankoff and Thibault (1980), an interesting difference emerges with respect to the different meanings of these verbs. In the case of Montréal French, speakers distinguish between the ended state and the perduring state interpretations, using rates of 78% (ended state) versus 47% *avoir* (perduring state) for *rester*; and 97% (ended state) and 45 % *avoir* (perduring state) for *demeurer*. Ottawa-Hull speakers do not make this distinction, using equally high percentages of *avoir* with both interpretations of the verbs: *rester* (ended state) uses 94% *avoir* while *rester* (perduring state) uses 93%; *demeurer* (ended state) uses 93% *avoir* while *demeurer* (perduring state) uses 89% *avoir*. This suggests that if *être* was to regularize completely to *avoir* with the

¹ The reason *venir* behaves differently is still unclear to me, however it may be related to the fact that *venir* is the second most frequent *être* verb with a total of 309 occurrences.

verbs *rester* and *demeurer*, it would do so sooner in Ottawa-Hull French than in Montréal French, where there is a low percentage of *avoir* associated with the perduring state interpretation of the verb to act in opposition to such a regularization.

4.3 Linguistic Factors

Variable rule analysis reveals that five of the seven factors analyzed are significant to auxiliary choice as shown in Table 9.² Interestingly, three of these have been attested to condition auxiliary choice throughout the development of the French language.

Table 9 Variable rule analysis of linguistic factors contributing to the probability of *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull French

Total N: 2000 Corrected mean: .707			
	Probability	%	N
Adjectival Use			
Used adjectivally	.60	83	1350
Not used adjectivally	.31	32	650
Range	29		
Complement³			
Locational	.51	67	675
Infinitival	.40	29	58
Range	11		
Reflexive Use			
Not used reflexively	.56	84	874
Used reflexively	.45	53	1126
Range	11		
Adjacency of Past Participle and Auxiliary			
Non-adjacent	.68	82	157
Adjacent	.44	65	1843
Range	20		
Transitive Use			
Used transitively	.62	86	1173
Not used transitively	.33	39	827
Range	29		

Factors not selected: Polarity, Frequency

³ excludes other types of complements

The oldest, use of the past participle as an adjective, was noted as far back as 1753 by the grammarian Antonini, as outlined in Section 3.4. Recall that he explained how only verbs whose past participles could be used as adjectives showed auxiliary alternation.

More recently, Canale et al. (1978) and Sankoff and Thibault (1980) suggested that verbs whose past participles can be used as adjectives are much more likely to be conjugated with *avoir*. Recall also that past participles actually used adjectivally, as in (91), are excluded from the variable context because in these cases the verb acts as a copula not an auxiliary. When used as true past participles, as in (92), they are included, but coded as having also been used adjectivally in the corpus.

- (91) *Pis deux jours avant- deux, trois jours avant que les checks ils sortent là, je sais pas si m'a avoir mon check temps- en temps. Les checks sont pas sortis encore, attends! Ah bien, quand-que les checks arrivaient là bien là drive moi à banque là là.*
 'So two days before- two, three days before the checks they come out there, I don't know if I'll have my check in time. The cheques aren't out yet, wait! So well, when the checks arrived there well then drive me to the bank?' (065/1459)
- (92) *Quand je me suis marié, j'ai déménagé, là j'ai parti.* 'When I got married, I moved, then I left.' (035/77)

As predicted, variable rule analysis reveals that verbs whose past participles admit adjectival use, and in fact are used in this way in Ottawa-Hull, favour *avoir*. Verbs not displaying this property disfavour it. This empirical finding supports claims made by Canale et al. (1978) and Sankoff and Thibault (1980) about Sudbury, Welland and Montréal French.

² Several factors did not yield sufficient data to be included in a variable rule analysis. One of these, 'tense of the auxiliary' was coded for either present or other, however only 37 other tenses (i.e. *imparfait*) were identified out of a total 2001 tokens. Similarly, the factor group 'proximity in the past' produced only 14 tokens that could clearly be identified as referring to a time within the past 24 hours, and the reference to the past for 5 tokens was unknown. Both of these factors were excluded from further analysis. Table A shows that the difference between the % *avoir* for the animacy of the subject is very small, hovering around the mean of 66% *avoir*. I conclude that animacy does not contribute in an important way to auxiliary choice and we exclude it from variable rule analysis.

Table A - Percentage *Avoir* by Animacy of Subject

Animacy of Subject	% <i>Avoir</i>	N <i>Avoir</i>
Inanimate	67	74
Animate	69	1116
Impersonal	58	135

Another factor influencing auxiliary choice in *composé* tenses is the type of complement. Recall, as outlined in Section 3.4, that based on claims made by grammarians in the 1800's, I test the hypothesis that verbs with a locational complement favour *avoir*, while those with a following infinitive prefer *être*. Examples of locational and infinitival complements taken from the Ottawa-Hull Corpus are shown in (93a) and (93b) respectively.

- (93a) Locational *Après ça quand j'ai sorti de l'hôpital, c'était fini ça.*
 'After that when I left **the hospital**, it was over.' (007/1170)
- (93b) Infinitival *Non, non, j'ai appelé le prêtre, il a venu me voir puis il a pris mon nom*
 [...].
 'No, no, I called the priest, he came **to see** me and he took my name [...].'
 (064/2277)

Results reveal that locational complements favour *avoir* as predicted by Blondin (1823) while infinitival complements disfavour it as prescribed by Barthelemy (1839). To my knowledge, this thesis represents the first time that the influence of locational complements on auxiliary selection in *composé* tenses has been empirically tested and the historical claims confirmed. Turning to the infinitival complements, while Sankoff and Thibault (1997) coded their data to reflect whether the *être* verbs in Montréal French acted as auxiliaries, i.e. were followed by infinitives, they did not find that a following infinitive was significant to variant choice. This thesis does not confirm their results in this area.

A third historical constraint is whether the verb is also used reflexively. Recall, again from Section 3.4, that Fontaine (1888) pointed out that *être* may tend to be used more often with verbs that have been shortened from a reflexive form. From Table 9, it is apparent that the parallel reflexive use of the verb disfavors *avoir* as predicted. This is another factor tested for the first

time in this thesis, so it does not confirm or contradict previous findings in this area, but rather provides a unique contribution to our understanding of auxiliary alternation.

Given that the three factors described above have all been documented to play a role in auxiliary selection throughout the evolution of the French language, we conclude that these are not contemporary innovations. Instead, they are constraints on auxiliary selection that have become entrenched in the language over the course of its evolution, likely explaining why *avoir* has not taken over as the sole auxiliary in *composé* tenses.

Two other factors selected as significant were not specifically cited in the historical literature. The first, adjacency, has figured prominently in other recent studies of French. Both Poplack's (1992) work on the French subjunctive, and Sankoff and Thibault's (1997) work on auxiliary alternation found that intervening material had a significant effect on variant choice. The hypothesis I test in *composé* tenses is that if the past participle is not directly adjacent to the auxiliary, *avoir* will be favoured. This is indeed the result obtained, indicating that the link -- real or prescribed -- between specific lexical verbs and *être* is weakened by intervening material.

The final factor selected as significant, which I will call "ability to be used transitively", has been suggested in previous variationist studies of Ontario, Montréal and Vermont French to influence auxiliary choice. As with parallel adjectival use, I test parallel transitive use here for the first time based on actual speaker usage. Table 9 reveals that this is indeed a major constraint on auxiliary choice: verbs that may be, and in fact are used transitively in Ottawa-Hull French. This is no doubt due to the fact that the precedent for taking *avoir* in transitive contexts is already established.

4.4 Social Factors

A breakdown of *avoir* usage by speaker reveals that while each speaker used both auxiliaries with the *être* verbs in Ottawa-Hull, the percentage of *avoir* varies dramatically between 95% and 15% as shown in Table 10. Due to this vast spread of *avoir* usage and the diversity of the speakers themselves, we must ask to what degree this wide range is related to the socio-economic situation of the speakers. The influence of social factors including: age, gender, education, occupation, neighbourhood and level of bilingualism is examined in detail in this section.

Table 10 - Distribution of Percent *Avoir* by Speaker

Speaker	Percent %	N <i>Avoir</i>
064	95	21
078	92	24
065	91	79
022	89	33
085	86	38
007	85	56
100	85	35
068	85	46
052	84	27
059	83	24
013	83	29
050	83	19
004	82	62
045	81	47
001	79	30
005	79	22
031	79	63
040	78	38
020	77	17
101	71	40

Speaker	Percent %	N <i>Avoir</i>
016	71	15
080	71	55
111	68	46
021	67	20
119	65	64
106	63	37
069	61	17
087	61	30
017	60	18
094	60	30
075	56	20
035	55	12
060	54	41
098	52	11
037	52	23
092	50	10
030	43	16
023	41	26
028	40	14
042	40	21
116	34	13
010	33	4
082	33	22
011	23	6
115	15	6

Similar to results obtained for the French conditional in Ottawa-Hull (LeBlanc, 1999), Table 11 reveals that the choice of *avoir* or *être* is not directly related to the influence of English. The table reveals that there is not a direct association between high contact with English and high percentage of *avoir*. In fact, Hull, the community with the least contact with English shares the same percentage *avoir* with Basse-Ville, a community with a much higher level of contact with English.

Table 11 - Percentage *Avoir* by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood - From most to least contact with English	% <i>Avoir</i>
Ontario	
West End	78
Basse-Ville	62
Vanier	70
Québec	
Mont Bleu	60
Hull	62

When we add to this the speaker's level of English proficiency, we have an even clearer indication that the choice of auxiliary is not a bilingualism effect at all. Table 12 shows the rating of bilingualism from highest to lowest English proficiency compared to the percentage of *avoir*. Note that speakers with the highest English proficiency actually produce the lowest rate of *avoir* at 59%. Furthermore, speakers with the highest and lowest bilingualism ratings produce almost the same percentage of *avoir* in their *composé* utterances, representing 59% and 62 % *avoir* respectively. Clearly then, we can rule out the possibility that auxiliary choice is influenced by the use of English.

Table 12 - Percentage *Avoir* by Bilingualism Rating

Bilingualism Rating	% <i>Avoir</i>
4 - High English Proficiency	59
3 - Mid-High English Proficiency	74
2 - Mid-Low English Proficiency	67
1 - Low English Proficiency	62

In fact, auxiliary choice is a classic socially conditioned variable in Ottawa-Hull. As shown in Table 13, two social factors are significant to variant choice: age and educational attainment.

Table 13 Variable rule analysis of social factors selected as significant to the probability of *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull French⁴

Total N: 2001
Corrected Mean: .671

	Probability	%	N
Age			
15 - 24	.66	73	205
25 - 34	.61	72	429
35 - 44	.54	70	316
45 - 54	.48	67	396
55 - 64	.47	62	340
65+	.27	55	315
<i>Range</i>	39		
Education			
Primary	.65	71	652
Secondary	.44	65	1232
Post Secondary	.20	56	117
<i>Range</i>	45		

Factor not selected: Gender

Factors excluded: Socioeconomic class, Level of bilingualism, Neighbourhood

⁴ In another analysis including the factor groups: age, socioeconomic class, education and gender, interaction was apparent between socioeconomic class and education. For that reason, I conducted separate analyses for education (Table 13), and socioeconomic class (Table 13b). There was still some interaction evident in the analysis including socioeconomic class, age and gender, which disappears when education, age and gender are run together. The analysis in Table 13 therefore provides a stronger account of the influence of social factors on auxiliary choice than that in Table 13b.

Table 13b Variable rule analysis of social factors selected as significant to the probability of *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull French

Total N: 2001
Corrected Mean: .667

	Probability	%	N
Age			
15 - 24	.54	73	205
25 - 34	.56	72	429
35 - 44	.56	70	316
45 - 54	.51	67	396
55 - 64	.46	62	340
65+	.37	55	315
<i>Range</i>	17		
Socioeconomic Class			
Unskilled	.55	71	810
Sales/Service	.52	68	441
Skilled	.41	61	480
Professional	.47	59	270
<i>Range</i>	8		

Factor not selected: Gender

Factors excluded: Education, Level of Bilingualism, Neighbourhood

Table 13 shows that age of the speaker plays a very significant role in the choice between *avoir* and *être* as indicated by the range of 39. The youngest speakers favour *avoir* with a probability of .66 while speakers over 65 years of age disfavour it very strongly with a probability of .27. As shown in Table 14, the overall rate of *avoir* for the oldest speakers is only 55% as compared to a rate of 68% *avoir* for the younger speakers.

Age of Speaker	% avoir	N avoir	Total N
Under 65	68%	1154	1686
65+	55%	173	315
Total		1327	2001

Indeed, when we consider each linguistic factor selected as significant to the choice of *avoir* by speaker age, as illustrated in Table 15, it is clear that age does not just play a role in some areas. Every one of the five linguistic factors selected as significant shows the age effect in the same direction. The rate of *avoir* for the factor favouring this auxiliary is always higher for the younger speakers, while the factor that disfavors *avoir* is consistently lower for the speakers over 65.

1. Adjectival Use				
Age of Speaker	Linguistic Factor	% avoir	N avoir	Total N
Under 65	Used adjectivally	84	973	1156
	Not used adjectivally	34	180	529
65 and older	Used adjectivally	76	147	194
	Not used adjectivally	21	26	121

2. Complement

Age of Speaker	Linguistic Factor	% avoir	N avoir	Total N
Under 65	Locational	68	384	566
	Infinitival	32	16	50
65 and older	Locational	63	69	109
	Infinitival	13	1	8

3. Reflexive Use

Age of Speaker	Linguistic Factor	% avoir	N avoir	Total N
Under 65	Not used reflexively	86	627	730
	Used reflexively	55	526	955
65 and older	Not used reflexively	74	106	144
	Used reflexively	39	67	171

4. Adjectival Use

Age of Speaker	Linguistic Factor	% avoir	N avoir	Total N
Under 65	Used adjectivally	85	111	131
	Not used adjectivally	67	1042	1554
65 and older	Used adjectivally	65	17	26
	Not used adjectivally	54	156	289

5. Transitive Use

Age of Speaker	Linguistic Factor	% avoir	N avoir	Total N
Under 65	Used transitively	87	871	1004
	Not used transitively	41	282	681
65 and older	Used transitively	79	133	169
	Not used transitively	27	40	146

In fact, when we separate do separate linguistic analyses for the older speakers (those over 65) and the younger speakers (those 65 and under), as shown in Tables 16 and 17 respectively, the dramatic difference in the linguistic behaviour of these two groups is clearly exemplified.

Table 16 Variable rule analysis of linguistic factors contributing to the probability of *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull French for speakers 65 and older

	Probability	%	Total N
Total N: 315			
Corrected mean: .578			
Complement ³			
Locational	.54	63	109
Infinitival	.13	13	8
<i>Range</i>	<i>41</i>		
Adjectival Use			
Used adjectivally	.64	76	194
Not used adjectivally	.28	21	121
<i>Range</i>	<i>36</i>		
Transitive Use			
Used transitively	.64	79	169
Not used transitively	.34	27	146
<i>Range</i>	<i>30</i>		

³ excludes other types of complements

Factors not selected: Polarity, Reflexivity, Adjacency, Frequency.

Table 17 Variable rule analysis of linguistic factors contributing to the probability of *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull French for speakers under 65 years of age

Total N: 1685 Corrected mean: .700			
	Probability	%	Total N
Transitive Use			
Used transitively	.62	87	1004
Not used transitively	.32	41	681
<i>Range</i>	30		
Adjectival Use			
Used adjectivally	.59	84	1156
Not used adjectivally	.31	34	529
<i>Range</i>	28		
Adjacency of Past Participle and Auxiliary			
Non-adjacent	.71	85	131
Adjacent	.48	67	1554
<i>Range</i>	23		
Reflexive Use			
Not used reflexively	.58	86	730
Used reflexively	.44	55	955
<i>Range</i>	14		
Complement			
Locational	.51	68	566
Infinitival	.44	32	50
<i>Range</i>	7		

³ excludes other types of complements
Factors not selected: Polarity, Frequency.

While the strongest linguistic factor for the oldest speakers is the choice of complement, this is the weakest contributor for the younger speakers, signifying that the influence of this factor is waning. Interestingly, both transitive use and adjectival use are strong factors for both groups of speakers. This is not surprising, given that these factors have been found or suggested to

influence variant choice in other varieties of French. Two factors, adjacency of part participle and auxiliary, and reflexive use, are selected as significant for the younger speakers, but not for the oldest speakers. The appearance of these two factors for the younger speakers may help explain why auxiliary alternation has not disappeared in contemporary speech. While a following locational complement that is such a strong contributor with the oldest speakers plays a very small role in the speech of younger speakers, two other factors, adjacency and reflexive use, constrain the speech of these younger speakers.

These results suggests a change in progress towards increased use of *avoir* with the *être* verbs in Ottawa-Hull and confirms results obtained in Welland, Sudbury and Montréal French, led by the youngest speakers.

Educational attainment is even more significant to variant choice as shown by the range of 45 in Table 13. Speakers who have completed only a primary school education favour *avoir* with a probability of .65 while speakers who have completed post secondary training disfavour *avoir* with a probability of .20. Again, this confirms findings reported for Montréal French.

The strong contribution of education points to the non-vernacular or non-usage nature of this variant, which must be learned in school, especially by the younger generation among whom *être* is on the decrease.

4.5 Summary of Results

Summarizing, then, it is clear that auxiliary selection is based on a complex combination of a number of competing factors. I suggest that it is not simply determined by lexical verb as many grammarians have asserted over the past 400 years. Because the *être* verbs displaying variation are not identical across different varieties of French, and because grammarians do not agree on the

class of *être* verbs, the choice of auxiliary cannot simply be determined by consulting a list of lexical verbs. On the other hand, in each variety of French studied a limited number of *être* verbs is shared, suggesting that lexical verb may play a partial role in auxiliary selection. By examining the characteristics that these verbs share, we are able to better understand what conditions the variability.

We saw that six of the 21 *être* verbs in Ottawa-Hull have slightly differing rates of *avoir* according to different semantic interpretations of the verb. With one exception, the meaning corresponding to that exemplified by grammarians over time showed the lowest percentage of *avoir*. This indicates that the semantic meaning of the verb may play some role in the case of these few verbs, unless speakers consider each meaning to correspond to a separate lexical entry.

Variable rule analysis reveals that five linguistic and two social factors condition auxiliary choice. Parallel adjectival use of a verb and locational complements favour *avoir*, while infinitival complements and parallel reflexive use disfavour it. The fact that these constraints, all attested to condition auxiliary choice throughout the evolution of the French language, are still operative today helps explain why *avoir* has not completely replaced *être* as the sole auxiliary in French *composé* tenses. Two other factors, not documented historically but both important in recent linguistic studies of French, adjacency and ‘ability to be used transitively’ also favour *avoir* as predicted.

The social factors selected as significant, age and educational attainment, both behave in the manner predicted, confirming results obtained in Montréal and Ontario French. The younger a speakers, the more they favour *avoir*, as reported by Sankoff and Thibault (1980) and Canale et al. (1978). The lower the educational attainment of a speaker, the more they favour *avoir*,

confirming results obtained by Sankoff and Thibault (1980). That education is such a strong contributor to auxiliary choice indicates that speakers do not naturally select *être* with certain verbs. On the contrary, this is something that must be learned in school, especially by younger speakers who strongly favour *avoir*.

In addition to these linguistic and social factors, I offer a unique historical explanation for the difference in *avoir* usage with the *être* verbs in Ottawa-Hull. Chapter 5 is devoted to an exploration of the prescriptive treatment the *être* verbs have received throughout the evolution of the French language, and how this treatment is reflected in the rate of *avoir* among *être* verbs in contemporary Ottawa-Hull French.

Chapter 5 Historical Prescriptive Treatment and Interpretation

As outlined in Section 3.6, the historical component of this thesis is based on consultation of 32 prescriptive French grammars spanning four centuries, which I selected from the *Répertoire des grammaires françaises anciennes* (Poplack, LeBlanc and Willis, 1999) compiled at the University of Ottawa.

A first important result of this grammatical research, which mirrors findings reported for contemporary speech in several varieties of French, is the lack of consensus about the class of *être* verbs. As you can see in Figure 1, which shows the number of *être* verbs mentioned versus the year the grammar was published, the ‘class’ of verbs fluctuates dramatically between 1 and 95 verbs. For all of these verbs, grammarians either categorically prescribe *être* or give certain circumstances in which *être* must be used. The explanations given in the 32 grammars consulted for each of the 95 verbs mentioned are presented in Appendix 5.

5.1 Prescriptive Explanations of Auxiliary Alternation

Similarly, the grammars reveal an equally striking lack of agreement about the meaning of the alternation between *avoir* and *être*, which they variously attribute to syntactic, semantic, stylistic or no distinctions at all. Examples of the meanings they provide for the different auxiliaries are provided in (94) through (97) below¹.

5.1.1 Syntactic

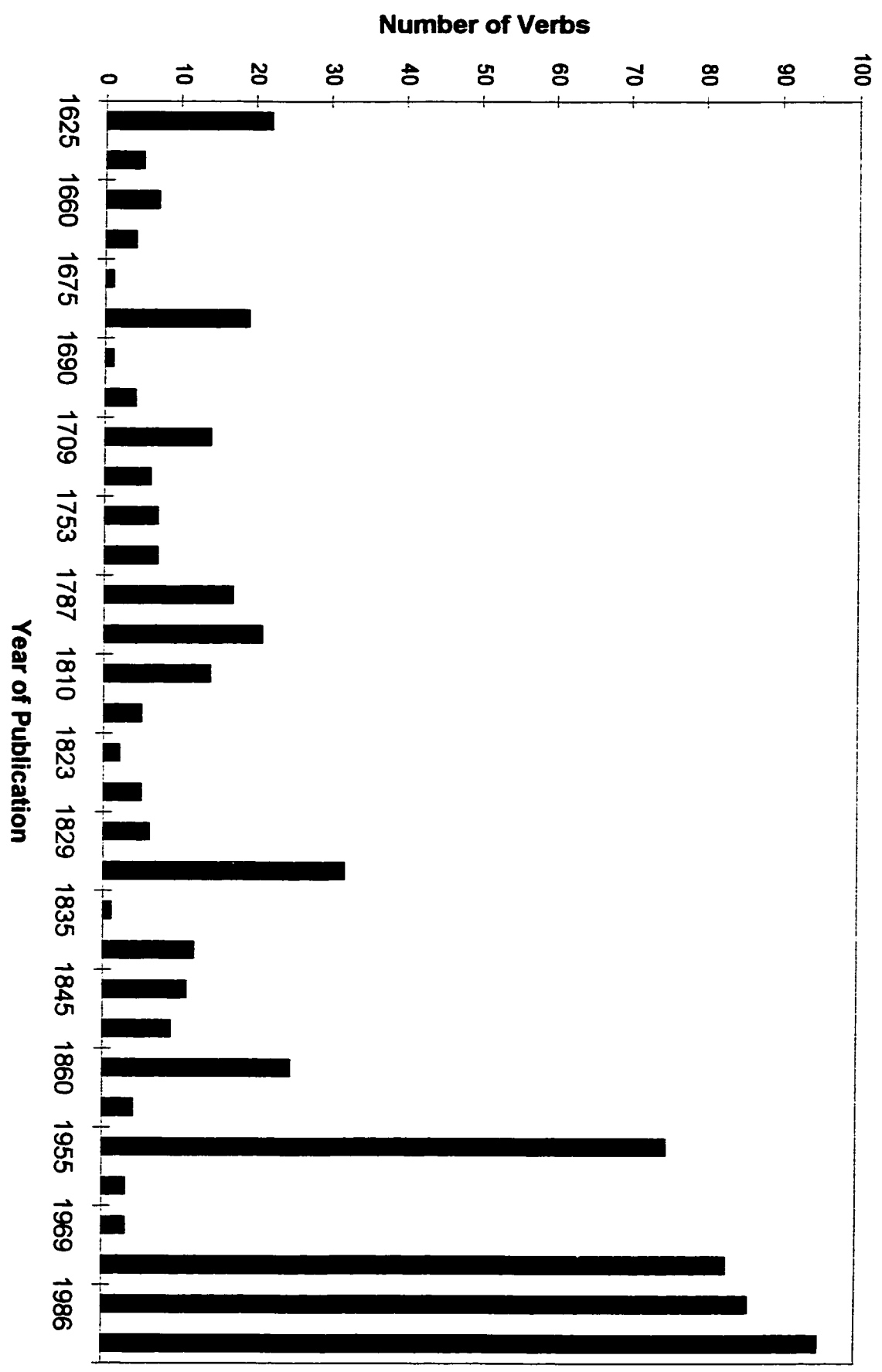
(94)

Passer...avec un régime, et ayant rapport aux lieux [emphasis mine], il prend l'auxiliaire avoir. Passer, sans régime, prend l'auxiliaire être. Expression vicieuse: Le Roi est passé par Compiègne. Correction: Le Roi a passé par Compiègne. (Blondin, 1823, 66-67)

‘*Passer* ‘to pass’...with an object, and **having to do with a location**, takes the auxiliary ‘to have’. *Passer* ‘to pass’, without an object, takes the auxiliary ‘to be.’ ‘Vicious expression: ‘The King passed via Compiègne.’ (*être*). Correction: ‘The King passed via Compiègne.’(*avoir*)’

¹ All spelling and punctuation in the French quotations is faithful to the original version.

Figure 1 - Membership in Class of *Etre* Verbs by Year of Publication
Grammar Source: See Appendix 6



5.1.2 Semantic

(95a)

Il est entré; Il est sorti; Il est monté; Il est descendu. C'est comme M. de Vaugelas prétend qu'il faut conjuguer les prétérits de ces quatre verbes. Et en effet, on parle d'ordinaire de la sorte. Mais on peut dire aussi, Il a sorti; Il a monté. Comme en ces exemples: Monsieur a sorti ce matin: cestadire qu'il est sorti, & revenu: car s'il n'estoit pas revenu, on diroit, M. est sorti M. est sorti dès le matin [emphasis mine]. (Ménage, 1675, 511)

'He is come in; He is gone out; He is gone up, He is gone down. This is how Mr. Vaugelas claims one must conjugate the *composé* tenses of these four verbs. And in fact, this is how one usually speaks. But one can also say, He went out (*avoir*); He went up (*avoir*). **As in these examples: Mister went out this morning: that is to say he went out, and returned: for if he hadn't returned, one would say, Mr. is gone out (*être*), Mr. is gone out (*être*) since this morning.'**

(95b)

Sortir a deux sens et deux conjugaisons différentes, relatives à ces deux sens. Pâsser du dedans au dehors. ...j'ai sorti... ; Sortir de son état...j'en suis sorti... (Féraud, 1787, 592)

'To go out' has two meanings and two different conjugations, related to these two meanings. Going from inside to outside...I went out (*avoir*)...; Getting out of one's state of mind...I got out of it (*être*) ...

5.1.3 Stylistic

(96a)

Descendre et monter prennent l'auxil. avoir, quand ils sont actifs, et qu'ils ont un régime absolu. Il a monté, il a descendu les degrés; et ils prennent l'auxil. être quand ils sont neutres. Il est monté, il est descendu. Corneille, d'après Ménage, donne des exemples de descendre et de monter, neutres, avec l'auxil. avoir. Elle a monté dans sa chambre; cet écolier a monté en Troisième.; j'ai monté à cheval etc. etc. [...] M. Targe a dit tout récemment: ayant, pour étant descendu en Irlande. L'Acad. met aussi cette phrase: on dit que la Justice a descendu en un lieu, quand, etc. Mais c'est du style du Palais, qui est souvent l'antipode du discours ordinaire [emphasis mine]. (Féraud, 1787, 714)

'Descendre 'to go down' and monter 'to go up' take the auxiliary *avoir* 'to have' when they are active, and when they have a direct object. He went up (*avoir*), we went down (*avoir*) the stairs; and they take the auxiliary *être* 'to be' when they are intransitive. He went up (*être*), he went down (*être*). Corneille, following Ménage, gives the example of *descendre* and *monter*, intransitive, with the auxiliary *avoir*. She went up to her room (*avoir*); this student went up to third grade (*avoir*), I got on a horse (*avoir*), etc. etc. [...]. **Mr. Targe said recently: 'having' instead of 'being' come down from Ireland. The Academy also includes this sentence: one says that Justice came down (*avoir*) in one place, when, etc. But this is the style of the Palace, which is often the exact opposite of ordinary speech.'**

(96b)

Le verbe être...est l'auxiliaire des temps composés...de quelques verbes intransitifs exprimant, pour la plupart, un mouvement ou un changement d'état: aller, arriver, décéder, devenir, échoir, entrer, mourir, naître, partir, rester, retourner, sortir, tomber, venir. Certains de ces verbes sont parfois employés avec avoir, soit par archaïsme littéraire, soit par imitation d'usages locaux ou populaires [emphasis mine]: Partir: Le fusil a parti tout à coup. Rentrer: Par sa mort il a rentré dans l'ordre. Rester: J'ai resté ensuite sur mon lit et au soleil...(Goosse, 1993, 1178-1180)

'The verb *être* 'to be'... is the auxiliary of composé tenses...of some intransitive verbs expressing, for the most part, a movement or a change of state: to go, to arrive, to die, to become, to fall to, to enter, to die, to be born, to leave, to stay, to return, to go out, to fall, to come. Some of these verbs are sometimes used with *avoir* 'to have', **either by literary archaism, or by imitation of local or popular usage**: To leave: The gun went off all of a sudden. To re-enter. As a result of his death, he returned to a state of order. To stay: After that I stayed on my bed in the sun...'

5.1.4 No Distinction

(97)

Quoy que tous les verbes dont il est parlé dans cette Remarque [Des préterits de ces verbes entrer, sortir, monter, descendre] se servent de l'auxiliaire estre au préterit, on croit qu'il y a certaines occasions où l'on se pourroit servir de l'auxiliaire avoir, & qu'on ne devoit pas condamner celui qui diroit, il y a huit jours que ne j'ay sorti. Peut-estre trouveroit-on des exemples aussi favorables pour les autres verbes. (L'Académie, 1704, 419)

'Even though all the verbs mentioned in the Remark [*Composé* tenses of the verbs 'to enter', 'to go out', 'to go up', 'to go down'] make use of the auxiliary 'to be' with the past participle, we believe that there are certain occasions where one may use the auxiliary 'to have', and that we ought not to condemn he who says, he hasn't gone out (*avoir*) for eight days. Perhaps we shall find examples just as favorable for the other verbs.'

5.2 Three Stages in Prescriptive Treatment

In sifting through this disparate material, I have been able to posit three stages in the evolution of the prescriptive treatment of the *être* verbs in contemporary Ottawa-Hull French. Figure 2 exemplifies how the active *être* verbs displaying auxiliary alternation in Ottawa-Hull proceed through these three stages. The verbs are listed down the left hand side of the figure. Progression of the stative *être* verbs through the same three stages is shown in Figure 3. As you can see, the length of time a verb spends in each stage is represented with a separate bar.

Figure 2 - The 3 Stages in Prescriptive Treatment of Active *Etre* Verbs

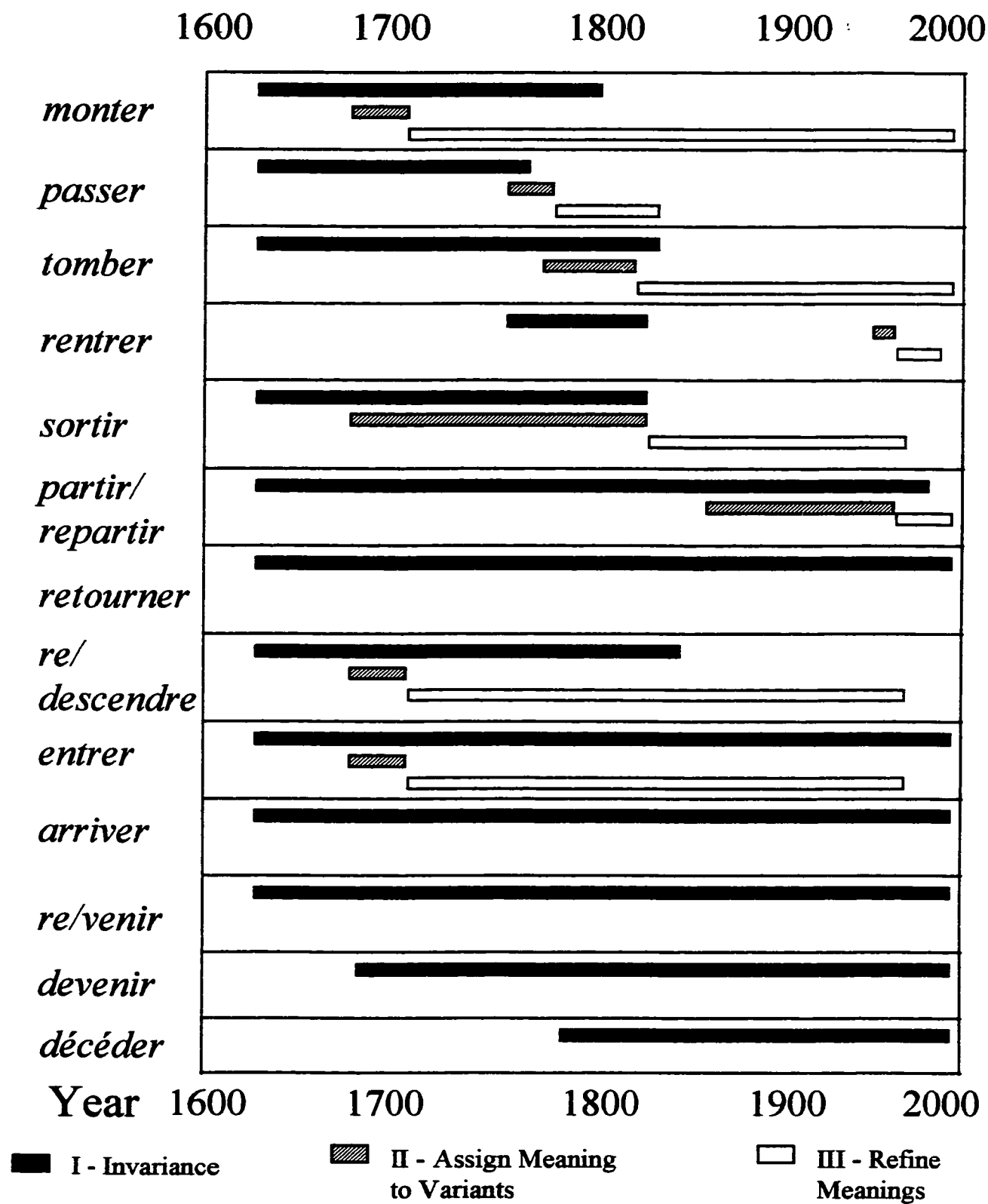
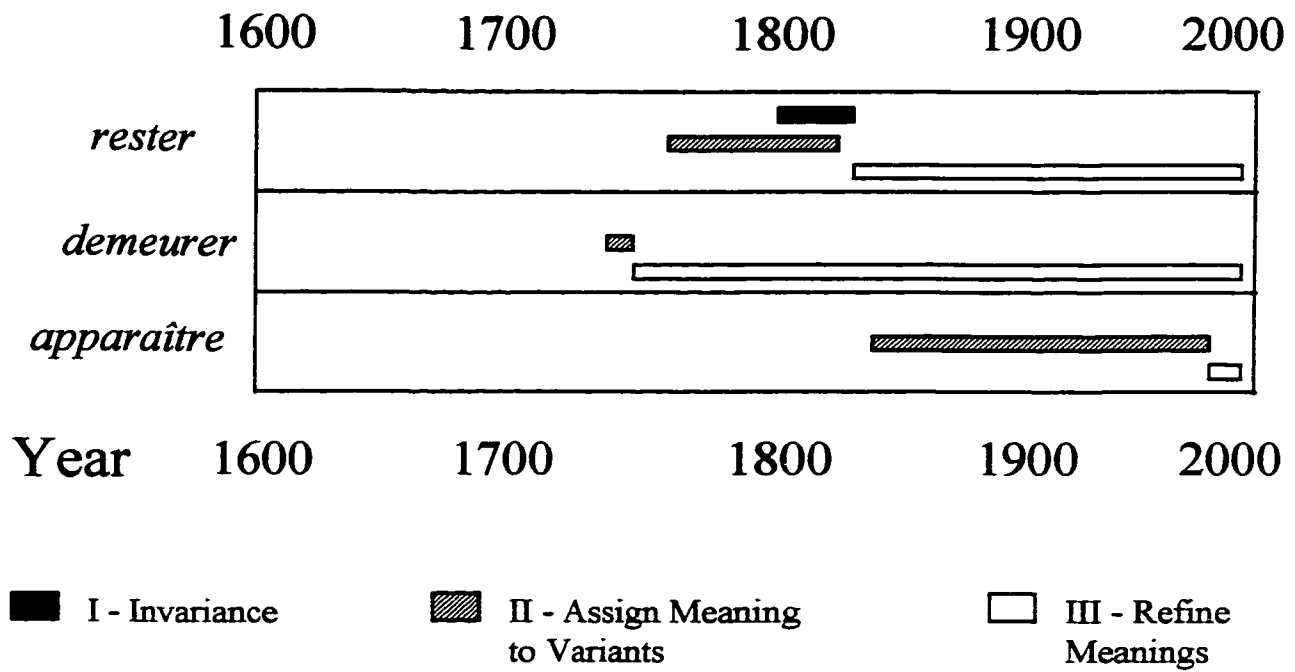


Figure 3 - The 3 Stages in Prescriptive Treatment of Stative *Etre* Verbs



Stage 1 corresponds to the time period in which grammarians invariably prescribe *être* and have no tolerance for *avoir* whatsoever with the verb. A paradigm shift is apparent in Stage 2, where for the first time, parallel use of *avoir* is accepted, but usually assigned a distinct meaning. The frequent overlap of Stage 1 with Stages 2 and 3 is not surprising, given that the paradigm shift represented by Stage 2 often runs counter to years of entrenched prescriptivism against *avoir*. In fact, this overlap reflects the controversy stemming from the fact that some grammarians are accepting the use of *avoir* with the verb, thus moving it into Stage 2; while others continue to prescribe exclusively *être*, keeping the verb in Stage 1. In Stage 3, meanings attributed to the two auxiliaries are refined or changed completely.

Summarizing then, Stage 1 represents the prescription of invariance, where only *être* is allowed. Stage 2 reflects the first time a different meaning is assigned to each variant. Finally, Stage 3 represents the ongoing refinement of different meanings associated with each auxiliary.

To exemplify with the verb *monter* ‘to go up’ on Figure 2, Stage 1 is shown by the black bar that spans the period from 1625 to 1800. During this time, a number of grammarians invariably prescribed *être* and did not permit the use of *avoir* with *monter*. For example, in 1660, Arnault writes:

le Verbe estre forme les preterits, au lieu d'avoir [avec] quelques verbes intransitifs, c'est à dire, dont l'action ne passe point hors de celui qui agit, comme aller, partir, sortir, monter [emphasis mine], descendre, arriver, retourner. Car on dit...il est allé, il est party, il est sorty...& non pas il a allé, il a party, &c [emphasis mine]. (136-137)

‘The verb *être* ‘to be’ forms the *composé* tenses, instead of *avoir* ‘to have’ [with] some intransitive verbs, that is to say, those in which the action does not happen external to the person performing the activity, like ‘to go’, ‘to leave’, ‘to go out’, ‘to go up’, ‘to go down’, ‘to arrive’, ‘to return’. Therefore we say...he is gone, he is left, he is gone out...and not he went (*avoir*), he left (*avoir*) etc.’

A dramatic shift is apparent in Stage 2, indicated by the striped bar covering the end of the 1600's for *monter*. This stage reflects the earliest mention of the acceptance of *avoir* with *monter*, made by Ménage in 1675. He writes that in addition to saying: *Il est sorti* 'He is gone out (*être*)'; *Il est monté* 'He is gone up (*être*)', *on peut dire aussi: Il a sorti; Il a monté* 'one can also say: He has gone out (*avoir*); He has gone up (*avoir*)' (p 511). Ménage assigns different meanings to the two auxiliaries by stating that the use of *avoir* signifies "*il est sorti et revenu: car s'il n'estoit pas revenu, on diroit, M. est sorti*" 'he is gone out and come back: because if he hadn't returned, one would say Mr. is gone out (*être*)' (511). Extending this interpretation to *monter*, use of *avoir* indicates, according to Ménage, that the person went up and came back down again, while use of *être* indicates that they are still up.

Finally, Stage 3, shown in white, has spanned a period of almost 300 years for the verb *monter*. Numerous different explanations have been offered to account for the fact that two auxiliaries are used with this verb.

For example, in 1753, Antonini explains that the verbes "*aller, demeurer, monter, passer and sortir ... joints à différens auxiliaires, expriment différentes circonstances de temps, ou plus proches, ou plus éloignées*" 'to go, to live, 'to go up, to pass and to go out...when joined with different auxiliaries, express different proximities in time, either more recent or more distant' (317). He states that people say both *il est sorti* 'he is gone out (*être*)' and *il a sorti* 'he went out (*avoir*)' depending on the proximity in time they're referring to. He does not mention, however, which auxiliary is used for which time reference.

About 60 years later, Molard (1810) offers a different explanation of the auxiliary alternation. He writes "*Il a monté, il est monté. Ces deux expressions sont bonnes; mais elles ne*

peuvent pas s'employer indifféremment. Le verbe avoir marque l'action, et le verbe être, l'existence ou le repos" 'He went up (*avoir*), he is gone up (*être*). These two expressions are both good; but they can't be used indifferently. The verb *avoir* 'to have' marks action, and the verb *être* 'to be', existence or rest' (181).

Yet another explanation is offered more recently by Goosse (1993). He writes that "*pour monter, être prédomine s'il s'agit de personnes, quoique avoir ne soit pas tout à fait exclu*" 'for *monter* 'to go up', *être* predominates if it relates to people, however *avoir* is not completely excluded' (1182). Goosse's comments are interesting because, contrary to the vast majority of other grammars consulted, here he admits here that there is unexplained auxiliary variation with the verb *monter* by saying that *avoir* is not completely excluded.

Also of particular note is the complete reversal in social conditioning during Stage 3. Recall that Féraud qualifies *avoir* usage as the style of the Palace in 1787 (p. 714). Interestingly, approximately a century and a half later it is considered popular language by the *Société du parler français*:

Elle a tombé...il a monté...Une certaine hésitation se manifeste dans la formation des passés composés de divers subjectifs, tels que tomber, partir. La langue populaire a une tendance à les former à l'aide de l'auxiliaire avoir, en réservant la forme en être pour un présent accompli...[emphasis mine]" (1968, 81).

She fell...he went up...There is a certain hesitation in the formation of a number of the *passé composé* forms of various verbs, such as to fall, to leave. **Popular language has a tendency to form them with the auxiliary *avoir***, reserving the *être* form for a completed present.'

Looking at Figure 2, we can see that a number of the verbs such as *monter, passer, tomber, rentrer, sortir, partir/repartir, re/descendre* and *entrer* have progressed through all three stages. Conversely, *retourner, arriver, re/venir, devenir* and *décéder* all remain in Stage 1 even

today. We are prompted to ask why this is the case. Do the verbs that have progressed through all three stages share common properties? Are there trends that can be extracted from the treatment grammarians have given to these verbs that help explain this? Figure 3, representing treatment of the stative verbs, also raises an interesting issue. Why do these verbs skip Stage 1 altogether, or spend just a very short time here, when some of the other *être* verbs were in Stage 1 for several centuries?

Indeed, when we look at a detailed breakdown of the three stages outlined above for each of the *être* verbs in Ottawa-Hull, some striking patterns emerge. Table 16 presents this distribution. Note that I have divided the *être* verbs into three groups: active verbs (*monter, passer, tomber, rentrer, sortir, re/partir, retourner, descendre, entrer, arriver, revenir, venir, devenir, décéder*), stative verbs (*demeurer, rester, apparaître*), and verbs never having prescribed exclusively *être* (*commencer, déménager*). As noted by Sankoff and Thibault (1980), stative verbs require a different treatment since the distinction made by grammarians here is between a completed or a perduring state rather than an action versus state dichotomy as for active verbs. In addition, verbs never having been prescribed to require exclusively *être* such as *commencer* and *déménager* also require separate treatment since grammarians sometimes prescribe exclusively *avoir* with these verbs, which is never the case for the other two groups.

Table 18 - Evolution of Prescriptive Treatment of *Être* Verbs in Ottawa-Hull French
In order of decreasing % avoir in Ottawa-Hull

1) **ACTIVE ÊTRE VERBS**

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	% <i>Avoir</i> in O-H French (1999)	% <i>Avoir</i> Montréal French (1980)
Verb	Only <i>Être</i> Permitted	Different Meaning/ Rationale First Assigned to Each Auxiliary	Subsequent Refinements Made to Meaning/ Rationale With Each Auxiliary		
monter	1625 (Maupas) 1660 (Arnault) 1680 (Chiffel) 1744 (Vallart) 1800 (Lhomond)	1675 - <i>avoir</i> = completed action, <i>être</i> = resulting state (ie still up) (Ménage, 511)	1704 - sometimes <i>avoir</i> is acceptable, no reason given (L'Académie, 419) 1753 - <i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> have different meaning wrt proximity in time, only verbs whose past participles can be inflected for gender and number vary (Antonini, 317) 1787 - <i>avoir</i> = style of Palace, Académie doesn't condemn using <i>avoir</i> , <i>être</i> = what should be used, what the people use (Féraud, 714) 1810 - <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = existence or rest (Molard, 181) 1968 - <i>avoir</i> = popular language, archaism (<i>Société du parler français</i> , 81) 1993 - <i>avoir</i> predominant for things; <i>être</i> for people (Goosse, 1182)	92	68
passer	1625 (Maupas) 1680 (Chiffel) 1744 (Vallart) 1766 (Desgrouais)	1753 - <i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> have different meaning wrt proximity in time, only verbs whose past participles can be inflected for gender and number vary (Antonini, 317)	1787 - <i>avoir</i> = to be received/accepted; <i>être</i> = all other intrans uses (Féraud, 96) 1810 - <i>avoir</i> = to walk, <i>être</i> = to finish, resulting state (Fréville, 206) 1823 - <i>avoir</i> = req'd when complement of location used, meaning 'being received'; <i>être</i> = other intrans use (Blondin, 66) 1830 - <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = resulting state (Leguén, 103)	91	90
tomber	1625 (Maupas) 1680 (Chiffel) 1690 (Vaugelas) 1709 (Buffier) 1753 (Antonini) 1766 (Desgrouais) 1800 (Lhomond) 1810 (Fréville) 1829 (Reynier, Meunier) 1830 (Leguén)	1787 - <i>avoir</i> = literary use, for stylistic reasons or by distraction, <i>être</i> = required (Féraud, 696)	1825 - sometimes <i>avoir</i> is ok, no explanation given (Boniface, 400) 1835 - <i>avoir</i> = fell and got up; <i>être</i> = still on the ground (Platt, 428-429) 1955 - ' <i>autrefois</i> ', <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state. Usage doesn't reflect this, seems archaic (Grevisse, 517) 1993 - <i>avoir</i> = popular or archaic, <i>être</i> - used predominantly (Goosse, 1219)	88	72

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3		
Verb	Only <i>Être</i> Permitted	Different Meaning/ Rationale First Assigned to Each Auxiliary	Subsequent Refinements Made to Meaning/ Rationale With Each Auxiliary	% <i>Avoir</i> in O-H French (1999)	% <i>Avoir</i> Montréal French (1980)
rentrer	1766 (Desgrouvais) 1823 (Blondin)	1955 - ' <i>autrefois</i> ', <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state. Usage doesn't reflect this, seems archaic (Grevisse, 517)	1969 - historically, distinguished different meanings; now <i>avoir</i> is popular usage and only <i>être</i> accepted, (Brunot et Brunneau, 311) 1993 - <i>avoir</i> = imitation of local or popular usage or literary archaism (Goosse, 1179)	84	74
sortir	1625 (Maupas) 1647 (Vaugelas) 1660 (Arnault) 1675 (Bouhours) 1680 (Chifflet) 1709 (Buffer) 1800 (Lhomond) 1810 (Molard) 1829 (Reynier) 1830 (Lequien)	1675 - almost all women use <i>avoir</i> in context of visits; <i>être</i> should be used according to Vaugelas, but <i>avoir</i> will likely establish itself if it hasn't already (Bouhours, 536)	1675 - <i>avoir</i> = went out and came back: past action; <i>être</i> = still out: resulting state (Ménage, 511) 1704 - sometimes <i>avoir</i> is acceptable, no reason given (L'Académie, 419) 1744 - <i>avoir</i> = gone out and returned; <i>être</i> = gone out and not yet returned (Vallart, 299) 1753 - <i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> have different meaning wrt proximity in time, only verbs whose past participles can be inflected for gender and number vary (Antonini, 317) 1787 - <i>avoir</i> = to go from indoors to outdoors; <i>être</i> = to go out of the house, the city (Féraud, 592) 1845 - <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state (Wey, 127) 1955 - <i>avoir</i> = used in meaning 'to produce', ' <i>autrefois</i> ', <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state. Usage doesn't reflect this, seems archaic (Grevisse, 517)	81	67
partir/ repartir	1625 (Maupas) 1680 (Chifflet) 1709 (Buffer) 1787 (Féraud) 1800 (Lhomond) 1830 (Lequien) 1968 (Glossaire) 1969 (Brunot)	1860 - <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state (Carpentier, 51)	1955 - ' <i>autrefois</i> ', <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state. Usage doesn't reflect this, seems archaic. <i>Repartir</i> : <i>avoir</i> = respond promptly; <i>être</i> = to leave again (Grevisse, 517) 1993 - <i>avoir</i> = imitation of local or popular usage, literary archaism; <i>être</i> = preferred auxiliary	66	36

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3		
Verb	Only <i>Être</i> Permitted	Different Meaning/ Rationale First Assigned to Each Auxiliary	Subsequent Refinements Made to Meaning/ Rationale With Each Auxiliary	% <i>Avoir</i> in O-H French (1999)	% <i>Avoir</i> Montréal French (1980)
rejourner	1625 (Maupas) 1660 (Arnault) 1680 (Chifflet) 1709 (Buffier) 1955 (Grevisse) 1993 (Goosse)	-	-	60	46
descendre/ redescendre	1625 (Maupas) 1647 (Vaugelas) 1660 (Arnault) 1680 (Chifflet) 1744 (Vallart) 1800 (Lhomond) 1810 (Féville, Molard) 1845 (Noel et Chapsal) 1845 (Wey)	1675 - <i>avoir</i> = completed action; <i>être</i> = resulting state (Ménage, 511)	1704 - sometimes <i>avoir</i> is acceptable, no reason given (L'Académie, 419) 1787 - <i>avoir</i> = style of the Palace, Académie doesn't condemn using <i>avoir</i> , <i>être</i> = what should be used, what the people use (Féraud, 714) 1830 - <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state (Lequien, 103) 1955 - <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = resulting state, <i>être</i> used significantly more overall (Goosse, 1181)	59	50
entrer	1625 (Maupas) 1647 (Vaugelas) 1660 (Arnault) 1680 (Chifflet) 1709 (Buffier) 1766 (Desgrouais) 1787 (Féraud) 1800 (Lhomond) 1810 (Molard) 1830 (Lequien) 1993 (Goosse)	1675 - <i>avoir</i> = completed action; <i>être</i> = resulting state (Ménage, 511)	1704 - sometimes <i>avoir</i> is acceptable, no reason given (L'Académie, 419) 1787 - some authors use <i>avoir</i> in error. <i>être</i> should be used (Féraud, 117) 1955 - ' <i>autrefois</i> ', <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state. Usage doesn't reflect this, seems archaic (Grevisse, 517)	50	6

Verb	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	% <i>Avoir</i> in O-H French (1999)	% <i>Avoir</i> in Montréal French (1980)
	Only <i>Etre</i> Permitted	Different Meaning/ Rationale First Assigned to Each Auxiliary	Subsequent Refinements Made to Meaning/ Rationale With Each Auxiliary		
arriver	1625 (Maupas) 1660 (Arnault) 1680 (Chifflet) 1709 (Buffier) 1753 (Antonini) 1787 (Féraud) 1800 (Lhomond) 1829 (Reynier) 1830 (Lequien) 1845 (Noel et Chapsal) 1955 (Grevisse) 1993 (Goosse)	-	-	43	9
revenir	1709 (Buffier) 1787 (Féraud) 1800 (Lhomond) 1830 (Lequien) 1845 (Noel et Chapsal) 1955 (Grevisse) 1993 (Goosse)	-	-	24	6.5
venir	1625 (Maupas) 1680 (Chifflet) 1709 (Buffier) 1800 (Lhomond) 1830 (Lequien) 1845 (Noel et Chapsal) 1955 (Grevisse) 1993 (Goosse)	-	-	20	7
devenir	1680 (Chifflet) 1709 (Buffier) 1800 (Lhomond) 1830 (Lequien) 1845 (Noel et Chapsal) 1955 (Grevisse) 1993 (Goosse)	-	-	12	-
décéder	1787 (Féraud) 1800 (Lhomond) 1830 (Lequien) 1955 (Grevisse) 1993 (Goosse)	-	-	8	-

2) STATIVE *ÊTRE* VERBS

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3			
Verb	Only <i>Être</i> Permitted	Different Meaning/ Rationale First Assigned to Each Auxiliary	Subsequent Refinements Made to Meaning/ Rationale With Each Auxiliary		% <i>Avoir</i> in O-H French (1999)	% <i>Avoir</i> Montréal French (1980)
rester	1800 (Lhomond) 1830 (Leguien)	1787 - <i>avoir</i> = meaning <i>demeurer</i> ; <i>être</i> = <i>être de reste</i> , <i>persister</i> (Féraud, 462)	1825 - <i>ex</i> 's show <i>avoir</i> = completed state; <i>être</i> = perduring state (Boniface, 400 - 401) 1955 - ' <i>autrefois</i> ', <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state. Usage doesn't reflect this, seems archaic (Grevisse, 517)		94 - ended 93 - perduring	78 - ended 47 - perduring
demeurer	-	1744 - <i>avoir</i> = no longer there <i>être</i> = still there (Vallart, 299)	1753 - <i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> have different meaning wrt proximity in time, only verbs with declinable past participles vary (Antonini, 317) 1766 - <i>avoir</i> = <i>habiter/lander</i> , <i>être</i> = <i>rester/être de reste</i> (Desgrouais, 79) 1787 - <i>avoir</i> = no longer there; <i>être</i> = still there (Féraud, 712) 1825 - <i>avoir</i> = ended state; <i>être</i> = resulting state (Boniface, 400) 1969 - historically, distinguished different meanings; now <i>avoir</i> is popular usage and only <i>être</i> accepted, (Brunot et Bruncau, 311) 1993 - <i>avoir</i> = <i>habiter</i> : to live, find it elsewhere too, <i>être</i> = <i>rester</i> : to stay (Goosse, 1185)		93 - ended 89 - perduring	97 - ended 45 - perduring
apparaître	-	1830 - <i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> may be used indifferently, no meaning given to different auxiliaries (Leguien, 1830)	1993 - Académie left choice in 1932, then in 1986 stated used more often with <i>être</i> than <i>avoir</i> . Some feel 3rd pers sing uses <i>être</i> because <i>avoir</i> would be cacophonous. Il <i>est</i> apparu vs. il <i>a</i> apparu. (Goosse, 1182)		33	-

3) VERBS NEVER PRESCRIBING ONLY *ÊTRE*

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3			
Verb	Only <i>Être</i> Permitted	Different Meaning/ Rationale First Assigned to Each Auxiliary	Subsequent Refinements Made to Meaning/ Rationale With Each Auxiliary		% <i>Avoir</i> in O-H French (1999)	% <i>Avoir</i> Montréal French (1980)
commencer	-	1986 - <i>avoir</i> = action; <i>être</i> = state resulting from completed action (Grevisse, 1220)			98	-
déménager	1787 - <i>avoir</i> only (Féraud)	1955 - <i>avoir</i> = past action; <i>être</i> = state resulting from previously completed action (Grevisse, 519-520)			84	70

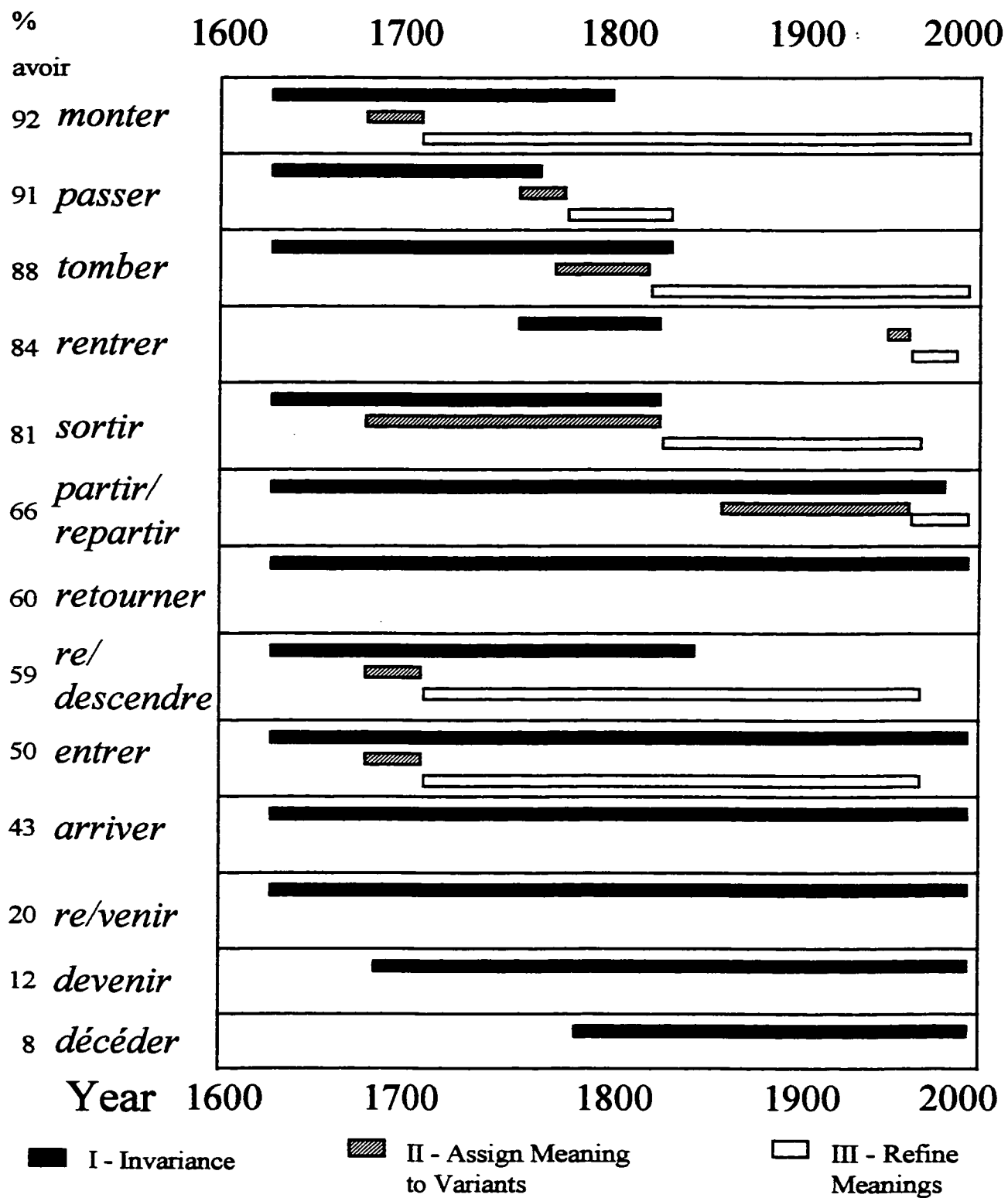
5.2.1 Active *être* verbs

From Table 16, we note that 10 of the 16 active *être* verbs have progressed through all three stages of prescriptive treatment I have identified. These verbs are: *monter*, *passer*, *tomber*, *rentrer*, *sortir*, *re/partir*, *re/descendre* and *entrer*. The other 6 verbs, *retourner*, *arriver*, *revenir*, *venir*, *devenir* and *décéder*, remain in Stage 1 even today, meaning that none of the 32 grammars consulted allowed the auxiliary *avoir* with these verbs. This is also represented graphically in Figure 2. We must ask what, if anything, differentiates the first 10 verbs from the remaining 6, and accounts for such different treatment by grammarians.

When we look to the data from Ottawa-Hull, we observe that the 10 verbs having progressed through all three stages are the verbs with the highest rates of *avoir* (from 50% to 92%) next to the stative verbs, which are discussed in Section 5.2.2. On the other hand, the active *être* verbs remaining in Stage 1, with one exception, represent the lowest rates of *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull (from 8% to 43%). I am unable to offer an explanation for the behaviour of the verb *retourner*, which still remains in Stage 1 but displays 60% *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull.

We conclude, therefore, that for 15 of the 16 active *être* verbs, there appears to be a direct correlation between frequency of *avoir* usage and assignment of different meanings to the two auxiliaries by grammarians, represented by Stage 3. This relationship is easily observed in Figure 2b, in which I add the percentages of *avoir* usage for all the active *être* verbs to the graphical representation of their progression through the three stages. An explanation for this important correlation is offered in Section 5.3, which follows a discussion of the stative *être* verbs and the verbs never having required exclusively *être*.

Figure 2b The 3 Stages in Prescriptive Treatment of Active *Etre* Verbs



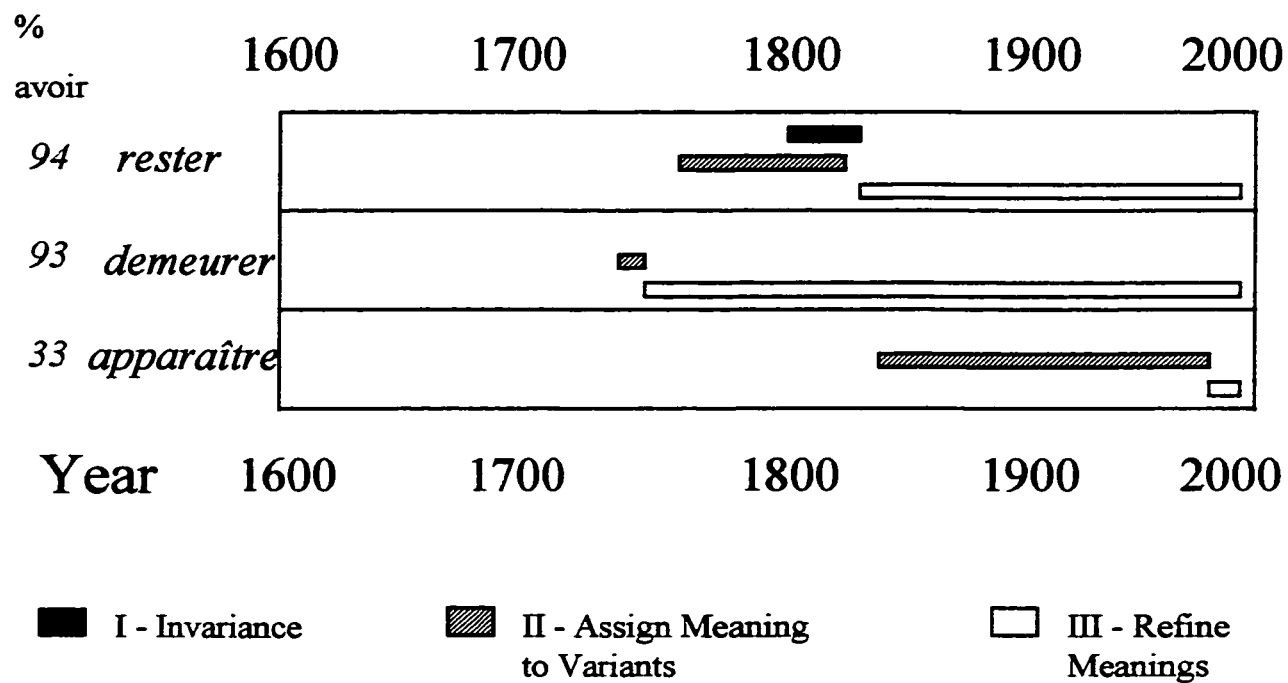
5.2.2 Stative *être* verbs

Contrary to the behaviour of all of the active *être* verbs, Table 16 shows that the stative *être* verbs spend very little or no time in Stage 1. In fact, only two of the 32 grammars consulted prescribed exclusive use of *être* with the verb *rester* ‘to stay’. No prescription for exclusively *être* was made for either *demeurer* ‘to live’ or *apparaître* ‘to appear’. Contrary to the case of all the other *être* verbs, *rester* entered Stage 2 before it entered Stage 1. Note that in 1787, Féraud assigned different meanings to the two auxiliaries, thus taking *rester* into Stage 2. However, it was not until 1800 that Lhomond prescribed exclusively *être*, putting the verb in Stage 1. The second and last prescription of exclusive use of *être* was made thirty years later, by Lequien who writes “*L’auxiliaire être sert, ... A conjuguer les verbes neutres suivants: aller, choir, déchoir, ..., rester, ... On doit dire, il EST mort, il EST venu, etc. (1830, 103)*” ‘The auxiliary *être* serves, ... to conjugate the following intransitive verbs: to go, to fall, to lower,..., to stay, ...One must say, he died (*être*), he went (*être*), etc.’ This reversal of entry into Stages 1 and 2, combined with the very short duration of Stage 1 compared with other verbs, shows that the prescription for exclusive use of *être* has never been very strong with the verb *rester*. In addition, the prescription for exclusively *être* is completely absent with *demeurer* and *apparaître*. In fact, both auxiliaries have been accepted for the verbs *rester* and *demeurer* since the mid to late 1700’s, while *apparaître* received this treatment in 1830. Indeed, *rester* and *demeurer* are solidly established in Stage 3, where they have received numerous different explanations for use of *avoir* and *être*, as shown in Table 1. *Apparaître* entered this stage more recently, in 1993.

Relating these observations to the empirical results obtained for Ottawa-Hull French, we note that not only do the stative verbs *rester* and *demeurer* spend little or no time in Stage 1, and

a significant period in Stage 3, they have the highest rates of *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull French of any *être* verb at 94% and 93% respectively. They also show among the highest rates of *avoir* in Montréal and Vermont French. Similar to the the case of the active *être* verbs, outlined above in Section 5.2.1, this observation indicates a strong relationship between entry of a verb into Stage 3, and a high rate of *avoir* usage. This relationship is apparent in Figure 3b, which shows the three stages in prescriptive treatment for the three stative *être* verbs, as well as the associated percentages of *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull. Note the short or non-existent Stage 1 compared to the relatively long Stage 3 for each of these verbs. As previously mentioned, an explanation for this direct correlation is provided in Section 5.3.

Figure 3b The 3 Stages in Prescriptive Treatment of Stative *Etre* Verbs



5.2.3 Verbs Never Requiring Exclusively *Etre*

In Ottawa-Hull French, the verbs *déménager* ‘to move’ and *commencer* ‘to start’ also display auxiliary alternation, despite the fact that not one of the 32 grammars consulted prescribes *être* with these verbs. In fact, while referring to the verb *déménager* in 1787, Féraud writes “*Un Auteur moderne done à ce verbe l’auxil. être. Mde. de...étant déménagee pour retourner à, etc. Il faut, ayant déménage [emphasis mine]*” ‘A modern author conjugates this verb with the auxiliary *être*. Madame ... being moved (*être*) to mean ‘to return to’, etc. One must say, having moved (*avoir*)’ (710). The only other mention was made in 1955 by Grevisse, stating that *être* was used to express the state resulting from the completed action while *avoir* referred to the action.

Only one mention of the verb *commencer* was found in the grammar sample: in 1986, Grevisse stated the classic action/state distinction noting that *avoir* was used to emphasize action while *être* signified the state resulting from the completed action (1220). In addition, none of the studies on auxiliary alternation in other varieties of French have shown variation with the verb *commencer*. The fact that it displays 2% *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull (6 tokens of a total 312 tokens) may reflect an overapplication of the variable auxiliary rule with the two speakers involved.

Given that these two verbs were never required to use exclusively *être* as all the other verbs studied, it is understandable that we do not observe the same correlation between number of meanings attributed to the different auxiliaries with these two verbs, and rate of *avoir* usage. since they were never prescribed to be *être* verbs like all other verbs studied. What is interesting is that despite the fact that most *composé* verbs in French are conjugated with *avoir*, Féraud and

Grevisse felt the requirement to mention these two verbs in particular to ensure people indeed used *avoir*.

5.3 A Frequency Threshold

As we saw in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, both the active and stative *être* verbs show a strong correlation between number of meanings offered by grammarians to account for the different auxiliaries, and the rate of *avoir* usage. Recall that in Figure 3b and Figure 4b, we observed that with one exception, verbs with the highest *avoir* usage have all entered Stage 3. In other words, grammarians have confronted the variability by attributing a number of different meanings to *avoir* and *être* when used with these verbs. This leads us to believe that when a so-called *être* verb reaches a certain threshold in *avoir* usage, grammarians address it by assigning a distinct meaning. It is unclear exactly what this threshold value is, however we notice that no different meanings of *avoir* and *être* were given in any of the 32 grammars consulted for verbs displaying less than 49% *avoir* usage in Ottawa-Hull today. In contrast to the situation of the French conditional, as reported by LeBlanc and Poplack (NWAVE 1999, Toronto), which was not given any linguistic explanation by grammarians, here we have an association between frequency of *avoir* usage and number of explanations offered in the grammars. This is as expected, since we recognize that the *passé composé* is much more frequently used in spoken French than protases of conditional complexes, and this may explain why so many linguistic explanations are provided for alternation in the *composé* tenses, while none is offered for variation in the conditional. Represented graphically, this association between frequency of *avoir* and number of linguistic explanations provides us with an insight into the treatment linguistic variation is given by the prescriptive enterprise once it reaches a certain frequency threshold.

Discussion and Conclusions

Although the use of *avoir* with the *être* verbs is traditionally frowned upon, I have shown that such use has been attested by prescriptive grammarians for at least 400 years. Not only is this alternation a legacy of the French language, a number of the same constraints I could detect from the prescriptive literature are clearly and strongly operative in contemporary Ottawa-Hull French. One key element that is not the same, however, is the verbs themselves. Ranging from 1 to 95 verbs as we saw earlier, we are prompted to ask why there is so much variability in the class of *être* verbs.

I conclude that because grammarians have not been able to agree on the verbs requiring *être*, and because comparison of three quantitative studies on different varieties of French reveals that different lexical verbs display the highest percentage of *avoir* usage in each variety, the effect is not purely lexical. We must examine other factors that are conditioning the variation.

By following Sankoff and Thibault's (1980) comprehensive approach to circumscribing the variable context, I rule out the semantic explanation of a simple action versus state distinction. In this thesis, I include only instances of actions completed in the past, as well as stative verbs. Because we find that *avoir* is used 66% of the time in Ottawa-Hull with the so called *être* verbs in these contexts, we are able to reject the traditional action versus state explanation, one that is still offered by grammarians today. I do suggest that for some verbs, there appears to be a slight semantic effect, however, this represents the exception rather than the norm.

I perform a quantitative analysis on over 2000 *composé* tokens to discover which linguistic and non-linguistic factors condition auxiliary choice in Ottawa-Hull French, based on the variationist framework. Interestingly, results reveal that three linguistic factors attested to

condition auxiliary choice by the prescriptive enterprise over the past 400 years remain significant in the selection of *avoir* or *être* in the National Capital Region today. Verbs also used adjectivally, verbs with locational complements and verbs not also used reflexively favour *avoir* as predicted. Two other linguistic factors, non-adjacency of the auxiliary to the participle, and ability to be used transitively also favour *avoir* as predicted.

Three of these factors confirm results obtained in previous studies. Adjacency was shown to be a significant factor in auxiliary selection in Montréal French (1997), as well as in recent studies on other French variables such as the subjunctive (Poplack, 1992). While ability to be used transitively was suggested to favour the choice of *avoir* in Welland and Sudbury, Montréal and Vermont French, this was confirmed quantitatively based on actual usage for the first time in this thesis. In the same way, parallel adjectival use was stated to favour *avoir* in Montréal and Ontario French. I confirm this, based for the first time on quantitative analysis from actual usage. That two other factors: complements of location and the lack of use of an *être* verb reflexively favour *avoir*, are new findings reported for the first time in this thesis.

Confirming results of previous French studies, results of analysis of non-linguistic factors reveal that speaker education and age also exert a significant effect on variant choice. As was the case in Montréal French, the less educated the speaker, the greater the probability he or she will select *avoir* in Ottawa-Hull. With respect to age, both the Ontario and Montréal French studies found a tendency for younger speakers to favour *avoir*. In the case of Montréal French, however, the effect was small and Sankoff and Thibault (1980) concluded that this did not indicate a real change in progress. On the contrary, there is a very strong age effect in Ottawa-Hull in the same direction -- younger speakers strongly favour *avoir* while older speakers disfavour it. Clearly,

there is a significant change in progress in the National Capital Region, led by the youngest speakers.

I conclude that auxiliary alternation is both a linguistically and socially conditioned variable, with the ranges of both social factors selected as significant higher than all of the linguistic variables selected. This points to a neutralization in the meaning of *avoir* and *être* in *composé* contexts. Indeed, it is the most educated and oldest speakers who use the most *être* in Ottawa-Hull, indicating that *être* usage with these verbs is something that must be learned, rather than being a meaningful semantic distinction. It is clearly a marker of prestige and formality in this linguistic community.

In addition to the linguistic and social analysis of auxiliary alternation, I consulted 32 prescriptive grammars published over the past 400 years, to discover how the prescriptive enterprise treated the alternation, and if they attributed any different meanings to the variation.

This unique approach revealed that the *être* verbs with the highest rates of *avoir* usage in Ottawa-Hull French, have received a number of different meanings for the two auxiliaries from prescriptive grammarians over the past four centuries. Conversely, verbs with the lowest rates of *avoir* in contemporary Ottawa-Hull speech lack explanations for the different auxiliaries in the grammars. Finally, the stative verbs *rester* and *demeurer* have the highest rates of *avoir* usage, which mirrors the fact that they have received a striking lack of prescription towards *être*.

The distribution of *être* verbs across the three stages I identified in the prescriptive enterprise's treatment of auxiliary alternation leads me to conclude that when an *être* verb reaches a given threshold in *avoir* usage, grammarians respond by assigning a distinct meaning to each auxiliary. We were not able to determine what this threshold value is, however we observe

that for Ottawa-Hull French, no different meanings were assigned in any of the works consulted for verbs showing less than 49% *avoir*.

These results contribute an analysis of auxiliary alternation in a fourth variety of North American French, the variety spoken in the Ottawa-Hull region. While several factors selected as significant differer from previous studies, others coincide confirming previous findings. On the whole, these results reveal that while *avoir* is clearly the auxiliary of choice in this variety of French, *être* retains 44% of the occurrences. Rather than reflecting a difference in meaning, however, I have shown that *être* serves to mark formality and prestige.

Given that this variation has been in place for the better part of 400 years, and that some of the constraints attested to condition its use over that time are still in place today, there is some support for the claim that *avoir* will not take over as the only auxiliary in Ottawa-Hull French in the near future. On the other hand, a number of *être* verbs show very high rates of *avoir* usage in the National Capital Region, especially among the youngest speakers, suggesting that *être*'s continued use in these contexts is threatened. Therefore, in answer to the question "*Etre ou ne plus être?*" in Ottawa-Hull, while the community has spoken, it is divided on its response.

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Appendix 1 - Factor Codes

LINGUISTIC FACTORS

1. **Person of Subject**
 - J - je
 - T - tu
 - E - elle/il
 - C - ce, c', ça
 - N - singular noun phrase (la porte)
 - P - plural noun phrases (les filles)
 - O - on
 - Q - singular qui
 - I - plural qui
 - L - zero relative
 - U - nous
 - V - vous
 - S - ils/elles
 - R - rien, tout(e), personne, quelque chose
 - Z - null subject, infinitivals

2. **Animacy of Subject**
 - I - Inanimate (la télévision)
 - A - Animate (elle, je)
 - M - Impersonal (il pleut, ça a arrivé, rien a arrivé, quelque chose...)
 - / - when null subject

3. **Polarity**
 - N - auxiliary is used in negative declarative
 - D - auxiliary is used in affirmative declarative
 - P - auxiliary is used in negative interrogative
 - A - auxiliary is used in affirmative interrogative

4. **Type of Complement**
 - L - following complement of location (à London, à la maison)
 - I - following infinitive
 - C - other following complement (direct objects excluded since transitive verbs are outside our variable context)
 - O (letter O) - no following complement

5. **Proximity to Past Reference**
 - R - recent past (within last 24 hours)
 - P - far past (prior to the last 24 hours)
 - U - unknown

6. **Shape of Onset**
 - C - past participle starts with a consonant
 - V - past participle starts with a vowel

7. **Transitive Use of Verb**
 T - verb was used transitively in the corpus in *composé* tense
 - *commencer, déménager, descendre, devenir, monter, partir, passer, redescendre, rentrer, rester, retourner, sortir.*
 N - verb was not used with a direct object in the corpus in the *composé* tense
 - *apparaître, arriver, décéder, demeurer, entrer, repartir, revenir, tomber, venir.*
8. **Adjectival Use of Past Participle**
 A - past participle used as an adjective in the corpus
 - *commencer, décéder, déménager, demeurer, monter, partir, passer, rentrer, repartir, rester, retourner, revenir, sortir, tomber.*
 N - past participle not used as an adjective in the corpus.
 - *apparaître, arriver, descendre, devenir, entrer, redescendre, venir.*
9. **Reflexive Use of Verb**
 R - verb used reflexively in corpus
 - *s'arriver, se passer, s'en redescendre, se retourner, s'en revenir, s'en sortir, s'en venir*
 N - verb not used reflexively in corpus
 - *apparaître, commencer, décéder, déménager, demeurer, descendre, devenir, entrer, monter, partir, rentrer, repartir, rester, tomber.*
10. **Adjacency of Auxiliary and Past Participle**
 D - directly adjacent
 S - separated by one or more words (includes *pas* of negation)
11. **Frequency of Verb Use**
 F - frequent
 I - infrequent
12. **Morphology of Verb**
 1 - First conjugation group (er verbs ending in e for 1st pers present of indicative)
 - *arriver, commencer, décéder, demeurer, déménager, entrer, monter, passer, rentrer, rester, retourner, tomber.*
 2 - Second conjugation group (ir verbs ending in is for 1st pers present of indicative, and whose present participle ends in issant)
 - none in corpus
 3 - Third conjugation group (aller, ir verbs where present participle ends in ant, oir and re verbs)
 - *apparaître, descendre, devenir, partir, repartir, revenir, sortir, venir.*
13. **Category of Verb or Predicate**
 I - Intransitive
 U - Unaccusative
 A - Auxiliary
 C - Copula
 B - Benefactive

14. Tense of Auxiliary

P - Present

O - Other

15. Lexical Verb

4	apparaître
Z	arriver - arrived
e	arriver - happened
R	commencer/recommencer
6	décéder
	déménager
+	demeurer - ended
7	demeurer - perduring
i	descendre/redescendre
&	devenir
<	entrer - entered
g	entrer - joined
f	monter
m	partir/repartir - left
h	partir/repartir - started
l	partir - dead
%	passer (se)
i	redescendre - see descendre
o	rentrer - (re)entered
T	rentrer - joined
m	repartir - see partir
μ	rester - ended
P	rester- perduring
r	retourner
è	revenir - came back
V	revenir - à bout
Y	sortir - left
w	sortir - dated
§	sortir - appeared
·	tomber - fell
TM	tomber - became
C	venir - came
	venir - was born
ñ	venir - à bout
=	venir - became

SOCIAL FACTORS

1. **Gender**
 F - female
 M - male

2. **Age**
 1 = 15 - 24
 2 = 25 - 34
 3 = 35 - 44
 4 = 45 - 54
 5 = 55 - 65
 6 = 65+

3. **SEC**
 U = unskilled workers and chronically unemployed
 S = skilled workers
 V = sales and service
 P = professional and managerial

4. **Education**
 P = Primary
 S = Secondary
 U = Post Secondary

5. **Level of English Proficiency**
 1 = low English proficiency
 2 = mid low English proficiency
 3 = mid high English proficiency
 4 = high English proficiency

6. **Neighbourhood**
Ontario
 V = Vanier
 W = West End
 B = Basse Ville
Québec
 H = Vieux Hull
 M = Mont Bleu

Appendix 2 - Examples of Transitive Use of *Etre* Verbs in Ottawa-Hull

commencer *Ils ont commencé ça. (001/750)*

‘to start’ ‘They started that.’

déménager *Nous autres on a déménagé une fortune parce que nos trois icitte... (062/1742)*

‘to move’ ‘We moved a fortune because the three of us here...’

descendre *Elle a descendu les marches. (110/1369)*

‘to go down’ ‘She went down the stairs.’

devenir *Puis après ça, il est devenu contremaître. (024/468)*

‘to become’ ‘Then after that he became a foreman.’

monter *Puis une autre fois quand qu'on- on la monté une île avec mes enfants (041/2158)*

‘to go up’ ‘Then another time when we- we we went up the island with my kids.’

Je l'ai montée. (110/1416)

I went up it.

partir *Ils ont parti cette idée là. (012/306)*

‘to leave’ ‘They started that idea there.’

passer *Ah tu l'as passé ça pour le rien? (001/6)*

‘to pass’ ‘So you gave it to her/him for nothing?’

redescendre *Mais quand j'ai revenu icitte ils m'ont découragé puis ils m'ont redescendu. (079/166)*

‘to go down’ ‘But when I came back here the discouraged me then they brought me down.’

remonter *J'ai remonté la côte. (060/62)*

‘to go back up’ ‘I went back the hill.’

<i>rentrer</i>	<i>C'est moi même qui a rentré le plombage. (108/389)</i>
'to enter'	'I put the plumbing in myself.'
<i>retourner</i>	<i>Elle elle a jamais retourné les enfants contre leur père, tu sais? (023/1008)</i>
'to return'	'She never turned the kids against their father, you know?'
<i>sortir</i>	<i>Je t'ai sorti une affaire là moi... (001/1032)</i>
'to go out'	'I got out something for you there...'

Appendix 3 - Examples of Adjectival Use of *Etre* Verbs in Ottawa-Hull

- commencer* *Ça fait trois ans qu'elle est commencée là cette année ici.* (120/177)
 'to start' 'It's been three years since she started there this year.'
- décéder* *Mais celui-là est décédé.* (035/564)
 'to die' 'But that guy's dead.'
- déménager* *Elle est déménagée à cette heure à l'hôpital des Enfants hein?* (045/892)
 'to move' 'She's moved now to the Children's Hospital, eh?'
- demeurer* *On est toujours demeurés dans Hull nous-autres.* (118/1288)
 'to live' 'We've always lived in Hull, us.'
- monter* *Ça c'était un renard ça...C'est toute bourré, c'est toute monté sur un- une bûche.*
 'to go up' (043/870)
 'That that was a fox...It's all stuffed, it's all mounted on a- a log.'
- partir* *Il y en a bien de partis. La plupart sont partis.* (065/848)
 'to leave' 'There are lots who are gone. Most of them are gone.'
- passer* *Fait que si elle voulait pas de deça, bien centaine des années passées, c'est à eux-autres*
 'to pass' *de- de- d'arrêter ça complètement dans ce temps là.* (059/1891)
 'So if she didn't want that anymore, well a hundred years ago, it's up to them to- to- to
 stop that completely in those days.'
- rentrer* *Il y a une nouvelle qui est rentrée, hein, puis la-- la dame elle dit...* (040/3424)
 'to return' 'There's a new one who's moved in, eh, then the lady she says...'

- repartir* *J'ai dit que le- le Francais qu'il reste donc chez eux, j'ai dit nous-autres on va rester chez*
 'to leave again' *nous. ... Je l'ai dit à femme. Sont- elle est repartie en France, la femme celle qui m'a*
dit ça. Elle est repartie en France. (018/1986)
 'She's gone back to France.'
- rester* *C'est pas des miracles qui vont être ... restés, hein? (060/557)*
 'to stay' 'It's not miracles that'll be...left, eh?'
- retourner* *Oui, puis là bien, il est retourné là, il est à l'école secondaire. (019/72)*
 'to return' 'Yes, so there well, he's back there, he's in high school.'
- revenir* *C'est ça des fois c'est revenu qu'ils ont trouvé le monde. (042/2031)*
 'to come back' 'That's it sometimes it's come so that they found the world.' - check context
- sortir* *Les tomates? Sont pas sorties encore. (093/1984)*
 'to go out' 'The tomatoes? Not out yet.'
- tomber* Interviewer: *Ça existe plus?* Informant: *Le regiment, il est tombé. (060/1821)*
 'to fall' Interviewer: 'Does it still exist?' Informant: 'The regiment, it's fallen.'

Appendix 4 - Examples of Reflexive Use of *Etre* Verbs in Ottawa-Hull

<i>s'arriver</i> 'to arrive'	<i>Puis je me suis arrivée dans un accident je me tuta- ça me tuerait. (067/980)</i> 'Then I got into an accident I [inc] myself- it would kill me.'
<i>se commencer</i> 'to start'	<i>Ils font bien des affaires de même, tu sais ils se commencent à se brainwasher un petit peu. (001/677)</i> 'They do things like that, you know they start to brainwash themselves a bit.'
<i>se passer</i> 'to happen'	<i>Même Danielle elle me contait des- des affaires qui s'est passé à Smith Falls là. (065/271)</i> 'Even Danielle she told me th- things that happened in Smith Falls there.'
	<i>Il y a des affaires qui se passent là puis ils laisserent ça- (001/305)</i> 'There are things that happen there then they leave it-'
<i>s'en redescendre</i> 'to go down'	<i>Tu peux pas revirer à gauche quand tu t'en redescends. (033/384)</i> 'You can't steer back to the left when you go down it.'
<i>se retourner</i> 'to return'	<i>So il s'est en retourné. (065/1465)</i> 'So he returned.'
<i>s'en revenir</i> 'to go back'	<i>On s'est en revenus. (018/381)</i> 'We came back.'
<i>se sortir</i> 'to go out'	<i>Lui c'était un petit peu de manque de précaution parce qu'il a pas été averti de deça pas se sortir la tête, hein? (084/1696)</i> 'In his case, he was a bit careless because he wasn't warned about that not to put his head out, eh.'
<i>s'en venir</i> 'to come'	<i>C'est dans ce boutte icitte je voulais m'en venir. (065/2528)</i> 'It's in this area here that I wanted to come.'

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiffet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
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<i>Aborder</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans										
<i>Abouir</i>											
<i>Accoucher</i>											
<i>Accourir</i>											
<i>Acroître</i>											
<i>Adoucir</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans										
<i>Advenir</i>											
<i>Aller</i>	always <i>être</i>	<i>être</i> with agreement	<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only
<i>Aluir</i>											<i>être</i> and <i>avoir</i> ok - meaning diff wrt time

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupus (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chifflet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Apparaitre</i>											
<i>Arriver</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans		<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only		<i>être</i> only
<i>Atterir</i>											
<i>Augmenter</i>											
<i>Avorter</i>											
<i>Baisser</i>											
<i>Camper</i>											
<i>Cesser</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiflet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
Ch(e)oir	always <i>être</i>					<i>être</i> only when intrans					
Changer											
Chavirer											
Circonve- mir											
Commen- cer											
Contre- mir											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiflet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Convenir</i>											
<i>Courir</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans										
<i>Crever</i>											
<i>Croï(s)ire</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans					<i>être</i> only when intrans			some- times ok with <i>avoir</i>		
<i>Crouler</i>											
<i>Croupir</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiffet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>De- (s)ch(e)oir</i>						<i>être</i> only when intrans					
<i>Dé- barquer</i>											
<i>Déborder</i>											
<i>Décamper</i>											
<i>Décéder</i>											
<i>Décroître</i>											
<i>Dégeler</i>											
<i>Dégénérer</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnaut (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiffet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Dé- ménager</i>											
<i>Demeurer</i>										<i>être</i> = still there, <i>avoir</i> = no longer there	<i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> = diffé meaning wt time
<i>Dénicher</i>											
<i>Descendre</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>avoir</i> = completed state, <i>être</i> = perduring state		<i>être</i> only when intrans		sometimes ok with <i>avoir</i>	sometimes ok with <i>avoir</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans	
<i>Devenir</i>									<i>être</i> only		
<i>Diminuer</i>											
<i>Dîner</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chifflet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Disconvenir</i>											
<i>Disparaitre</i>											
<i>Divorcer</i>											
<i>E(s)-camper</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans										
<i>E(s)cheoir</i>						<i>être</i> only when intrans					
<i>E(s)-chapper</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chifflet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffler (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Échoer</i>											
<i>Éclater</i>											
<i>Éclorre</i>											
<i>Émaner</i>											
<i>Embellir</i>											
<i>Empirer</i>											
<i>Enchétrir</i>											
<i>Enlaidir</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chifflet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Entrer</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> = perdurant state, <i>avoir</i> = ended state		<i>être</i> only when intrans		sometimes ok with <i>avoir</i>	only <i>être</i>		
<i>Evader</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans										
<i>Expier</i>											
<i>Expier</i>											
<i>Faillir</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans										
<i>Finir</i>											
<i>Grandir</i>											
<i>Grossir</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiffet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Hausser</i>											
<i>Intervenir</i>											
<i>Jailir</i>											
<i>Maigrir</i>											
<i>Monter</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> = perduring state, <i>avoir</i> = ended state		<i>être</i> only when intrans		sometimes ok with <i>avoir</i>	sometimes ok with <i>avoir</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> and <i>avoir</i> ok - meaning diff wrt time
<i>Mourir</i>	always <i>être</i>					<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only		
<i>Nail(s)ire</i>	always <i>être</i>					<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only		
<i>Paraitre</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiffet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Partir</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans					<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only		
<i>Parvenir</i>						<i>être</i> only when intrans					
<i>Passer</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans					<i>être</i> only when intrans				<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> and <i>avoir</i> ok - meaning diff wrt time
<i>Perir</i>											
<i>Pouvoir</i>											
<i>Prévenir</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiflet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Provenir</i>											
<i>Rajeunir</i>											
<i>Récliver</i>											
<i>Recroître</i>											
<i>Redevenir</i>											
<i>Rentrer</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiffet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Repartir</i>											
<i>Ressorcir</i>											
<i>Res- suscier</i>											
<i>Rester</i>											
<i>Resulter</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chiffet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Retomber</i>											
<i>Retourner</i>	always <i>être</i>		<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only		
<i>Revenir</i>									<i>être</i> only		
<i>Réveiller</i>											
<i>Sauter</i>											
<i>Sonner</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

<i>VERB</i>	<i>Maupas</i> (1625)	<i>Vaugelas</i> (1647)	<i>Arnaut</i> (1660)	<i>Bouhours</i> (1675)	<i>Ménage</i> (1675)	<i>Chiflet</i> (1680)	<i>Vaugelas</i> (1690)	<i>Académie</i> (1704)	<i>Buffier</i> (1709)	<i>Vallart</i> (1744)	<i>Antonini</i> (1753)
<i>Sortir</i>	always <i>être</i>	<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> only women use <i>avoir</i>	<i>être</i> = perdurant state, <i>avoir</i> = ended state	<i>être</i> only when intrans		sometime ok with <i>avoir</i>	<i>être</i> only	<i>avoir</i> = returned <i>être</i> = still out	<i>être</i> and <i>avoir</i> ok - meaning diff wrt time
<i>Souper</i>											
<i>Stationner</i>											
<i>Subvenir</i>											
<i>Survivre</i>											
<i>Tomber</i>	always <i>être</i>					<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> only		<i>être</i> only		<i>être</i> only

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Maupas (1625)	Vaugelas (1647)	Arnault (1660)	Bouhours (1675)	Ménage (1675)	Chifflet (1680)	Vaugelas (1690)	Académie (1704)	Buffier (1709)	Vallart (1744)	Antonini (1753)
<i>Trebucher</i>											
<i>Trepasser</i>											
<i>Venir</i>	always <i>être</i>					<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only		
<i>Veillir</i>											
<i>Voler</i>											

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Férard (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Aborder</i>										
<i>Abourir</i>		normally <i>être</i> , some authors <i>avoir</i> , Acad says both ok								
<i>Accoucher</i>		<i>être</i> when intrans but Diel Gramm says <i>avoir</i> - erreur		<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state		<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	
<i>Accourir</i>								<i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> ok no explan	<i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> ok indifferent	
<i>Accroître</i>										
<i>Adoucir</i>										
<i>Advenir</i>										
<i>Aller</i>	<i>être</i> only = still out no <i>avoir</i>		<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only				<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only	
<i>Alumir</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgronnais (1766)	Féraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Apparaître</i>									<i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> ok	
<i>Arriver</i>		<i>être</i> ONLY) find <i>avoir</i> in Journ.Poitt - error (160)	<i>être</i> ONLY					<i>être</i> ONLY	<i>être</i> ONLY	
<i>Atterir</i>										
<i>Augmenter</i>										
<i>Avorter</i>										
<i>Baisser</i>										
<i>Campier</i>										
<i>Cesser</i>				<i>avoir</i> or <i>être</i> no explan					<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Féraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Féville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Ch(e)oir</i>									<i>être</i> only	
<i>Changer</i>										
<i>Chavirer</i>										
<i>Circonvenir</i>										
<i>Commencer</i>										
<i>Contrevenir</i>			<i>être</i> only	<i>avoir</i> = sans dessein prémédité <i>être</i> = prémédité						

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Féraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Leguier (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Convenir</i>	sens accord = <i>être</i> , sens rapport/con venance = <i>avoir</i>	<i>avoir</i> = agréer, <i>être</i> convenable , <i>être</i> = demurer d'accord	<i>être</i> only	<i>avoir</i> = <i>être</i> convenable <i>être</i> = <i>être</i> d'accord					<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	
<i>Courir</i>				<i>être</i> only when intrans						
<i>Crever</i>										
<i>Croi(s)tre</i>									<i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> both ok - indifferent	
<i>Crouler</i>										
<i>Croupir</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desrouvais (1766)	Féraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>De-</i> <i>(Sch(e)oir</i>			<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Débarquer</i>										
<i>Déborder</i>										
<i>Décamper</i>										
<i>Décéder</i>		<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Décroître</i>									<i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> ok indifferent	
<i>Dégeler</i>										
<i>Dégénérer</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Féauid (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Leguier (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Déménager</i>		<i>avoir</i> req'd, auteur moderne donne <i>être</i> - mistake (710)								
<i>Demeurer</i>	<i>avoir</i> = habiter and tarder <i>être</i> = rester, <i>être</i> de reste	<i>avoir</i> = no longer there, <i>être</i> = still there		<i>avoir</i> = no longer there <i>être</i> = durée déterminée			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state		<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	
<i>Déjeuner</i>										
<i>Descendre</i>		<i>être</i> when intrans, Ménage uses <i>avoir</i> , <i>Académie</i> too, style of Palace not people	<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only when intrans	<i>être</i> only when intrans				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	
<i>Devenir</i>			<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Diminuer</i>										
<i>Diner</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Févaud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Disconvenir</i>										
<i>Disparaitre</i>								<i>avoir</i> and <i>être</i> ok no explan	<i>avoir</i> or <i>être</i> ok in- differently	
<i>E(s)camper</i>										
<i>Divorcer</i>										
<i>E(s)ch(e)voir</i>										
<i>E(s)chapper</i>									<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	

avoir =
échappe
momentané
ment, *être* =
hors toute
atteinte

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgronnais (1766)	Féraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Féville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Échoier</i>										
<i>Éclater</i>										
<i>Éclorre</i>										
<i>Émaner</i>										
<i>Embellir</i>										
<i>Empirer</i>										
<i>Enchéirir</i>										
<i>Enlaidir</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Féraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Entrer</i>	être only	être only, some auths use <i>avoir</i> in error ex Des Fontaines	être only		être only				être only	
<i>Expier</i>										
<i>Expier</i>										
<i>Expier</i>				<i>avoir</i> = durée momentané e <i>être</i> = temps toute à fait écoulé						
<i>Faillir</i>										
<i>Finir</i>										
<i>Grandir</i>										
<i>Grossir</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desrouvais (1766)	Féraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Hausser</i>										
<i>Intervenir</i>			<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Jailir</i>										
<i>Maigrir</i>										
<i>Monter</i>		<i>être</i> when neutre, <i>avoir</i> is style du Palais, Academic - <i>avoir</i>	<i>être</i> only		<i>être</i> = existence, rest <i>avoir</i> = action				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	
<i>Nourrir</i>			<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Naisître</i>			<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Paraitre</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Feraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Plat (1835)
<i>Parir</i>		<i>être</i> only in composé, Academie used <i>avoir</i> then took out ex	<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Parvenir</i>			<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Passer</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans when obj dir or indir = <i>avoir</i>	<i>être</i> only when intrans, can use <i>avoir</i> = <i>être reçu</i> ,	<i>être</i> only	<i>avoir</i> = sens marcher <i>être</i> = sens finir	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = complément of location <i>être</i> when intrans	<i>avoir</i> = complément of location or action <i>être</i> = state		<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	
<i>Perir</i>				<i>avoir</i> or <i>être</i> no explan						
<i>Pourrir</i>										
<i>Prevenir</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Férand (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Féville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Leguier (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Provenir</i>										
<i>Rajeunir</i>										
<i>Racidiver</i>										
<i>Recroître</i>									<i>avoir and être ok indifferent</i>	
<i>Redevenir</i>										
<i>Rentrer</i>	<i>être only</i>					<i>être only when intrans</i>				

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouvais (1766)	Étraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Repartir</i>										
<i>Ressortir</i>										
<i>Ressusciter</i>										
<i>Rester</i>		<i>avoir = demeurer ended state, être = être de reste</i>	<i>être only</i>				<i>avoir = used often , action être = state</i>		<i>être only</i>	
<i>Résulter</i>				<i>avoir or être no explan</i>						

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desrouvais (1766)	Étraud (1787)	Lamond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Leguien (1830)	Platt (1835)
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<i>Retomber</i>										
<i>Retourner</i>										
<i>Revenir</i>		like venir	<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Riellir</i>										
<i>Sauter</i>										
<i>Sonner</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Érard (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Moland (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
Sortir		<i>avoir</i> = passer du dedans au dehors, <i>être</i> = sortir de la ville/maiso n ou sans regime	<i>être</i> only		<i>être</i> only when intrans			<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only	
Souper										
Stationner										
Subvenir										
Survénir									<i>être</i> only	
Tomber	<i>être</i> only people s' times use <i>avoir</i>	<i>être</i> , some auths by distraction or style use <i>avoir</i> Ex Jean de Naples	<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only			sometimes <i>avoir</i> is ok - no explan given	<i>être</i> only M. Laveau disagrees	<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.
 Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Desgrouais (1766)	Féraud (1787)	Lhomond (1800)	Fréville (1810)	Molard (1810)	Blondin (1823)	Boniface (1825)	Reynier (1829)	Lequien (1830)	Platt (1835)
<i>Trebucher</i>										
<i>Trepasser</i>										
<i>Venir</i>			<i>être</i> only						<i>être</i> only	
<i>Vieillir</i>										
<i>Voler</i>										

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Goosse (1993)
Aborder	avoir = action être = state					<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
Abouir									<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
Accoucher						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
Accourir			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action, pple make errors			<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
Accroître						<i>avoir</i>=past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
Adoucir										
Advenir										<i>être</i> only
Aller	can't say je suis allé if you're back	<i>être</i> only when intrans even if action				<i>être</i> only			<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only
Alunir									<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Gaosse (1993)
<i>Apparaître</i>									<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	prefers <i>être</i> , <i>avoir</i> is cacophonie
<i>Arriver</i>		<i>être</i> only when intrans even if action				<i>être</i> only			<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only
<i>Aterir</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Augmenter</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Avorter</i>										<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Baisser</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Camper</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Cesser</i>			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action. pple make errors	<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>être</i> rare, mostly <i>avoir</i> , jadis <i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legende (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Goosse (1993)
<i>Ch(e)oir</i>		<i>être</i> only when intrans even if action								mainly <i>avoir</i>
<i>Changer</i>	<i>être</i> = current state, <i>avoir</i> = action			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> = past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state, almost always <i>avoir</i>	<i>avoir</i> - past tense, <i>être</i> - pp = adj
<i>Chavirer</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Circonvenir</i>						<i>avoir</i> when transitive (dir or indir) <i>être</i> otherwise			<i>avoir</i> when transitive (dir or indir) <i>être</i> otherwise	
<i>Commencer</i>									<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state almost always <i>avoir</i>	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Contrevenir</i>						<i>avoir</i> when transitive (dir or indir) <i>être</i> otherwise			<i>avoir</i> when transitive (dir or indir) <i>être</i> otherwise	

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legende (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Goosse (1993)
<i>Convenir</i>						sens être à propos, plaire: avoir, sens faire un accord: être, distinction arbitraire et subtile			sens être à propos, plaire: avoir, distinction arbitraire et subtile	sens être approprié, plaire: avoir, sens admettre, tomber d'accord: être
<i>Courir</i>										être - usage ancien
<i>Crever</i>						avoir=past action, être = resulting state			avoir = action être = state	avoir = action être = state
<i>Cro(s)tre</i>			être = state avoir = action. pple make errors	être = state avoir = action		avoir=past action, être = resulting state			avoir = action être = state	avoir = action être = state
<i>Crouler</i>						avoir=past action, être = resulting state			avoir = action être = state	avoir = action être = state
<i>Croupir</i>						avoir=past action, être = resulting state			avoir = action être = state	avoir = action être = state

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	<i>Barthelemy</i> (1839)	<i>Noël +</i> <i>Chapsal</i> (1845)	<i>Wey</i> (1845)	<i>Carpentier</i> (1860)	<i>Legendre</i> (1890)	<i>Grévisse</i> (1955)	<i>Glossaire</i> (1968)	<i>Brunot +</i> <i>Bruneau</i> (1969)	<i>Grévisse</i> (1980)	<i>Goosse</i> (1993)
De- (s)ch(e)oir	<i>être =</i> state, <i>avoir</i> = action					<i>avoir = past</i> action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>	<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>
Debarquer				<i>être = state</i> <i>avoir =</i> action						
Deborder						<i>avoir = past</i> action, <i>être =</i> resulting state			<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>	<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>
Décamper						<i>avoir = past</i> action, <i>être =</i> resulting state			<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>	<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>
Décéder						<i>être</i> only			<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only
Décroître				<i>être = state</i> <i>avoir =</i> action		<i>avoir = past</i> action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>	<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>
Dégeler						<i>avoir = past</i> action, <i>être =</i> resulting state			<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>	<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>
Dégénérer	<i>être =</i> state, <i>avoir</i> = action			<i>être = state</i> <i>avoir =</i> action		<i>avoir = past</i> action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>	<i>avoir =</i> action <i>être = state</i>

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Goosse (1993)
<i>Déménager</i>						<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action.			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Demeurer</i>	<i>avoir</i> = past state, <i>être</i> = current state							jadis, <i>avoir</i> = no longer there, <i>être</i> = still there	sens habiter = <i>avoir</i> , sens rester = <i>être</i>	sens habiter = <i>avoir</i> , sens rester = <i>être</i> , find <i>avoir</i> in other cases
<i>Dénicher</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Descendre</i>		<i>être</i> only when intrans even if action	<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action. pple make errors			<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state usage prefers <i>être</i> regardless	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state ÊTRE used more overall
<i>Devenir</i>		<i>être</i> only when intrans even if action				<i>être</i> only			<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only
<i>Diminuer</i>						<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action			<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Dîner</i>										sometimes <i>être</i> in old language

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Gaosse (1993)
<i>Disconvenir</i>						<i>sens ne pas convenir d'une chose: être, sens ne pas convenir à: avoir</i>			<i>être = ne pas convenir d'une chose avoir = ne pas convenir à</i>	<i>sens ne pas convenir d'une chose: être, sens ne pas convenir à: avoir</i>
<i>Disparaitre</i>	<i>être = current state, perm state, avoir = temp, past state</i>		<i>être = state avoir = action. pple make errors</i>			<i>avoir = past action, être = resulting state</i>			<i>avoir = action être = state</i>	<i>avoir = p.c, être - pp is adj. avoir = action être = state</i>
<i>Divorcer</i>						<i>avoir = past action, être = resulting state</i>			<i>avoir = action être = state</i>	<i>avoir = action être = state</i>
<i>E(s)camper</i>										
<i>E(s)ch(e)oir</i>				<i>être = state avoir = action</i>		<i>être only</i>			<i>être only, but sometimes hesitation and avoir used</i>	<i>être mainly, sometimes avoir popular or archaic</i>
<i>Echapper</i>						<i>avoir = past action, être = resulting state</i>			<i>avoir = action (sens n' être pas saisi, compris) être = state</i>	<i>avoir = action (sens n' être pas saisi, compris) être = state</i>

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noel + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legende (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Goosse (1993)
<i>Echouer</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Éclater</i>									<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Éclorre</i>						<i>être</i> only			<i>être</i> only, sometimes <i>avoir</i> when action accomplish ed while speaking	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Émaner</i>										rarely composé, uses <i>être</i> traditional ly
<i>Embellir</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action, almost alw. <i>avoir</i>	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Empirer</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Enchétrer</i>									<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Enlaidir</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Goosse (1993)
<i>Entrer</i>						<i>être</i> only autrefois - <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = state			<i>être</i> mainly, sometimes <i>avoir</i> to focus on action	<i>être</i> only <i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Expier</i>									<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Expier</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Faillir</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Finir</i>										<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Grandir</i>	<i>être</i> = state, <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action. ppl make errors	<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action, almost always <i>avoir</i>	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Grossir</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	<i>Barthelemy</i> (1839)	<i>Noël + Chapsal</i> (1845)	<i>Wey</i> (1845)	<i>Carpentier</i> (1860)	<i>Legendre</i> (1890)	<i>Grévisse</i> (1955)	<i>Glossaire</i> (1968)	<i>Brunot + Bruneau</i> (1969)	<i>Grévisse</i> (1980)	<i>Goosse</i> (1993)
<i>Hausser</i>				<i>être = state avoir = action</i>						
<i>Intervenir</i>	<i>être only when intrans</i>					<i>être only</i>			<i>être only</i>	<i>être only</i>
<i>Jailtir</i>										<i>avoir = action être = state</i>
<i>Malgrir</i>						<i>avoir=past action, être = resulting state</i>			<i>être = state avoir = action</i>	<i>avoir = action être = state</i>
<i>Monter</i>				<i>être = state avoir = action</i>		<i>avoir=past action, être = resulting state</i>	<i>être only, avoir popular or archaic</i>		<i>être = state avoir = action, usage prefers être</i>	<i>être - people, avoir - things</i>
<i>Mourir</i>		<i>être only</i>				<i>être only</i>			<i>être only</i>	<i>être only</i>
<i>Nai(s)tre</i>		<i>être only</i>				<i>être only</i>			<i>être only</i>	<i>être only</i>
<i>Paratre</i>						<i>avoir=past action, être = resulting state</i>			<i>être = state avoir = action</i>	<i>avoir - usually être - publications</i>

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VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Goosse (1993)
<i>Parir</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>être</i> only autrefois <i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>être</i> only, <i>avoir</i> popular or archaic	<i>être</i> only, <i>avoir</i> populaire or patois	<i>être</i> only, autrefois <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = state	<i>être</i> mainly, sometimes <i>avoir</i> popular or archaic
<i>Parvenir</i>		<i>être</i> only when intrans even if action				<i>être</i> only			<i>être</i> only	
<i>Passer</i>			<i>être</i> = state, <i>avoir</i> = action p 127	<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action, usage prefers <i>être</i>	<i>être</i> mainly, uses both
<i>Pêrir</i>	<i>avoir</i> only								<i>avoir</i> - today's usage, <i>être</i> = archaic	<i>être</i> rare, mostly <i>avoir</i> , jadis <i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Pourrir</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Prévenir</i>						<i>avoir</i> when transitive (dir or indir) <i>être</i> otherwise			<i>avoir</i> when transitive (dir or intrans)	

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Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Way (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Goosse (1993)
<i>Provenir</i>										<i>être</i> only
<i>Rajeunir</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action , <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Réclamer</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action , <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Recroître</i>										
<i>Redevenir</i>										<i>être</i> only
<i>Rentier</i>						<i>être</i> only autrefois - <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = state		<i>être</i> only, jadis, <i>être</i> = current state, <i>avoir</i> = past action	<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> mainly, <i>avoir</i> popular or archaic

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Brunau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Goosse (1993)
<i>Repartir</i>						sens: partir de nouveau <i>être</i> only autrefois <i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state sens: répondre promptem ent = <i>avoir</i> only			<i>être</i> only, autrefois <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = répondre promptem ent	<i>être</i> mainly, <i>avoir</i> popular or archaic (sens partir de nouveau)
<i>Ressorcir</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action, usage prefers <i>être</i>	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Resser</i>	<i>avoir</i> = past state, <i>être</i> = current state		<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action. pple make errors		<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>être</i> only autrefois - <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = state			<i>être</i> only autrefois - <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = state	<i>être</i> mainly, sometimes <i>avoir</i> - popular or archaic
<i>Resulter</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grévisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grévisse (1980)	Grosse (1993)
<i>Redomber</i>									<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only
<i>Retourner</i>						<i>être</i> only			<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only
<i>Revenir</i>		<i>être</i> only when intrans even if action				<i>être</i> only			<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only
<i>Réallier</i>				<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action						
<i>Sauter</i>										sometimes <i>être</i> : state, <i>avoir</i> = action
<i>Sonner</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	Barthelemy (1839)	Noël + Chapsal (1845)	Wey (1845)	Carpentier (1860)	Legendre (1890)	Grevisse (1955)	Glossaire (1968)	Brunot + Bruneau (1969)	Grevisse (1980)	Grosse (1993)
<i>Sorir</i>			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action. ppl make errors	<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	sens produire = <i>avoir</i> , autrement <i>être</i> only autrefois - <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>avoir</i> = produire (law term)	<i>être</i> mainly, sometimes <i>avoir</i> popular or archaic
<i>Souper</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state				sometimes <i>être</i> in old language
<i>Stationner</i>						<i>avoir</i> when transitive (dir or indir) <i>être</i> otherwise			<i>avoir</i> when transitive (dir or indir) <i>être</i> otherwise	
<i>Subvenir</i>						<i>avoir</i> only			<i>être</i> only	
<i>Survénir</i>						<i>être</i> only			<i>être</i> only	<i>être</i> only
<i>Tomber</i>		<i>être</i> only when intrans even if action		<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>être</i> only autrefois - <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = state	<i>être</i> only, <i>avoir</i> popular or archaic		<i>être</i> only autrefois - <i>avoir</i> = action, <i>être</i> = state	<i>être</i> mainly, <i>avoir</i> popular or archaic

Shading indicates first time verb is mentioned.

Bold indicates a change in explanation.

VERB	<i>Barthelemy</i> (1839)	<i>Noël +</i> <i>Chapsal</i> (1845)	<i>Wey</i> (1845)	<i>Carpentier</i> (1860)	<i>Legendre</i> (1890)	<i>Grévisse</i> (1955)	<i>Glossaire</i> (1968)	<i>Brunot +</i> <i>Bruneau</i> (1969)	<i>Grévisse</i> (1980)	<i>Goosse</i> (1993)
<i>Trebucher</i>						<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Trepasser</i>									<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Venir</i>		<i>être</i> only when intrans even if action				<i>être</i> only				<i>être</i> only
<i>Viellir</i>	<i>être</i> = current state, <i>avoir</i> = action		<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action. pple make errors			<i>avoir</i> =past action, <i>être</i> = resulting state			<i>être</i> = state <i>avoir</i> = action	<i>avoir</i> = action <i>être</i> = state
<i>Valer</i>										sometimes <i>être</i> in old language - also in Belgium

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