

## Variation and Morphosyntactic Change: The case of the stative possession in English

*Sali A. Tagliamonte*  
University of Toronto, Canada



Table 1: Communities under investigation

Name	Geographic location	Acronym
Buckie	Northern Scotland	BCK
Cumnock	Southeast Scotland	CMK
Cullybackie	Northern Ireland	CLB
Portavogie	Northern Ireland	PVG
Maryport	Northeast England	MPT
Wheatley Hill	Northwest England	WL
York	Northern England	YRK
Tiverton	Southwest England	DVN
Wincanton	Southwest England	SMT
Henfield	Southeast England	SSX

## Variation and Morphosyntactic Change: The case of stative possession in English

Sali A. Tagliamonte  
University of Toronto  
<http://individual.utoronto.ca/tagliamonte>

## Stative Possession

*Contemporary British Dialects*

- I 've got two granddaughters ... Joyce and I just *have* the one daughter. (PVC/ε)
- We always *have* an advance-party, each troop *has* about three or four .... It 's got its advantages, that. (MPT/n)
- I 've got a cousin in New Cummock that *has* it and she gets it every month (CMK/I)
- They got a lovely family bible, you know .. Thomas *has* it. (CLB/q)

Sali A. Tagliamonte OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Historical Development: *have*

Nu we sind hlæne *hæbbe* we nan þing to etanne buton Manna.  
'Now we are lean, haven't we no thing to eat except Manna.' (Ælfric c. 970-1000, Num. 11,9)

Bot he *haf* wit to steir his stede.  
'Unless he has wit to stear his steed.' (Barbour c. 1375, Bruce VI, 334)

He that had lyttle to spende, *hath* not much to lose.  
(Lyly 1580, Euphues and His England 243)

Sali A. Tagliamonte OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Historical Development: *have got*

**16th century:**  
What a beard *hast* thou *got*; thou *hast got* more haire on thy chin, then Dobbins my philhorse has on his taile.  
(Shakespeare 1596, Merchant of Venice ii. 99)

Hodge, what a delicious shop you *have got*!  
(Dekker 1600, Shoemaker's Holiday IV, ii, 51)

Ye *have got* a humour there Does not become a man.  
(Shakespeare, 1607 Timon I. ii. 26)

Sali A. Tagliamonte OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Prescriptive Commentary

*have got*

**1855:** This form of speech should never be used to express possession, ... (Gwynne 1855)

**1870:** "... use of the word got ..[for 'have' is] not only wrong, but if right, superfluous. (White [1870] 1927)

**1907:** Wrong: *Have* you *got* a knife with you:  
Right: *Have* you a knife with you? (Wooley 1907)

Sali A. Tagliamonte OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Proportion of stative *have got* British English 1850-1935

(from Noble 1985, extrapolated from Kroch 1989: 209)

Period	Proportion (%)
1859-1899	~35
1900-1935	~80

Sali A. Tagliamonte OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Explanations

- ❖ **Syntactic**
  - Changing grammatical status of *have*
    - Auxiliary verb -> lexical verb
- ❖ **Prosodic**
  - A result of weakening, contraction and insertion
- ❖ **Semantic**
  - Reanalysis from active verb, “acquire” with past tense cognate *got*

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

Scots vs. English



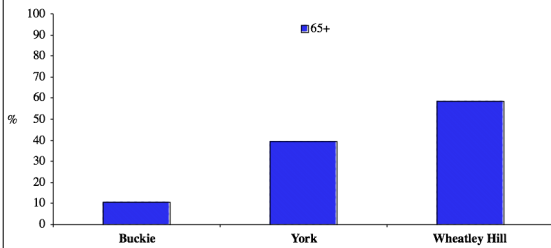
Northern Ireland vs. Scotland vs. England

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Increase of *have got* across communities

(Tagliamonte 2004:548 Figure 6)

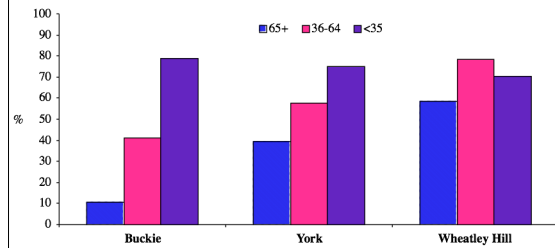


Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Increase of *have got* in apparent time

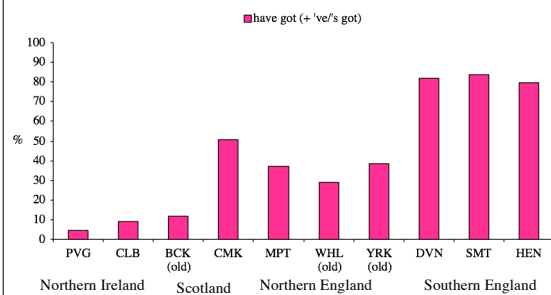
(Tagliamonte 2004:548 Figure 6)



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Overall Distribution



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Negation

There are “a very wide range of options for negating lexical *have*”

- ❖ Nelson 2004:300

The range of options is “bewildering”

- ❖ Biber et al. 1999:160

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Negation

(Nelson 2004: 300)

Pattern 1: I *don't have* (any) money.

Pattern 2: I *haven't* any money.

Pattern 3: I *haven't got* any money.

Pattern 4: I *have no* money.

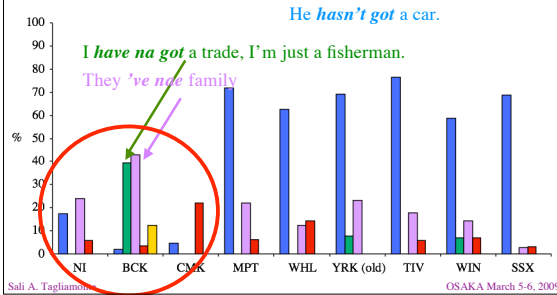
Pattern 5: I *'ve got* no money.

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Negation

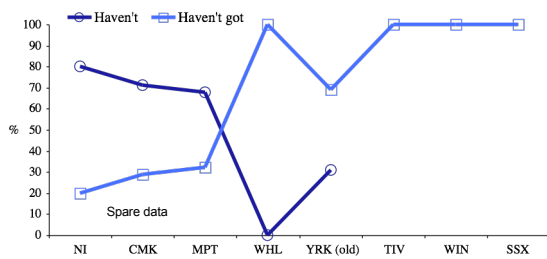
■ Haven't/Hasn't ■ Not /na ■ No /nae ■ Do support ■ Nothing/no one



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Negation



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

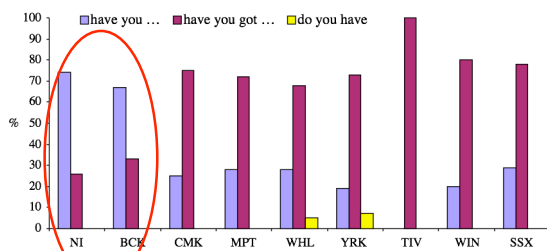
## Negation

- **Scotland**
  - They *do na have* assistant managers. They *'ve got* a manager. (BCK/s)
- **Northeast England**
  - I *haven't* far to go anyhow. (MPT/f)
- **Northern Ireland**
  - He *hasn't* time lyke. (CLB/n)
  - *Hae* you friends in America yet? (PVG/h)

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

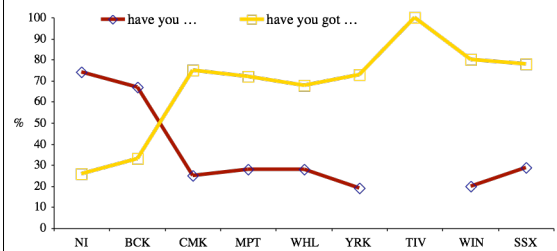
## Question formation



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Question formation



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Questions

- **Scotland**
  - *Have* you any sugar eh, Jennifer? (BCK/g)
- **Northern Ireland**
  - *Have* you an orchard probably, *have* you? (CLB/n)
  - Well how *have* you such nice skin? (PVG/d)

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Contraction of *have*

- She's only one daughter and her two grandsons. (CMK/m)
- He's a beautiful head of hair. (CMK/v)
- He's a lot of customers. (CMK/n)
- He's a farm. (PVG/g)

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

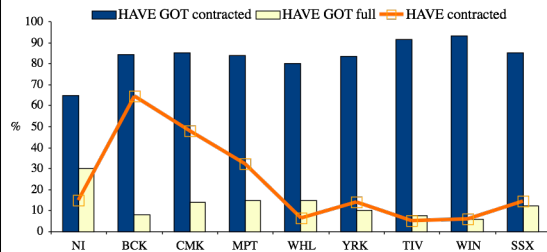
## Insertion of *got*

- He's *got* three daughters and a son. (CMK/h)
- We've *got* a church. (CMK/d)
- I 've *got* this car. (PVG/h)
- You've *got* Scotch blood in you. (PVG/@)

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Contraction



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Phases of development

- 1st *have* used for all contexts
- 2nd Contraction of *have* ('s/'ve) with **pronouns**
- 3rd *Got* added to **pronoun** contexts to get '*ve got*'s *got*
- 4th *Got* added to **noun phrase** contexts

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Type of Subject

### Pronoun subjects:

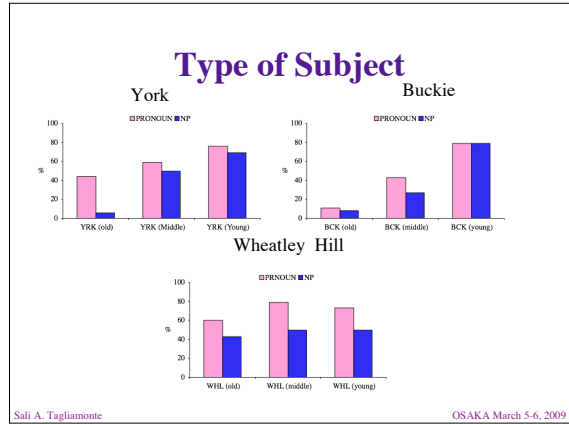
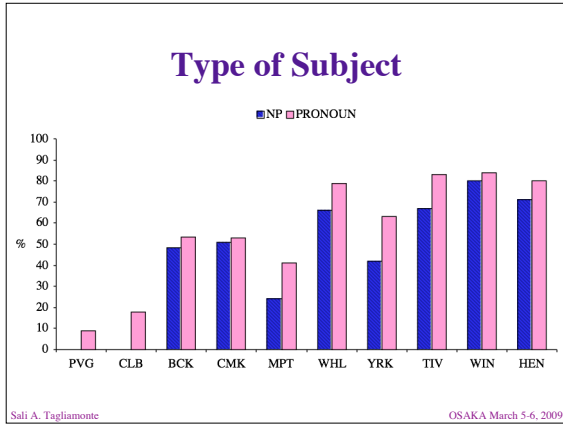
- I '*ve got* a phone number. (CMK/!)
- You '*ve got* Scotch blood in you.. (MPT/@)
- Be better than that bloody great big angel they '*ve got* at Newcastle. (MPT/f)

### Noun phrase subjects:

- The turbines *has* a habit o sticking sometimes. (PVG/g)
- Raynor Fletcher *has* his house down on the quayside. (MPT/s)
- Every area *has* different words for things. (PVG/d)

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009



### Elision of contracted *have* leaving *got*

- I *got* a job now. (CLB/b)
- They *got* meat, eggs and different provisions. (MPT/b)
- We *got* friends in America. (PVG/h)

Sali A. Tagliamonte OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

### Historical Development: *got*

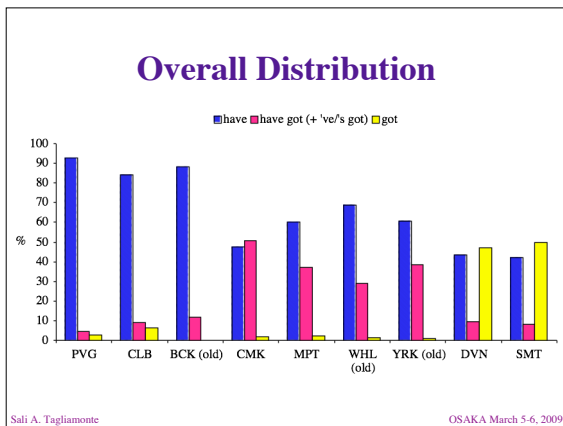
**19th century:**  
 They *got no* principles. They *got no* platform to stand onto.  
 (1849 Knickerbocker XXXIV. 12)

What you *got* there, grandma?  
 (1887, M. E. Wilkins Jumble Romance 370)

I *got* a right to know what she said.  
 (Booth Tarkington 1913, *The Flirt* 36)

We *got* some mail.  
 (Shaw 1948, *The Young Lions* 450)

Sali A. Tagliamonte OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

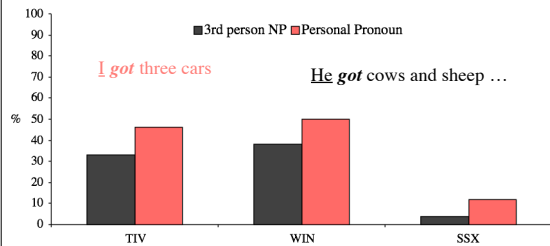


### Phases of development

5th *'v's got* — cliticized to a preceding pronouns ... elide leaving *got* alone

Sali A. Tagliamonte OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Got in the south



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Phases of development

- Original lexical meaning of *get*, 'to acquire'
  - I got a car from the dealership
    - Acquired by some means
- Have got* enters the stative possessive system for physical, concrete things
  - I've got a car
    - Possession
- Generalization to other types of complements
  - I've got an idea
    - Abstract qualities, relationship, health etc.

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Type of complement

Concrete:

- She *has got* near *two-thousand pound* with her. (CLB/b)
- They *'ve got* a very big *boat*, like. (PVG/c)

Abstract:

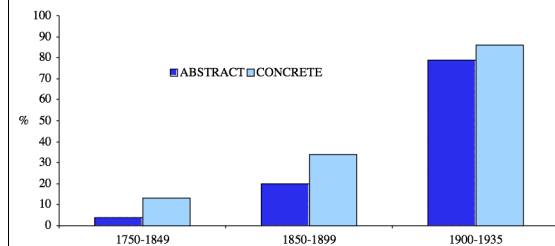
- You *have* these *memories* lass. (CMK/q)
- I *'ve* a *notion* to go to the trip. (CLB/k)

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Effect of Type of Complement British Plays

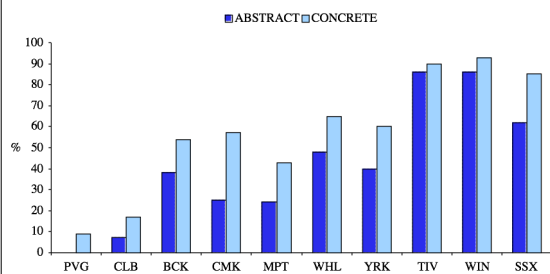
(Kroch 1989:209; Noble 1985)



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Type of Complement



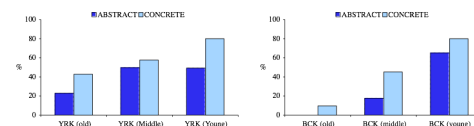
Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

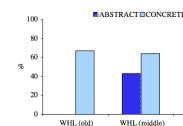
## Type of Complement

York

Buckie



Wheatley Hill



Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Contextual Effects on incoming *have got*

TYPE OF COMPLEMENT	TYPE OF SUBJECT	
Concrete	✓	Pronoun ✓
Abstract	✗	NP ✗

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Probability of *have got*

	NI	CMK	BCK	YRK	MPT	WHL	SSX	DVN	SMT
Corrected Mean	.11	.52	.53	.36	.39	.72	.83	.91	.92
Proportion	12%	53%	53%	44%	39.8%	73%	82%	91%	92%
<b>Type of complement</b>									
Concrete	.55	.55	.51	.55	.54	.54	.54	[.56]	[.52]
Abstract	.24	.23	.36	.28	.32	.33	.24	[.50]	[.34]
<b>Type of Subject</b>									
Pro	14%	[.50]	[.50]	.58	.52	[.52]	[.51]	[.52]	[.41]
NP	0%	[.49]	[.47]	.09	.33	[.38]	[.41]	[.27]	[.39]

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Observations

- ❖ Morphosyntactic change influenced by multi-dimensional constraints operating at different levels of grammar
- ❖ Contrast between constant changes and differential changes
- ❖ Contextual constraints propel change forward in different ways at different phases in the evolution of a system
- ❖ Synchrony mirrors diachrony

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Thanks to...

- The Economic and Social Research Council of the United Kingdom (ESRC) for research grants:
  - 1996-1998. Roots of identity: Variation and grammaticisation in contemporary British English.
  - 1999-2001. Grammatical variation and change in British English: Perspectives from York.
  - 2002-2003. Back to the roots: The legacy of British dialects.

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009

## Selected References

- Crowell, Thomas L. (1959). 'Have got', a pattern preserver. *American Speech* 34(2): 280-186.
- Jespersen, Otto H. (1965). *A Modern English grammar: Part IV: Syntax*. Northampton: John Dickens and Co. Ltd.
- Kroch, Anthony S. (1989). Reflexes of grammar in patterns of language change. *Language Variation and Change* 1(3): 199-244.
- Kroch, Anthony S. (1999). Syntactic Change. In Balin, M. & Collins, C. (Eds.), *Handbook of Syntax*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers.
- Rice, Wallace (1932). Get and Got. *American Speech* 7(2): 280-296.
- Nelson, Gerald (2004). The negation of lexical *have* in conversational English. *World Englishes* 23: 299-308.
- Tagliamonte, Sali A. (2003). "Every place has a different toll": Determinants of grammatical variation in cross-variety perspective. In Rhodenberg, G. & Mondorf, B. (Eds.), *Determinants of grammatical variation in English*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 531-554.

Sali A. Tagliamonte

OSAKA March 5-6, 2009