In Black English (BE), in addition to the motion verb "come," there exists a modal-like "come" which expresses speaker indignation. This "come" is comparable to other modal-like forms, identical to motion verbs, which occur in Black and non-Black varieties of English, and which signal various degrees of disapproval. However, this usage of "come" occurs in BE only. It is of special interest that it occurs even in acrolectal varieties of BE, thus showing that the post-creole continuum in the United States differs from that in Guyana as described by Bickerton, who states that forms identical to forms in the base-language but which are functionally distinct do not occur in acrolectal varieties. The case for the grammaticalization of the mood, indignation, by usage of "come" is elaborated as is its relation to "gone," which is used to express disapproval. (Author/AMH)
THE OTHER COME IN BLACK ENGLISH

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In Black English (BE), in addition to the motion verb come, there exists a modal-like come which expresses speaker indignation. This come is comparable to other modal-like forms, identical to motion verbs, which occur in Black and nonBlack varieties of English and which signal various degrees of disapproval; however, it occurs in BE only. It is of special interest that it occurs even in acrolectal varieties of BE; thus showing that the post-creole continuum in the U.S. differs from that in Guyana as described by Bickerton (1975), who states that forms identical to ones in the base-language but which are functionally distinct do not occur in acrolectal varieties.

Introduction

The primary concern of this paper is to demonstrate that there exists in Black English (BE) a modal-like form come which can be distinguished from the formally identical motion verb come. Even though there is a substantial body of literature on BE, no prudent linguist would assume that all of the features which set it off from other English dialects have been catalogued. Indeed, it is common knowledge that no language has been completely described, even those that have benefited from centuries of scholarly investigation. Thus, from one point of view it is not entirely surprising that a second come, which is functionally unrelated to the motion verb come, should have gone undiscovered in the literature and apparently unrecognized as existing.

* This article is a revised version of a paper read in December of 1979 at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America. I would like to thank Yuki Kuroda, Patricia Nichols, Elizabeth Traugott, William Labov, Lillith Haynes, William Mejia Yrroman, John Baugh, and Susan Fisher for their valuable comments on previous versions.
A crucial point in the study of the Guyanese creole continuum is the distinction between its various varieties, particularly in the context of decreolization. Bickerton (1975) proposes that while some varieties of BE continue to exhibit certain creole features, others have undergone a process of decreolization, leading to more Standard English-like forms. This process is characterized by the loss of creole features and the adoption of Standard English norms.

The modal-like come, for example, is a verb that appears in the Guyanese creole continuum. It is a verb of motion that can express abruptness, purpose, and willingness. In Standard English, the verb come is often used as a modal, indicating intention or possibility. However, in the Guyanese creole continuum, come is used more frequently as a verb of motion, particularly in the context of indignation.

The importance of come as a verb of motion lies in its ability to express a specific set of meanings. Its use in this context is not merely a matter of lexical variation but also reflects a grammatical transformation. The modal-like come is analyzed as a verb of motion, and its use in various contexts helps to illustrate the process of decreolization.

The analysis of come in this context is significant for several reasons. First, it provides evidence for the process of decreolization, as it shows how a creole form can become more standard English-like. Second, it highlights the role of linguistic change in shaping creole languages. The process of decreolization is not merely a matter of simplification but involves complex grammatical changes that can have significant implications for our understanding of language change.

In conclusion, the study of come as a verb of motion in the Guyanese creole continuum provides insights into the process of decreolization. It demonstrates how a creole form can become more Standard English-like, and it sheds light on the role of linguistic change in shaping language. The analysis of come as a verb of motion also highlights the importance of considering the full range of linguistic change in the study of creole languages.
COME is not a motion verb in this instance.

The existence of sentences such as 5 leaves little doubt that two verbs COME are to be distinguished.

[5] He come tellin’ me here raisin’ all kind of hell.

In 5, there are two instances of COME; the first is the COME of indignation, and the second is the motion verb, which the speaker would have no reason to utter twice, not being a stutterer and not having made a false start.

It was noted above that the other COME expresses the speaker’s attitude of strong disapproval or indignation. In the discussion above, phonetics was not taken into account, but it is important since sentences with this other COME are (with no exceptions noted) uttered with the intonation and force of indignation, as well as an appropriate constellation of nonverbal behaviors.

Typically, as can be seen from examples 1-5, the complement of the COME of indignation expresses an action that is presumptuous, antisocial, or grossly inappropriate, and it is that action toward which indignation is directed.

There are sentences, which upon first consideration, might seem to invalidate the analysis of COME as expressing speaker indignation. Consider example 6:

[6] He come telling me how fine I was.

In the case of 6, the social context must be taken into consideration. Example 6 was uttered by a woman who was the object of a recently met married man’s amorous attention. In uttering the sentence, the woman was clearly pleased by the man’s compliment concerning her attractiveness but sought to indicate the inappropriateness of the man’s comments and the expectation, in that particular social context, for her to be taken aback—even though she was not—by her use of the COME of indignation. Example 6, then, constitutes an instance of mock indignation, stemming not from the complement’s content per se, but rather from the speaker’s perceived obligation to interpret the compliment negatively in view of the social context in which it was spoken.

Thus, although indignation can be posited as the basic meaning of COME, there is evidence indicating that there are extended uses which do not actually express sincerely felt indignation on the part of the speaker. It is not difficult, however, to argue that such extended uses are a function of COME’s basic meaning, just as, for example, certain extended uses of sentences which are formally questions are a function of the basic “request for information” meaning of questions. This is not to imply that the relationship between basic and extended meanings is a simple or direct one, but solely that the relationship is a principled one.

The COME of indignation, then, expresses indignation which may result from several factors. Any complement of COME which expresses something perceived as an extremely negative fashion and which causes indignation on the part of the speaker serves as the justification for its use.

The COME of Indignation, Mood, and Modals

Given that the COME of indignation is speaker-oriented—it expresses indignation on the part of the speaker only—there is some reason for classifying it as a marker of mood, following the characterization of mood in its most general sense as expressing speaker attitude. One problem stemming from the classification of COME as a mood marker, however, is that traditionally, in its widest application, the term “mood” is associated with imperativity, interroga tivity, wish or intention, deontic notions such as obligation and permission, and epistemic ones such as certainty, doubt, and probability. COME does not fit into any of these categories, but mood is clearly the most appropriate of the traditional semantic notions for its classification. The fact that BE has a form through which indignation is grammaticalized is in itself noteworthy since there appear to be no other languages which do so. Given that the most natural classification of COME from a semantic standpoint is as a mood marker, any theory of mood would seem obligated to deal with the notion of indignation.

The statement that indignation is grammaticalized in BE by means of COME is in need of some elaboration, since grammaticalization in natural language is not always clear cut but rather a matter of degree. A grammaticalized form is one of a closed, i.e., small in number and resistant to accepting new members, set of elements which exhausts a semantic domain. The smaller the closed set of forms to which a particular form belongs, the more grammaticalized it is. Connected with the notion of grammaticalization is that of obligatoriness. To the extent that a set of elements is grammaticalized in a language, the speaker is forced to choose among the set’s members in constructing sentences. Tense, for example, is grammaticalized in English, and the marking of tense in the English sentence is obligatory. The relevant domain in BE appears to be one
involving types and degrees of disapproval and would include minimally come and gone (see below). A detailing of the precise constraints on the use of forms in this domain must await further research. The discussion of the semantics of come presented herein can only be taken as preliminary given the larger questions relating to the interaction of all disapproval forms.

In one important respect, come behaves as modals. It is speaker-oriented as are modals, i.e., it expresses speaker-attitude only, regardless of what the overt subject of the (simple) sentence is, unlike, for example, verbs such as believe or doubt whose subject is the overt marker of the attitude-holder, who may or may not be the speaker.

The data from actual speech are insufficient for a full-scale comparison of the syntactic behavior of the come of indignation with modals. Those few relevant data that have been gathered show no syntactic similarity between come and modals: Thus, come may well have nothing or little at all in common with modals from a nonsemantic viewpoint, although it does semantically since it marks mood (accepting indignation as a mood notion) as do modals (in their mood-signalling functions). Unlike modals, come requires no support in questions:

(7) Did he come packing you again?

Also, come can occur in infinitival clauses, unlike modals:

(8) I didn't want him to come talking to me, cursing and carrying on.

Come has not, however, been observed in gerundive clauses, but this fact may owe to come's taking a gerundive complement itself, thereby producing a double-ing construction, come itself being gerundive. Therefore, come's absence from gerundive clauses may well result from general constraints on double-ing constructions. The facts are not clear with respect to an additional property of modals, which is subject-verb agreement. In some BE varieties, subject-verb agreement is either not present or sporadic.

This brief discussion of the syntactic properties of the come of indignation has focused on comparing come's syntactic behavior with that of the nonmarginal modals, e.g., may, should, must, etc. The marginal modals, e.g., ought to, need, dare, have to, be to (as in he is to leave tomorrow), and used to, have been labeled variously, e.g., as marginal modals, semi-modals, semi- auxiliaries, etc., and their syntactic behavior is to varying extents more like that of the come of indignation and main verbs. Given the lack of precision and the inconsistent usage of the terms available for marginal modals, there is no principled basis for selecting any one of such terms for referring to the come of indignation. Suffice it to state that there is a continuum of modalhood with the come of indignation being situated close to the main-verb end, nonmarginal modals being situated at the modal end, and the various other marginal modals situated in between.

Gone

Another BE form, mentioned above, which marks a type of disapproval, is gone. It can be classified as a mood-marker on the same basis as the come of indignation. Gone occurs in sentences such as the following:

(9) Why did she act a fool like that?

(10) Now he gone come in here raising hell and then wonder why they wanted to put him out.

Gone will not be examined in detail, but a few remarks can be made in passing. It should be observed that gone in 9 and 10 marks neither future nor future in the past, as one would expect based on be going to, with which gone might be equated. Both examples are past (and realized). Context determines the tense of 9, and the simple past form wanted makes it clear that 10 is in the past tense.

Gone is used to express the disapproval of the speaker, but that disapproval is of a weaker sort than the indignation expressed by come. Additionally, unlike come, gone expresses also unexpectedness, unexplainability and/or doubt. This observation is particularly important in view of sentences such as 11:

(11) He gone come telling me he had to shut off my electricity.

In the case of 11, pragmatic considerations rule out a reading expressing both disapproval (of a weaker sort than indignation) by gone and indignation by come. Sentence 15 was uttered by a beautician who was dismayed that her electricity was being shut off during business hours. She was indignant due to the inconvenience caused her customers, particularly those under the electric hair-dryers at the time the electricity was shut off. The shut-off of her electricity was also unexpected and unexplainable: she had been told beforehand that her electricity would not be shut off during business hours; furthermore, there was no reason to shut off her electricity because her wiring was separate from that of the rest of the building, and only the wiring for the rest of the building was to be worked on. Clearly then, she also had reason to doubt that the electrician "had to shut off" her electricity. Thus, in 11, gone expresses unexpectedness, unexplainability, and doubt.
The Case for *Come*

One might wish to argue that the *come* of indignation should be taken as a metaphorical extension of the verb of motion rather than establishing two *come*’s. Any attempt to support such a view, however, encounters insurmountable obstacles.

In the first place, if the metaphorical extension view is to be supported, there should be some explanation of the basis for the metaphorical extension and ideally some idea of its origin. Although the *come* of indignation may well be the result of an original metaphorical extension, the original metaphor must be considered dead since it is synchronically unrecoverable. Furthermore, it must be noted that the question of metaphor in the origin, evolution, and present status of *come* is one which is distinct from the question of whether two *come*’s must be established on the basis of synchronic syntactic and semantic factors. The preceding discussion of the syntax and semantics of the two *come*’s is by itself sufficient for establishing the existence of the two.

The metaphorical extension view of the *come* of indignation is made even more difficult to support because the semantic value of the modal-like *come* is not what one might expect based on previous studies of the semantic extensions of deictic phenomena linked to the motion verbs *come* and *go*.

Clark (1974), for example, offers interesting hypotheses on the evaluative uses of *go* and *come* in idioms, e.g.:

(12) He came through a good deal last year.
(13) He went through a good deal last year.

She suggests that two classes of idioms, one with *go* and one with *come*, are related to other types of deixis, all of which derive from the basic deictic contrast between *ego* and *non-* *ego*. The evaluative uses of *come* and *go* "... related to normal-state idioms in that the evaluative use of *come* implies that the person or event described has ended up in some speaker-approved or public-approved state. The evaluative use of *go*, however, is either neutral or negative in connotation . . ." (p. 317). Although a deixis-based explanation of meaning phenomena connected with the *come* and *go* idioms that she treats appears viable, such an explanation is not feasible for the modal-like *come* since, contrary to what one would expect given a deixis-based explanation, *come* is evaluatively negative.

Go and the Origin of the *Come* of Indignation

Even though a full understanding of the origin and development of the *come* of indignation will have to come primarily from future research at this point, several relevant observations can be presented.

Although the use of motion verb forms in the tense-aspect system of English and other languages of European origin (notably Portuguese) that may have been involved in BE’s presumed creole past is well known (e.g., English *go* and Portuguese *vir"* “to go,” both used as future tense markers), there appear to be no cases of forms formally identical or similar to motion verbs which are used specifically to express indignation. Furthermore, our present knowledge of these languages indicates that none have grammaticalized in any way the mood of indignation.

However, in-varieties of English other than BE, disapproval is grammaticalized: *go* marks disapproval, as in the following examples:

(14) Don’t go acting crazy again.
(15) Don’t go going around ringing people’s doorbells.
(16) Whenever I let him cook, he goes burning everything.

There are several bases on which the *go* of disapproval can be distinguished from the *go* of the motion verb. Note first that there are contexts where no motion interpretation for *go* is possible:

(17) [Your] sitting there now is OK, but if you go sitting there past midnight, you’re going to get picked up by the police.

Secondly, as happens with the *come* of indignation, *go* can take itself as a complement, as in 15 above.

It should be noted that some instances of *go* taking a complement verb in—ing are not instances of the *go* of disapproval. The *go* of disapproval cannot occur in the progressive.

(18a) a. He goes fishing every chance he gets.
   (NONDISAPPROVAL)
   b. (Nowadays) he’s going fishing every chance he gets.
   (NONDISAPPROVAL)
(19a) a. He goes showing off every chance he gets.
   (DISAPPROVAL)
   b. (Nowadays) he’s going showing off every chance he gets.
   (DISAPPROVAL)
In much the same manner as thecome of indignation, the come of disapproval has both main verb and modal properties.

The come of disapproval, unfortunately, does more in the way of raising questions than providing answers. So can no clear way be related to either the come of indignation or the come of disapproval except in that all three are formally identical to motion verb forms. Indeed, an important question that come raises is why different varieties of English should employ forms identical to motion verb forms to mark types of disapproval.

Clearly, one of the most important questions relating to the origin of the come of indignation is whether it or similar forms exist in other creoles, particularly the English-based ones such as Guyanese Creole, Jamaican Creole, and Gullah. Scrutiny of what are perhaps the most extensive studies of these creoles (Bailey 1966, Jamaican Creole; Cunningham 1970 and Turner 1949, Gullah; and Bickerton 1975, Guyanese Creole) does not, however, reveal forms of interest in this regard. This notwithstanding, given the high degree of camouflage that the come of indignation represents, it would be premature to assume that this form or one quite similar to it does not exist in these creoles.

Conclusion

Although the existence of camouflage forms in creole and post-creole languages has long been noted (at least implicitly), studies oriented specifically toward the delineation of and interrelationship between different types of camouflage have not been undertaken. That such studies should be on the creolist's agenda is argued for by the possibility that a typology or theory of camouflage will assist in rendering possible a full-fledged theory of decrwalization, and a more accurate specification of the notion of stage of decrwalization.

At present, the only terms we have to refer to stages of decrwalization ("basilect," "mesolect," etc.), are ones which are not satisfactorily precise.

Bickerton (1975) has taken a first step toward critical use of the notion of camouflage (though not the term) to isolate stages of decrwalization. Thus, for example, he states:

The processes that we observed in the developmental phase between basilect and mid-mesolect consisted to a large extent of introducing formations modeled on English ones, using them (at least initially) in a quite un-English way, and only slowly and gradually shifting the underlying semantic system in the general direction of English.
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This Continuum contains varieties ranging from the basilectal (that furthest from the standard) to what may be referred to as Standard Black English. (See Taylor, 1971, for a discussion of the notion of Standard Black English.)

As the typical brief statement, this one concerning BE distributive be oversimplifies. See Fasold (1972) and Macauley (1974) for further discussion.

For increased clarity unreduced forms are given in all examples since the way in which forms are reduced is irrelevant for the purposes of the present discussion.

Unless otherwise indicated, the come (and gone—see below) data are taken from notes gathered during participant observation in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. (Actually, in this case one might speak of a member observation, since the observer has routing contact, for reasons unrelated to language research, with the group of persons providing the data for this study.) Most of the data come from speech in a hair care establishment where lively, uninhibited speech prevails. Such speech is typical for beauty and barber shops in Black communities. These establishments provide especially productive opportunities for speech observation since the researcher’s or anyone else’s presence with or without participation in the conversations is perfectly normal.

The method of participant observation, though used rarely in linguistic studies (see, however, Rickford, 1975), is particularly useful for overcoming the limitations of tape-recording. Since normal social contexts are made use of, there are fewer constraints on when and where data can be gathered. Forms which might rarely or never at all occur in recording situations can be watched for in a range of situations in which tape-recording may be infeasible for various reasons. (See Rickford, 1975, and Wolfram and Fasold, 1974, for detailed discussions of related methodological issues.)

The use of the term ‘modal’ in contradistinction to ‘verb’ does not imply support for the analysis of modals as a separate category, as in Chomsky (1957) and other analyses in the same vein, e.g., Aboagyan and Vasow (1975). It is an expository convenience and is intended to be neutral with respect to the controversy over the category status of modals and other auxiliaries.

In this and other written sentences where come might be ambiguous, context established that no motion was involved. The presence of the come of indignation was determined on this basis.

Present tense sentences with come in the case of speakers whose speech is for the most part standard may prove to show subject-verb agreement. Although no such sentences have been recorded; the author’s intuitions indicate that present tense sentences of at least some of these speakers would show subject-verb agreement.

It is phonetically realized as [go] of [gon].

See Traugott (1978) for additional examples.

This discussion of go has benefited from observations and examples provided by Susanna Cumming, Donn Seeley, Deborah Clarke, John Moore, and Dyann Paynovich.

For an interesting discussion of the go-get infinitive construction, e.g., go get me a beer, see Shopen (1971). He concludes that go in this construction also has both main verb and (with respect to syntax) modal properties.

A similar question arises with respect to West African languages, viz. whether a motion-verb-form/disapproval-marking-function correlation occurs with sufficient frequency in these languages so as to allow one to hypothesize that they provided the model for disapproval forms in BE. It would be difficult, however, to connect disapproval forms in BE to analogous West African ones given the existence of analogous disapproval forms in nonblack varieties of English. This is particularly true since it is not yet certain that forms in other English varieties did not serve as models for the BE disapproval forms.

Lillith Haynes (personal communication), has reported that the modal-like come described in this paper is widely used in Guyana. It is not clear at this point, however, over what part of the speech continuum in Guyana this form occurs. The existence of come in Gyanese speech will require minor modifications only of discussions in this paper, but it may eventually require significant modifications in our view of the decreolization process.

Taylor would consider habitual be, the meaning of which he curiously labels "continuative aspects," to be a feature of Standard Black English. Several of the informants used for this study who never use habitual be to use the come of indignation.

See Ross (1972), Milsark (1972), and Pullam (1974) for discussions of constraints on sequences of forms in -ing.

Footnotes

1. "Black English" is used here to refer to what is actually a continuum of varieties of English in the United States spoken almost exclusively by Blacks. This continuum contains varieties ranging from the basilectal (that furthest from the standard) to what may be referred to as Standard Black English. (See Taylor, 1971, for a discussion of the notion of Standard Black English.)

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