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THE BLACK ENGLISH SEMI-AUXILIARY *COME*

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Black English has, in addition to the motion verb *come*, a *come* which expresses only speaker indignation. To some extent it shares grammatical properties with auxiliary verbs. Typically, it occurs in utterances that can be taken as identical to ones occurring in non-Black dialects; and it is apparently for this reason that it has remained undetected. The existence of this *come* indicates that an even greater difference exists between Black and White speech than previously thought. It is also of interest that the semi-auxiliary *come* occurs even in acrolectal varieties of Black English. This reveals that the post-creole continuum in the United States differs from that in Guyana as described by Bickerton 1975, who states that forms which are identical to ones in the base language, but functionally distinct, are not part of the acrolect.*

1. INTRODUCTION. Even though a substantial body of literature exists on Black English (BE),¹ no prudent linguist would assume that all the features which set it off from other English dialects have been cataloged. 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*, functionally unrelated to the motion verb *come*, should have gone undiscussed in the literature on BE, its existence apparently unrecognized.

The primary concern of this paper is to demonstrate that two verbs of the shape *come* exist in BE. One is the familiar motion verb; the other is a formally identical semi-auxiliary, which shares certain morphological, syntactic, and semantic properties with auxiliaries.

The lack of attention to the semi-auxiliary *come*, which expresses speaker indignation, may also result in part from the existence, in creole and putative post-creole languages such as BE, of what may be termed CAMOUFLAGED FORMS, which are phonologically similar or identical to forms in the base language (the source of most of the lexical items), but which are used with different semantic values. An example of a camouflaged form in BE would be distributive *be* (e.g. *He always be talking*)—which, unlike Standard English (SE) *be*, is used specifically to express iterative aspect.²

Camouflaged forms are important for the study of creole and post-creole continua since the degree of their functional similarity to counterpart base-

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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 (cf. Taylor 1971).

² See §3 and also Fasold 1972, Wolfram 1973, and Macaulay 1974 for additional discussion.

language forms can serve as an important indicator of the stage of decreolization of a language—and, as they become increasingly understood, shed some light on the process of decreolization itself. Of particular interest in the case of the semi-auxiliary *come* is the fact that it appears in a wide range of BE varieties, even the most acrolectal ones. This is contrary to what one might expect in view of the discussion of the Guyanese creole continuum in Bickerton 1975. His position is that the underlying representation of the verbal system in acrolectal Guyanese English is substantively identical to that of speakers whose English is not creole-influenced. But the BE semi-auxiliary *come* argues in favor of the position that full camouflage, involving complete unrelatedness of function, may exist even in the furthest reaches of the acrolect, whether or not such is actually the case in the Guyanese continuum.

The existence of camouflage and its importance for the study of decreolization raises the existence of the semi-auxiliary *come* to a level of significance which it might not have if it were discussed merely as another dialect difference. The significance of *come* is also heightened by the fact that it does not represent merely a lexical difference between BE and other varieties of English, but a grammatical one. The following discussion seeks to establish that *come* is to be included among those elements which make the BE verbal system unique.

The plan of this paper is as follows. In §2, the semi-auxiliary *come* is contrasted with the motion verb. The objective of that section is to demonstrate that the two verbs must be distinguished, and to clarify in what sense the semi-auxiliary is said to express speaker indignation. In §3, the grammatical properties of the semi-auxiliary are discussed with reference to those of 'true' auxiliaries. Subsequently, attention is turned to the notions of mood and grammaticalization in order to state explicitly the rationale for considering the semi-auxiliary both as a mood-marker and as a grammatical morpheme. In §4, *go*, a form similar to the semi-auxiliary *come* in that it expresses a kind of negative evaluation (but different in that it occurs in non-Black as well as Black varieties of English), is discussed with respect to questions concerning the origin of *come*. §5 focuses on the nature of camouflage in general, the significance of *come*'s status as a feature of the BE acrolect, and the system-separateness of BE dialects vis-à-vis non-Black ones.

2. THE SEMI-AUXILIARY *COME* AND THE MOTION VERB *COME*. The semi-auxiliary typically occurs in contexts shared with the motion verb *come*. However, one feature of the semi-auxiliary sometimes allows one to distinguish it from the motion verb: it does not have a distinct preterit form. Thus the semi-auxiliary is invariantly *come*, while the motion verb is variably *come* or *came* in the preterit, depending on whether or not speakers use the SE preterit form.³

³ 'SE' refers to a standard English basically equivalent to that used in broadcasting, and devoid of grammatical features peculiar to a geographical area or social group. SE is contrasted with Standard Black English (SBE)—which, for present purposes, can be characterized as the normal informal English of Blacks who have spent their formative years in a Black milieu and who also have perfect control of SE; it is devoid of affectations modeled on the Black Vernacular English typically spoken by Blacks in the lower socio-economic strata. It is worth noting that SBE is more 'acrolectal' than what Taylor has labeled 'Standard Black English', to consider one earlier definition

Consequently, in a sentence like the following, which contains the semi-auxiliary, there is no way to determine, on the basis of phonemic shape and syntax alone, whether the *come* in the sentence is the motion verb or the semi-auxiliary:

(1) He come walking in here like he owned the damn place. (S)⁴

(In such a case, to determine which *come* is present, contextual factors must be considered, which may indicate that no motion is involved. Phonetics can also be useful in this regard; cf. §3.)

Since the semi-auxiliary is always immediately followed by *V-ing*, with no intervening pause (represented by a comma), certain kinds of constructions containing the motion verb cannot be confused with those having the semi-auxiliary:

- (2) a. They come to tell me what happened.
- b. They come and told me what happened.
- c. They come into the house running.
- d. And there they come, stopping all along the way.

In *come V-ing* constructions, the verb in *-ing* may express (a) the specific type of movement in coming, if the verb in *-ing* is itself a motion verb; (b) an action simultaneous with the movement conveyed by *come*; or (c) some action that immediately follows the movement expressed by *come*, and which in some respect is typically closely associated with the idea of arrival.

The motion verb *come* can be followed by any motion verb except *go*, which expresses the opposite movement orientation. *Come* and *go* are pragmatically

of the term. Taylor would consider even distributive *be* (the meaning of which he curiously labels 'continuative aspect') to be a feature of SBE. Speakers observed for this study never use distributive *be*, but they do use the *come* of indignation.

⁴ Unreduced forms are given in examples if the way in which they are reduced is not at issue.

Examples which are taken from actual speech are indicated by '(S)' following the example. Data with the semi-auxiliary *come* are taken from notes gathered during participant observation in San Francisco and Oakland, California. (Actually, in this case one might speak of member observation, since the observer has routine contact, for reasons unrelated to language research, with the group of persons providing the data.) 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 conversation) is perfectly normal.

The semi-auxiliary is produced in situations characterized by immediacy, emotional intensity—and, frequently, loss of composure. Apparently, for this reason, it is difficult to capture *come* on tape. Taping sessions are usually characterized by some residue of self-monitoring on the part of speakers, which would include emotional moderation as well as some degree of censoring of verbal output.

The examples of the semi-auxiliary that are taken from speech are perhaps most useful in providing an accurate idea of the flavor of the aggravations that prompt its use. Any effort to gain a reasonable idea of the syntax and semantics of *come* would fail if one had to rely on observed speech alone. Obtaining the range of sentences needed would verge on the impossible. Moreover, one needs to know not only the kinds of sentences in which *come* occurs, but also those in which it cannot. To round out the analysis of *come* presented here, examples reflecting my own intuitions are used.

incompatible. In case (a), where a motion verb in *-ing* immediately follows the motion verb *come*, what is actually expressed is one action—movement:

- (3) She came $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{walking} \\ \text{running} \\ \text{skipping} \\ \text{crawling} \\ \text{etc.} \end{array} \right\}$ down the sidewalk.

Case (b) is illustrated as follows:

- (4) The dogs came barking down the street.

The interpretation is straightforward: the dogs were barking as they came down the street.

Case (c) is exemplified thus:

- (5) So I was in my room reading a book, and my mom comes pounding on the door and walks in and asks me, 'Where's the car?' (S)

This sentence, clearly, would not be interpreted as meaning that the mother came, bringing the door with her and pounding on it, after which she walked in and asked her question. Consideration of how things usually are in the world, and in the rest of the speaker's narrative, make it clear that an uninterrupted sequence of actions is involved. One action is movement to the door; pounding on the door immediately follows. Pounding on a door is very closely associated with the idea of arrival. That the V in *-ing* must refer to some action closely associated with arrival is indicated by the anomaly (represented with a cross-hatch) of sentences like this:

- (6) #The repairman came fixing the furnace.

Here a simultaneity reading is extremely bizarre: dragging the furnace with him, presumably, and fixing it at the same time, came the repairman. My claim is that the only other interpretation possible is that of uninterrupted sequence, which requires that the second action be closely associated with arrival. But an uninterrupted-sequence interpretation for 6 is quite odd—since, under normal circumstances, some kind of interaction would occur between the repairman and whoever received him before he proceeded to fix the furnace. The anomaly of 6, then, is a result of its oddness under each of the two interpretations allowed by the semantics of this construction with the motion verb *come*.

Note that 7 is slightly better than 6—although it still does not strike one as felicitous:

- (7) #A neighbor came borrowing a cup of sugar.

Although the neighbor, in the stereotypic scenario, would remain at the door and receive the cup of sugar there, the action of borrowing and actually receiving the cup of sugar would not immediately follow the movement expressed by *come*. But 8 is much better:

- (8) A neighbor came asking to borrow a cup of sugar.

Here the request to borrow a cup of sugar might be seen more easily as occurring upon arrival and, with more difficulty perhaps, immediately after

movement stopped. This sentence could also be said with a pause after *came*; but the essential point is that the pause is not necessary. Since 8 is more amenable to the uninterrupted-sequence interpretation under discussion, it is significantly better than 7.

Returning to ex. 1, note that if such a sentence were heard or read in a transcript by non-speakers of BE, they would have no reason not to assume that the motion verb was involved. The *come* there occurs in the same ... V *V-ing* construction in which the semi-auxiliary occurs, and the sentence as a whole is amenable to one of the permitted interpretations discussed above.

A sentence like 9 might also easily be taken as containing the motion verb:

- (9) He come trying to hit on me. (S) [This sentence was said by a woman speaking of a man who had been trying to proposition her.]

This might strike one as slightly odd if *come* were taken to be the motion verb, although there are contexts in which an equivalent sentence with the motion verb would sound perfectly normal, e.g. *We all came here last Friday—Zeb came up the road laughing, Mary came telling dirty jokes, Sue and Jethro came complaining about the weather, and Joe came trying to proposition every woman in his car.* However, with a sentence like 10, problems in interpreting *come* as a verb of motion begin to emerge:

- (10) We sitting there talking, and he come hitting on me for some money.
(S) [*He* is included in the referent of *we*. Here *hit on* means approximately 'to ask to borrow'.]

Clearly, if both parties are sitting while talking, it is difficult to account for any motion to which *come* might refer.

In a sentence like 11, it becomes clearer that a formally identical but semantically distinct item is being dealt with:

- (11) She come going in my room—didn't knock or nothing. (S)

If *come* as well as *going* were interpreted as motion verbs, the sentence would be anomalous, since *come going* implies simultaneous movements with different orientations. But the sentence is not anomalous, because *come* is not a motion verb in this instance.

The existence of sentences like 12 leaves little doubt that two verbs are to be distinguished:

- (12) He come coming in here raising all kind of hell. (S)

Here we see two instances of *come*: the first is the semi-auxiliary, 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 semi-auxiliary expresses the speaker's attitude of strong disapproval or indignation. In the discussion above, phonetics was not dwelt upon; but it is important, since sentences with the semi-auxiliary *come* are invariably uttered with the intonation and force of indignation, as well as an appropriate constellation of non-verbal behaviors. Typically, as can be seen from exx. 1 and 9–12, 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.

Some sentences, on first consideration, might seem to invalidate the analysis of *come* as expressing speaker indignation; e.g.,

(13) He come telling me how fine I was. (S)

Here the social context must be considered. This example was uttered by a woman who was the object of amorous attention from a recently-met married man. In uttering the sentence, the woman was clearly pleased by the man's compliment, but sought to indicate, by her use of the *come* of indignation, the inappropriateness of his comments. Ex. 13, then, constitutes an instance of mock indignation, stemming not from the content of the compliment per se, but rather from the speaker's perceived obligation to interpret the compliment negatively, in view of the social context.

Thus, although indignation can be posited as the basic meaning of *come*, evidence indicates that some extended uses do not actually express sincere 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 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 only that it is a principled one.

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

One might consider the position that the *come* of indignation should be taken as a metaphoric extension of the verb of motion, rather than establishing two verbs. Any attempt to support such a position, however, encounters insurmountable obstacles. First, if metaphoric extension is to be supported, there should be some explanation of its basis, and ideally some idea of its origin. Although the *come* of the indignation may well be the result of an original metaphoric extension, the original metaphor is synchronically unrecoverable. Furthermore, the question of metaphor in the origin, evolution, and present status of *come* is distinct from that of whether two *come*'s must be established on the basis of synchronic syntactic and semantic factors. The preceding discussion is, then, sufficient for establishing the existence of two *come*'s. Indeed, the sole fact that both occur in the same clause, each with its own meaning, is sufficient for establishing the existence of the two.

The view of semi-auxiliary *come* as a metaphoric extension becomes even more difficult to support because its semantic value 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*. Thus Clark 1974 offers an interesting hypothesis on the evaluative uses of *go* and *come* in idioms such as

(14) He came through a good deal last year.

(15) 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* 'are 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' (317). Although a deixis-based explanation of meaning phenomena connected with the *come* and *go* idioms that Clark treats appears viable, such an explanation is not feasible for the semi-auxiliary *come*—since, contrary to what one would expect with a deixis-based explanation, *come* is evaluatively negative.

3. THE STATUS OF THE *COME* OF INDIGNATION IN BE GRAMMAR. It was stated in §1 that the *come* of indignation is called a semi-auxiliary because it shares some properties with auxiliaries. However, the term 'auxiliary' itself presents problems: it has been used both as an essentially syntactic term, in transformational and traditional grammar, and as a cover term for elements that, for the most part but not always, share certain types of syntactic behavior. 'Auxiliary' has often been used, sometimes confusingly, to refer to elements which are argued to be generated under the category label AUX as well as those which are not. (Of course, AUX is always essentially syntactic.)

3.1. Regardless of how the term 'auxiliary' is actually used, there seems to be agreement concerning what it should refer to: those elements which meet certain syntactic and morphological criteria (to be listed below). It should be noted further, however, there is certainly no general agreement about whether auxiliaries should be dominated by an AUX node. (For detailed discussions of competing analyses, see Pullum & Wilson 1977, Akmajian et al. 1979.)

It should be made clear that 'semi-auxiliary' as used here is neutral with respect to the controversy concerning whether the category AUX should be part of grammar; more specifically, it is neutral with respect to the question of whether the semi-auxiliary *come* would be categorized as an AUX, if indeed the category AUX is accepted. It is fully recognized that verbs might most profitably be thought of as forming something like a continuum, with auxiliaries at one end, main verbs at the other, and various semi-auxiliaries arranged along the line between.

In this paper, 'semi-auxiliary' is used as a cover term for those elements, including *come*, which differ in important ways from main verbs, but which may not meet all the commonly-accepted syntactic criteria for auxiliaryhood. The requirement is only that they meet one or more of the set of syntactic and morphological criteria outlined below, in addition to a semantic one: the expression of at least one of the notional categories of tense, aspect, and mood.⁵

⁵ This characterization of semi-auxiliaries, if strictly applied, would include auxiliaries, since they also meet one or more of the set of syntactic and morphological criteria commonly considered in discussions of auxiliaries (as well as the semantic criterion). Thus this characterization should be amended to exclude 'full' auxiliaries. A serviceable definition of auxiliaries would be one which requires that they meet, minimally, criteria A–C as presented below. Clearly, definitions should be functional; and any definition of auxiliaries should be tailored to specific goals in grammatical description, e.g. determining which auxiliaries should be generated in deep structure under AUX—and, more generally, determining whether an AUX category is required. This paper does not try

Although the common criteria for auxiliaryhood are syntactic and morphological, several considerations help justify the use of the semantic criterion. First, auxiliaries (in all senses of the word), as well as semi-auxiliaries, express tense, aspect, and/or mood.⁶ While one would not want to make a semantic property a sufficient condition for auxiliaryhood, it is surely appropriate as a necessary condition, since it characterizes those elements already accepted as auxiliaries. The association of auxiliaries and semi-auxiliaries, taken as a group, with tense, aspect, and mood has been so strong that at least one item, *have* (*to*), which is auxiliary-like only in semantic terms, has been classified as a semi-auxiliary by some. Note also that one major study (Akmajian et al.) has used a semantic criterion to define *AUX*, which in English would dominate a subset of the elements which traditionally have been referred to as auxiliaries. Akmajian et al. suggest that the use of a semantic criterion 'only makes explicit what is implicit in the cross-linguistic identification of other categories. The semantic criteria for identifying Noun or Verb in some unfamiliar language may be more covert, because the categories are more familiar, but they are nonetheless necessary' (56).⁷ On the whole, their analysis, which uses a semantic criterion in an effort to establish the viability of *AUX* as a universal category, suggests that the semantic property which *come* shares with auxiliaries and semi-auxiliaries (expressing a notion of mood) is more significant than it might seem if interpreted solely in the light of analyses not cross-linguistically oriented.

The six criteria most often mentioned in transformational analyses as underlying the distinction between auxiliaries and main verbs are the following:

(A) Subject–auxiliary inversion in questions: Auxiliaries are inverted with subjects to form questions, while main verbs are not. *Come* does not share this property with auxiliaries:

- (16) a. Will Harry eat?
 b. *Eat Harry?
 c. *Come he trying to break down the door?

to provide a fully non-arbitrary means of delimiting the set of auxiliaries; accordingly, a somewhat arbitrary yet reasonable definition is presented, which would include only 'true' modals plus *ought* and *be* (as in *He is to leave this afternoon*).

⁶ Even *dare*, probably the most likely candidate for being an exception, fits in with this statement. Its modal character is perhaps more obvious in sentences like (a) and (b), where (like markers of tense, aspect, and mood) it can be seen to predicate something of an S:

- (a) It dare not rain tonight.
 (b) There dare not be any more rain this year.

⁷ They also state that '*AUX* is a category—i.e. distinct in its syntactic behavior from the behavior of other syntactic categories—labeling a constituent that includes elements expressing the notional categories of Tense and/or Modality' (p. 2). Here it should be reiterated that the semantic criterion of Akmajian et al. pertains only to items dominated by *AUX*, not to auxiliaries (as does the one presented in this paper). Furthermore, their criterion differs in that it does not include aspect—although it should, since at least one of the items which they would generate under *AUX* in deep structure, viz. *will*, has aspectual uses. Note that *will* can be used to express habituality that is temporally present-focused: *Nowadays a Democrat will vote for a stringent fiscal measure*. That is, *will* is not merely the future-tense marker it is often assumed to be (cf. Spears 1974, 1977 for additional examples and discussion).

(B) *Do* support: A supportive *do* never occurs before auxiliaries, although it appears before main verbs in certain types of sentences, e.g. questions. With respect to this property, *come* behaves like main verbs:

- (17) a. *Does Harry may eat?
 b. Does Harry eat?
 c. Did he come hitting you again? (S)

(C) Gerundive and infinitival clauses: Generally, auxiliaries cannot occur in such clauses.⁸ This restriction does not apply to main verbs. The behavior of *come* is like that of main verbs:

- (18) a. *I asked for Harry (to) should eat; *I overlooked Harry's should(ing) eat.
 b. I asked for Harry to eat; I overlooked Harry's eating.
 c. I didn't want him to come talking to me, cussing and carrying on. (S)⁹

(D) Tag formation: Auxiliaries are generally allowed to appear in the tag of tag questions, unlike main verbs. *Come*, like main verbs, cannot:

- (19) a. You will speak, { won't you? }
 { will you not? }
 b. *You speak, { speakn't you? }
 { speak you not? }
 c. *He come calling her a damn fool, { comen't he? }
 { come he not? }

(E) Negative contraction: The negative *not* may be contracted onto a preceding auxiliary. *Come* behaves like main verbs:

- (20) a. Harry wouldn't leave.
 b. *Harry preferredn't to leave.
 c. *Harry comen't calling me a damn fool.

(F) Reduction: Some auxiliaries have reduced forms which are contracted onto the preceding word. This cannot happen with main verbs:

⁸ Notable exceptions are what have been referred to as aspectual auxiliaries—perfect *have* and progressive *be*—which do occur in gerund and infinitive clauses:

- (a) I would prefer for them to have left before I arrive.
 (b) Harry wouldn't like for them to be singing.

⁹ *Come* does not occur in gerundive clauses, no doubt because of a doubl-*ing* constraint. *Coming* in a gerundive clause would require a complement verb in *-ing*. (Note also that *come* cannot occur in the progressive; thus sentences like **He was coming breaking down the damn door* are ungrammatical.) According to the statement of the constraint in Pullum 1974, doubl-*ing* constructions are prohibited if it is the case that, given *V-ing*₁ and *V-ing*₂, (a) *V-ing*₂ is in the complement of *V-ing*₁ and (b) no NP boundary intervenes between the two. (See also the earlier discussions of Ross 1972 and Milsark 1972.)

No NP boundary intervenes between *coming* and *V-ing* in doubl-*ing* constructions involving *come*. Whether the *V-ing* following *come* is 'in the complement' of *come* cannot be answered definitively without a precise characterization of the locution 'in the complement of'. As Pullum notes (119, fn. 4), 'complement' is normally used in generative grammar to refer to underlying phrase-structure configurations, and a number of problems must be overcome before surface analogs can be adequately defined.

- (21) a. I'll leave as soon as possible.
 b. *They'll everything to the eldest son. (I.e. they bequeath everything to the eldest son.)

Come does not reduce and contract in the same way as the well-known English auxiliaries, but rather follows a pattern widely attested in BE and related creole languages. As Rickford (1977:203–4) states, BE permits the reduction of certain auxiliaries in ways not permitted in non-Black dialects of English, standard and non-standard: '*Don't*, for instance, can be reduced to a single nasal vowel— \bar{o} or $\bar{\omega}$ or \bar{o} —and *didn't* can be reduced in $\bar{e}nt$, $\bar{e}nt$ or $\bar{i}n$.' All dialects of English allow the reduction of *I am going to* to [mgənə]. Rickford continues:

'Beyond this point, however, the similarities disappear. SE and White non-standard dialects always retain some trace of the initial *g* in "going", if only in the form of a velar nasal, as in $\eta n\bar{a}$. But BE allows the assimilation of the *g* to the preceding nasal, and further reduction can apply to yield simply $m\bar{a}n\bar{a}$, $m\bar{n}\bar{a}$, or $m\bar{a}$.'

(See also the earlier and more detailed discussion of this phenomenon in Labov et al. 1968:251–2.) Rickford further notes that the phenomenon of initial voiced-stop deletion in auxiliaries and preverbal markers is common in English creoles: 'There is alternation between *ben* and *en* in Jamaican Creole, *da* and *a* in Gullah, *go* and *o* in Sranan, *gun* and *un*, *bi* and *i*, *dun* and *un* in Guyana Creole, $d\bar{a}z$ and $\bar{a}z$ in Gullah as well as in the creoles of Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados, and the Bay Islands.'

With *come*, the process of initial stop deletion is extended to a voiceless stop. Thus the initial /k/ occurs weakened to [h] (as in [həm[?]] and [həm]) and deleted entirely:

- (22) [m̩] trying to take my check. (S)¹⁰

3.2. Now that the commonly-accepted morphological and syntactic criteria for modalhood have been considered, attention will be turned to two other possible criteria: (a) uninflectability, which is somewhat controversial; and (b) restricted occurrence in compound verbal constructions, which is generally included in discussions of auxiliaries, but is not discussed explicitly as a criterion for auxiliaryhood.

Although uninflectability would not fit in the list of common criteria for auxiliaryhood, it is always discussed in lengthy treatments of auxiliaries.

¹⁰ Interestingly, *come* can be produced without opening the mouth; in such cases, it is identical to the paralinguistic marker of disdain, indignation, and/or contempt, which is often produced without supporting speech (as those who paid special attention to Hattie McDaniel's performance in the film *Gone with the Wind* may have observed). The paralinguistic marker and *come*, when phonetically identical, are typically produced with a burst of air through the nasal passage. Whether there is a relationship between the two items is an intriguing question, but it cannot now be answered with certainty. In any case, it is important to note that the paralinguistic marker is extrasentential, as such markers typically are; but *come*, even when maximally reduced, is syntactically integrated into the sentence, occurring in its fixed position. It is also noteworthy that, when *come* is maximally reduced, it is utterance-initial; consequently, its use requires subject deletion. This requirement, however, is not as remarkable as it may seem, since Subject NP Deletion is much more widespread in BE and Gullah (and probably in other related creoles) than in varieties of English without creole antecedents.

Clearly, inflectional restrictions are associated more with auxiliaries than with main verbs; and uninflectability can be argued to be a property of some auxiliaries, but of no main verbs. Thus, if it proved possible to demonstrate that the *come* of indignation is uninflectable, its status as a semi-auxiliary would be strengthened.

It has been claimed that modal auxiliaries do not inflect (cf. Akmajian et al., 53). It is noted that forms like *may* and *might*, which have been treated as present- and past-tense forms, respectively, should not necessarily be considered different tense forms of the same modal auxiliary: each may be a modal in its own right, *might* indicating a weaker possibility than *may*. Pullum & Wilson (759), following McCawley 1975, in their discussion of modals and inflection, note certain archaic inflected modal forms, e.g. (*thou*) *may'st* and (*thou*) *canst*. However, as Akmajian et al. correctly observe, such forms have no role in contemporary English, so there is no basis to assume that they should be considered in synchronic analysis. The central point is that there is good reason to claim that modal auxiliaries do not inflect, while main verbs do.

If the semi-auxiliary *come* is considered a marker of mood, there is some reason to compare it with the modal subset of auxiliaries, as opposed to other kinds. Even though BE speakers have no distinct preterit form for the *come* of indignation (as some do for the motion verb), the *come* in our examples can be considered a preterit, because the preterit of supportive *do* appears in questions like 17c (*Did he come hitting you again?*) Thus the *come* of indignation would be analysed as having a zero preterit inflection.

It is not certain whether the semi-auxiliary *come* has a 3sg. pres. indic. *-s* in the speech of maximally-inflecting acrolectal speakers, since it seems to be used only in (declarative) sentences referring to past events. Apparently, if the indignation-causing event occurs in the past, *come* itself is required to be past tense. As noted already, we know this only because of the *did* in questions. Even so, *come* always expresses speaker indignation at the time of the speech event, regardless of the time of the event about which indignation is expressed. Consequently, no conceptual motivation exists, so to speak, for a past-tense *come*. If *come* were to be inflected for the 3sg. present indicative, it would most likely be in sentences referring to an indignation-causing event which occurs habitually, or which is occurring at the time of the speech event. Conceivably, some acrolectal BE speakers could utter sentences like *He always comes telling me what I shouldn't do*, to express indignation about an event which occurs habitually. Some maximally-inflecting BE speakers, however, feel that such sentences with the 3sg. *-s* inflection sound odd. What is clear is that all observed (declarative) sentences with *come* are past tense. This could be caused by pragmatic factors—or, more likely, there may simply be morphological restrictions on *come* which are symptomatic of its partially auxiliary nature. Such morphological restrictions, should they exist, would be comparable to those pointed out by Shopen 1971 in his discussion of the partially auxiliary *go* in *go + V* constructions (e.g. *Go get me a beer*). In brief, the question concerning 3sg. *-s* cannot be answered conclusively.

3.3. While *come* cannot be said with certainty to meet a criterion of unin-

flectability, it does, to a certain extent, meet a criterion based on restricted occurrence in compound verbal constructions. In the following discussion, *come*'s co-occurrence with modals in particular will be taken up first, followed by remarks on its co-occurrence with other forms in compound verbal constructions.

Come has one property which, while not characteristic of all auxiliaries (in the broader sense, which would include perfect *have* and progressive *be*), is characteristic of modals: generally, it cannot occur with modals. Most contemporary English dialects do not allow modals to co-occur, although certain dialects allow a few combinations. Because of this co-occurrence restriction, sentences like the following are infelicitous:

(23) #He $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{might} \\ \text{may} \\ \text{should} \\ \text{would} \\ \text{etc.} \end{array} \right\}$ come going in my room—not knocking or nothing.

These sentences are characterized as infelicitous, and crosshatched, because (as will be argued below) they are anomalous rather than ungrammatical.

The issue here is that *come* apparently does not occur with modals because of pragmatic factors, while the prohibition against the co-occurrence of modals is purely syntactic. There is no conceptual basis for the ungrammaticality of a sentence such as this:

(24) *John may will go home tomorrow. (Cf. It may be that John will go home tomorrow; It's possible that John will go home tomorrow.)

The one case in which *come* can occur with a modal is instructive:

(25) You can't come coming in here knocking over everything and acting a damn fool.

Come can occur with *can't*, but not with *can*. Nor can it occur with any other modal, regardless of whether it is followed by *not*. This, along with the fact that *come* would be extremely bizarre in an affirmative imperative (e.g. #*Come breaking down my damn door!*), re-inforces the idea that the restriction on *come*'s occurrence with modals is pragmatic. As regards affirmative imperatives, it is clear that, if an action is perceived as extremely negative and the speaker is indignant about it, then there would be no reason for the speaker to command someone to do it. To follow this line of thought, it would seem that *come* would be more likely to occur in statements than questions. However, we do have 17c (*Did he come hitting you again?*); but note that this was uttered by a mother to her niece as the mother was already moving to punish her son, the accused. The mother, then, was only seeking perfunctory confirmation of what she already assumed.

Various considerations indicate that the use of *come* requires a strong assumption that the event about which indignation is expressed has taken place, or will take place if there is no intervention. The modals with which *come* does not occur all attenuate or suggest approval in some way. They are incompatible

with a strong assumption of an event's reality or indignation about that event. If this is correct, then *come*'s occurrence with *can't* can be easily explained.

Can't, in the context of 25 specifically, expresses a strong obligation not to act in the way stated (although in other contexts it might express inability, impossibility, or lack of permission). It is stronger and more ominous than *must not*—which, besides, is used only in rather formal contexts, unlike *come*, which appears limited to informal ones. Consequently, the negative *can't* in 25 does not attenuate or suggest approval, as do the other modals; for this reason, it is allowed to occur with *come*.

In brief, *come*'s highly restricted occurrence with modals does indeed appear to be pragmatic, not syntactic, as is the case with modals. Since it is the result of pragmatic factors, *come*'s non-occurrence with modals serves, if anything, primarily to re-inforce its status as a mood-marker, since such pragmatic conflict would be more likely (but, of course, not necessary) among forms signaling grammatical meanings that fall within the same semantic domain.

What *come* does share with modals, and to varying extents with other auxiliaries and semi-auxiliaries, is its non-occurrence in perfect and progressive constructions:¹¹

- (26) *He $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{had come} \\ \text{has come} \\ \text{has been coming} \\ \text{was coming} \\ \text{etc.} \end{array} \right\} \text{coming in here raising hell and carrying on.}$

Although the restriction on *come*'s occurrence in compound verbal constructions is apparently pragmatic, the restriction in perfect and progressive constructions seems purely syntactic.¹² The restriction against *come*'s occurring in progressives can be seen, alternatively, as a consequence of its stativity; so non-occurrence in progressives alone would not support *come*'s status as a semi-auxiliary. However, the stativity of *come* cannot be used to explain its non-occurrence in perfect constructions.

What is clear is that the quintessential auxiliary (one most different from main verbs, e.g. a modal like *must*) cannot occur following other auxiliaries in compound verbal constructions. Accordingly, it would be reasonable to

¹¹ *Come* also shares with modals its non-occurrence in compound verbal constructions other than those with perfect *have*, progressive *be*, and the modals. One exception is constructions with BE *gone* ([gō(n)]), an auxiliary-like form that signals unexpectedness, unexplainability, or disapproval; e.g., *He gone come telling me he had to shut off my electricity* (S). *Gone* may be the same as the familiar BE 'quasi-modal' *gonna*, discussed in Labov et al. In Spears 1980, the two are considered distinct. Should the two be the same, the semantics of *gonna* will need rethinking.

¹² The idea that this restriction is purely syntactic is suggested by the fact that *have the nerve*, perhaps the nearest equivalent to *come*, does occur in perfect constructions:

- (a) They've had the nerve to use staff cars on vacations.

But then again, *have the nerve* occurs with modals, where *come* does not:

- (b) Bertha would have the nerve to come in here raising hell.

‡Bertha would come coming in here raising hell.

So the semantics of *have the nerve* may be too different from that of *come* to prove any point about the nature of restrictions on *come* in compound verbal constructions.

claim that this restriction is diagnostic of auxiliaryhood: to the extent that a form is an auxiliary, it will be subject to the restriction. Thus the restriction on *come*'s occurrence in compound verbal constructions provides support for its classification as a semi-auxiliary.

3.4. In the preceding discussion, I claimed that the *come* of indignation meets the semantic criterion for auxiliaries because of its function as a mood-marker. This claim requires some discussion, since indignation has not been discussed as a 'mood' in the literature.

Given that the *come* of indignation is speaker-oriented (it expresses indignation only on the part of the speaker),¹³ there is reason to classify it as a marker of mood—following the characterization of mood, in its most general sense, as expressing speaker attitude. However, one problem stemming from the classification of *come* as a mood-marker is that traditionally, in its widest application, the term 'mood' is associated with imperativity, interrogativity, 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; yet mood is clearly the most appropriate of the traditional semantic notions for its classification.

Definitions of 'mood' which pretend to adequacy are rare. That of Jakobson ([1957] 1971) may well be the most useful to date, in large measure because he contrasts mood with other notions such as tense, aspect, and voice, which are grammaticalized in a significant number of languages. Jakobson states (1971:135) that mood 'characterizes the relation between the narrated event and its participants with reference to the participants of the speech event'. Accepting this definition, one can classify *come* as a marker of mood.

3.5. Now that the various criteria for auxiliaryhood have been considered, we can return to the issue of the status of the *come* of indignation in BE

¹³ As will be noted below, *come* is speaker-oriented, as are modals. An interesting property of *come* is that it is actually more speaker-oriented than are modals, in that it has the property of speaker-boundedness. By 'speaker-boundedness', I mean that no matter how deeply embedded it may be, it necessarily marks speaker attitude, rather than that of the surface subject of any clause in the sentence:

(a) ... [she₁] said ... [she₂] told her that damn fool *come* standing out there last night ringing all the bells. (S)

(b) ... [she₁] said ... [she₂] told her that damn fool

}	might
	must
	should
	etc.

 stand out there last night ringing all the bells.

The modals in (b) are not predicated by the speaker, but rather by *she*₂; the speaker merely reports. But *come* in (a) cannot be taken as indicating anyone's attitude other than the speaker's indignation. Thus, in a sentence like (a), if the speaker were to express explicitly something that would contradict an attitude of indignation, anomaly would result:

(c) ... [she₁] said ... [she₂] told her that damn fool *come* standing out there last night ringing all the bells,

{	#but I'm glad he (that damn fool) did.
	#but I don't see anything wrong with him doing that.

grammar. I stated above that *come* can be classified as a semi-auxiliary on the basis of its meeting the semantic criterion for auxiliaryhood, and at least one of the morphological and syntactic criteria. Of the common morphological and syntactic criteria, the only one which *come* meets is the morphological one concerning reduction. Through the consideration of additional properties which can be argued to characterize the quintessential auxiliary—uninflectability, and restricted occurrence in compound verbal constructions—it is found that *come* is auxiliary-like in being subject to co-occurrence restrictions. Obviously, *come* is more like main verbs than some elements which have been labeled as semi-auxiliaries; however, as noted, auxiliaries and semi-auxiliaries have their status to varying degrees.

At this point, it is appropriate to clarify the sense in which *come* grammaticalizes the modal notion of indignation. First, grammaticalization is not always clear-cut, but is rather a matter of degree. A grammaticalized form is one of a closed set of elements (i.e. small in number, and resistant to accepting new members), which make distinctions with respect to notions such as tense, mood, aspect, and animacy. The smaller the closed set of forms to which a particular form belongs, the more grammaticalized it is. My claim is that BE *come* is a grammatical (rather than lexical) morpheme, in that it belongs to the closed set of auxiliaries and semi-auxiliaries.

It might be argued that BE *come* cannot be claimed to grammaticalize indignation because it is not 'grammatically autonomous': unlike distributive *be*, to take another example of a camouflaged form in BE, its meaning can be signaled by sentences in which it does not occur. According to this argument, 27a, without the *come* of indignation, can convey indignation just as well as 27b:

- (27) a. He come in here raising all kind of hell.
 b. He come coming in here raising all kind of hell.

Furthermore, the indignation reading of a sentence with this *come* can be canceled by uttering it with a jocular or some other non-indignant intonation.

This argument fails for several reasons. First, it indicates confusion about the semantics of BE distributive *be*, particularly as compared to that of the comparable finite *be* forms. Consider sentence pairs like 28a–b, where the first has a finite form of *be* and the second an invariant *be*:

- (28) a. He is working.
 b. He be working.

The facts are as follows (cf. Wolfram 672): Invariant *be* expresses only iterative aspect. Finite *be* forms can express iterative aspect (*In the morning, he is always working*) or non-iterative aspect (*He is working right this minute*). They are, in other words, neutral with respect to iterativity. But invariant *be* is semantically marked with respect to finite *be* forms; it is marked for iterativity. Thus the meaning of 28a is not the exact equivalent of 28b: the latter is more specific, and its more specific meaning (iterative aspect) is included within that of the more general 28a. (This type of phenomenon is not unusual in natural language, and was noted by Jakobson.)

The same kind of markedness relationship holds for the *come* of indignation. Ex. 27a CAN be used to express indignation, but it does not necessarily do so. However, 27b can express only indignation. Even if 27b is uttered with a jocular or other non-indignant intonation, all that is produced is a mixed message, comparable to what one would produce in uttering *I hate you* lovingly. Thus 27a is semantically unmarked with respect to indignation, just as it is unmarked with respect to remorse, glee, sadness, or any other attitude. With these facts in mind, the above argument against *come* as a grammatical morpheme must be rejected.

4. *GO* AND THE ORIGIN OF THE *COME* OF INDIGNATION. One of the most important questions concerning the *come* of indignation is whether it is a creolism—a form that has survived from the putative creole past of BE, and is found in related creole languages. Unfortunately, it is now clear that a full understanding of the origin and development of the *come* of indignation must come primarily from future research. Notwithstanding, several relevant observations can be presented.

As regards the origin of *come*, there are several possibilities: (a) *come* may be modeled on forms that exist or have existed in non-Black dialects of English; (b) *come* may be a creolism, found in related creoles such as Guyanese Creole, Jamaican Creole, and Gullah—and perhaps modeled on forms from West African languages that served as input into an ancestor of BE; and (c) *come* may be a BE innovation, resulting from the history of social and geographic isolation of Blacks in the US. The existence of what will be termed the *go* of disapproval in Black and non-Black dialects of American English bears on questions relevant to the first possibility.

The use of motion verbs in the tense-aspect systems of English and other European languages (notably Portuguese) that were involved in BE's presumed creole past is well known (e.g. Eng. *go* and Ptg. *ir* 'to go', both used as future-tense markers; cf. Traugott 1978). However, the literature apparently mentions no forms which are formally identical or similar to motion verbs, and are used specifically to express indignation. Neither is there any indication that any of the languages concerned has grammaticalized the mood notion of indignation.

However, even though varieties of English other than BE may have no specific form to express indignation, it is certain that they have a form which expresses disapproval. This form is *go*—signaling only disapproval, with no implication of motion. Both the *come* of indignation and the *go* of disapproval are negatively evaluative, and identical to motion verbs. The meanings of the two motion verbs are only similar, not identical; but what they do share invites questions concerning the specifics of how they compare to each other, and the possibility of their being somehow related historically.

Go occurs in sentences like these:

- (29) a. Don't go acting crazy again.
 b. Go acting crazy again—see if I care.
 c. Don't go going around ringing people's doorbells.
 d. Whenever I let him cook, he goes burning everything.

There are several bases on which the *go* of disapproval can be distinguished from the motion verb *go*. First, note that contexts exist where no motion interpretation for *go* is possible:

- (30) (Your) sitting there now is okay, but if you go sitting there past midnight, you're going to get picked up by the police.

Second, as with the *come* of indignation, *go* can take the homophonous motion verb as its complement, as in 29c above.¹⁴

Since the goal of this discussion is only to demonstrate that a *go* of disapproval exists, and to note that it exists in non-Black varieties of English, I will not present a detailed discussion of its grammatical properties. Note, however, that *go* cannot be considered a semi-auxiliary under the definition elaborated above: the only criterion for auxiliaryhood that it meets is the semantic one. (The argument for considering disapproval as a mood notion would follow that used for indignation, *mutatis mutandis*.)

As noted, the *go* of disapproval is different from the *come* of indignation in significant ways. Aside from the fact that different motion verbs are involved, there is the difference in meaning: *go* merely expresses disapproval, while *come* expresses a negative evaluation which is significantly stronger. Finally, as already noted, no basis exists for classifying the *go* of disapproval as a semi-auxiliary. Indeed, the fact that *come* is already partially auxiliarized, while *go* is not, might suggest that *come* served as a model for *go*. Perhaps the major impetus for speaking of one verb as being modeled on the other is that both forms strike one as unusual, because of the absence of discussions of such negatively evaluative forms in the literature.

Classifying *come* as a creolism would be supported by its existence in creoles, particularly the English-based ones. Scrutiny of the most extensive studies of these languages (Bailey 1966, for Jamaican Creole; Cunningham 1970 and Turner 1949, for Gullah; Bickerton 1975 and Rickford 1979, for Guyanese Creole) does not, however, reveal forms of interest in this regard. Nevertheless,

¹⁴ This discussion of *go* has benefited from observations and examples provided by Susanna Cumming, Donn Seeley, Deborah Clarke, John Moore, and Dyan Paynovich.

It should be noted that some instances of *go* with a complement in *-ing* are not instances of the *go* of disapproval. The *go* of disapproval cannot occur in the progressive:

- (a) He goes $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{sailing} \\ \text{fishing} \\ \text{shopping} \end{array} \right\}$ every chance he gets. (non-disapproval)
- (b) (Nowadays) he's going $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{sailing} \\ \text{fishing} \\ \text{shopping} \end{array} \right\}$ every chance he gets. (non-disapproval)
- (c) He goes showing off every chance he gets. (disapproval)
- (d) *(Nowadays) he's going showing off every chance he gets. (disapproval)

If a *going V-ing* sequence can take only a disapproval reading, it will be ungrammatical, as in (d). If such a sequence can take a non-disapproval interpretation, as in (b), it will not be ungrammatical. (See Bolinger 1978 for further discussion of *go* + *V-ing* constructions.) Interestingly, it appears that semantics here determines the grammaticality of a *doubl-ing* construction.

given the camouflaged nature of semi-auxiliary *come*, it would be premature to assume that no such form exists in these creoles.¹⁵

The question of whether *come* is modeled on a form from some West African language is quite difficult to deal with at present. There is always the possibility, albeit tenuous, that *come* is modeled on forms from other English dialects. In view of this possibility, extra work would be required to establish a West African model.

The possibility that *come* is a BE innovation—perhaps a result of the isolation which Blacks have experienced in the US—makes it even more difficult to hypothesize that *come* is modeled on *go* or some West African model. Nevertheless, we have no evidence to suggest that *come* is indeed an innovation. In sum, consideration of the *go* of disapproval serves primarily to sound a note of caution to anyone who might assume a creolist answer to the question of the origin of *come*.

5. IMPLICATIONS. The discussions presented below will be concerned mainly with (a) an elaboration of the brief remarks on camouflage in §1, and their implications concerning the nature of decreolization; and (b) a question that has been addressed repeatedly in studies of BE: To what extent can one say that BE forms a system separate from that formed by White dialects?

5.1. The fact that the semi-auxiliary *come* has existed undetected so long is in itself of some consequence. It not only shows that rather basic aspects of the grammar of a relatively well-studied dialect may go undetected because of camouflage, but also suggests the presence of other significant camouflaged forms—not only in BE, but also in other language-contact situations involving inequalities of prestige and influence. The two main questions about camouflage are: (a) What types of camouflage should be distinguished? and (b) Where can one expect to find the various types of camouflage along creole and post-creole continua?

The two examples of camouflage that have been pointed out are those involving distributive *be* and the semi-auxiliary *come*. It is clear that *be* and *come* differ in significant ways. The semi-auxiliary *come* can be considered a member of a word class distinct from that of its related motion verb; but no difference of word class exists between distributive *be* and the related SE *be*. Both serve as auxiliaries (in progressive constructions) and as main verbs, e.g. before NP's and adjectives. Furthermore, the semantic relations between the camouflaged form and its related SE form are different. Distributive *be* and its related form both function as copulae, and carry aspectual grammatical meanings; however, the semi-auxiliary *come* carries a grammatical meaning, while its related form carries a lexical one. In addition, the aspectual meaning of distributive *be* is included, so to speak, within that of the related SE form:

¹⁵ Lilith Haynes (p.c.) has reported that a *come* of indignation is widely used in Guyana. However, John Rickford has stated (p.c.) that he has not noticed the form in Guyanese speech. During my own brief stay in a Gullah-speaking area (Daufuskie, South Carolina), I did not notice such a form. But of course, attending to other aspects of speech, I might easily have missed it.

distributive *be* signals iterative aspect specifically, while SE *be* is neutral with respect to iterativity.

These differences, while important, do not capture the most significant difference between the two camouflaged forms: *come* in the great majority of cases is SYNTACTICALLY CAMOUFLAGED. But while the lexical item *be* is camouflaged (in that it is formally identical or similar to the SE form), the syntactic environments in which it occurs are such that, when it occurs in a BE utterance, that utterance is recognizable as not belonging to SE. This is shown by the following examples with distributive *be*, the closest SE renderings of which would contain the appropriate finite form of the verb *be* (examples from Fasold, Chap. 4):

- (31) a. 'Cause sometime I be sleeping and I don't feel like doing the work.
 b. Everybody be happy.
 c. Sometime I be with Rudy.
 d. Christmas Day, well, everybody be so choked up over gifts and everything, they don't be too hungry anyway.

Thus distributive *be*, unlike the semi-auxiliary *come*, represents an instance of WORD CAMOUFLAGE. AS such, it does not represent a phenomenon different from that encountered in basilects and mesolects of creole continua. Utterances from these creoles which manifest camouflage on the word level are clearly those which do not belong to the standard language. Two examples from Guyanese Creole English illustrate this point. The first example contains *bin*, which (with stative verbs) marks a simple past; the second contains *don*, which marks perfect tense-aspect:

- (32) a. *o gaad man ayu bin kyan kil awi laas nait.* 'Oh God, man, you could have killed us last night.' (Bickerton 1975:35)
 b. *wen dem don plau dem chip.* 'When they've finished ploughing, they harrow.' (Bickerton 1975:41)

These examples of word camouflage all involve forms with grammatical meanings; however, many forms in creole and post-creole languages show word camouflage, but have lexical meanings.¹⁶ Examples of LEXICAL WORD CAMOUFLAGE abound, but they are certainly trivial in comparison to those forms manifesting GRAMMATICAL WORD CAMOUFLAGE; and they are less interesting, because they are outside the network of grammatical properties which forms the core of languages.

Just as a difference in significance exists between grammatical and lexical word camouflage, such a difference also exists between word and syntactic camouflage; the difference is a qualitative one, since it involves an important conceptual difference between the two. Here we return to the nature of camouflage: it pertains to situations in which the true identity of a linguistic item is concealed, from the standpoint of a related standard language. In a form like

¹⁶ Gumperz 1978 treats an interesting example of lexical word camouflage which has been of consequence in socio-political interaction. His example is *kill*, which in SE generally means 'to take someone's life'. In idiomatic Black vernacular usage, it means 'to finish something, to stop it, to destroy someone's influence' etc.

Guyanese Creole *bin*, it is not the syntactic environment that conceals the nature of *bin*—i.e. its meaning and function, and the fact that it is different from the formally similar standard *been*. It is the form itself which provides the camouflage, and the meaning which is being camouflaged. In such a case, camouflage is the result of the formal trappings of the item. Word camouflage, then, has to do with meaning and function: they are camouflaged by the form that bears them.

In the case of syntactic camouflage, meanings are camouflaged not only by the form that bears them, but also by their syntactic environment. Consequently, in such cases, it is the form–meaning unit itself that is camouflaged. Thus an utterance can pass as one generated by the grammar of the standard language, and only the language-wide pattern reveals that the camouflaged item is not a part of the standard-language grammar.

5.2. In speaking of any type of camouflage, it is necessary to refer to languages other than a specific language X in which camouflage occurs. With respect to what language, for example, do we say that an item in language X is camouflaged? One must consider the REFERENCE LANGUAGE of a language X. In most cases, the reference language seems to be a related standard language. However, since the semi-auxiliary *come* appears in a non-standard preterit form, one would identify the relevant reference language as a significantly distinct cluster of language varieties, i.e. non-Black varieties of American English.

Thus the reference language is not necessarily a standard language. It may be another kind of language or language cluster—where, importantly, the linguist's ignorance has led to incorrect assumptions. In the case of the semi-auxiliary *come*, the existence of the formally identical motion verb and its morphology in standard and non-standard dialects are well known; and it is apparently the knowledge of them that has allowed the existence of *come* to remain undetected. One must assume that instances of the semi-auxiliary *come* have surfaced in the data collected in previous research on BE, but that its distinct character was simply not recognized.

I pointed out above that, in most cases, the semi-auxiliary *come* is syntactically camouflaged, as in ex. 1 (*He come walking in here like he owned the damn place*). Only rarely is it not syntactically camouflaged, e.g. when it precedes the motion verb *come*. In view of such cases, however, one must distinguish two over-all patterns of syntactic camouflage: (a) RESTRICTED SYNTACTIC CAMOUFLAGE, as with the semi-auxiliary *come*; and (b) COMPLETE SYNTACTIC CAMOUFLAGE, where all occurrences of a form are camouflaged. An important question is whether instances of complete syntactic camouflage occur in BE. My own recent research indicates that such camouflage occurs with remote *been*, which is used in SBE in a way unlike that in which it is used in Black Vernacular English. (For another example of what may represent complete syntactic camouflage, see Labov 1980 on Belizean Creole English.)

Although the existence of camouflage in creole and post-creole languages has long been noted (at least implicitly), studies oriented specifically toward the delineation of and relationships between different types of camouflage have

not been undertaken. One reason that such studies should be on the creolist's agenda is the possibility that a typology or theory of camouflage will help us develop a full-fledged theory of decreolization, and a more accurate specification of the notion 'stage of decreolization'. At present, the only terms we have for stages of decreolization ('basilect', 'mesolect' etc.) are not sufficiently precise.

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

'The processes that we observed in the development phase between basilect and mid-mesolect consisted to a large extent of introducing formatives 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. But at the level our description has now reached, a change in the nature of these processes occurs ... Increasingly, from this point [going from mesolect to acrolect], English forms are added to the grammar in pretty much their English functions, while non-English forms either drop out altogether or are crushed and distorted into patterns that become steadily closer to English ones.' (114)

In comparing the Guyanese acrolect specifically to varieties of English which have not been creole-influenced, Bickerton comments that 'the underlying representation of the verbal system in the minds of acrolectal Guyanese speakers may be regarded as substantively identical with that of metropolitan speakers of English' (162).

Despite the implication concerning camouflage in Guyanese Creole English that one may draw from Bickerton's remarks, it is clear that full (word) camouflage—involving complete unrelatedness of meaning and function, as well as syntactic camouflage—are present in even the acrolectal varieties of BE, i.e. in SBE itself. The semi-auxiliary *come*, which represents both types, has been observed in the informal SBE speech of several middle-class Blacks. We may assume that the more acrolectal a dialect is, the more likely it is that complete (as opposed to restricted) syntactic camouflage will occur; if so, one might hypothesize that in SBE, unlike Black Vernacular English, *come* would become completely camouflaged syntactically—i.e. the motion verb and the semi-auxiliary would not co-occur.

5.3. I stated above that a fundamental question in the study of BE is the extent to which it forms a system separate from that formed by White dialects. That it forms a separate system has been persuasively argued by Labov 1972, 1980. His conclusion is that 'The uniform Black English vernacular is separated from ... all ... white vernaculars ... by both categorical and variable rules specific to Black English with accompanying norms of interpretation; by differences in underlying forms; and by a large section of the lexicon with associated semantic interpretations and cultural knowledge' (1980:374). He adds (376) that 'We then find two kinds of relations between white and black speech communities: integration of the various rules, with a high level of potential recognition and common semantic interpretations, and absolute barriers that seem to demand separate grammatical description.' A critical feature of ab-

solute barriers, then, is that Whites do not recognize them or provide correct semantic interpretations for them.

A survey of approximately fifty Whites (students in linguistics courses and linguists, among others) revealed that none was able to interpret correctly the semi-auxiliary *come*, even when uttered in sentences with the appropriate intonation. This indicates that *come* is yet another item to be added to the list of absolute differences, including distributive *be* and remote *been*, that separate the Black speech community from the White. *Come* indicates that there is a greater difference between the two than previously thought. However, *come* signals a quantitative difference, rather than a qualitative one, since it is the same kind of absolute barrier as the others that have been established, involving a grammatical form in the BE tense-aspect-mood system.

Although tense-aspect systems have constituted a major focus in creole and BE studies, attention to mood systems has remained comparatively insubstantial. A major reason for the concern of creolists with tense-aspect systems is their similarity around the world, which prompted the intriguing hypothesis of Bickerton 1974 that they closely mirror an innate tense-aspect system—one based on human cognitive capacities. Attention to the tense-aspect system of BE stems from the fact that many of the radical differences which researchers have found between BE and other kinds of English have been in this system. Awareness of the existence of the BE *come* of indignation should, then, stimulate more interest in the mood systems of BE and of creoles as well—since, as Bickerton has observed (1976:183), ‘it is likely that a full and satisfactory understanding of the origin and development of Black English must await a full and satisfactory explanation of pidgins and creoles.’

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