

**A directional shift in a linguistic change:
A longitudinal study on English-speaking expatriates in Japan**

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This paper attempts to demonstrate that the direction of linguistic change in a dialect-contact environment can shift over time. This provisional analysis reports on linguistic change occurring in an English-speaking expatriate community in Japan in which dialect contact (Britain, 2018; Trudgill, 1986, 2004) among English varieties occurs by comparing corpus data from 2000 and 2001 (Hirano, 2013; Hirano & Britain, 2020) with more recent data. Speakers' choice of possessive verbs (*have got*, *have* and *got*) (Tagliamonte, 2003, 2013; Tagliamonte et al., 2010) and obligatory verbs (*must*, *have got to*, *have to* and *got to*) (Tagliamonte, 2013; Tagliamonte & D'Arcy, 2007) are examined. This longitudinal study is based on three sets of linguistic data: (1) a corpus of English-language conversations collected in 2000 from young British and American English speakers who had recently arrived in Japan [Data1], (2) a corpus collected in 2001 from the same speakers after they had lived in Japan for a year [Data2] and (3) a corpus collected in 2019 from British and Americans who had worked and lived in Japan for over ten years [Data3].

The analysis of possessive verbs extracted from the three sets of data of the British English speakers shows that they increased their use of *have got* from Data1 to Data2 but decreased their use in Data3 (55%-62%-49%). Their total use of *have* and *got* decreased in Data2 but increased in Data3 (45%-38%-51%). The American English speakers maintained their total use of *have* and *got* in Data2 but slightly decreased their use in Data3 (88%-88%-81%), while their use of *have got* remained unchanged in Data2 but increased in Data3 (12%-12%-19%). These changes suggest that the British English speakers were using more typically "British" grammatical constructions in Data2 (one year after their arrival in Japan), while the American English speakers were maintaining more typically "American" constructions a year later. The analysis of Data3 (after 10 years or longer living in Japan), however, suggests an alteration of the direction of this linguistic change. Both the British and Americans were adopting the use of verbs that have strong associations with the other nationality's style of English. A similar tendency was observed among the British English speakers in terms of the choice of verbs of obligation; Data2 from the British English speakers showed an increase in the use of more typically "British" grammatical constructions (*have got to* and *must*), but Data3 revealed an increase in the adoption of *have to* and *got to*, which have strong associations

with American English. The analysis found that the American English speakers began using *have got to*, which is a more typically “British” construction, in Data2 and even more so in Data3. These changes in the use of possessive and obligatory verbs among the three sets of data indicate that the direction of a linguistic change in a dialect-contact environment is not always unidirectional but may shift over the long term.

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