

Grammaticalization and language contact in a discourse-pragmatic change in progress: The spread of *innit* in London English

HEIKE PICHLER 

Newcastle University, UK
heike.pichler@ncl.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This variationist analysis investigates the development and spread of *innit* as an invariant tag in London English. The sociolinguistic distribution of *innit* in a socially stratified corpus of vernacular speech suggests that the form's emergence and spread were initiated and propelled system-internally through changes associated with grammaticalization. Frequency triggered phonetic reduction of *isn't it* to *innit*; loss of syntactic-semantic usage constraints and growing functional versatility enabled *innit* to seize the range of contexts and functions of grammatically-dependent tags (e.g. *didn't you*, *weren't we*), virtually ousting these from the system of negative-polarity interrogative tags. Examination of cross-linguistic data and comparisons with relevant pre- and non-contact varieties indicate multiple language contact and grammatical replication may have played an ancillary role. I flag some challenges of establishing contact effects in discourse-pragmatic change, and propose that the promotion of *innit* for invariant use was governed by its low salience and social indexicality of localness. (*Innit*, question tags, (Multicultural) London English, grammaticalization, language contact, grammatical replication)*

INTRODUCTION

English grammatically-dependent tag questions consist of (non)clausal anchors and interrogative tags comprising an auxiliary, pronoun, and, frequently, a negator. The specific form of dependent tags is determined by the syntactic-semantic properties (person, number, gender, type, tense, polarity) of the anchor subject and verb, exemplified in (1).¹ Although complex, these formation rules are robust across diachronic and synchronic varieties of vernacular British English (see, for example, Hoffmann 2006; Tottie & Hoffmann 2006, 2009; Moore & Podesva 2009; Pichler 2013; Childs 2016). However, in contemporary London English, the dramatic spread of the tag form *innit*, in (2), is disrupting this robustness. Following corpus linguistics studies of *innit* in London English, I use variationist methods to elucidate this discourse-pragmatic change in progress.

© The Author(s) 2021. Published by Cambridge University Press. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. 0047-4045/21 \$15.00

- (1) a. I mean, it's immoral, *isn't it*. (Monty, old-M-A-multi)
 b. We've been on two Mediterranean cruises, *haven't we*. (Shirley, old-F-A-mono)
 c. Cos they don't know me, *do they*. (Latif, 16-M-A-multi)
- (2) a. Potato is good for you, *innit*. (Tina, 18-F-N-multi)
 b. But next year, she'll get paid, *innit*. (Mandy, 18-F-A-mono)
 c. You get dazed, *innit*. (Alex, 16-M-N-multi)

Innit derives from *isn't it*, possibly via *ain't it*, and is spreading beyond third-person singular neuter present-tense BE-anchors (see (2a) vs. (2b,c)), suggesting its development into an invariant tag which can be appended to any anchor irrespective of grammatical properties and which may eventually oust the dependent tags in (1) (Krug 1998; Andersen 2001). I use the Linguistic Innovators Corpus (LIC), with an apparent-time span of seventy-odd years (Kerswill, Cheshire, Fox, & Torgersen 2007), to test these predictions and whether the associated changes are (i) an example of grammaticalization, 'the process by which a frequently used sequence of words or morphemes becomes automated as a single processing unit' (Bybee 2003:603), and/or (ii) a product of multilingualism, an environment that 'provides particularly good conditions for the development of invariant ['is + it' tags]' (Andersen 2001:113).

My analysis implicates grammaticalization and, possibly, multiple language contact in changes affecting several aspects of the London English system of negative-polarity interrogative tags (NEG-TAGS): variant inventory, linguistic conditioning, and functional profile. Central to these changes is the rapid spread of *innit* across social groups and linguistic contexts, at the expense of other NEG-TAG variants.

BACKGROUND

Innit (or *ennit*), pronounced [ɪnɪt] or [ɪnɪʔ], has been widely used in southern England since at least the 1970s by working-class youth of diverse ethnicity, acquiring local vernacular status in London (Cheshire 1982:61; Sutcliffe 1982:184, 1992:90, 104; Hewitt 1986:126–32). Without explaining the origins of the form *innit*, early observers attributed its spread to ethnic minority speech. Hewitt (1986:126–32) and Sutcliffe (1992:90, 104) claim use of *innit* in extended contexts, as in (2b,c), originated in British Jamaican Creole. Baumann (1996:47) and Harris (2006:100–101) link *innit* to London adolescents of South Asian descent.

Krug (1998) and Andersen (2001) provide corpus-based confirmation of *innit*'s use and spread in southern England. Andersen quantifies its distribution in the Bergen Corpus of London Teenage speech (COLT, 1993) and subsets of the British National Corpus (BNC/London, 1991–1994). Although used across social groups, Andersen finds *innit* is most frequent among females, adolescents, and individuals from lower social classes and ethnic minority backgrounds, especially when used as in (2b,c) beyond its presumed source context after third-person

singular neuter present-tense BE-anchors. The findings support Hewitt's (1986) and Sutcliffe's (1992) proposals: SOME uses of *innit* may spread from ethnic minority speech. Yet Andersen's basis for evoking language contact—multilingualism promoting invariant 'is + (-n't+)' it' tags in other contact varieties—is problematic (see Thomason & Kaufman 1988:57–59).

Despite occurrence of *innit* across anchor types, its linguistic distribution in COLT is more frequent after anchors licensing dependent tag variants that are phonologically complex (e.g. *mustn't they*), involve certain low-frequency modals (e.g. *ought she*), or share syntactic-semantic features with the tag *isn't it* (e.g. *isn't he*, *hasn't it*). Based on syntactic-semantic constraints, Andersen (2001:197) argues *innit* derived through phonetic reduction and fusion from *isn't it it*: [ɪznt it] > [ɪzn it] > [ɪn it]. He does not exclude derivation from *ain't it* via *in't it* (see Krug 1998:182), but notes this pathway is not supported by his data, where (a)*in't*-tags are infrequent and *innit* rarely occurs in *hasn't it* contexts (see derivation of *ain't* from both present-tense BE and HAVE; Cheshire 1981:366).

The sociolinguistic conditioning of *innit* in Andersen's data reveals change indicative of ongoing grammaticalization. *Innit* is predominantly used with third-person singular neuter present-tense BE-anchors by adults and by adolescents from higher classes and Hertfordshire, whereas (ethnic minority) adolescents from lower classes and London regularly use *innit* across anchor types. However, in keeping with Hopper's (1991:28–30) Principle of Persistence, whereby distribution of grammaticalizing features is constrained by their origin, *innit* is favoured after anchors licensing dependent tags with 'it', forms of BE, present-tense auxiliaries, and negative polarity. For Andersen, these patterns show *innit*'s host-class expansion, led by male and ethnic minority speakers and accompanied by pragmatic strengthening (see also Erman 1998), is gradual and ongoing. Based on distribution of third-person singular neuter present-tense BE-tags in the BNC and Bank of English Corpus (1980–), Krug (1998) predicts *innit*'s gradual spread across all anchor types to replace the canon of dependent tag variants.

Torgersen, Gabrielatos, Hoffmann, & Fox (2011) compare *innit*'s normalized frequency (= N/million words) and spread (= % *innit* users) across subsamples of COLT and LIC. They find neither frequency nor spread of *innit* differ significantly across the two datasets collected twelve years apart nor across social factors (sex, ethnicity, borough) in LIC. They conclude 'the use of *innit* seems to have stabilised [and] is no longer characteristic of a particular group of speakers' (Torgersen et al. 2011:107). While grammaticalization is often associated with frequency increase (Bybee, Pagliuca, & Perkins 1994:8; Bybee 2003:602), frequency increase may lag behind context expansion (Mair 2004). Frequencies (and spreads) are therefore not reliable means to assess whether linguistic change involving expansion of an innovating feature across linguistic contexts and social groups is ongoing.

Palacios Martínez (2015) explores the linguistic distribution of *innit* among COLT and LIC adolescents (without circumscribing the variable context). He claims that, between 1993 and 2005–2006, *innit* increased in frequency after

non-BE anchors, and with the functions ‘emphatic marker’ and ‘text organiser’. Since Palacios Martínez does not provide comparative data for *innit*’s distribution across anchor pronouns, explain the ‘text organiser’ function or consider social predictors, the nature, direction, and extent of the form’s context expansion remain nebulous. Torgersen and colleagues (2011) and Palacios Martínez (2015), then, neither refute nor validate Krug’s (1998) and Andersen’s (2001) hypotheses about the spread of *innit*. Nor do they clarify the role of grammaticalization and language contact.

Previous studies also neglect that *innit* may not be the only NEG-TAG variant undergoing change. Cheshire & Fox’s (2009) analysis of past-tense BE in LIC shows that adolescents in outer London use the tag form *weren’t it* after anchors which, in Standard English, do not license third-person singular neuter past-tense BE-tags, as in (3). Cheshire & Fox hypothesize that *weren’t it* may be grammaticalizing as an invariant tag in parts of London.

- (3) a. That’s about it, *weren’t it*. (Emily, 16-F-A-mono)
 b. Cos I stopped bunning, *weren’t it*. (Kieran, 17-M-A-mono)

A VARIATIONIST APPROACH TO INNIT

My variationist analysis of *innit* in London English differs from earlier studies in three aspects.

- (i) Recognizing that linguistic forms do not evolve in systemic isolation, I include in the locus of variation the CANON OF NEG-TAGS (see Labov’s 1972:72 ‘principle of accountability’). This situates the development of *innit* within the linguistic subsystem where it first emerges and subsequently operates, and establishes how its development is shaped by and shapes activities in the remainder of the NEG-TAG system (see Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog’s 1968:185 ‘embedding problem’).
- (ii) Because grammaticalization is socially embedded and constituted of multiple directional changes (Bybee et al. 1994:12–14; Nevalainen & Palander-Collin 2011:128), I operationalize broad social factors and MULTIPLE diagnostics of grammaticalization as (in)dependent variables for quantitative analysis, and examine their COMBINED effect on variant selection using mixed-effects modelling. Comparisons of the structure of variant choice across social groups and stages in NEG-TAG change expose the existence, directionality, and social dimension of ongoing grammaticalization (see Narrog & Heine 2011; Poplack 2011; Tagliamonte 2013).
- (iii) Applying Poplack & Levey’s (2010:406) and Thomason’s (2013) imperatives, I test contact hypotheses by examining (a) the structure and conditioning of question tags in presumed MODEL LANGUAGES, and (b) the distribution of *innit* in appropriate PRE- and NON-CONTACT VARIETIES. Cross-linguistic and cross-dialectal comparisons elucidate factors triggering and propelling observed NEG-TAG changes (see ‘actuation’ and ‘transition’ problems in Weinreich et al. 1968:184–86).

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data

The data were extracted from the 1.4-million-word Linguistic Innovators Corpus (LIC, 2005–2006; Kerswill et al. 2007), collected through sociolinguistic interviews with older adults (ages sixty-two to ninety) and adolescents (ages sixteen to nineteen) from selected multi- and mono-ethnic London boroughs. Table 1 stratifies the 110 NEG-TAG users in LIC by social predictors. (Eleven LIC speakers with below-average word counts produced zero NEG-TAGS.) Beyond borough and sex, the adolescent sample is divided by ethnicity as a broad indicator of language background (see Cheshire, Adger, & Fox 2013:54): a homogenous group of largely monolingual individuals of long-standing white British heritage (Anglos), and a heterogeneous group of individuals of ethnic minority and recent immigrant heritage who tended to regularly use a heritage language (non-Anglos). (All old speakers are Anglo.) Andersen (2001:195) concludes that *innit* originates in and spreads from ethnic minority speech. Invoking non-Anglo ethnicity as a measure of advanced *innit* use and employing the apparent-time framework (Bailey 2002), I infer evidence for ongoing NEG-TAG change from the variable's differential patterning across old Anglos, young Anglos, and young non-Anglos. Comparison of NEG-TAG distributions across ethnicity and borough flags the potential role of language contact in NEG-TAG innovations. Inclusion of speaker sex identifies which—males or females—are leading observed changes.

NEG-TAG variable (context)

Situating the evolution of *innit* in relation to the linguistic subsystem in which it originates requires (i) operationalizing *innit* as a linguistic variable and isolating the whole set of forms with which it alternates in this subsystem, and (ii) delimiting the analysis to those contexts where speakers have a choice between co-variants (Labov 1972:71–72). Implementing these requirements in discourse variation analyses is not straightforward (see inter alia Pichler 2010; Waters 2016). Like other discourse-pragmatic features, *innit* is semantically bleached and polyfunctional, hampering identification of co-variants based on semantic equivalence (Labov

TABLE 1. LIC NEG-TAG speaker sample.

	OLD ANGLO (62–90)		YOUNG ANGLO (16–19)		YOUNG NON-ANGLO (16–19)	
	female	male	female	male	female	male
Multi-ethnic boroughs	4	5	8	14	13	15
Mono-ethnic boroughs	6	6	16	17	3	3

1972:271) or functional comparability (Lavandera 1978; Dines 1980). Moreover, *innit* is referentially and syntactically optional, which complicates determining where it could have occurred but did not (Labov 1982:30). To provide an accountable analysis, I use derivational and positional criteria for defining the variable (context). I include in the analysis the canon of reduced negative-polarity interrogative tags (NEG-TAGS) derived from the linear string of components ‘(auxiliary) + (negative clitic) + (pronominal subject)’ and attached to same-speaker positive-polarity declarative anchors (see also Pichler 2013:179). This definition delimits the analysis to a finite set of variants equivalent in component parts (even if not easily identifiable in cases of advanced reduction/fusion), leftward scope over same-speaker propositions, and persistent or fading grammatical dependency on declarative anchors. It excludes constructions which, in LIC, are invariable or have different scopal properties: NEG-TAGS after negative-polarity, imperative, and interrogative anchors; and tokens in pre-finite or turn-initial positions (e.g. *One person, innit, was a bit weak*; A: *He’s got to win*. B: *In he!*; see further Pichler 2016). Positive-polarity and invariant tags (e.g. *do you, yeah*) are excluded. The former compete only marginally with *innit* in LIC. The latter constitute a category of question tags by definition unconstrained by anchor grammatical properties (Axelsson 2011:802–806), and therefore not comparable to *innit* in its initial attestations as dependent NEG-TAG. Without function as inclusion criterion, I can operationalize semantic-pragmatic shift as one of multiple quantitative measures of grammaticalization (Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008:11–12; Pichler 2010:587–91).

Extraction and exclusions

I applied a Perl script designed to exhaustively extract all full, reduced, and fused ‘(auxiliary) + (negative clitic) + (pronominal subject)’ combinations from LIC while simultaneously discarding ineligible hits (e.g. *don’t you* immediately preceded by a WH-word). I manually inspected the search results, LIC transcripts, and audio files to remove ineligible extractions (e.g. *haven’t you* immediately followed by a VP), add tokens not isolated by the script (e.g. *wunnit*), and check the transcription of NEG-TAGS and anchor materials. Following standard variationist procedure, I removed NEG-TAGS with uncertain variant form or indecipherable anchors, and those part of direct quotes and meta-linguistic commentaries. This left 2,359 NEG-TAG tokens for analysis.

Coding

To assess whether London English NEG-TAG changes can be understood with reference to grammaticalization, I operationalize as (in)dependent variables the processes jointly constituting grammaticalization and together signalling constituency change (Heine 2003:579; Beckner & Bybee 2009:39): (i) erosion and fusion, manifested as reduction or loss in phonetic substance and morpheme boundaries; (ii)

decategorialization, involving weakening or loss of syntactic-semantic constraints and extension of variants beyond source contexts; and (iii) semantic-pragmatic change, characterized by pragmatic bleaching and development of new discourse functions.²

Erosion and fusion. All NEG-TAG tokens were subjected to auditory analysis to confirm their morphophonological properties and identify the full inventory of NEG-TAG variants in LIC. For quantification, I categorize individual variants by degree of erosion and overt manifestation of unithood status. The ‘full’ category contains phonetically non-reduced variants analyzable as three distinct morphemes (auxiliary + negator + pronoun). The ‘reduced’ category contains variants derived through phonetic reduction and, occasionally, fusion from full variants. Reduction processes affect auxiliary vowels (e.g. *aren't* > *ain't*) and, if present, final consonants of auxiliary stems (e.g. *wouldn't* > *wun't*). (With both full and reduced variants, the /t/ of negators is sometimes deleted.) With exception of *innit* and consistent with other reduced variants, *in-*, *din-*, *dun-*, *win-*, and *wun-*forms in LIC (e.g. *dun we*, *wunnit*) near-categorically combine with pronouns that match the anchor subject (e.g. *He always smiles*, *in he*), suggesting they are not fixed but constructed on-line from distinct negative auxiliary- and pronoun-morphemes (see Beckner & Bybee 2009). *Innit*, by contrast, regularly occurs in contexts where it matches neither the grammatical properties of the anchor verb nor subject (e.g. *They look gangster*, *innit*), indicating its negative auxiliary- and pronoun-elements, [in] + [it], have been reanalysed as a single unit, [inɪt], that is stored and accessed holistically as one chunk (Andersen 2001:201–202; see Bybee 2003, 2010 on ‘chunking’). Because of its different constituent structure and centrality in the analysis, *innit* occupies a distinct category.

Phonetically reduced/fused forms are located further along the grammaticalization cline than non-reduced and non-fused forms (Bybee et al. 1994:107–108; Hopper & Traugott 2003:158). Occurrence of reduced variants and *innit* in LIC thus evidences that the London NEG-TAG system has been affected by phonetic erosion and fusion indicative of grammaticalization. The results section establishes the extent of these changes and their impact on the formal composition of the London English NEG-TAG system, including any ousting of variants by the predicted spread of *innit* (and, possibly, *weren't it*).

Decategorialization. To assess decategorialization, I followed Andersen (2001) and examined syntactic-semantic ties between NEG-TAGS and anchors. I distinguish four contexts: (i) paradigmatic, in (4), where choice of tag pronoun and auxiliary are constrained by anchor syntactic-semantic properties; (ii) non-paradigmatic, in (5), where the properties of tag pronoun and auxiliary mismatch those of anchor subject and verb; (iii) semi-paradigmatic, in (6), where either the properties of anchor subject or auxiliary are replicated in the tag, but

not both; and (iv) ambiguous, in (7), where NEG-TAGS' scope and anaphoric reference are unclear. Appendix B details assumptions for coding reduced and fused NEG-TAGS, and NEG-TAGS following elliptical and multi-clausal anchors or anchors with certain semi-auxiliaries. NEG-TAGS with nonstandard pronoun-auxiliary agreement (e.g. *weren't he*) were coded as if having standard agreement.

(4) Paradigmatic tokens

- a. It's been on the cards for ages, *hasn't it*. (Mark, 18-M-N-multi)
- b. They're hyped a bit as well, *in't they*. (Isabella, 17-F-N-multi)
- c. He will just get it sorted, *win he*. (Marina, 16-F-A-mono)
- d. Yeah, but football's a timed sport, *innit*. (Dean, 17-M-A-multi)

(5) Non-paradigmatic tokens

- a. You watched it black and white, *wasn't it*. (Rae, old-F-A-mono)
- b. We bought a large Fanta, *weren't it*. (Lewis, 16-M-A-mono)
- c. And I was hitting my friend, *in he*. (Freddy, 16-M-A-mono)
- d. I needed money, *innit*. (Gary, 17-M-A-multi)

(6) Semi-paradigmatic tokens

- a. More English people live down there, *aren't they*. (Bradley, 17-M-A-mono)
- b. You still think about fights, *ain't you*. (Dona, 18-F-A-mono)
- c. We are all loud, *dun't we*. (Michelle, 17-F-A-mono)
- d. Your younger brother's from a different dad, *innit*. (Alex, 16-M-N-multi)

(7) Ambiguous tokens

- a. We think they're rude, *innit*. (John, M-18-N-mono)

Used beyond their source context through violation of Standard English form-dependency rules, semi- and non-paradigmatic NEG-TAGS provide evidence of decategorialization. Ambiguous NEG-TAGS also indicate weakening anaphoric links between anchors and NEG-TAGS. Cross-tabulations, reported in the next section, isolate affected variants. I also coded semi- and non-paradigmatic NEG-TAGS for their anchor syntactic-semantic properties in order to establish evidence of persistence in their grammatical distribution (see Andersen 2001:177).

Semantic-pragmatic change. I measure semantic-pragmatic change by conceptualizing NEG-TAGS' multifunctionality as polysemy layering: the co-existence of older and newer discourse functions (Hopper 1991:22–24). I examined the function of each NEG-TAG in LIC using the time-aligned orthographic transcriptions and insights from conversation analysis (Atkinson & Heritage 1984). Utterance interpretation was guided by sequential context, ambient linguistic context (e.g. prosody, hedges), and co-participants' next-turn

responses. To minimize coder subjectivity, I conducted three independent, blind analyses at six-month intervals, followed by discussion of inconsistent codings with speakers of London English. Using these procedures, I isolated these well-established functions (see *inter alia* Tottie & Hoffmann 2006; Pichler 2013): seeking verification or confirmation of anchor propositions, mitigating negatively affective speech acts, underlining salient or obvious anchor propositions, and signalling involvement and alignment (see Appendix C for examples). I also uncovered NEG-TAG uses resembling ones described by Andersen (2001:128–32) for *innit* in COLT, where they function as interactive narrative devices. In (8), Freddy’s narrative NEG-TAGS request tacit acknowledgment of the tagged propositions, thereby focusing listeners’ attention on and guiding their interpretation of salient story materials (see further Pichler 2021). Unlike other NEG-TAG functions, the narrative function is not attested in diachronic or synchronic British English varieties outside London. Since development of discourse functions is cumulative (Traugott 2016:32), the narrative function in LIC (and COLT) evidences semantic-pragmatic context expansion.

- (8) We all got pizza *innit*. @ We beat up the pizza man. Then we took his bike *innit*, joy-riding it. And the police come *innit*. And then there’s only two policemen, and we beat up one of them, and the other one run. We took it all, his (.) walkie-talkie, (.) we got helmets. @ (..) It was funny, (man). (h) Put his jacket on and then, one boy is massive, yeah. He put all the suit on *innit*. And he stripped the geezer *innit*. Just left him there in his socks and that. [...] (Freddy, 16-M-A-multi)

I evoke NEG-TAGS’ conducive force as another measure of semantic-pragmatic change. Verification- and confirmation-seeking NEG-TAGS invite listener responses, warranting their categorization as conducive NEG-TAGS that meet Hudson’s (1975:12) sincerity conditions for interrogatives (‘The speaker believes that the hearer knows at least as well as the speaker does whether the proposition is true or false.’). Other NEG-TAG uses do not generally meet these conditions, having comparatively weakened conducive force (see Cheshire 1981; Algeo 1988). I therefore categorize them as non-conductive. (Mitigating NEG-TAGS are exempt; their conduciveness effect varies by context.) Most modern NEG-TAG functions have been attested since the sixteenth century, but seeking verification or confirmation and, by implication, soliciting listener responses are the original uses (Tottie & Hoffmann 2009:154). I therefore construe rise in non-conductive NEG-TAG uses as evidence of pragmatic bleaching or weakening of interrogative force.

Quantification

Distributional analyses examine NEG-TAGS’ social patterning along linguistic measures operationalized above to identify and trace NEG-TAG changes in progress. The programming environment R (R Core Team 2016) is used for statistical

testing. Mixed-effects logistic regressions using the *lme4* package (Bates, Mächler, Balkler, & Walker 2015) establish the statistical significance of sociolinguistic predictors on variant choice when all of them are treated simultaneously and inter-speaker variation in NEG-TAG frequency and choice is accounted for. In Tables 4–6, significant positive coefficients indicate that specified predictor levels favour application values (compared with specified baseline levels); significant negative coefficients indicate disfavoured effects.³

RESULTS

This section first compares NEG-TAGS' formal, structural, and functional variability across LIC social groups. It then presents mixed-effects logistic regressions that illuminate how ongoing spread of *innit* (and, possibly, *weren't it*) restructures the NEG-TAG system, and which social forces and linguistic processes may generate change.

Distributional results

Figure 1 partitions the full set of NEG-TAGS into the variant categories assumed to occupy different stages on the grammaticalization cline, showing their frequencies as proportions of all NEG-TAGS produced by each social group. It reveals that phonetic reduction and fusion are implicated in synchronic NEG-TAG variability, and that

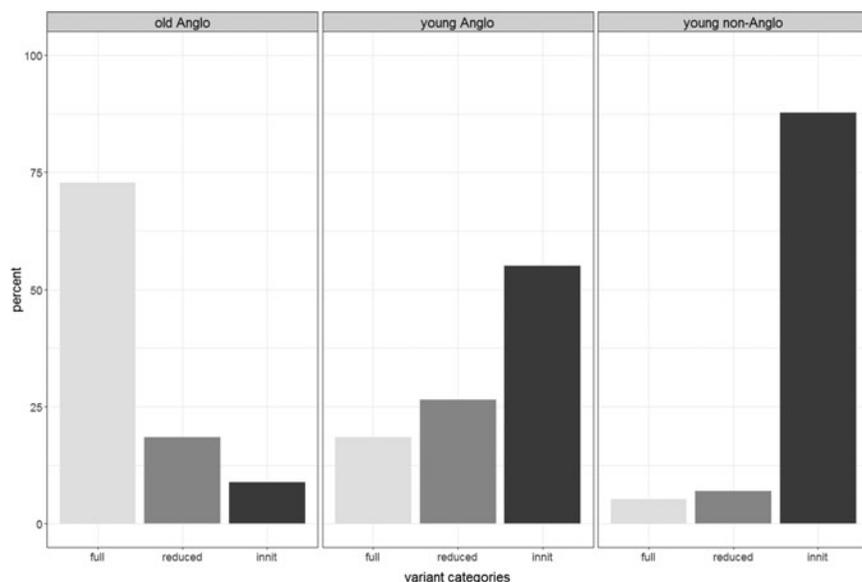


FIGURE 1. Distribution of NEG-TAG variant categories.

THE SPREAD OF *INNIT* IN LONDON ENGLISH

TABLE 2. *NEG-TAG variant inventories.*

OLD ANGLO N _{NEG-TAGS} = 543			YOUNG ANGLO N _{NEG-TAGS} = 1074			YOUNG NON-ANGLO N _{NEG-TAGS} = 742		
VARIANT	N	%	VARIANT	N	%	VARIANT	N	%
innit	48	8.8%	innit	583	54.3%	innit	651	87.7%
<i>isn't it</i>	37	6.8%	weren't it	51	4.7%	<i>in he</i>	19	2.6%
<i>didn't they</i>	35	6.5%	<i>in't they</i>	30	2.8%	<i>in they</i>	10	1.4%
<i>wasn't it</i>	33	6.1%	<i>in he</i>	27	2.5%	<i>don't they</i>	5	0.7%
<i>don't they</i>	33	6.1%	<i>din't you</i>	18	1.7%	<i>weren't he</i>	4	0.5%
<i>didn't we</i>	30	5.5%	<i>in I</i>	17	1.6%	<i>in't they</i>	4	0.5%
<i>aren't they</i>	22	4.1%	<i>in't you</i>	17	1.6%	<i>din he</i>	4	0.5%
weren't it	18	3.3%	<i>don't they</i>	16	1.5%	weren't it	3	0.4%
<i>weren't they</i>	15	2.8%	<i>in't she</i>	14	1.3%	<i>in't she</i>	3	0.4%
<i>didn't he</i>	12	2.2%	<i>dinnit</i>	13	1.2%	<i>didn't he</i>	3	0.4%
N _{variants} = 92			N _{variants} = 78			N _{variants} = 37		

competition between variant categories is unstable. We observe unidirectional change from a system dominated by full variants (old Anglos) to one where *innit* is supreme (young non-Anglos), via an intermediate system of more vigorous variation between variant categories (young Anglos) (see ‘layering’ in Hopper 1991:22–24). Ongoing reconfiguration of the NEG-TAG inventory favours *innit*, the variant located furthest along the cline of reduction and fusion.

Table 2 elucidates the reconfiguration by comparing, across social groups, frequencies of the top ten NEG-TAG variants and total numbers of individual variants used. Because old Anglos use *innit*, *isn't it*, and several other full variants with broadly comparable frequencies, *innit* does not dominate their NEG-TAG system. With *innit* assuming majority and virtual default status among young Anglos and young non-Anglos, other variants (e.g. *don't they*) recede, and both size and diversity of the NEG-TAG inventory diminish. Contrasting with Andersen’s (2001) COLT data, where *innit* has lower overall frequency than its assumed source *isn't it*, *innit* has effectively replaced *isn't it* among adolescents in LIC (N = 2 in each group). Rise of *innit* does not greatly affect the status of *ain't it* and *in't it*, alternative precursors to *innit*; they are consistently negligible or absent (N = 6, N = 7, N = 0 across social groups). Although the second most frequent variant among young Anglos, *weren't it* is marginal compared to *innit*.

For each social group, Figure 2 plots on the y-axis proportional frequencies of NEG-TAGS across the syntactic-semantic contexts listed on the x-axis. It furnishes quantitative evidence of ongoing decategorialization: transformation of a grammatically-dependent into invariant NEG-TAG system. Older Anglos’ near-categorical use of NEG-TAGS in paradigmatic contexts and robust compliance with Standard English form-dependency rules explains the fragmentation of their variant inventory. Among young Anglos, rise in semi- and non-paradigmatic NEG-TAGS, which bear

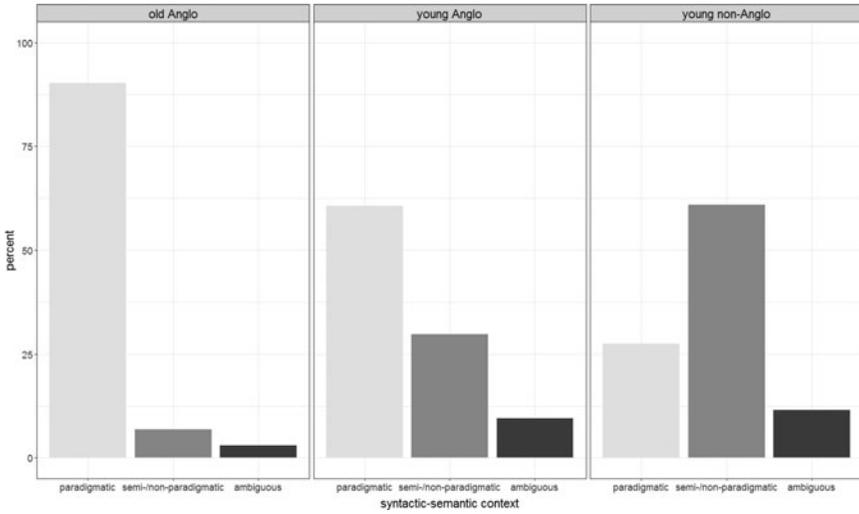


FIGURE 2. Syntactic-semantic distribution of NEG-TAGS.

TABLE 3. *Semantic-pragmatic distribution of NEG-TAGS.*

MICRO-FUNCTION	INTERROGATIVE FORCE	OLD ANGL0		YOUNG ANGL0		YOUNG NON-ANGL0	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Seek verification	conductive	66	12.1	124	11.5	50	6.7
Solicit confirmation		396	72.9	591	55.0	269	36.3
Mitigate face-threatening acts	either	18	3.3	43	4.0	47	6.3
Mark salient propositions	non-conductive	47	8.7	179	16.7	223	30.1
Underline obvious propositions		3	0.6	63	5.9	78	10.5
Signal involvement		8	1.5	25	2.3	35	4.7
Guide narrative interpretation		5	0.9	49	4.6	40	5.4

only partial or no form-dependency on anchors, reduces rates of paradigmatic NEG-TAGS. Weakening of syntactic-semantic ties between NEG-TAGS and anchors is most advanced among young non-Anglos, who predominantly use semi- and non-paradigmatic NEG-TAGS. Small rises in ambiguous tokens also indicate relaxation of anaphoric constraints governing NEG-TAG variability.

Table 3 reports NEG-TAG frequencies for each micro-function listed on the left as proportion of all NEG-TAGS produced by the social group listed on top. It shows unstable polysemy layering in the system. First, it provides quantitative confirmation of the semantic-pragmatic innovation described earlier. Use of narrative NEG-TAGS is negligible among old Anglos but slowly rises among young speakers. Second, it reveals reweighting in relative importance of established NEG-TAG functions

across social groups indicative of ongoing pragmatic bleaching. The proportional frequency of non-conductive NEG-TAGS (bottom rows) is increasing (11.8% to 30.8% to 54.4%, including contextually recoded mitigating NEG-TAGS).

Logistic regression results

The model in Table 4 fitted independent regressions of the contribution of sociolinguistic predictors to the choice of each NEG-TAG variant category across all speakers in LIC. For each category, regressions reveal significant main effects of social group, vindicating inference of ongoing change in the formal composition of the London English NEG-TAG system. Old Anglos favour full variants compared to young speakers; the probability of reduced variants significantly increases among young Anglos; young age significantly boosts the odds of *innit* compared to old age. Coefficients for borough show that—unlike full variants—*innit* is favoured in multi-ethnic boroughs, suggesting change towards increased use of *innit* proceeds at different rates across boroughs. (With Bonferroni corrections of *p*-values to $\alpha=0.0167$ to compensate for multiple independent regressions, effect of speaker sex for full variants is marginal.)

Results for main effects of linguistic factors identify *innit* as principal exponent of decategorialization and semantic-pragmatic change. *Innit*'s significant association with semi- and non-paradigmatic and non-conductive compared to paradigmatic and conducive uses establishes its routine use beyond its source context and with pragmatically bleached functions. By contrast, the distribution of full and reduced NEG-TAGS shows little evidence of syntactic-semantic spread or weakening of interrogative force. Both variant categories are favoured in paradigmatic contexts. The main full and reduced forms occasionally used in semi-/non-paradigmatic contexts are *weren't it* and *(a)in(t)*-tags (see (5)–(6) above). Yet their main users (young Anglos) follow the same trajectory of change towards increasing use of (invariant) *innit* as the leaders of change (young non-Anglos) (see Figures 3 and 4). *Weren't it* is therefore but a transient competitor for invariant status (contra Cheshire & Fox 2009). Regarding function, full variants accommodate to the advancement of non-conductive *innit* (and polyfunctional reduced variants) by developing a complementary correlation with conduciveness (see Hopper's 1991:24–25 'functional split'). The advancement of *innit*, then, impacts both probability AND conditioning of full and reduced NEG-TAGS.

Table 5 elucidates *innit*'s expansion. It reports results of parallel regressions modelling effects of sociolinguistic predictors on the probability of *innit* (versus full and reduced variants) at different development stages. Notwithstanding old Anglos' low *innit* frequency, the results show that *innit* has not entered the NEG-TAG system as a fully invariant, pragmatically bleached tag. Among old Anglos, there is no main effect of interrogative force. But with increasing frequency, *innit* first develops then loses correlation with non-conduciveness among Anglo and non-Anglo adolescents. No significant increase in the probability of *innit* beyond its source context is detected among old Anglos. Only among adolescents does *innit*

TABLE 4. *Independent mixed-effects logistic regressions testing contextual effects on the choice of NEG-TAG variant categories across all speakers in LIC.*

	FULL VARIANTS				REDUCED VARIANTS				INNT			
	ESTIMATE	STD. ERROR	Z-VALUE	N (%)	ESTIMATE	STD. ERROR	Z-VALUE	N (%)	ESTIMATE	STD. ERROR	Z-VALUE	N (%)
AIC	1654.7				1941.3				1743.7			
BIC	1706.6				1993.1				1795.5			
Log likelihood	-818.3				-961.6				-862.8			
Deviance	1636.7				1923.3				1725.7			
INTERCEPT	2.1670***	0.3669	5.906		-1.4100***	0.2425	-5.813		-3.8374***	0.3686	-10.410	
MAIN EFFECTS												
<i>Social group</i>												
old Anglo (baseline)				395 (73)				100 (18)				48 (9)
young Anglo	-2.8393***	0.3777	-7.518	202 (19)	0.7298**	0.2519	2.897	289 (27)	2.8131***	0.3673	7.659	583 (54)
young non-Anglo	-3.5859***	0.4990	-7.186	39 (5)	-0.3078	0.3318	0.928	52 (7)	3.7933***	0.4340	8.741	651 (88)
<i>Borough</i>												
mono-ethnic (baseline)				468 (40)				299 (26)				392 (34)
multi-ethnic	-0.8288*	0.3369	-2.460	168 (14)	-0.1994	0.2236	-0.892	142 (12)	0.8903**	0.2856	3.117	890 (74)
<i>Sex</i>												
female (baseline)				377 (36)				238 (23)				427 (41)
male	-0.7284*	0.3121	-2.334	259 (20)	-0.0320	0.2064	-0.155	203 (15)	0.4556	0.2655	1.716	855 (65)
<i>Synt.-semantic context</i>												
paradigmatic (baseline)				581 (43)				379 (28)				393 (29)
semi-/non-paradigmatic	-1.4250***	0.2098	-6.791	41 (5)	-1.2340***	0.1706	-7.234	60 (8)	1.8091***	0.1544	11.715	699 (87)
ambiguous	-1.5702***	0.3409	-4.605	14 (7)	-3.5642***	0.7116	-5.009	2 (1)	3.1861***	0.3356	9.493	190 (92)
<i>Interrogative force</i>												
conductive (baseline)				569 (36)				343 (22)				656 (42)
non-conductive	-0.8474***	0.1832	-4.626	67 (9)	-0.0938	0.1483	-0.632	98 (12)	0.6519***	0.1496	4.357	626 (79)
RANDOM EFFECTS												
Speaker (intercept)	VARIANCE	SD			VARIANCE	SD			VARIANCE	SD		
	1.261	1.123			0.434	0.659			0.9789	0.9864		
	Observations: 2359; Groups: 110				Observations: 2359; Groups: 110				Observations: 2359; Groups: 110			
	Overall percentage: 27%				Overall percentage: 19%				Overall percentage: 54%			

TABLE 5. Independent mixed-effects logistic regressions testing contextual effects on the choice of innit across social groups in LIC.

	OLD ANGL0				YOUNG ANGL0				YOUNG NON-ANGL0			
	ESTIMATE	STD. ERROR	Z-VALUE	N (%)	ESTIMATE	STD. ERROR	Z-VALUE	N (%)	ESTIMATE	STD. ERROR	Z-VALUE	N (%)
AIC	285.8				1077.2				378.0			
BIC	315.8				1112.1				405.6			
Log likelihood	-135.9				-531.6				-183.0			
Deviance	271.8				1063.2				366.0			
INTERCEPT	-3.5573***	0.6368	-5.586		-0.1096	0.2683	-4.086		0.2654	0.4057	0.654	
MAIN EFFECTS												
<i>Borough</i>												
mono-ethnic (baseline)				21 (6)				306 (43)				65 (84)
multi-ethnic	1.2761	0.7317	1.744	27 (16)	0.9447**	0.3520	2.683	277 (76)	/	/	/	586 (88)
<i>Sex</i>												
female (baseline)				24 (8)				244 (45)				159 (82)
male	0.2611	0.7250	0.360	24 (10)	0.4867	0.3376	1.442	339 (64)	0.6589	0.5050	1.305	492 (90)
<i>Synt.-semantic context</i>												
paradigmatic (baseline)				35 (7)				230 (35)				128 (63)
semi-/non-paradigmatic	0.6487	0.5101	1.272	7 (19)	1.6696***	0.1973	8.461	254 (82)	2.6712***	0.3307	8.077	438 (97)
ambiguous	2.2387***	0.6784	3.300	6 (38)	3.5002***	0.4899	7.144	99 (95)	3.7530***	1.0187	3.684	85 (99)
<i>Interrogative force</i>												
conductive (baseline)				43 (9)				333 (45)				280 (81)
non-conductive	-0.6686	0.5572	-1.200	5 (8)	0.8474***	0.1870	4.532	250 (76)	0.5042	0.3155	1.598	371 (94)
RANDOM EFFECTS												
Speaker (intercept)	VARIANCE	SD			VARIANCE	SD			VARIANCE	SD		
	1.444	1.201			0.8954	0.9463			0.736	0.8579		
	Observations: 543; Groups: 21				Observations: 1074; Groups: 55				Observations: 742; Groups: 34			
	Overall percentage: 9%				Overall percentage: 54%				Overall percentage: 88%			

significantly expand into semi- and non-paradigmatic contexts. Throughout, *innit* is favoured in ambiguous contexts, suggesting perhaps that scopal under-specification is an inherent characteristic. The data, then, support an interpretation of semantic-pragmatic and syntactic-semantic change in progress. Growing functional versatility and weakening syntactic-semantic constraints promote *innit* in the NEG-TAG system.

Figure 3 inspects the syntactic-semantic distribution of *innit*. Bars along the y-axes show its proportional frequency out of all NEG-TAGS appended to anchors that in Standard English license the tag pronouns and tag auxiliaries on the x-axes. Among old Anglos, *innit* is virtually restricted to contexts constituting or

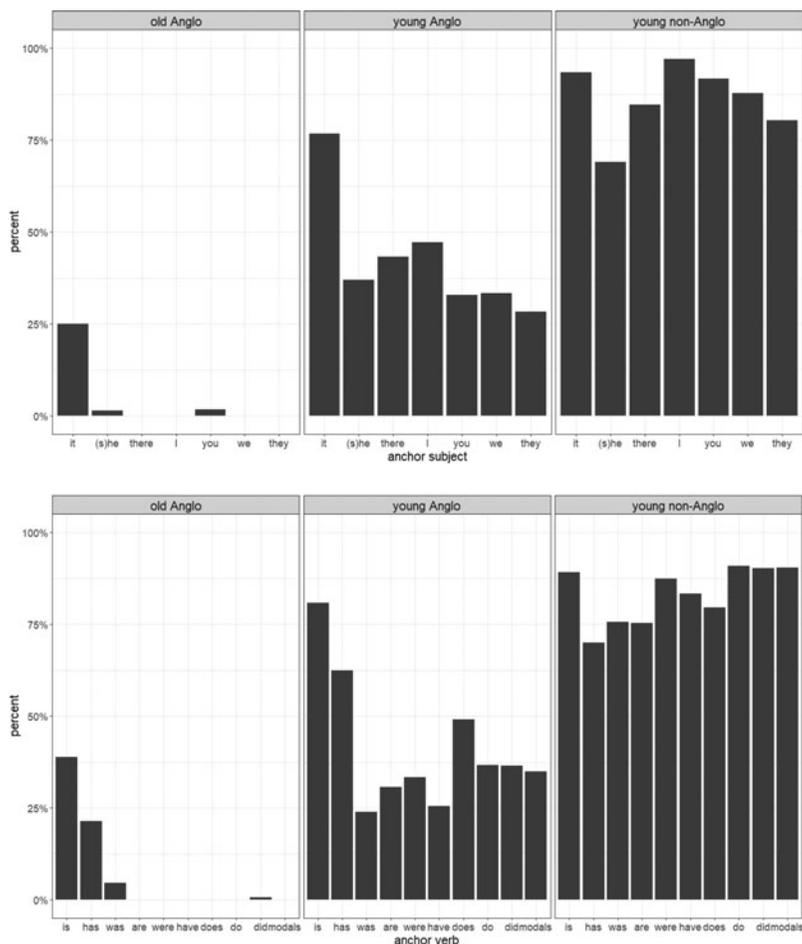


FIGURE 3. Frequency of *innit* across tag pronouns and auxiliaries licensed by Standard English tag formation rules. Results for *had* are not shown due to limited data ($N \leq 1$ across groups). Other pronoun and auxiliary contexts occur at $N \geq 13$.

resembling its source: *it*, (*s*)*he*; *is*, *has*, *was*. Among young Anglos, *innit* spreads across available contexts, its proportional weight exceeding 25% across most pronouns and auxiliaries. Yet as in Andersen's (2001) COLT data, there is evidence of persistence (see Hopper 1991:28–30). *Innit* is most frequent in contexts fully or partially sharing grammatical properties of its source: *it*; *is*, *has*, *does*; and it is significantly favoured with *it* and *is* over other pronouns and auxiliaries ($\chi^2(1) = 148.78$, $p < 0.0001$; $\chi^2(1) = 173.65$, $p < 0.0001$). These constraints vanish among young non-Anglos, where *innit* exceeds rates of 70% across contexts and is not significantly favoured with third-person singular pronouns or *is* ($\chi^2(1) = 3.27$, $p = 0.07$; $\chi^2(1) = 1.93$, $p = 0.16$). As predicted by Krug (1998:171), *innit* has expanded 'to all persons, all verbs (in all tenses) and all subjects' (see also Andersen 2001:203). Old Anglos use *innit* largely as grammatically-dependent, young non-Anglos as fully decategorized invariant tag.⁴

Returning to Table 5, there is no detected association of *innit* with male speakers in any social group. Sex effects uncovered by Andersen (2001) in COLT have been neutralized. The main effect of borough among young Anglos and differences in variant conditioning between young Anglos and young non-Anglos in Table 5 warrant closer inspection.

Table 6 summarizes results of a regression model fitting main, interaction, and random effects on the probability of *innit* among the LIC adolescents grouped by ethnicity AND borough. (Data from non-Anglo adolescents in mono-ethnic boroughs were not fitted due to poor sample stratification; see Table 1.) The main effects reveal both Anglo and non-Anglo adolescents in multi-ethnic boroughs significantly favour *innit* over Anglo adolescents in mono-ethnic boroughs. Results for interaction effects reveal significant interactions between adolescent group and linguistic predictors, visualized in Figure 4. (Ambiguous tokens were modelled but not plotted.) The odds of *innit* in semi- and non-paradigmatic contexts significantly increase among adolescents in multi-ethnic compared to mono-ethnic boroughs; this increase is sharper for non-Anglos than Anglos. The plot also suggests the interaction effect between adolescent group and interrogative force is driven by young Anglos in mono-ethnic boroughs, who use *innit* for conducive functions with lower frequencies than adolescents in multi-ethnic boroughs. All adolescents have higher *innit* frequencies with non-conductive compared to conducive functions, but overall these frequencies are higher among those from multi-ethnic than mono-ethnic boroughs.

In sum, although *innit* evinces evidence of syntactic-semantic and semantic-pragmatic change across ALL young speakers in LIC, the changes are more advanced in multilingual environments (multi-ethnic boroughs) and among multilingual speakers (young non-Anglos). The data provide a basis for pursuing a contact hypothesis for the spread of *innit* (see Heine & Kuteva 2005), and for adding invariant *innit* to the catalogue of innovations characterizing Multicultural London English (MLE) (Cheshire, Kerswill, Fox, & Torgersen 2011). My results contradict Torgersen and colleagues' (2011): the use of *innit* has NOT stabilized, and its proportional frequency and linguistic distribution DO continue to differentiate social groups.

TABLE 6. *Mixed-effects logistic regressions testing contextual effects on the choice of innit among adolescents in LIC.*

	ESTIMATE	STD. ERROR	Z-VALUE	N (%)
AIC	1389.5			
BIC	1465.9			
Log likelihood	-680.7			
Deviance	1361.5			
INTERCEPT	-1.1661***	0.2582	-4.516	
MAIN EFFECTS				
<i>Adolescent group</i>				
Anglo mono-ethnic boroughs (baseline)				306 (43)
Anglo multi-ethnic boroughs	1.0253*	0.3993	2.568	277 (76)
non-Anglo multi-ethnic boroughs	1.5197***	0.4009	3.791	586 (88)
<i>Sex</i>				
female (baseline)				368 (53)
male	0.5954*	0.2934	2.029	801 (77)
<i>Syntactic-semantic context</i>				
paradigmatic (baseline)				340 (41)
semi-/non-paradigmatic	1.3697***	0.2392	5.726	659 (91)
ambiguous	4.0699***	0.7545	5.394	170 (97)
<i>Interrogative force</i>				
conductive (baseline)				595 (56)
non-conductive	1.1477***	0.2315	4.958	574 (85)
INTERACTION EFFECTS				
<i>Adolescent group:syntactic-semantic context</i>				
Anglo mono-ethnic boroughs:paradigmatic (baseline)				162 (31)
Anglo multi-ethnic boroughs:semi-/non-paradigmatic	0.8903*	0.4362	2.041	161 (92)
non-Anglo multi-ethnic boroughs:semi-/non-paradigmatic	1.5658***	0.4382	3.573	405 (97)
Anglo multi-ethnic boroughs:ambiguous	-1.3162	0.9959	-1.322	48 (94)
non-Anglo multi-ethnic boroughs:ambiguous	-0.4556	1.2714	-0.358	71 (99)
<i>Adolescent group:interrogative force</i>				
Anglo mono-ethnic boroughs:conductive (baseline)				194 (35)
Anglo multi-ethnic boroughs:non-conductive	-0.9194*	0.4005	-2.296	138 (81)
non-Anglo multi-ethnic boroughs:non-conductive	-0.7799	0.4088	-1.908	324 (93)
RANDOM EFFECTS				
Speaker (intercept)	VARIANCE	SD		
	0.8644	0.9298		
Observations: 1739; Groups: 83				
Overall percentage: 67%				

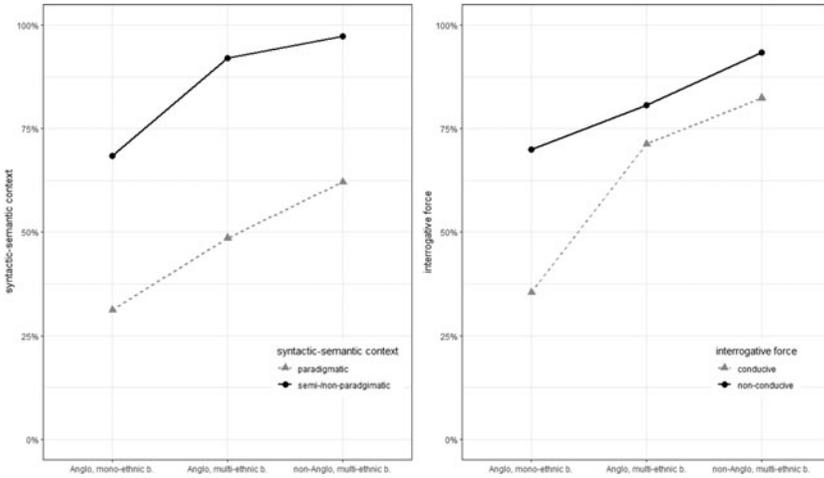


FIGURE 4. Interaction effects on the choice of *innit* among adolescents in LIC.

DISCUSSION

This section examines the mechanisms generating and diffusing London English NEG-TAG innovations, and explores factors promoting the selection of *innit* for linguistic context expansion.

Grammaticalization

The previous section demonstrated that rise of *innit* within and beyond third-person singular neuter present-tense BE-anchor contexts and across macro-functions is driven by interaction of phonetic reduction and fusion, decategorialization, and semantic-pragmatic shift. These changes are associated collectively with grammaticalization (but see n. 2), and provide multilayered evidence that *innit* has become ‘automated as a single processing unit’ (Bybee 2003:603).

Evolution of the London NEG-TAG system is in accordance with the unidirectionality hypothesis of grammaticalization: the tendency for formal, structural, and functional changes to proceed in one direction (Hopper & Traugott 2003:99–139). Extrapolated from my results, the multilevel pathway in (9) shows that the changes affecting the system follow universal tendencies of loss and expansion (Bybee et al. 1994; Himmelmann 2004), viz: (i) the reduction of phonetic substance and loss of morpheme boundaries; (ii) the loss of form-dependency constraints with attendant host-class expansion; and (iii) the acquisition of new polysemies and weakening of interrogative meaning components with corresponding semantic-pragmatic context expansion.

- (9) non-reduced/non-fused > reduced/fused
 grammatically-dependent > invariant
 multifunctional > more multifunctional
 conducive > non-conductive

These developments are neither new nor unique to London English. Diachronic studies of question tags in sixteenth- to twentieth-century drama texts show the system has undergone semantic-pragmatic change from the start (Hoffmann 2006; Tottie & Hoffmann 2009). Apparent-time studies of synchronic speech data reveal phonetic erosion and host-class expansion of NEG-TAGS in contemporary northern British Englishes (Pichler 2013; Childs 2016). What is striking is the interdependence, speed, and magnitude of NEG-TAG developments in London. They affect ALL dimensions of NEG-TAG use—form, structure, and function—, radically transforming the system within the seventy-odd years covered by LIC. But the different changes are intimately connected only for the diachronically and synchronically most frequent auxiliary-pronoun combination in NEG-TAGS: ‘is + it’ (see inter alia Krug 1998:152–53; Hoffmann 2006:42–43; Tottie & Hoffmann 2006:296, 2009:139; Pichler 2013:198). The findings thus confirm that grammaticalization need not affect all variants of a variable homogeneously (Bybee & Torres Cacoullos 2009).

The findings also suggest the system in which an innovating variant is embedded and the innovating variant itself need not move in the same direction throughout the course of semantic-pragmatic change. The London NEG-TAG system is shifting from conduciveness to non-conduciveness. The macro-functional distribution of *innit* across social groups in LIC displays seemingly counter-directional changes: weakly conducive > non-conductive > weakly non-conductive. This may be because formal reconfiguration of the NEG-TAG system proceeds faster than its semantic-pragmatic shift. Among LIC young non-Anglos, *innit* far outnumbers full and reduced NEG-TAG variants, but the NEG-TAG variable as such performs conducive and non-conductive functions with roughly similar frequencies. With almost no full variants in young non-Anglos’ repertoire, the functional split between full variants and *innit* (noted in Table 4) cannot be maintained, and *innit* must subsume conducive uses (see Hopper’s 1991:22 ‘specialization’).

Language contact

London English NEG-TAG development, then, is consistent with a grammaticalization model. But what triggered it? What, if any, is the role of language contact?

Comparisons with relevant pre- and non-contact data from LIC old Anglos and individuals in cotemporaneous northern England corpora undermine the idea of language contact as trigger. LIC old Anglos were born in the 1930s and grew up as monolingual speakers in mono-ethnic neighbourhoods; multilingualism was not part of their early sociolinguistic histories (Cheshire et al. 2013:66–67). Individuals recorded in the northern communities of Hull, Berwick-upon-Tweed, and

Tyneside share limited experience of everyday multilingualism; at the time of data collection, their communities were virtually mono-ethnic white British (Cheshire, Kerswill, & Williams 2005:144; Pichler 2013:211; Childs 2016:25–27). Assuming adult linguistic stability and rejecting a south-north diffusion hypothesis for *innit*,⁵ LIC old Anglos' and northern individuals' regular use of *innit* in paradigmatic and, occasionally, semi- and non-paradigmatic contexts is inconsistent with inference of contact-propelled change.

The emergence of the form *innit* and its spread through the NEG-TAG system must have been triggered by a force not restricted to contact settings: frequency. Owing to high incidence of use in a sequence, the morphemes 'is + -n't + it' have undergone phonetic reduction ([ɪznt it] > [ɪzn it] > [ɪn it]) and have been reanalysed as the single processing unit or chunk *innit* ([ɪnit]) (Andersen 2001:196–201; see Beckner & Bybee 2009; Bybee 2010). Unlike its source variant *isn't it*, *innit* is not immediately identifiable as a reduced interrogative clause that is composed of the NEG-TAG building blocks 'auxiliary + negator + pronoun'. Through loss of analysability and compositionality, *innit* has gained autonomy from its source. The growing opacity of *innit*'s internal constituency (relative to *isn't it*) has weakened its syntactic-semantic co-dependency on third-person singular neuter present-tense BE-anchors and induced spread across anchor contexts. In turn, syntactic-semantic context expansion, together with loss of interrogative transparency, have produced new polysemies. Devoid of syntactic-semantic constraints and transparent interrogative structure, *innit* has spread to past-tense narratives where it developed new non-conductive functions.

An internal causation scenario explains the distribution of *innit* in the non-contact varieties in northern England. In London English, too, progression of change is compatible with a system-internal evolution of the NEG-TAG system. But this does not explain the timing, social embedding, and unprecedented scale of NEG-TAG changes in London. Changes incipient among LIC old Anglos gained momentum in the late twentieth century in boroughs that experienced increased immigration and linguistic diversification, and among adolescents with probable regular exposure to, or even use of, languages other than English in their families and neighbourhoods (see Cheshire et al. 2013:53–54, 66–67). This calls for consideration of language contact.

Language and dialect contact may have played an ancillary role in the development of the form *innit*. Hewitt (1986) and Sutcliffe (1992) claim (non-paradigmatic) *innit* has its origins in British Jamaican Creole. While not listing *innit* or *ennit* in their dictionaries of Jamaican and Caribbean English, Cassidy & Le Page (1967:235) and Allsopp (1996:18, 304) note the Creole pronunciation [ɪn] for 'is' and 'ain't'. Although '[ɪn] + pronoun' is a common tag variant in British Englishes (see inter alia Cheshire 1981:370; Pichler 2013:183; Childs 2016:176), the dictionaries weakly support the idea of Jamaican or Caribbean English influence on the development of the [ɪn]-element in [ɪnit] in southern England varieties.

More compelling, though inconclusive, evidence is available to propose that language and dialect contact may have reinforced the syntactic-semantic spread of *innit*. Table 7 provides an overview of question tags in languages and non-British varieties of English widely spoken in the multi-ethnic boroughs of LIC adolescents (see Baker & Mohieldeen 2000); it includes tags in two ambient creoles and in heritage languages (passively) spoken by frequent ($N \geq 10$) NEG-TAG users in LIC (Torgersen, pc, February 28, 2017).⁶ With the exception of Gujarati and Yoruba, which have exclusively polarity-dependent invariant tags, all languages in Table 7 have neutral invariant tags with no semantic, lexical, or syntactic usage constraints. Only Afrikaans, Hindi-Urdu, and Swahili also have dependent tags with more or less complex grammatical or lexical usage restrictions. All contact dialects have invariant tags, sometimes in addition to lower-frequency dependent tags (not listed). Because invariant tags prevail cross-linguistically (Axelsson 2011) and second-language learners tend to ignore tag characteristics not found in their invariant tag-dominated heritage languages (Kolehmainen, Meriläinen, & Riionheimo 2014:17), ambient learner varieties are likely also characterized by invariant tag usage. Only in ambient varieties of British English are dependent tags expected to be more robust than invariant tags (e.g. *yeah, right*) (Algeo 1988:175; Stenström, Andersen, & Hasund 2002:185–87). Assuming that the invariant tags listed in Table 7 are known, understood, or used by adolescents in multi-ethnic boroughs, their occurrence may have challenged the status of grammatically-dependent English NEG-TAGS. How?

Based on structural, positional and functional similarities, (non-Anglo) adolescents in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods may have established a cognitive link between invariant tags in Table 7 and dependent tags dominant in the local variety of English. This ‘interlingual identification’ (Weinreich 1968:7–8) may have motivated grammatical replication, whereby speakers use linguistic resources from one language to create new usage patterns based on the model(s) of (an)other language(s) or dialect(s); crucially, new usage patterns are not replicated *in toto* but through universal strategies of grammaticalization (Heine & Kuteva 2005). (Non-Anglo) adolescents in multi-ethnic boroughs may have recruited *innit*, a minor use pattern already available in London English. On the model of invariant tags available in the ambient multilingual environment, they may have strengthened a trend embryonic in the old Anglos’ pre-contact variety and gradually extended the use of *innit* across anchor contexts, thereby developing it into a major use pattern. (Grammatical replication, if implicated, would accelerate, not alter, the manner of change; Heine & Kuteva 2005:80.) The social distribution of *innit* in LIC mirrors the stages leading from minor to major use pattern in grammatical replication (Heine & Kuteva 2005:46): at Stage 0, old Anglos use *innit* relatively infrequently, in restricted syntactic-semantic contexts, and with strong interrogative force; at Stage 1, young Anglos (in mono-ethnic boroughs) use *innit* with increased frequency, in new syntactic-semantic contexts, and with reduced interrogative force; finally, at Stage 2, young non-Anglos (and young Anglos in multi-ethnic boroughs) use

TABLE 7. *Question tags in frequent contact languages and dialects.*

CONTACT LANGUAGE	TAG FORMS	GLOSS	USAGE CONSTRAINTS
Afrikaans (Donaldson 1993:417; van der Wal, pc, May 29, 2018; Biberauer, pc, May 31, 2018)	<i>is dūt (nie), issit</i>	‘is it (NEG)’	
	<i>nè</i> <i>nie waar nie</i> <i>of hoe</i> anchor PRON + anchor AUX (+ NEG)	NEG ‘NEG true NEG’ ‘or how’	polarity-dependent (+/-) polarity-dependent (-/+) grammatically- and polarity-dependent (- / +, + / -)
Akan (Twi) (Marfo, pc, Oct. 26, 2018)	<i>ɛ-n-yɛ saa</i>	‘it-NEG-do that’	
Bengali (Moravcsik 1971:142; Thompson 2012:201–202; van der Wurff, pc, April 18, 2017)	<i>na</i> <i>taī na(ki)</i>	NEG ‘it-EMPH NEG(+Q)’	
	<i>haih-mhaih a</i> <i>dāk-mdāk a</i> <i>hōh-mhōu</i> <i>le</i>	‘be-NEG-be SFP’ ‘okay-NEG-okay SFP’ ‘good-NEG-good’ Q	
French (Morin 1973:97; Cuenca 1997:13)	<i>n’est-ce pas</i> <i>pas vrai</i>	‘NEG is it NEG’ ‘NEG true’	
	<i>non</i> <i>oui, si</i> <i>ne</i>	NEG ‘yes’ NEG	polarity-dependent (+/-) polarity-dependent (-/+)
Gujarati (Moravcsik 1971:143; Doctor 2004:89; Joshi, pc, Nov. 11, 2018)	<i>kharu</i> <i>kharo</i>	‘true-N’ ‘true-M-SG’	polarity-dependent (+/-) polarity-dependent (+/+)
	<i>na</i> <i>hai na</i> anchor verb (+ <i>na</i>)	NEG.Q ‘BE.3SG.PRES NEG.Q’ NEG.Q	lexically-dependent

Continued

Table 7. *Continued.*

CONTACT LANGUAGE	TAG FORMS	GLOSS	USAGE CONSTRAINTS
Igbo (Emenanjo 2015:400)	<i>ọ bughī ya</i> <i>ọ bukwa yā</i>	‘it NEG PRON’ ‘it also PRON’	
Maltese (Borg & Azzopardi-Alexander 1997:4–5)	<i>hu(x)</i> <i>hux hekk</i>	‘PRON.3M.SG(-NEG)’ ‘PRON.3M.SG-NEG SO’	
Moroccan Arabic (Holmberg, pc, Aug. 25, 2018)	<i>ulla la</i> <i>ulla hiya</i>	‘OF NEG’ ‘or she’	
Punjabi (Moravcsik 1971:144; Bhatia 1993:6–7)	<i>na</i>	NEG	
Somali (Saeed 1999:205)	<i>sòw má aha</i>	‘Q NEG BE-NEG’	
Spanish (Gómez González 2014; Bueno-Amaro, pc, Dec. 9, 2018)	<i>no (es verdad)</i> <i>verdad (que no)</i> <i>o no</i> <i>o sí</i> <i>(o) qué</i> <i>eh</i>	‘NEG (is true)’ ‘truth (that NEG)’ ‘OF NEG’ ‘OF POS’ ‘(or) what’	polarity-dependent (+/–) polarity-dependent (–/+)
Swahili (Moravcsik 1979:142, 144; Marten, pc, June 3, 2018)	<i>kweli</i> <i>eh</i> <i>siyo</i> <i>si ndiyo</i>	‘truly’ ‘NEG.COP referential concord’ ‘NEG.COP emphatic COP referential concord’	concord- and polarity-dependent (+/–) concord- and polarity-dependent (+/+)
Turkish (Göksel & Kerslake 2005:289, Duman, pc, April 23, 2020)	<i>değil mi</i> <i>öyle mi</i> <i>tamam mi</i> <i>(cô) phâi/đung</i> <i>(vây) không</i>	‘NEG INT’ ‘DEM INT’ ‘okay INT’ ‘(yes) right/correct (so) NEG’	
Yoruba (Moravcsik 1971:140)	<i>àbí</i>	‘or’	polarity-dependent (+/–)

Continued

Table 7. *Continued.*

CONTACT DIALECT	COMMON <u>INVARIANT</u> TAG FORMS	USAGE CONSTRAINTS
East African English (Schmied 2006:199)	<i>isn't it</i>	
Indian English (Hoffmann, Blass, & Mukherjee 2017; Parviainen 2016:106)	<i>isn't it</i> no	polarity-biased (+/-)
Jamaican Creole (Moravcsik 1971:141; Patrick 2004:418, pc, Aug. 29, 2018)	duont no <i>yaa</i> <i>iing</i> 'yes' innit	polarity-biased (+/+) polarity-biased (+/+)
London Jamaican (Hewitt 1986:128–32)		
Mauritian Creole (Baker 1972:116)	noh	
Nigerian English (Alo & Mesthrie 2004:817)	<i>isn't it</i>	
South African English (Chisanga & Kamwangamalu 1997:96)	<i>is it</i> nè	
Trinidad English (Wilson, Westphal, Hartmann, & Deuber 2017:734–35)	nah, not so <i>(all) right, ok, eh</i> <i>yeah, yes</i> <i>or what</i>	
West African English (Täuschel 2014:27–28)	<i>is it</i> <i>isn't it</i>	

nnit with very high frequency, across the range of syntactic-semantic contexts, and with different degrees of interrogative force. The outcome of this sequence replicates a usage pattern prevailing in assumed model languages and dialects: application of ONE invariant tag form in ALL grammatical contexts.

Language contact may also have boosted semantic-pragmatic developments. Use of English narrative NEG-TAGS (see (8) above), for example, seems limited currently to London. Gorla (2016) finds that in bilingual Gibraltar, the Spanish tag *no*, which does not otherwise serve an emphatic function, underwent semantic-pragmatic context expansion on the English model. Although English invariant tags also regularly occur in narratives (Stenström et al. 2002:165–191; Pichler 2021), pragmatic borrowing, whereby linguistic material ‘takes on new discourse functions as a result of external influence’ (Andersen 2014:18), may have reinforced the development of *innit* and other NEG-TAG variants as narrative devices in London. Available sources only attribute agreement-seeking functions to tags found in the frequent heritage languages and dialects in Table 7. But narrative tag functions have been reported for less widely used contact languages: Tamil, Mohawk, and Portuguese (Herring 1991; Mithun 2012; Gómez González 2014).

Contact would shape the course of change. In the system-internal scenario I propose, there is a strong causal and temporal link between processes of change. Phonological changes are primary and cause syntactic-semantic context expansion; phonological and syntactic-semantic change are together responsible for semantic-pragmatic change. In a multiple causation scenario involving contact, however, syntactic-semantic spread of *innit* is not chiefly enabled by loss of analysability and compositionality. Instead, context expansion is driven by recruitment of *innit* for grammatical replication. Depending on the scenario, frequency increase of *innit* is either the source or by-product of context expansion.

Social diffusion

Irrespective of language contact effects, innovations in *innit* usage are led by speakers of MLE—(non-)Anglo adolescents in multi-ethnic boroughs. How do these innovations diffuse to mono-ethnic boroughs? Regression analyses (not shown) revealed the odds of *innit* increase significantly among: (i) young Anglos in mono-ethnic boroughs with the most ethnically mixed friendship networks (compared to those with exclusively Anglo networks), and (ii) adolescents commuting from multi-ethnic to mono-ethnic boroughs for college (compared to those both studying and living in mono-ethnic boroughs). These correlations indicate regular interethnic contact and everyday mundane mobility may constitute important channels for the social diffusion of *innit* innovations across ethnicities and boroughs (see also Cheshire, Fox, Kerswill, & Torgersen 2008). This would explain why *innit* is more frequent, less grammatically constrained, and more functionally versatile in mono-ethnic London boroughs than in the mono-ethnic northern locales mentioned

earlier. The social forces promoting system-internal tendencies in mono-ethnic London boroughs are likely rarer or altogether absent in northern England.

Selection of innit

Following Cheshire and colleagues (2011), I invoke Mufwene's (2001) 'feature pool' and Siegel's (1997) selection constraints to account for the promotion of *innit* in the London English NEG-TAG system. Cheshire and colleagues propose that in multi-ethnic boroughs, the high linguistic diversity and largely unguided acquisition of English within ethnically mixed adolescent peer groups produce a feature pool. It contains a complex and heterogeneous set of co-variants drawn from different input varieties spoken in the ambient multilingual environment; in the pool, co-variants compete with and reinforce each other (Mufwene 2001:4–6). Multiple factors such as frequency and unmarkedness conspire to constrain selection from the feature pool (Siegel 1997:139–43). The selection may give rise to new variants or to increased and modified use of original input variants, including ones infrequent in the local variety before language and dialect contact began or intensified (Mufwene 2001:4–6).

Table 7 lists input languages and dialects to the 'tag feature pool' in relevant multi-ethnic boroughs. With the exception of Yoruba, all contribute at least one tag form that comprises a negative particle or affix (in bold non-italics); most of these are neutral invariant tags (see final column). Many also contribute forms that comprise a third-person singular neuter pronoun and/or form of BE (in bold italics); these are often (reduced) strings of 'is (+ -n't) + it' (see final set). Traditional London English contributes dependent tags skewed towards 'is + it'. We may assume, then, the 'tag feature pool' is heavily biased towards variants that contain 'is + it', have negative polarity, and/or are invariant. With *innit* combining multiple or all of these properties in two input varieties, its selection from the feature pool is likely governed by frequency, low salience, unmarkedness, and economy (see Siegel 1997:139; De Smet 2012:608). *Innit* derives from the feature pool's most common auxiliary-negator-pronoun combination and is commonly used as a dependent tag in one input variety (traditional London English) and as an invariant tag in another (London Jamaican). Moreover, it lacks analysability and compositionality vis-à-vis *isn't it* and other NEG-TAG variants. Thus, the selection of *innit* will have been promoted by its gradual spread across social groups and anchor contexts constituting a lowly salient and, by implication, favoured innovation. It extends a pattern already latent in some input varieties; and because of the form's reduced transparency it constitutes a relatively covert rule violation. (Absent detailed descriptions of the functionality of other tags in the feature pool, we can only speculate that *innit*'s selection may have also been affected by its greater multifunctionality; see Hlavac 2006.)

Since the gradual expansion of *innit* is relatively unobtrusive, it is favoured over alternative scenarios, viz: (i) spread of a less frequent and more marked

auxiliary-negator-pronoun combination (e.g. *weren't it*); or (ii) wholesale adoption of a fully invariant but lexically marked tag form from a contact language (e.g. Cantonese *hóh-mhóu*). Due to their pragmatic detachability (Matras 2009), tag forms get routinely borrowed in language contact situations (see, for example, Bentahila & Davies 1983; Gorla 2016). In London, tag variants from contact languages may be rejected over *innit* because they index ethnic minority group membership or non-localness (see also Cheshire et al. 2011:167–68). *Innit* was at first also related to minority status (black Caribbean and, possibly, South Asian heritage). It diffused across adolescent groups, possibly because of its covert prestige as a racialized linguistic form (see Hollington & Nassenstein 2017), and it became delinked from racial or ethnic and relinked to place identity (Hewitt 1986:132; see Aarsæther, Marzo, Nistov & Ceuleers's 2015 'space appropriation'). Because, unlike other variants in the feature pool, it indexes localness, London adolescents may have selected *innit* for expansion because it helps them foreground their identity as Londoners.

Innit's indexicality of localness, use as an invariant tag in one input variety, and unmarked status in the NEG-TAG feature pool may also have boosted its adoption by bilingual and second-language speakers. Within the NEG-TAG feature pool, *innit* is unmarked in terms of lexical components ('is + it'), polarity (negative), and usage restrictions (invariant). In language contact settings, bilingual and second-language speakers tend to adopt unmarked rather than marked features (Thomason 2013:43–44) and replace dependent with invariant tags (Bhaya Nair 1991:213). These speakers may promote selection and expansion of *innit* in a drive towards economy in the NEG-TAG system, that is, to reduce the complexity and informational redundancy inherent in a grammatically-dependent system. The form's social indexicality would allow them to do so without outing themselves as bilingual or second-language users.

CONCLUSION

My variationist analysis of LIC reveals the ongoing transformation of the London NEG-TAG system via successive micro-changes in the sociolinguistic conditioning of co-variants. A system characterized by diversity of full NEG-TAG variants that are grammatically dependent and largely conducive is being supplanted by one that is increasingly non-conductive and dominated by invariant use of one variant: *innit*. I attribute these developments to formal, structural, and functional changes associated with grammaticalization, triggered by frequency. I propose that—even if not implicated directly—multiple language contact may play an ancillary role in reinforcing the emergence of the form *innit*, accelerating its expansion across anchor contexts, and shaping functional change in the NEG-TAG system.

My contact proposal remains tentative. We do not know (i) to what extent the tags listed in Table 7 are used in the wider community, (ii) whether adolescents in multi-ethnic boroughs were sufficiently exposed to relevant heritage languages for contact effects to occur, or (iii) whether the published sources in the table

reflect current functional (and structural) usage. To more reliably confirm the role of multiple language contact in discourse-pragmatic change, we need more research into the use of presumed model languages in the multilingual community, meta-data about individuals' knowledge and use of these languages, and corpus-based descriptions of relevant model structures.

Among leaders of observed NEG-TAG changes in London (young non-Anglos), *innit* has spread across syntactic-semantic contexts AND begun to assimilate functions of full and reduced NEG-TAG variants, which earlier dominated the NEG-TAG system and initially occur in complementary distribution with *innit*. Full and reduced variants maintain a precarious foothold, the former occupying a functional niche (conduciveness), the latter carrying social meaning (young Anglo). Continued spread of *innit* may endanger the survival of these variants and cause the disappearance of grammatically-dependent NEG-TAGS in young Londoners' vernacular English. With *innit* having developed into a fully invariant tag in their vernacular, it will be interesting to see how it competes with more established invariant tags such as *yeah* and *right*.

NOTES

*I am immensely grateful to Jenny Cheshire and Paul Kerswill for access to LIC (funded by the ESRC). I thank Lauren Ackerman for help with statistics; Khadija Badri for researching parts of Table 7; Sebastian Hoffmann for Perl scripts for data extraction; Eivind Torgersen for answering corpus queries and checking tag transcriptions; and Kaleigh Woolford for R-codes. I am thankful to audience members at DiPVaC4 (Helsinki, 2018), two anonymous reviewers, and Shana Poplack and Elizabeth Traugott for constructive comments on earlier drafts. Ultimate responsibility for the article rests with me.

¹All examples are from the Linguistic Innovators Corpus. Information in parentheses gives speakers' pseudonym, age (cohort), sex (F = female, M = male), ethnicity (A = Anglo, N = non-Anglo), borough (mono = mono-ethnic, multi = multi-ethnic). Transcription conventions are given in Appendix A.

²Erosion and fusion, decategorialization, and semantic-pragmatic change are, of course, not the only identified processes of grammaticalization (see Lehmann 2015), nor are they unique to grammaticalization (see, for example, Campbell & Janda 2001). Brinton's (2006) work on discourse-pragmatic change has challenged Lehmann's paradigmaticization and scope reduction criteria, a finding confirmed in my data. Conceived as expansion (rather than reduction; Himmelmann 2004; Traugott 2010), grammaticalization is a useful framework for explaining how discourse-pragmatic features arise and develop over time (see inter alia Brinton 1996, 2006). (I reject Erman & Kotsinas' (1993) pragmaticalization framework. It overlaps with expansion views of grammaticalization and implies discourse-pragmatic features are a-grammatical.)

³Notation for significance in Tables 4–6: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

⁴An anonymous reviewer proposes expansion of *innit* involves two abrupt changes: emergence of fixed *innit* (= addition of grammar B; young Anglos), followed by loss of compositional *innit* (= loss of grammar A; young non-Anglos) (see Denis 2021). Figure 3 suggests transition between grammars A and B is gradual and 'sneaky', progressing 'from one environment to another on the basis of similarity relations between environments' (De Smet 2012:608).

⁵Krug (1998:184) and Cheshire and colleagues (2005:155–59) posit that *innit* is innovating in and diffusing from southern England varieties. Pichler (2013:211) proposes the occurrence of *innit* in Berwick English, northern England, is an independent system-internal development; only semi- and non-paradigmatic *innit* uses diffuse from London. I concur with Pichler (2013) regarding *innit*'s system-internal origins, but suggest that low rates of semi- and non-paradigmatic *innit* in northern varieties may

be due to relative absence of sustained, community-wide language contact as an accelerating force in linguistic context expansion.

⁶Corpus studies of question tags in languages other than English are in short supply. The top of Table 7 was collated from reference grammars, review chapters, Moravcsik's (1971) and Axelsson's (2011) tag typologies, and from named individuals, whose help I gratefully acknowledge. It makes no claims to exhaustiveness, serving to assess which tag categories and usage constraints dominate potential models for contact-induced change.

REFERENCES

- Aarsæther, Finn; Stefania Marzo; Ingvild Nistov; & Evy Ceuleers (2015). Indexing locality: Contemporary urban vernaculars in Belgium and Norway. In Jacomine Nortier & Bente Ailin Svendsen (eds.), *Language, youth and identity in the 21st century: Linguistic practices across urban spaces*, 249–70. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Agnihotri, Rama Kant (2007). *Hindi: An essential grammar*. London: Routledge.
- Algeo, John (1988). The tag question in British English: It's different, i'n't it? *English World-Wide* 9:171–91.
- Allsopp, Richard (1996). *Dictionary of Caribbean English usage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alo, M. A., & Rajend Mesthrie (2004). Nigerian English: Morphology and syntax. In Bernd Kortmann, Edgar W. Schneider, Kate Burridge, Rajend Mesthrie, & Clive Upton (eds.), *A handbook of varieties of English, vol. 2: Morphology and syntax*, 813–27. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Andersen, Gisle (2001). *Pragmatic markers and sociolinguistic variation: A relevance-theoretic approach to the language of adolescents*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- (2014). Pragmatic borrowing. *Journal of Pragmatics* 67:17–33.
- Atkinson, Maxwell J., & John Heritage (1984). *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Axelsson, Karin (2011). A cross-linguistic study of grammatically-dependent question tags. *Studies in Language* 35:793–851.
- Bailey, Guy (2002). Real and apparent time. In J. K. Chambers, Peter Trudgill, & Natalie Schilling-Estes (eds.), *The handbook of language variation and change*, 312–32. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Baker, Philip (1972). *Kreol: A description of Mauritian Creole*. London: Hurst & Company.
- , & Yasir Mohieldeen (2000). The languages of London's schoolchildren. In Philip Baker & John Eversley (eds.), *Multilingual capital: The language of London's schoolchildren and their relevance to economic, social, and educational policies*, 5–60. London: Battlebridge.
- Bates, Douglas; Martin Mächler; Ben Bolker; & Steven Walker (2015). Fitting linear mixed-effects models using lme4. *Journal of Statistical Software* 67:1–48.
- Baumann, Gerd (1996). *Contesting culture: Discourse of identity in multi-ethnic London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beckner, Clay, & Joan Bybee (2009). A usage-based account of constituency and reanalysis. *Language Learning* 59:27–46.
- Bentahila, Abdelâli, & Eirlys E. Davies (1983). The syntax of Arabic-French code-switching. *Lingua* 59:301–30.
- Bhatia, Tej K. (1993). *Punjabi: A cognitive descriptive grammar*. London: Routledge.
- Bhaya Nair, Rukmini (1991). Expressing doubt and certainty: The tag question and the 'to' particle in some Indian languages. *Language Sciences* 13:207–27.
- Binh, Du'o'ng Thanh (1971). *A tagmemic comparison of the structure of English and Vietnamese sentences*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Borg, Albert, & Marie Azzopardi-Alexander (1997). *Maltese*. London: Routledge.
- Brinton, Laurel J. (1996). *Pragmatic markers in English: Grammaticalization and discourse function*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- (2006). The development of *I mean*: Implications for the study of historical pragmatics. In Ans van Kemenade & Bettelou Los (eds.), *The handbook of the history of English*, 307–34. London: Blackwell.

- Bybee, Joan (2003). Mechanisms of change in grammaticalization: The role of frequency. In Brian D. Joseph & Richard D. Janda (eds.), *The handbook of historical linguistics*, 602–23. London: Blackwell.
- (2010). *Language, usage and cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ; William Pagliuca; & Revere Perkins (1994). *The evolution of grammar: Tense, aspect, and modality in the languages of the world*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- , & Rena Torres Cacoullos (2009). The role of preverbs in grammaticalization: How the particular and general interact in language change. In Roberta Corrigan, Edith A. Moravcsik, Hamid Ouali, & Kathleen Wheatley (eds.), *Formulaic language, vol. 1: Distribution and historical change*, 187–217. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Campbell, Lyle, & Richard Janda (2001). Introduction: Conceptions of grammaticalization and their problems. *Language Sciences* 23:93–112.
- Cassidy, Frederic G., & Robert B. Le Page (1967). *Dictionary of Jamaican English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cheshire, Jenny (1981). Variation in the use of *ain't* in an urban British English dialect. *Language in Society* 10:365–81.
- (1982). *Variation in an English dialect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ; David Adger; & Sue Fox (2013). Relative *who* and the actuation problem. *Lingua* 126:51–77.
- , & Sue Fox (2009). *Was/were* variation: A perspective from London. *Language Variation and Change* 21:1–38.
- ; ———; Paul Kerswill; & Eivind Torgersen (2008). Ethnicity, friendship network and social practices as the motor of dialect change. *Sociolinguistica* 22:1–23.
- ; Paul Kerswill; Sue Fox; & Eivind Torgersen (2011). Contact, the feature pool and the speech community: The emergence of Multicultural London English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15:151–96.
- ; ———; & Ann Williams (2005). Phonology, grammar, and discourse in dialect convergence. In Peter Auer, Frans Hinskens, & Paul Kerswill (eds.), *Dialect change: Convergence and divergence in European languages*, 135–67. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Childs, Claire (2016). *Variation and change in English negation: A cross-dialectal perspective*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle University PhD thesis.
- Chisanga, T., & N. M. Kamwangamalu (1997). Owing the other tongue: The English language in Southern Africa. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 18:89–99.
- Cuenca, Maria Josep (1997). Form-use mappings for tag questions. In Wolf-Andreas Liebert, Gisela Redeker, & Linda Waugh (eds.), *Discourse and perspective in cognitive linguistics*, 3–19. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Denis, Derek (2021). Reflexes of abruptness in the development of pragmatic markers. In Elizabeth Peterson, Turo Hiltunen, & Joseph Kern (eds.), *Discourse-pragmatic variation and change: Theory, innovations, contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, to appear.
- De Smet, Hendrik (2012). The course of actualization. *Language* 88:601–33.
- Dines, Elizabeth R. (1980). Variation in discourse—'and stuff like that'. *Language in Society* 9:13–31.
- Doctor, Raimond (2004). *A grammar of Gujarati*. Munich: LINCOM Europa.
- Donaldson, Bruce C. (1993). *A grammar of Afrikaans*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Emenanjo, E. N. (2015). *A grammar of contemporary Igbo*. Port Harcourt: Grand Orbit Communications.
- Erman, Britt (1998). From identifying and proposition-oriented to intensifying and hearer-oriented: Grammaticalization in progress. In Timo Hankioja (ed.), *Papers from the 16th Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics*. Turku: University of Turku, Department of Finnish and General Linguistics.
- , & Ulla-Britt Kotsinas (1993). Pragmaticalization: The case of *ba'* and *you know*. *Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis* 10:76–93.
- Göksel, Asli, & Celia Kerslake (2005). *Turkish: A comprehensive grammar*. London: Routledge.
- Gómez González, María de los Ángeles (2014). Canonical tag questions in English, Spanish and Portuguese: A discourse-functional study. *Languages in Contrast* 14:93–126.

- Goria, Eugenio (2016). The role of extra-clausal constituents in bilingual speech: The emerging of regular patterns in a bilingual corpus. In Gunther Kaltenböck, Evelien Keizer, & Arne Lohmann (eds.), *Outside the clause: Form and function of extra-clausal constituents*, 273–302. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Harris, Roxy (2006). *New ethnicities and language use*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Heine, Bernd (2003). Grammaticalization. In Brian D. Joseph & Richard D. Janda (eds.), *The handbook of historical linguistics*, 575–601. London: Blackwell.
- , & Tania Kuteva (2005). *Language contact and grammatical change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Herring, Susan C. (1991). The grammaticalization of rhetorical questions in Tamil. In Elizabeth Closs Traugott & Bernd Heine (eds.), *Approaches to grammaticalization, vol. 1: Theoretical and methodological issues*, 253–84. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hewitt, Roger (1986). *White talk, black talk: Inter-racial friendship and communication amongst adolescents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Himmelman, Nikolaus P. (2004). Lexicalization and grammaticization: Opposite or orthogonal? In Walter Bisang, Nikolaus P. Himmelman, & Björn Wiemer (eds.), *What makes grammaticalization? A look from its fringes and its components*, 21–42. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Hlavac, Jim (2006). Bilingual discourse markers: Evidence from Croatian-English code-switching. *Journal of Pragmatics* 38:1870–1900.
- Hoffmann, Sebastian (2006). Tag questions in Early and Late Modern English: Historical description and theoretical implications. *Anglistik* 17:35–55.
- ; Anne-Katrin Blass; & Joybrato Mukherjee (2017). Canonical tag questions in Asian Englishes: Forms, functions and frequencies in Hong Kong English, Indian English and Singapore English. In Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola, & Devyani Sharma (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of World Englishes*, 617–714. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hollington, Andrea, & Nico Nassenstein (2017). From the hood to public discourse. *Anthropological Linguistics* 59:390–413.
- Hopper, Paul J. (1991). On some principles of grammaticization. In Elizabeth Closs Traugott & Bernd Heine (eds.), *Approaches to grammaticalization, vol. 1: Theoretical and methodological issues*, 17–35. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- , & Elizabeth Closs Traugott (2003). *Grammaticalization*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hudson, Richard (1975). The meaning of questions. *Language* 51:1–31.
- Kerswill, Paul; Jenny Cheshire; Sue Fox; & Eivind Torgersen (2007). Linguistic innovators: The English of adolescents in London: Full Research Report. ESRC End of Award Report, Res-000-23-0680. Swindon: ESRC.
- Kolehmainen, Leena; Lea Meriläinen; & Helka Riionheimo (2014). Interlingual reduction: Evidence from language contacts, translation and second language acquisition. In Heli Paulasto, Leäa Meriläinen, Helka Riionheimo, & Maria Kok (eds.), *Language contacts at the crossroads of disciplines*, 3–32. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Koul, Omkar N. (2008). *Modern Hindi grammar*. Springfield, VA: Dunwoody Press.
- Krug, Manfred (1998). British English is developing a new discourse marker, *innit*? A study in lexicalisation based on social, regional and stylistic variation. *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 23:146–97.
- Labov, William (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- (1982). Building on empirical foundations. In Winfred P. Lehmann & Yakov Malkiel (eds.), *Perspectives on historical linguistics*, 17–92. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Lavandra, Beatriz (1978). Where does the sociolinguistic variable stop? *Language in Society* 7:171–82.
- Lehmann, Christian (2015). *Thoughts on grammaticalization*. 3rd edn. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Mair, Christian (2004). Corpus linguistics and grammaticalisation theory: Statistics, frequencies and beyond. In Hans Lindquist (ed.), *Corpus approaches to grammaticalization in English*, 121–50. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- Matras, Yaron (2009). *Language contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mathews, Stephen, & Virginia Yip (1994). *Cantonese: A comprehensive grammar*. London: Routledge.
- Mithun, Marianne (2012). Tags: Cross-linguistic diversity and commonality. *Journal of Pragmatics* 44:2165–82.
- Moore, Emma, & Robert Podesva (2009). Style, indexicality and the social meaning of tag questions. *Language in Society* 38:447–85.
- Moravcsik, Edith A. (1971). Some cross-linguistic generalizations about yes-no questions and their answers. *Working Papers on Language Universals* 7:45–192.
- Morin, Yves (1973). Tag questions in French. *Linguistic Inquiry* 4:97–100.
- Mufwene, Salikoko S. (2001). *The ecology of language evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Narrog, Heiko, & Bernd Heine (2011). Introduction. In Heiko Narrog & Bernd Heine (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of grammaticalization*, 1–16. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nevalainen, Terttu, & Minna Palander-Collin (2011). Grammaticalization and sociolinguistics. In Heiko Narrog & Bernd Heine (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of grammaticalization*, 118–29. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Palacios Martínez, Ignacio (2015). Variation, development and pragmatic uses of *innit* in the language of British adults and teenagers. *English Language and Linguistics* 19:383–405.
- Patrick, Peter L. (2004). Jamaican Creole: Morphology and syntax. In Bernd Kortmann, Edgar W. Schneider, Kate Burridge, Rajend Mesthrie, & Clive Upton (eds.), *A handbook of varieties of English, vol. 2: Morphology and syntax*, 407–38. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Pichler, Heike (2010). Methods in discourse variation analysis: Reflections on the way forward. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 14:581–608.
- (2013). *The structure of discourse-pragmatic variation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- (2016). Uncovering discourse-pragmatic innovations: *Innit* in Multicultural London English. In Heike Pichler (ed.), *Discourse-pragmatic variation and change in English: New methods and insights*, 59–85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2021). Tagging monologic narratives of personal experience: Utterance-final tags and the construction of adolescent masculinity. In Karen Beaman, Isabelle Buchstaller, Susan Fox, & James Walker (eds.), *Advancing sociogrammatical variation and change: In honour of Jenny Cheshire*, 377–98. London: Routledge.
- Poplack, Shana (2011). A variationist perspective on grammaticalization. In Heiko Narrog & Bernd Heine (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of grammaticalization*, 209–24. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- , & Stephen Levey (2010). Contact-induced grammatical change: A cautionary tale. In Peter Auer & Jürgen Erich Schmidt (eds.), *Language and space: An international handbook of linguistic variation, vol. 1: Theories and methods*, 391–419. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- R Core Team (2016). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing*. Vienna: R Foundation for Statistical Computing. Online: www.R-project.org.
- Saeed, John (1999). *Somali*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Schmied, Josef (2006). East African Englishes. In Braj B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru, & Cecil L. Nelson (eds.), *The handbook of World Englishes*, 188–202. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Schwenter, Scott A., & Rena Torres Cacoulios (2008). Defaults and indeterminacy in temporal grammaticalization: The ‘perfect’ road to perfective. *Language Variation and Change* 20:1–39.
- Siegel, Jeff (1997). Mixing, levelling and pidgin/creole development. In Arthur K. Spears & Donald Winford (eds.), *The structure and status of pidgins and creoles*, 111–49. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Stenström, Anna-Brita; Gisle Andersen; & Ingrid Kristine Hasund (2002). *Trends in teenage talk: Corpus compilation, analysis and findings*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Sutcliffe, David (1982). *British Black English*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- (1992). *System in black language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Tagliamonte, Sali A. (2013). Comparative sociolinguistics. In J. K. Chambers & Natalie Schilling (eds.), *The handbook of language variation and change*, 2nd edn., 128–56. Oxford: Wiley.

- Täuschel, Alexander (2014). *World English(es): On the examples of India and West Africa*. Berlin: epubli.
- Thomason, Sarah (2013). Contact explanations in linguistics. In Raymond Hickey (ed.), *The handbook of language contact*, 31–47. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- , & Terrence Kaufman (1988). *Language contact, creolization and genetic linguistics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Thompson, Hanne-Ruth (2012). *Bengali*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Torgersen, Eivind; Costas Gabrielatos; Sebastian Hoffmann; & Susan Fox (2011). A corpus-based study of pragmatic markers in London English. *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory* 7:93–118.
- Tottie, Gunnel, & Sebastian Hoffmann (2006). Tag questions in British and American English. *Journal of English Linguistics* 34:283–311.
- , & ——— (2009). Tag questions in English: The first century. *Journal of English Linguistics* 37:130–61.
- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs (2010). Grammaticalization. In Silvia Luraghi & Vit Bubenik (eds.), *Continuum companion to historical linguistics*, 269–83. London: Continuum.
- (2016). On the rise of types of clause-final pragmatic markers in English. *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 17:26–54.
- Waters, Cathleen (2016). Practical strategies for elucidating discourse-pragmatic variation. In Heike Pichler (ed.), *Discourse-pragmatic variation in English: New methods and insights*, 41–55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weinreich, Uriel (1968). *Languages in contact*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- ; William Labov; & Marvin Herzog (1968). Empirical foundations for a theory of language change. In Winfried Lehmann & Yakov Malkiel (eds.), *Directions for historical linguistics: A symposium*, 95–188. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Wilson, Guyanne; Michael Westphal; Johanna Hartmann; & Dagmar Deuber (2017). The use of question tags in different text types in Trinidadian English. *World Englishes* 36:726–43.

APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS AND
GRAMMATICAL GLOSSES

[], [[]]	overlap	AUX	auxiliary
-	false start, truncation	COP	copula
(.), (..)	short, medium pause	EMPH	emphatic particle/marker
@	laughter	INT	interrogative particle/marker
(h)	audible in-breath	M	masculine
(?)	indecipherable talk	N	neuter
,	continuing intonation	NEG	negative particle/marker
	contour	POS	positive particle/marker
.	final intonation contour	PRES	present
?	rising intonation contour	PRON	pronoun
!	increase in volume	Q	question particle/marker
[...]	conversation continues on	SFP	sentence-final particle
	this topic	SG	singular
(text)	uncertain transcription	3	third person
<u>underlining</u>	emphatic stress		
bold italics	highlights token(s) discussed		
CAPITALS	increased volume		

APPENDIX B: SPECIAL CONTEXTS FOR CODING DECATEGORIALIZATION

NEG-TAG VARIANT	SOURCE ANCHOR CONTEXT (IN LIC)	PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE	NON-PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE	SEMI-PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE	AMBIGUOUS EXAMPLE
<i>innit</i>	third-person singular neuter present-tense BE (Andersen 2001:196–201)	<i>College is better, innit.</i>	<i>He must be coming up to 17 now, innit.</i>	<i>Cos my ear went numb, innit.</i>	<i>She's skinny, innit.</i>
(a)in(t)-tags	present-tense BE and HAVE (Andersen 2001:196–201)	<i>I'm still here, ain't I. They're hyped a bit as well, in't they.</i>	<i>And I was butting my friend, in he.</i>	<i>They love their food, in they.</i>	
<i>din(t)</i> -tags	present- and past-tense DO	<i>I learned from them all, din I.</i>		<i>You got it as well, din't you.</i>	
<i>dun(t)</i> -tags	present-tense DO	<i>You get a load of chocolate at Christmas, dun't you.</i>		<i>We're all loud, dun't we.</i>	
<i>win</i> -tags	modal <i>will</i>	<i>He will just get it sorted, win he.</i>		<i>Matthew start again, win he.</i>	
<i>wun(t)</i> -tags	modal <i>will</i> and <i>would</i>	<i>The kids would half kill them, wun't they.</i>		<i>You just fail, wun you.</i>	

Continued

Continued.

ANCHOR VERB	LICENSED NEG-TAG AUX. IN LIC	PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE	NON-PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE	SEMI-PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE	
present- and past-tense <i>HAVE to</i>	DO	<i>But then <u>she</u> just <u>has</u> to be a bitch, doesn't she.</i>	<i>You have to do my hair one day, innit.</i>	<i><u>We</u> have to get two buses home, ain't we.</i>	
present- and past-tense <i>(HAVE) got</i>	HAVE		<i>I've got two weeks, innit.</i>	<i><u>You</u> got it as well, din't you.</i>	
present- and past-tense <i>(HAVE) got to</i>	HAVE	<i>Because <u>you've got to</u> get used to this modern world, haven't you.</i>	<i>I've got to ring him tonight, innit.</i>		
ANCHOR TYPE	CODING PROCEDURE	PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE	NON-PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE	SEMI-PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE	AMBIGUOUS EXAMPLE
elliptical anchors (= phrasal units extendable to positive- polarity anchors)	ellipted materials inferred from context (where possible)	<i>How old <u>is she</u>? Two years older than me, in't she.</i>			<i>What would you want to know about him? – About money, weren't it.</i>
multiclausal anchors (e.g. matrix- complementizer constructions)	NEG-TAG scope and anchor materials inferred from context (where possible)	<i><u>Everyone</u> swore that mum got the piano out of the collection money, didn't they.</i>	<i><u>People</u> think we're mates, innit. Not brother and sister. They just think we're two mates.</i>		<i><u>We</u> think they're rude, innit.</i>

APPENDIX C: ESTABLISHED NEG-TAG FUNCTIONS IN LIC

NEG-TAG FUNCTION	ILLUSTRATIVE LIC EXAMPLE	NEG-TAG INTERPRETATION	CONTEXTUAL FEATURES GUIDING NEG-TAG INTERPRETATION
Seeking verification of anchor propositions	<p>(<i>Laura is unimpressed with her daughter's daycare.</i>) Laura: Like yesterday, Monday's our longest day. (.) I put three drinks, one milk, (..) six nappies. I picked her up at two, <i>weren't it?</i> Half two or [something like that.] Katie: [Yeah.] Half two. Laura: Only one nappy had been used. [...] (Laura, 19-F-A-multi; Katie, 18-F-A-multi)</p>	invites Katie to verify the time-estimate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Laura's turn contains multiple uncertainty signals (tag with rising intonation; general extender; provision of alternative time-estimates) – Katie supplies requested verification of pick-up time
Soliciting confirmation of anchor propositions	<p>(<i>Kieran boasts about his car.</i>) Derek: My car is fucked. Kieran: @ Yeah, your car broke down the other day, <i>dinnit</i>, [(?)?] Derek: [Yeah.] I was in the middle of Brentwood. Like, just went to work. And you know the multi-storey car park? [...] (Derek, 17-M-A-mono; Kieran, 17-M-A-mono)</p>	facilitates Derek taking an extended turn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Kieran already knows of Derek's breakdown (see content of his turn) – Derek accepts Kieran's invitation to recount events leading up to the breakdown
Mitigating negatively affective speech acts	<p>(<i>SF asks about religious practices.</i>) SF: So do you wear the burka? Fatima: [Nah.] I don't. We've got two of our mates that do. [But] we don't. Nazma: [Mhm.] [Yeah.] SF: [[But you d-]] Nazma: [[Two? There's one]], <i>innit?</i> {name1}. Fatima: {name1}. And thingy. {name2}! Nazma: Oh yeah, {name 2}. (SF = interviewer; Fatima, 18-F-N-multi; Nazma, 18-F-N-multi)</p>	mitigates Nazma's disalignment with Fatima's observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nazma's face-threatening disagreement is presented tentatively (see rising intonation on 'two' and 'innit') – Fatima embraces Nazma's request to resolve the disagreement

Continued

Continued.

NEG-TAG FUNCTION	ILLUSTRATIVE LIC EXAMPLE	NEG-TAG INTERPRETATION	CONTEXTUAL FEATURES GUIDING NEG-TAG INTERPRETATION
Instructing interlocutors to note salient propositions to which speakers are committed	<p>(<i>SF enquires whether Fatima socializes with boys.</i>)</p> <p>SF: You'd include boys in that, would you. Mhm. Yeah. But tha- that's is that quite unusual or?</p> <p>Fatima: No, it's just friends. [(.) I have] (.) boy <u>mates</u> but [not] boy<u>friends</u>.</p> <p>SF: [Mhm.] [Yeah.]</p> <p>Yeah that no that yeah. That's what I mean. Mhm.</p> <p>Fatima: They're just mates, <i>innit</i>.</p> <p>(SF = interviewer; Fatima, 18-F-N-multi)</p>	issues a pretend-request for SF to acknowledge behaviours important to Fatima's self-presentation as observant Muslim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fatima clarifies the nature of her relationships with boys – SF's demonstration of understanding is unconvincing – Fatima repeats her clarification which SF is asked to accept as fact
Underlining the obviousness and/or truth of propositions that cannot be disputed by interlocutors	<p>(<i>Alex establishes his drug-dealing credentials.</i>)</p> <p>Alex: Crackheads come back to us like five times a day.</p> <p>(..)</p> <p>SF: Where do <u>they</u> get the money?</p> <p>Alex: They go and ROB PEOPLE, <i>INNIT!</i> They rob people's houses.</p> <p>(SF = interviewer; Alex, 16-M-N-multi)</p>	signals that SF should know how drugs are financed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SF's question reveals she does not know how drug addiction is funded – Alex's response is delivered with authority and conviction (see increased volume, lack of hedges) – SF cannot dispute Alex's response (see preceding question)
Signaling involvement and alignment with previous speakers' talk	<p>(<i>Mark and Tina discuss a reality TV show contestant.</i>)</p> <p>Mark: He does a good Elvis impression [man.]</p> <p>Tina: [No j-] Yeah! He does do Elvis very good, <i>din he</i>.</p> <p>(Tina, 18-F-N-multi; Mark, 18-M-N-multi)</p>	displays Tina's deliberation of the accuracy of Mark's assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tina enthusiastically endorses Mark's assessment (see increased volume on 'yeah') – Tina's tagged proposition echoes Mark's, ruling out corroboration-seeking readings

Address for correspondence:

Heike Pichler
School of English Literature, Language & Linguistics
Percy Building
Newcastle University
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU, UK
heike.pichler@ncl.ac.uk

(Received 14 October 2019; revision received 16 September 2020;
accepted 18 September 2020; final revision received 9 October 2020)