Variation in Appalachian non-present verb forms

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1. Problem: Past vs. Participle?

Grammarians and linguists alike conceptualize the English verb as exhibiting a three-part paradigm, with the "principal parts" (= **morphological forms**) of

(i)   ROOT (or, "bare infinitive," or "present")
(ii) PAST (or, "simple past," or "preterite")
(iii) PARTICIPLE (or, "past participle")

Table 1:

ROOT (or, bare infinitive; or present)	NON-PRESENT	
	PAST (or, simple past, or preterite)	PARTICIPLE (or, past participle)
walk	walked	walked
bring	brought	brought
lent	lent	lent
read	read	read
put	put	put

Some terminology, for clarification:

- **NON-PRESENT VERB FORMS: verb forms** that are found in **simple past** and **compound tense**

- **COMPOUND TENSE:** perfect tenses (e.g., *have*+**kicked**), and passives (e.g., *was*+ **kicked**), and also modal/to+*have*+**kicked**

- **VERB FORM:** the **morphological form** of the verb. E.g., *come* and *came* are different verb forms (related to the same root)

Question: Does this three-part paradigm accurately characterize the grammars of (all) English speakers?

This talk: We explore data from the *Audio-Aligned and Parsed Corpus of Appalachian English*, to answer the question of whether all English speakers encode a grammatical distinction between **PAST** and **PARTICIPLE**

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2. Deconstructing the English verb "three-part paradigm" concept
2.1 The robust identity between PAST and PARTICIPLE

Why would we appeal to the two distinct categories PAST and PARTICIPLE, when (the overwhelming majority of) verbs have same form for both simple past and compound tenses?

(1) a.   They **walked** to class yesterday.
     b.   They've **walked** home four times so far this week.

> The overwhelming majority of verbs (including many "irregulars") have a **single NON-PRESENT form**, used both for simple past (1a) and compound tenses (1b)

Given the identity between the forms in (1a) and (1b), what is the motivation to hypothesize a category **PAST** as distinct from **PARTICIPIAL** form?

2.2 Are they not all participles?
Based on various independent issues, Tortora (2014) hypothesizes that *walked* in (1a) is in fact a past participle, and that the structure involves a compound tense with a null AUX, as in (1a'):

simple past:
(1a')   [*They* INFL$_{[+fin]}$ AUX$_{SILENT}$ [$_{participial\ clause}$ *walked ...*]]
           MATRIX CLAUSE   EMBEDDED CLAUSE

Solà (1996): also argues on independent theoretical grounds that so-called "past" verb forms are not finite (and are none other than past participles)

2.3 The obvious problem

Complicating matter: approximately 150-200 verbs (? Anderwald 2011a:260), which seem to exhibit a distinction in NON-PRESENT forms (at least for academic normativized English).

(2) a. They **ate** at 10:00pm
     b. They've **eaten** out 6 times this week already.

(3) a. They **came** to the party late.
     b. They haven't **come** up with a solution to the problem yet.

(4) a. They **gave** us a nice raise.
     b. They haven't **given** out any raises in years.

Table 2: Apparent distinction between PAST and PARTICIPIAL forms:

ROOT (or, bare infinitive; or present)	NON-PRESENT	
	PAST (or, simple past)	PARTICIPLE (or, past participle)
eat	ate	eaten
come	came	come
give	gave	given

> There seem to be some verbs that exhibit **two distinct non-present forms**. Furthermore, these two forms seem to specialize for **simple** versus **compound tense**

This proves that English speaker grammars encode PAST as distinct from PARTICIPLE?

3. "English" vs. English speaker behavior
3.1 The persistence of the concept of PAST vs. PARTICIPLE

- Objection to Table 2: represents a model based on an idealization, influenced by normative pressure
- To gain a true understanding of how speakers mentally organize the NON-PRESENT: need to study English speaker behavior
- Several researchers have observed that many English speakers exhibit patterns distinct from those dictated by the norm (e.g., Anderwald 2009, 2011a, 2011b; Eisikovits 1987, 1989; Bybee & Moder 1983; Wolfram & Fasold 1974; Wolfram & Christian 1976; Tagliamonte 2001; a.o.).

Anderwald (e.g., 2011a) in particular examines verbs of the ***drink-drank-drunk*** type, and observes that speakers in her English corpus exhibit a **variant** of the simple past which is identical to the participle:

Table 3.1: Normativized English   **Table 3.2: Non-normativized English**

NON-PRESENT	
PAST	**PARTICIPLE**
drank	drunk
sank	sunk
sang	sung
swam	swum
etc.	

NON-PRESENT	
PAST	**PARTICIPLE**
drunk	drunk
sunk	sunk
sung	sung
swum	swum
etc.	

Variants (distinct morphological forms used in the same syntactic context, with the same lexical semantics, like *I dreamed* and *I dreamt*)

Example from Anderwald (2011a):

(5)   ...he **drunk** it and bathed his eyes in it, because he had them very bad they had them all in his eyes you know they're liable to blind you, eh in them the measles was very bad in them days, and ehm bathed his eyes in it and he **drank** it and everything. (Nottinghamshire, Midlands)

> Despite this apparent **levelling**, Anderwald presupposes that nevertheless speakers represent **PAST** and **PARTICIPIAL** forms as distinct categories. (The idea also persists in the studies cited earlier; Bybee & Moder 1983 model speaker-knowledge as organized around three-part paradigms)

3.2 Unconflating the two issues

Despite the observed variation, the literature remains commited to the idea that English speakers conceptualize two different categories, PAST and PARTICIPLE.

We believe, however, that this persistence is not driven by the actual data, but rather by the conflation of two distinct questions, which we lay out as follows:

[A] For any given verb root: do speakers exhibit **more than one** form for the NON-PRESENT? E.G.:

> (a) *saw / seen*
> (b) *did / done*
>
> BUT ALSO:
> (c) *saw / seed / seen*
> (d) *saw / seened / seen*
> (e) *ran / run / runned*
> (f) *gave / give / given*
> (g) *did / done / doned*
>
> (h) *et / eat / ate / eaten*
> (i) *taken / take / takened / took*

[B] Wherever it can be shown that speakers exhibit **more than one form** for the NON-PRESENT, are the distinct forms specialized for **simple past** vs. **compound tenses**? Or for something else? Or not specialized at all?

- **The question in [A]** already has an easy answer: we know that English speakers of different backgrounds (British, Australian, American, educated, uneducated) exhibit more than one form for the NON-PRESENT for some verbs.
- However, we contend that the **question in [B]** does not get an immediate answer, without further investigation.

The question can be investigated by pursuing two different hypotheses:

(6) **PAST vs. PARTICIPLE distinction Hypothesis:** Wherever a speaker exhibits more than one form for the NON-PRESENT (e.g., *saw* and *seen*), the same speaker exhibits specialization of each form, such that one form is used for the **simple past**, while the other is used in the **compound tenses**

(7) **GENERAL NON-PRESENT Hypothesis:** Wherever a speaker exhibits more than one form for the NON-PRESENT (e.g., *saw* and *seen*), neither form specializes for one syntactic context (simple past) vs. the other (compound tense)

Thus, we separate out:

(a) the matter of use of **more than one form** for the NON-PRESENT, and
(b) the question of whether the existence of distinct NON-PRESENT forms provides any evidence for the distinct concepts of PAST and PARTICIPLE

3.2.1 Four possible behaviors (an idealization)

(8) **Type [1] Speakers**

NON-PRESENT	
PAST	PARTICIPLE
drank	drunk
brang	brought
saw	seen
went	gone

In a scenario like that in (8), we would conclude that we have data which supports a grammatical distinction between PAST and PARTICIPLE

(9) **Type [2] Speakers**

NON-PRESENT	
PAST	PARTICIPLE
drank / drunk	drunk
brang / brought	brought
saw / seen	seen
went / gone	gone

In a scenario like that in (9), we might conclude that, despite the existence of variant forms in simple past contexts (as in Anderwald 2011a), use of only one form in the compound tenses still argues for a grammatical distinction between between PAST and PARTICIPLE

(10) **Type [3] Speakers**

NON-PRESENT	
PAST	PARTICIPLE
drank	**drank / drunk**
brang	**brang / brought**
seen	**saw / seen**
went	**went / gone**

In a scenario like that in (10), we might conclude that, despite the existence of variant forms in compound tense contexts, use of only one form in the simple past still argues for a grammatical distinction between between PAST and PARTICIPLE

(11) **Type [4] Speakers**   (11')

NON-PRESENT	
PAST	PARTICIPLE
drank / drunk	**drank / drunk**
brang / brought	**brang / brought**
seen / saw	**seen / saw**
went / gone	**went / gone**

→

NON-PRESENT
drank / drunk
brang / brought
seen / saw
went / gone

In a scenario like that in (11), we might conclude the following: given that the speaker exhibits non-descriminate variant forms in both simple past and compound tense contexts, we have no evidence the speaker makes a grammatical distinction between PAST and PARTICIPLE.

Under this scenario, what might be said about the variants seen in (11) is that they are just that: *variants*, or, **morphological doublets**, like *dreamed* and *dreamt*.

4.   "English" vs. English speaker behavior revisited: the idea of a GENERAL PAST

Return to our question [B] from section 3.2: *Wherever it can be shown that speakers exhibit more than one form for the NON-PRESENT, are the distinct forms specialized for **simple past** vs. **compound tenses**?*

Literature often alludes to the idea of a **general past**, as depicted in (11') (Labov et al. 1968; Wolfram & Fasold 1974; Eisikovits 1987):

> "It is possible ... that some non-standard equivalents of the present and past perfect tenses do not consist of forms of *have* plus the past participle, but rather involve a form of *have* plus a **general past** form." (Wolfram & Fasold 1974:153)

> For AAE: "It is doubtful if there is a consistent differentiation between the preterite and the perfect forms of the verb..." (Labov et al. 1968:225, taken from Eisikovits 1987:16)

African American English
(12) a.   She **has came** over.
     b.   When any of the fellas **has went**...

Are there such Type [4] Speakers? Need a systematic study.

4.1 Pilot study on Appalachian speech
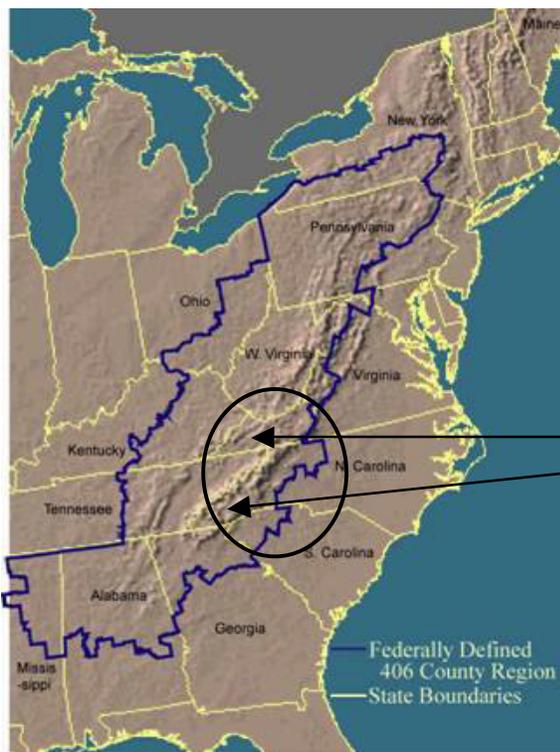
Geographic area of investigation:
Appalachian English is spoken in a geographical area roughly coinciding with the central and southern part of the Appalachian Mountain range, which includes areas of southwestern Pennsylvania and Virginia, West Virginia, eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, western North Carolina, southeastern Ohio, and northern Georgia and Alabama (Algeo 2003).

Our study thus far:
  [1] Dante, Virginia
  [2] Great Smoky Mountains, Tennessee

Our pilot study is based on a small portion of the in-progress *Audio-Aligned and Parsed Corpus of Appalachian English* (AAPCAppE; Tortora, Santorini, & Blanchette; **csivc.csi.cuny.edu/aapcappe/**)

What is the AAPCAppE?

- *Audio-Aligned and Parsed Corpus of Appalachian English* (AAPCAppE): an in-progress database of a ~1,000,000-word corpus of Appalachian English which will be:
    - syntactically annotated
    - accompanied by digitized recordings of the underlying speech signal, in the form of *.wav* files (text-searchable)

- Based on extant unparsed oral history project recordings housed at various colleges and institutions in the Appalachian region:

I. **Joseph Hall Collection**. Interviews with residents of the Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina (1939); collector: Joseph Hall.

II. **Dante Oral History Project**. Collection of interviews on cassette tape with residents of Dante, VA (recorded 1997–98), under the auspices of People Incorporated of Abingdon, VA. Recordings are housed at, and curated by, the *Archives of Appalachia at East Tennessee State University* (ETSU; http://www.etsu.edu/cass/archives/).

III. **Appalachian Oral History Project** (AOHP). Alice Lloyd College, in Pippa Passes, KY. This history project was conducted from 1971–75 and its materials are housed in the library at Alice Lloyd College, Pippa Passes, Kentucky. The speech is from Central Eastern Kentucky.

IV. **Southeast Kentucky Community College Collection**. Interviews from Eastern Kentucky.

We explored a 180,000-word portion of the AAPCAppE, to find evidence supporting **general past** theory

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Some examples of variation (DOHP = *Dante Oral History Project*):

DOHP, Speaker: TS
(13) a.	Mommy **taken** care of him till he got over it.	past
b.	They **took** him to the dead house and embalmed him.	past
c.	And we **was took** up to the top of the- what they call the slack...	compound tense
d.	And I said it'll **be taken** care of.	compound tense

DOHP, Speaker EW
(14) a.	She **teached** over there at Clinchfield.	past
b.	She **taught** school up there a long time.	past

DOHP, Speaker EC
(15) a.	And he **went** down there and got a job.
b.	And he come down there one Sunday and said if you go a-home with me I'll give you a job, so I **gone**.
c.	She knowed that I was supposed **to went** to Kingsport on Monday and this was on Friday.
d.	Said **we'd went** down to Uncle Eli's and got to romping down there with them boys and girls.
e.	Well Lois **had done gone** back.

Joseph Hall Recordings (Great Smoky Mountains), **verb** *see*

(16) **PAST**:

a.	...and I **seen** them coming down through the old field.	seen
b.	One of my old dogs, he **seen** me and...	seen
c.	That was the last one I ever **seen**.	seen
d.	I **seed** some sycamore trees...	seed
e.	…and that's the last you ever **seed** of any wolf in this country.	seed
f.	I went just on up to the top of the mountain, till I **seed** the dark'uz on me.	seed
g.	The last'un ever I **saw** in the woods I killed it with a pocket knife.	saw
h.	...and uh he **saw** the bear passing through a little higher up.	saw
i.	Well, I never **saw** none but the bear.	saw

(17) **COMPOUND TENSE:**

a.	...something I never **had seen** before, you know.	seen
b.	I**'ve seed** a many a bear, and eat the meat of them, coon too.	seed
c.	I**'ve saw** as high as ten to twenty drunk women the same day, and men in proportion.	saw
d.	…and it jumped on the biggest bear I**'ve ever saw** in the Smoky Mountain.	saw

There is variation in the verb forms in the different grammatical environments; doesn't appear the forms have different syntactic distributions.

Now let's look at some numbers.

4.1.1 Some basic facts regarding frequency of the simple past vs. compound tenses

Table 4: Number of pasts vs. compound tenses: pasts are far more common than compound tenses

Joseph Hall Collection Appalachian Eng. (Tortora et al. in progress) 7,640 sentence tokens		Penn Parsed Corpus of Middle English (Kroch & Taylor 2004) 81,230 sentence tokens		Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English (Kroch, et al. 2010) 57,416 sentence tokens	
simple past	compound tense	simple past	compound tense	simple past	compound tense
3,080 (**94%** of all non-presents)	195 (**6%** of all non-presents)	29,688 (**87%** of all non-presents)	4,530 (**13%** of all non-presents)	15,771 (**74%** of all non-presents)	5,670 (**26%** of all non-presents)

4.1.2 Joseph Hall Collection, Great Smoky Mountains (60,000 words)

Table 5: the forms *seen*, *seed*, and *saw* (in both past and compound tense contexts)

AAPCAppE: Joseph Hall Collection (Tortora et al. in progress) Verb: *see*		
	Past	Compound tense
seen	12	1
seed	12	1
saw	29	6

First glance: If we set aside the overarching facts that
    (a)   simple past is a far more common tense than the compound tenses (as in Table 4) — for whatever reason, and that
    (b)   *saw* is overall more frequent than the other forms — for whatever reason, then

    ...the data suggest the following:

- the form *seen* has similar relative frequency with respect to its co-variants in the past environment as it does in the compound tense environment;
- the form *seed* has similar relative frequency with respect to its co-variants in the past environment as it does in the compound tense environment;
- the form *saw* has similar relative frequency with respect to its co-variants in the past environment as it does in the compound tense environment

We checked to see if this was the case with 6 of the Dante, Virginia speakers, with all verbs that exhibit more than one non-present form.

4.1.3 Dante Oral History Project (Dante, Virginia)

We looked at 6 speakers from the DOHP (5 men, 1 woman), interviewed in early 1990s, over age 65.

Table 6: Total variant types and variant sets across speakers, DOHP (AAPCAppE)

a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.
Speaker / Words 121,096	Total variant types	Total variant sets*	Total variant types occurring in past	Total variant types occurring in compound tense	Total variant types occurring in both contexts
GC / 18,770	12	6	11	7	6
EC / 23,377	40	19	39	11	9
CP / 29,281	14	7	12	5	2
TS / 15,443	31	15	30	14	10
EW / 21,898	30	14	27	9	6
CC / 12,327	10	5	10	6	5

*If this number is not half of the number of types, the speaker displayed at least one triplet set (e.g. *saw*, *seed*, *seen*).

- All speakers had variant types.
- Variants occurred more in past contexts than in compound tense contexts, reflecting the fact that the corpus data contains more past contexts than compound tenses overall (as in Table 4).
- All speakers displayed variant forms that occurred in both past and compound tense contexts **(Column f)**

To answer the question of whether the relative frequency of a given variant within a set is similar in past and compound tense contexts, we tallied up the number of tokens of each variant in a set in each non-present environment. Here are the results:

Table 7: Relative frequencies of co-variants in each set in past and compound tense environments

	All non-present	Past	Compound Tense
Total tokens	1379	1273 (92%)	106 (8%)
Tokens of most frequent variant of each set (aggregated)	1267 (92%)	1186 (93%)	81 (76%)
Tokens of less frequent variant(s) of each set (aggregated)	112 (8%)	87 (7%)	25 (24%)

- Non-present co-variants occur with different frequencies (92% vs. 8%); e.g., *seen* occurs more frequently than *saw*, *took* occurs more frequently than *taken*

- Past has higher frequency than compound tense (92% vs. 8%); this is expected

- BUT, the frequency of a given form is similar across both non-present environments: **93%~76%** (for the more frequent form) and **7%~24%** (for the less frequent form)

- Therefore, syntactic environment (simple past vs. compound tense) doesn't seem to condition the frequency of co-variants; overall co-variants don't seem to be specialized for past vs. compound tense.

5. Summary
Based on these data, we can come to the following preliminary conclusion:

- Wherever there is more than one form for the NON-PRESENT, (at least for some verbs) it seems that neither form is specialized for simple past vs. compound tense.

Question: if the forms are not specialized, then why do some verbs exhibit more than one form in NON-PRESENT environments? **Morphological doublets** (in the sense of Kroch 1994)?

(18) a.   Mary **dreamed** that she finished her paper.
     b.   Mary **dreamt** that she finished her paper.
     c.   Mary **has dreamed** that dream five times this week.
     d.   Mary **has dreamt** that dream five times this week.

Further research:
- Limitation of this corpus study: it is likely that not every possible form (and its use) is attested;
- The forms and uses that are attested occur just a handful of times, because of the small size of the corpus (most especially intra-individually), the register, the topic of conversation, and the lexical frequency of a given verb;
- Next step: to use a much larger set of corpus data, and to restrict our analysis to a set of highly frequent variant verb forms
- However, problem of small number of words per speaker will persist

APPENDIX A: NON-PRESENT variants for the five speakers in 4.1.3, DOHP (92 forms, out of 5043 non-present tokens in the corpus)

began, begin (EC)
bring, brought (CP)
brought, brung (GC)
burned, burnt (EC)
came, come (GC, CP, TS)
catch, caught (EW)
cause, caused (EC)
did, done (GC, CP, EW)
done, doned (TS)
drill, drilled
drop, dropped
get, got
give, given
gone, went
go, gone, went
hand, handed
heard, heared
held, helt
keep, kept

knew, knowed
laid, lay
learned, learnt
load, loaded
lose, lost
lost, losted
made, make
open, opened
paid, pay
push, pushed
ran, run
ran, run, runned
run, runned
rent, rented
sang, sung
saw, seen
saw, seen, seened

scald, scalded
start, started
send, sent
set, sit
start, started
swore, sworn
taken, takened, took
taken, took
take, took
taught, teached
tell, told
turn, turned
walk, walked
want, wanted
work, worked

APPENDIX B:

	GC forms	past	compound
1	brought	2	1
2	brung	1	0
3	came	1	0
4	come	22	1
5	did	3	0
6	done	7	1
7	gone	0	1
8	went	67	6
9	knew	2	0
10	knowed	8	1
11	run	2	1
12	runned	1	0

	CP forms	past	compound
1	bring	1	0
2	brought	2	0
3	came	2	0
4	come	59	3
5	did	1	0
6	done	9	1
7	knew	3	0
8	knowed	1	0
9	lost	4	0
10	losted	1	0
11	swore	2	0
12	sworn	0	1
13	taken	0	3
14	took	18	1

	CC forms	past	compound
1	came	18	0
2	come	6	1
3	did	5	0
4	done	2	3
5	heard	1	1
6	heared	2	2
7	ran	1	0
8	run	5	0
9	saw	1	1
10	seen	6	14

	EC forms	past	compound
1	began	1	0
2	begin	2	0
3	burned	1	0
4	burnt	5	2
5	cause	1	0
6	caused	1	0
7	drill	1	0
8	drilled	2	0
9	drop	2	0
10	dropped	1	1
11	go	2	0
12	gone	1	0
13	went	111	1
14	hand	1	0
15	handed	1	0
16	heard	2	0
17	heared	0	2
18	learned	1	0
19	learnt	1	0
20	load	1	1
21	loaded	15	2
22	lose	1	0
23	lost	1	0
24	made	14	0
25	make	1	0
26	paid	5	3
27	pay	1	0
28	rent	1	0
29	rented	2	0
30	**saw**	5	0
31	**seen**	3	1 ambig
32	**seened**	1	0
33	start	1	0
34	started	12	3
35	turn	1	0
36	turned	2	0
37	walk	1	1
38	walked	6	1
39	work	1	0
40	worked	13	1

APPENDIX B, con't:

	TS forms	past	compound		EW forms	past	compound
1	came	2	0	1	catch	1	0
2	come	71	4	2	caught	6	0
3	done	7	2	3	did	1	0
4	doned	1	0	4	done	2	1
5	get	2	0	5	**go**	3	0
6	got	83	3	6	**gone**	0	1
7	give	25	1	7	**went**	83	3
8	given	1	0	8	heard	0	1
9	gone	0	4	9	heared	1	0
10	went	167	3	10	keep	1	0
11	held	4	0	11	kept	1	0
12	helt	8	0	12	open	1	0
13	laid	5	1	13	opened	5	0
14	lay	1	0	14	push	1	0
15	ran	1	0	15	pushed	2	0
16	run	11	0	16	**ran**	1	0
17	saw	1	0	17	**run**	9	1
18	seen	13	3	18	**runned**	1	0
19	send	1	0	19	scald	1	0
20	sent	7	0	20	scalded	0	1
21	set	1	0	21	saw	1	0
22	sit	1	0	22	seen	7	2
23	start	1	0	23	sang	2	0
24	started	24	0	24	sung	1	0
25	**taken**	3	1	25	take	2	0
26	**takened**	1	0	26	took	23	3
27	**took**	46	2	27	taught	3	0
28	tell	1	0	28	teached	1	0
29	told	75	5	29	tell	2	0
30	want	1	0	30	told	40	1
31	wanted	15	1				

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