

# SPREMI

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## **At the root of “corrupt forms of speaking”: exploring the origins of possessives *have got* and *got***

Over the past four centuries stative possessive constructions have gone through immense grammatical changes. The original verb for stative possession in English is *have*, but in the 16<sup>th</sup> century a new possessive construction emerged. Instead of *having* something one could now *have got* something. In a more recent development, a bare possessive *got* appeared in American English. Today, the expressions *I have blue eyes*, *I have got blue eyes*, and *I got blue eyes* are semantically equivalent. The debate on developmental hypotheses has continued since the 19<sup>th</sup> century with no clear conclusion on the matter.

This talk focuses on earlier developmental hypotheses by viewing them in light of corpus evidence from 1418 to 1900. In this presentation I will also report preliminary results of my current paper, which aims to formulate an updated hypothesis of the development from *have* to *have got* and further to *got* in North American English. Finally, I will discuss my plans for further studies around these possessives.

**Aino Malmivirta** is a doctoral student at Åbo Akademi University. In her PhD thesis, she attempts to construct a usage-based model of the possessives *have got* and *got*. Her research interests include syntax, corpus linguistics, and pragmatics.