

# The grammar of rural and ethnic varieties in the Southeast\*

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## 1. Introduction

Notwithstanding the popular stereotype of the American South as a uniform region, the Southeastern US represents one of the most diverse dialect areas in the United States. It is an area of robust dialect diversity, including a full range of areal, social, and ethnic variation. At least three major dialect boundaries cut across the Southeastern states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, including a seaboard region to the east, a highland region to the west, and an intermediate Coastal Plain and Piedmont region. Within the context of dialect diversity in the South is a set of *enclave dialect communities*, that is, communities that have been set apart from mainstream populations and, in some cases, from the major dialect boundaries set forth in dialect surveys such as Kurath (1949), Carver (1987), and Labov, Ash, and Boberg (fc.). Admittedly, the notions of “enclave community” and “historical isolation” are difficult to define in a precise, objective manner (Wolfram and Thomas 2002), although these constructs generally involve geographical and/or social remoteness, historical continuity, and communicative disconnection from more widespread populations. Perhaps more important than objectifiable criteria, however, is the fact that these communities usually have a strong sense of local, oppositional identity vis-à-vis other groups.

There are several reasons why enclave dialect communities are significant for the description of language variation in the South. Such communities provide a critical basis for reconstructing the history of vernacular dialects in the US, based on the assumption that enclave dialects will be conservative in language change and that they will be relatively immune to some language changes diffusing throughout the wider population. Enclave communities have, in fact, played an important role in reconstructing the earlier status of prominent social and ethnic varieties such as African American English (Poplack 2000, Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001; Wolfram and Thomas 2002; Mallinson and Wolfram 2002) and Appalachian English (Montgomery 1989; Montgomery and Hall 2003). Another reason is the rapid transformation of some historically isolated dialect communities. Abrupt changes in demographic and socioeconomic conditions during the last half of the twentieth century have threatened these once-insular dialect communities, resulting in rapid dialect dissipation and, in a couple of cases, dialect intensification (Schilling-Estes 1997; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2003).

The dynamics of dialect change under these circumstances, including the death of some traditional dialects, is of considerable interest to researchers of language variation and change. Finally, the rapid erosion of some of these remote dialect communities has resulted in a sense of urgency to document them before they are lost or drastically restructured. Given the moribund state of many enclave dialects, it seems incumbent on dialectologists and linguists to document the descriptive status of these varieties.

## 2. The construction of enclave dialect communities

Like other varieties, enclave dialects in the Southeastern US are a product of founder dialects (Mufwene 2001), language contact, language diffusion, and independent language development. Accordingly, these varieties reveal similar and dissimilar traits with other enclave communities as well as with many other adjacent and non-adjacent dialects. Enclave dialects are typified by a set of structures that are shared not only with each other but also with a relatively wide range of rural dialects in the US. Given the distribution of forms in diverse, rural areas throughout the US and their attestation in earlier varieties of English brought to colonial America, we assume that these communities simply have been conservative in their language change. For example, the use of *a*-prefixing, widely distributed in the earlier English of the British Isles and in the US, is amply documented in enclave communities in the Southeastern US and elsewhere in the rural American South (Pederson 1986–1992), but it is also found in rural contexts in New England (Kurath 1939–1943) and in the Midwestern US. (Allen 1973–1977).

A second type of distribution pattern can be traced to regional dialects of the British Isles. In earlier American English, these patterns might have shown regional distribution as well, as settlers from particular regions of England tended to cluster in particular geographical regions in America. For example, the concord pattern attaching *-s* to verbs with plural noun phrase subjects (e.g. *The dogs barks*) has been attributed to varieties in Northern England and to the dialect of the Ulster Scots immigrants who were a dominant population in the highland areas of Appalachia (Montgomery 1989). In fact, the marking of *-s* on verbs with 3<sup>rd</sup> plural subjects has now become known as the “Northern Concord Subject Rule”, in recognition of its historical regionalization in England (see the chapters by Beal and Filppula, this volume).

The assumed origin of such features in the regional dialects of the British Isles, however, raises important questions about their occurrence in enclave dialects of the Southeastern US. Ulster Scots immigrants and speakers from Northern England were certainly part of the overall mix of English-speaking settlers in the Southeast, but they were much more concentrated in some areas – in particular, the Appalachian mountain range – than they were in others, such as the Southeastern coastal

area. Nonetheless, we find traits associated with this assumed regional British dialect founder effect well beyond the original area of settlement. It is possible that the effects of some earlier varieties of English in colonial America diffused to other areas from their original locus, and may even have become part of an earlier American English koiné in the Southeast. If this was the case, then the dialect features might have persisted in enclave varieties that have had no significant contact with each other for a couple of centuries.

In the enclave dialects we survey here, we also find a few structures that are not documented in other regional varieties of American English. In most US varieties, past *be* is usually regularized to *was*, as in *We was home* or *You wasn't there* (Wolfram and Fasold 1974; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998); however, in some enclave communities, we find a pattern in which past *be* is leveled to *was* in positive sentences (e.g. *We was there*) but to *weren't* in negative ones (e.g. *I weren't home*). Within our sample, the *was/weren't* pattern is robust among groups as geographically and culturally disparate as the European Americans of Smith Island and Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay (Schilling-Estes 1997; Shores 2000) and the Lumbee Indians of the Coastal Plain of North Carolina (Wolfram and Sellers 1999). At the same time, there is no documentation of this pattern in other current rural dialects in the Southeast.

Although we can only speculate, it does not seem likely that regularization to *weren't* is due to a simple, direct founder effect from the British Isles (where it is very much alive, see Anderwald 2002). The feature was present in some of the varieties brought to regions of the Eastern Seaboard of America, including those varieties that originally came from Southwest England (Orton et al. 1962–1971). From that point, it probably developed into a regional feature of the coastal Delmarva dialect region (Shores 2000; Wolfram and Thomas 2002). As people from the Delmarva region moved to various coastal sites, including islands in the Chesapeake Bay and the Outer Banks, the pattern was apparently diffused along the Mid-Atlantic and Southern coasts. In this case, the earlier development of a regional variety of American English spread to other areas that then became isolated.

Like other varieties, the dialects of enclave communities also change from within. While dialectologists and historical linguists certainly acknowledge the potential for internal linguistic change in peripheral dialect areas, the role of innovation tends to be overlooked in most descriptions of enclave dialect communities. Instead, there seems to be an assumption that dialect forms in historically isolated varieties will be quite conservative with respect to innovation and that relic forms will remain relatively intact in their linguistic composition. Andersen (1988), however, argues that what we conveniently refer to here as *the relic assumption* has led researchers to slight system-internal innovations in favor of hypothetical contact situations that lead to diffusion-based explanations. Andersen (1988: 54) notes: “[...] there are internally motivated innovations which arise independently

of any external stimulus. These too have an areal dimension and may appear to spread merely because they arise in different places at different times.”

This claim certainly counters the relic assumption that remnant dialect communities will necessarily be conservative in their patterns of change and rarely favor innovation. Our investigation of dialect enclave communities in the coastal US supports the contention that language change can indeed take place fairly rapidly in enclave dialect areas and that dialect intensification – that is, the accelerated development of dialect distinctiveness – can take place through internally based language change, even when a variety is in a moribund state (Schilling-Estes and Wolfram 1999). Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2003), for example, show that the remorphologization of past tense *be* is an accelerating change taking place currently in at least several unrelated enclave dialects in the mid-Atlantic coast ranging from the islands in the Chesapeake Bay to the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

The rapid rate of change within a relatively compressed time period suggests that we cannot simply assume that dialect change is necessarily slow or fast, or that it takes a unilateral path. Rather, there may be periods of rapidity of change as well as conservatism over the course of centuries of isolation. Even when enclave dialects share a common core of structures vis-à-vis dialects of the wider population, particular communities may indicate selectivity in their retention and development of dialect forms. For example, perfective *be* in sentences such as *I'm been there before* was once a fairly common dialect trait across a broad range of earlier dialects of English, including most of the communities considered here. We know that perfective *have* was a later development in the English language, and that there was widespread fluctuation with perfective *be* well into the seventeenth century. But in one of the enclave communities considered here, we find that the use of perfective *be* is still a robust, productive form, even among younger speakers (Dannenberg 2003). Furthermore, the structure has undergone some independent structural and semantic development that now distinguishes it from other varieties where it is still productive. Though the perfective use of *be* might qualify as a “relic” form given the traditional definition of this notion, it must be understood that such items are hardly static structurally or functionally. Indeed, these forms may undergo independent development within a particular community that sets the community dialect apart from other enclave dialects in subtle but important ways. If we assume that the label “relic” refers to earlier forms selectively preserved intact, then there would be very few forms that qualify; if, on the other hand, we admit that these forms are subject to change just like non-relic features, then we are hard put to show how change in relic forms differs from other types of language change, apart from the fact that relic forms involve changes in items that have receded in more widely distributed, socially dominant varieties of the language.

Finally, change may also involve parallel independent development, or “drift” among unrelated dialect communities due to the operation of the general processes

of analogy and universal tendencies to move toward unmarked forms. All of the varieties examined here, for example, show the regularization of irregular plurals (e.g. *two sheeps*), the regularization of past tense forms (e.g. *They growed up*), and negative concord (e.g. *They didn't do nothing*). These general traits are shared not only by these enclave communities but also by a host of other vernacular communities of English that include but are not restricted to American English. The developments are simply part of the natural processes that guide changes quite independently of diffusion or language contact, or, as Chambers (1995: 242) puts it “primitives of vernacular dialects in that they recur ubiquitously all over the world.” More than anything, analogical pressures to regularize and generalize linguistic rules distinguish socially subordinate enclave communities from the prescribed standard English norm which is, according to Chambers (1995: 246), “more strictly tightly constrained in its grammar and phonology” due to the social pressures to resist some natural changes. These system-internal processes must be factored into the description and explanation of these varieties as they configure and reconfigure themselves over time in ways that are both uniform and diverse.

Notwithstanding romantic notions about enclave dialect communities existing in splendid isolation apart from all contact with outside dialect communities, we must also consider the role of language contact in the development and maintenance of enclave dialects. Regardless of the situation, there is some inevitable interaction and communication with other groups. The communities represented here are no different in this regard, and each of them has had contact with other groups in their past, as well as varying types of contact more recently. Thus, structural traits may be transferred from other language varieties. However, linguistic accommodation is not necessarily a matter of categorical structural acceptance or rejection. In fact, it is possible that *interdialectal forms* may arise – that is, “forms that actually originally occurred in neither dialect” (Trudgill 1986: 62). In our discussion of the grammatical attachment of third person plural *-s* in one of the communities considered here, Hyde County, we find that the use of *-s* attachment by African American cohorts reflects but does not precisely replicate its use by European Americans, showing a type of overgeneralization characteristic of language contact situations. Donor dialects thus worked in tandem with language contact strategies in the configuration of the earlier African American speech in this isolated, bi-ethnic context. Both intra-community and inter-community contact must be recognized, not only in the formative stages of such dialects, but also as varieties reconfigure themselves over time and as they emerge from insularity. The contact dynamics of the different enclave communities must be taken into account along with founder effects, diffusion, and independent development in understanding the structuring and restructuring of enclave dialect communities.

### 3. The grammar of enclave dialects

In this section I describe some of the morphological and syntactic traits of a representative set of enclave dialect communities. The description is based on several types of communities. First, we include island communities on the Outer Banks of North Carolina (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1997; Wolfram, Hazen, and Schilling-Estes 1999) and the Chesapeake Bay area of Maryland and Virginia (Schilling-Estes 1997; Schilling-Estes and Wolfram 1999; Shores 2000). These mono-ethnic, European American communities represent one of the paradigm types of the Southeastern enclave community. These are complemented by the examination of a couple of bi-ethnic enclave communities, including a longstanding African American and European American community on the coast of North Carolina (Wolfram and Thomas 2002), Hyde County, and a receding bi-ethnic community in the Appalachian mountains of North Carolina, Beech Bottom (Mallinson and Wolfram 2002). Finally, we include the case of a tri-ethnic situation involving the Lumbee Native American Indians (Wolfram and Dannenberg 1999; Dannenberg 2003). The Lumbee, who lost their ancestral language generations ago, have carved out a unique sociocultural variety that symbolizes their unique status as neither white nor black. The location of these communities is given in the map in figure 1.

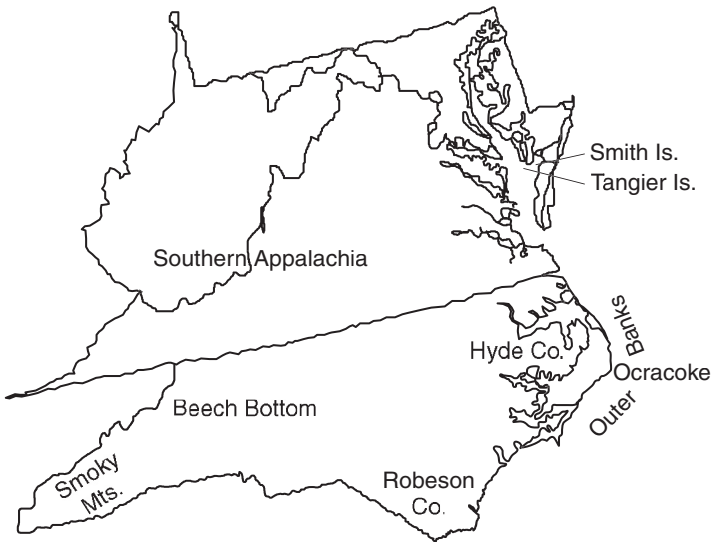


Figure 1. Rural and ethnic sites of the Southeast United States

In describing the structural characteristics of these enclave situations, I attempt to highlight the ways in which they are similar to and different from each other, as well as from other rural Southern varieties. The description is organized on the basis of major grammatical categories.

### 3.1. Verb phrase

Some of the most distinguishing traits of enclave dialect situations involve the verb phrase, including a set of specialized auxiliaries, irregular verbs, and subject-verb agreement patterns. Many of these features unify these varieties with other Southern American vernacular dialects but there are also a couple of cases that seem to be confined to enclave dialect communities.

#### 3.1.1. Finite *be*

The use of *be* as a finite form in sentences like *That's how it bes* has been attested in selected regions of the South, although its productive use among European Americans tends to be quite regionally restricted (Montgomery and Mishoe 1999). It may occur with a habitual meaning (e.g. *They usually be there*), as it currently does in contemporary African American Vernacular English (AAVE), but it is clearly not restricted to this aspectual reference in enclave dialect communities. It is rare in the enclave communities that we have examined here, excepting Lumbee English in Southeastern North Carolina, where it has become a dialect icon associated with their distinct sociocultural variety. It should be noted, however, that the Lumbee live in a county adjacent to one of the few regions in the United States where finite *be(s)* characterizes the European-American population, Horry County, South Carolina (Montgomery and Mishoe 1999). Older European American residents in Robeson County where the Lumbee reside also show vestiges of finite *be* but elderly European Americans and African Americans in other enclave sites rarely use this form.

A kind of restructuring of *be* in Lumbee English is taking place in the current generation of speakers. This development coincides to some extent with the integration of public schools in the early 1970s, an event that brought Lumbees into increasing contact with African Americans. While the use of finite *be(s)* has come to characterize the Lumbee (Wolfram and Dannenberg 1999), habitual *be* in constructions such as *Sometimes they be acting nice* is a well-known feature of twentieth-century AAVE (see Wolfram, this volume). Among older Lumbee speakers, *be(s)* may be used in habitual contexts, but it is not restricted to this function. Younger Lumbee speakers show the increased use of *be* in *v-ing* constructions with a habitual reading, the contemporary grammaticalized function of *be* in AAVE. At the same time, *be* may have verbal *-s* attachment with 3<sup>rd</sup> sg. subjects (e.g. *The train bes coming every day at noon*) and, to a lesser extent, 3<sup>rd</sup> pl. subjects (e.g. *The trains bes coming*). This pattern is unlike its contemporary AAVE use, which does not typically mark verbal *-s*. We thus observe that *be* has partially accommodated the grammaticalization that has taken place in AAVE while retaining distinctive parameters of the concord system of Lumbee Vernacular English.

### 3.1.2. *Copula/auxiliary absence*

The absence of copula and auxiliary for contractible forms of *is* and *are* (e.g. *She nice* for ‘She’s nice’ or *They acting silly* for ‘They’re acting silly’) is strongly associated with AAVE (e.g. Labov 1972a; Wolfram 1969; Fasold 1972; Rickford 1999), but it is also shared to some extent with Southern white rural vernacular varieties of English. In Southern European American English varieties, particularly those within the former large plantation areas of the South, deletion tends to be limited to contractible forms of *are*; it is also used at reduced frequency levels compared to AAVE. In Southeastern enclave communities, copula absence is associated primarily with African American communities. For example, it is not found in the exclusively white island dialects of the Outer Banks (Wolfram, Hazen and Schilling-Estes 1999) and Chesapeake Bay (Schilling-Estes 1997) and it is not characteristic of the European American cohort community in Hyde County even though it is found among African Americans there. Deletion is also found among African American speakers in Appalachian enclave communities (Mallinson and Wolfram 2002), where some European American speakers do sporadically exhibit deletion of *are* (Wolfram and Christian 1976). In Lumbee Vernacular English, it is found to a very limited extent (Dannenberg 2003) and used at frequency levels between those for cohort African American and European American speakers. The occurrence of copula absence in enclave communities seems attributable to contact with AAVE speakers rather than to an independent development.

Enclave dialects regularly exhibit the deletion of contracted forms of *have* as in *I been there before* or *He been there*. This is a phonological process involving the deletion of a weak final consonant rather than a morphological process.

### 3.1.3. *Perfective be*

Many enclave dialects alternate perfective *be* with the auxiliary *have* as in *I’m been there* for *I’ve been there* or *You’re been there* for *You’ve been there*. This is no doubt a perpetuation of an earlier pattern that included widespread fluctuation with perfective *be* and *have* well into the seventeenth century. Although perfective *be* is now relatively infrequent in most enclave dialects in the Southeastern US, it remains a robust, productive form in one variety we examined, Lumbee Vernacular English (Dannenberg 2003). Furthermore, its development in this variety distinguishes it from other varieties where it is still found. Perfective *be* is structurally restricted to contracted finite forms (e.g. *I know I’m been here* but not *\*I know I am been here*), and it has expanded semantically to apply to some simple past constructions (e.g. *I’m forgot the food yesterday*). Though perfective *be* is indicated in a wide range of enclave dialects, its restructuring in Lumbee English illustrates how a particular dialect community may selectively preserve and expand an item

to distinguish itself both from other enclave dialect communities and from dialects found in the wider population.

#### 3.1.4. *A-prefixing*

The use of the prefix or proclitic *a-* with *v-ing* structures, as in *She was a-huntin' and a-fishin'* or *They came a-lookin' for the possum* is a widespread structural trait in enclave dialect communities in the Southeast as well as in other rural vernacular varieties of English. The prefix *a-* may only attach to verbs and verbal complements as in *They went a-walkin'* and *We was goin' up there a-squirrel huntin'*; it is also attached occasionally to *-ed* participles as in *It had a white sheet a-wrapped around it* or *It's supposed to be a-haunted*. It is not generally permissible with prepositions, so that a sentence like *They make money a-fishin'* is well formed but a sentence like *\*They make money by a-fishin'* is ungrammatical. This restriction is no doubt related to the fact that *a-* prefixing developed historically from a temporal locative as in *Rex was at/on fishin'*. In fact, in some communities, older speakers still occasionally use sentences like *Rex was at fishin' when we got there*. These sentences are remnants from the period when *a-* prefixing alternated with a temporal locative preposition. There are also phonetic restrictions on the current use of *a-* prefixing. *A-* prefixing does not generally occur when the following syllable is unstressed, as in *\*a-discoverin'* or *\*a-repeatin'*; this prohibition is no doubt a reflection of the prosodic restriction against words beginning with two unstressed syllables. Furthermore, *a-* prefixing is favored in preconsonantal contexts (e.g. *She was a-drinkin'*) over prevocalic ones (e.g. *She was a-eatin'*) though it is permissible in both types of contexts. All of the varieties we have surveyed exhibit *a-* prefixing to some extent, though they show great variation in their relative levels of usage. Elderly speakers on the Outer Banks use it infrequently and younger speakers rarely use it at all, while some elderly Lumbee speakers use it at high frequency levels and young speakers in more isolated Lumbee communities use it productively as well.

#### 3.1.5. *Completive done and slam*

The use of *done* with the past tense of the verb, as in *They done used all the good ones* is a persistent structural trait of enclave dialects that is shared with Southern European American and African American vernacular varieties. On the Outer Banks and among the Lumbee, the variant *slam* is used in much the same way as *done*, so that we may get sentences such as *They slam used all the good ones*. In many respects, completive *done* and *slam* function like a perfect, referring to an action completed in the recent past, but they can also be used to highlight a change of state or to intensify an activity, as in a sentence like *I done/slam told you not to mess up*. It is a stable feature though not used as frequently in enclave communities as it is in some other Southern rural varieties.

### 3.1.6. *Specialized auxiliaries*

Enclave dialect communities tend to share a set of specialized auxiliaries with surrounding Southern rural vernacular dialects. We find, for example, the generalized Southern form *fixin' to* referring to an immediate future or planned event (e.g. *I'm fixin' to go now*) and double modals such as *I might could do it* in enclave dialect communities. We also find counterfactual *liketa* in *I was so scared I liketa died*, although it may differ subtly from how it is used in more widespread Southern rural varieties. In some varieties of Southern English, its use is restricted to contexts of intensified significance, with a metaphorical rather than a literal reference. In these varieties, a sentence like *They liketa went through the roof when they saw the mess* is well-formed but a sentence with a literal reference of 'almost' such as *\*They liketa went through the roof but the drill they were using wasn't powerful enough* would not be permissible. In other dialects, including the enclave dialects we have examined here, it may also be used with a literal meaning as well as a metaphorical, intensified sense so that the latter sentence would indeed be permissible. Its more expansive use in different enclave communities suggests that its restriction to counterfactual *liketa* for intensified significance was probably a later development in English. Though *liketa* is derived historically from the phrase *like to have*, it is currently interpreted as an unanalyzable lexical item.

### 3.1.7. *Irregular verbs*

Irregular verbs tend to fall well within the vernacular irregular verb patterns set forth in Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998: 331). The types of differences are enumerated as follows:

1. past generalized as participle  
*I had went down there.*  
*She may have took the car.*
2. participle generalized as past  
*He done the work.*  
*She seen something there.*
3. bare root as past  
*She run there yesterday.*  
*They come to my house.*
4. regularization of past tense  
*Everybody knowed him.*  
*They dranked the soda.*
5. different irregular form  
*I hearn something.*  
*It riz up in front of me.*

Enclave dialects are no different from other vernacular varieties of American English in the patterning of irregular verb forms. However, the retention of different irregular forms (Type 5), such as *hearn* for *heard*, *riz* for *rose*, *clumb* for *climbed*, or *holp* for *help* is much more characteristic of enclave varieties than most other vernacular varieties of English. Many of these forms are, of course, retentions of an earlier, more expansive set of irregular verb forms in English.

### 3.1.8. Subject-verb agreement

Several aspects of subject-verb agreement are noteworthy. The concord pattern in which *-s* is marked on a verb with a plural subject, as in *The dogs barks* or *People goes there*, is widely documented as a feature of American English varieties that were influenced by the Scotch-Irish, such as Appalachian English (Wolfram and Christian 1976; Christian, Dube and Wolfram 1988; Montgomery 1989), although its colonial distribution apparently was not limited to the Southern Highland region (Wolfram and Thomas 2002). In fact, we find robust patterns of 3<sup>rd</sup> pl. *-s* marking in all of the enclave dialect communities we have examined here, extending from European American communities in the Chesapeake Bay and Outer Banks to African Americans in both coastal and mountain locations, as well as in Lumbee Vernacular English in the Coastal Plain. Although it may occur at different levels of usage and is subject to different constraints in its application, it is clearly a widespread feature of enclave dialect communities in the Southeast.

There are several constraints on the incidence of plural *-s* marking, namely, the subject type and the proximity of the subject and the verb. Noun phrase subjects (e.g. *The dogs barks*) favor the incidence of plural *-s* marking over pronoun subjects (e.g. *They barks*), and collective nouns (e.g. *People likes the dogs*) and coordinate noun phrases (e.g. *Me and my dog likes to run*) favor *-s* marking over other types of noun phrases. Some enclave dialects show quite strong subject type constraints whereas others show weaker constraints. For example, the Hyde County European American community shows a categorical prohibition against plural *-s* marking with pronoun subjects whereas cohort African American Hyde County speakers show a relatively weak variable constraint (Wolfram and Thomas 2002).

The second constraint is based on adjacency. Verbs that are not adjacent to the subject because of a heavy NP (e.g. *The dogs in the trucks barks*) or a clausal complement (e.g. *The dogs that barks are hungry*) are more likely to attach a plural *-s* than those that are immediately adjacent to the subject. This appears to be a fairly constant pattern though its application is stronger in some enclave dialect communities than it is in others.

Most of the dialects we have examined show occasional *-s* attachment with subjects other than third person as well, as in *I goes down there* or *You takes you a good wife* but this is much more sporadic than 3<sup>rd</sup> pl. *-s* attachment. Furthermore, the use of *-s* with non-third person subjects tends to be idiosyncratic; a few

speakers use it with some regularity but the majority of speakers rarely use it. The attachment of *-s* on 1<sup>st</sup> person as a type of historical present in personal narratives as in *I goes down there and sees this ghost...* is also found in enclave dialect communities. These communities also use *don't* instead of *doesn't* as a 3<sup>rd</sup> sg. form, as in *She don't go there* or *The dog don't bark*. This is a widespread characteristic of American English vernacular dialects wherever they are found.

The pattern of 3<sup>rd</sup> sg. *-s* absence in sentences such as *The dog bark\_* has not been documented to any extent in the European American enclave communities we have examined in this survey. At the same time, 3<sup>rd</sup> sg. *-s* absence is a characteristic of several representative African American enclave communities (Wolfram and Thomas 2002; Mallinson and Wolfram 2002) coexisting with a cohort European American community, revealing a consistent ethnolinguistic boundary in bi-ethnic enclave communities.

### 3.1.9. *Past and present tense be agreement*

Patterns of subject-verb agreement are both similar to and different from those found in other vernacular dialects of English. On the one hand, enclave dialects participate in the widespread vernacular pattern of *be* regularization for present and past forms of conjugated *be*; *are* and *am* level to *is*, as in *The folks is home* or *Y'all is here* and past tense *be* levels to *was*, as in *The folks was there* or *Y'all was here*. Regularization is much more common in past than in present tense, as it is in virtually all varieties of vernacular English having *be* leveling. The comparison of leveling over time and place indicates that it is diminishing somewhat (Wolfram and Thomas 2002), probably due to the effect of prescriptive norms. Nonetheless, it is still quite robust in some enclave communities.

In most US varieties, past *be* is usually regularized to *was*, as in *We was home* or *You wasn't there* (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998). However, in the Southeastern coastal area extending from Maryland and Virginia to North Carolina, there is an alternate pattern in which past *be* is leveled to *was* in positive sentences (e.g. *We was there*) and to *weren't* in negative sentences (e.g. *I weren't home*). This pattern represents remorphologization of the two past *be* stems on the basis of polarity, such that *was* is now used to mark affirmative rather than singular meaning, and the *were*-stem is now used to mark negativity rather than plurality. In the Southeast, the *was/weren't* pattern is robust among groups as geographically and culturally disparate as the European Americans on the islands in the Chesapeake Bay (Schilling-Estes 1997; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2003) and the Lumbee Indians of the Coastal Plain of North Carolina (Wolfram and Sellers 1999). Furthermore, it is found in both coastal African American and European American enclave communities (Wolfram and Thomas 2002). There is little indication that it is found among cohort rural communities in neighboring Coastal Plain regions or in the Highland South. Although leveling to *weren't* is well-represented in past

and present vernacular varieties of English spoken in the British Isles (cf. Anderwald 2002), the coastal Southeastern US is the only region outside of the British Isles where it has been documented.

### 3.1.10. Other verb phrase structures

A number of traits affecting verbs are restricted to particular lexical items and verb plus complement combinations rather than general categories of verbs. A couple of items involve the use of the complement *to* with the verb. One occurs with *v-ing* constructions as in *He started to running* or *Dad went to driving real fast*. Another involves *have to* with a causative or resultative meaning as in *She'll have him to bring the paper when he comes home*. This trait is shared with most Southern American dialects in general. Enclave dialects are also more prone than other rural varieties to retain *for to* complement constructions as in *I'll have for him to come home* or *I want for her to take it with her*. Many of these uses involve retentions of older forms that have been lost in other varieties of English and are general features shared with surrounding Southern rural varieties of English.

The use of *aim* for 'intend' or 'plan' (e.g. *I aim to do it later*), *hear tell* for 'hear' (e.g. *I heard tell you have a new boat*), *carry* for 'accompany' (e.g. *I'll carry you to the store*), and *reckon* for 'suppose' or 'surmise' (e.g. *I reckon I should leave now*) are widespread features of contemporary or earlier Southern American English that are shared with enclave dialect communities. Particular lexical differences may also characterize specific enclave communities such as the use of *mommuck* for 'harass' on the Outer Banks (e.g. *He mommucked his kids all the time*) or the use of *progging* for 'looking for artifacts' (particularly arrowheads as in *He was proggin' yesterday*) on the islands of the Chesapeake Bay (Shores 2000), but such differences have to be considered on an item-by-item basis for different enclave communities.

## 3.2. Adverbs

Several distinctive features of adverbs characterize enclave dialect communities. One is the placement of temporal adverbial phrases. In English, adverbial phrases may occur after the verb phrase as in *We have floods once in a while* or in pre-sentential position as in *Once in a while we have floods*, but some dialects, including the enclave dialects in our survey, also permit placement within between the subject and the verb phrase, as in *We once in a while have floods*. We also find the use of *anymore* in affirmative sentences with a meaning of 'nowadays', as in *We have a lot of floods anymore*. These varieties align themselves with regional Midland dialects of American English rather than surrounding Southern varieties in this regard. Although some positive *anymore* varieties permit pre-sentential movement of the adverb as in *Anymore, we have a lot of floods*, it is only found in post-verbal

position in the enclave dialects we have surveyed. We also find an expanded reference for the adverb *whenever* in the enclave communities, in which it may be used to refer to a punctual event as in *Whenever I lost my mother a few years ago* or an extended time event in *Whenever she was living she taught me*. It is quite evident in the highland areas of Appalachia, but it is also found to some extent in coastal varieties. In most other varieties of American English, its use is restricted to recurring or conditional events as in *Whenever she goes to the store, she buys fish*.

A set of specialized intensifying adverbs characteristic of Southern dialects is also found in enclave varieties of the Southeast. The intensifier *right* retains its earlier, more unrestricted co-occurrence with general adjectives and adverbs, as in *The dog is right big* or *He hollered right loud*. In most varieties of American English, the intensifier *right* is now limited to location in place or time, as in *She's right around the corner* or *He's right on time*. The intensifier *plumb*, which can alternate with *slam*, refers to a state of completeness, as in *She fell plumb asleep* or *She fell slam asleep*. *Plumb* and *slam* are also restricted to neutral and negative attributes; accordingly, a sentence like *He's plumb ugly* is permissible but as sentence like *\*He's plumb handsome* is not. In a couple of the coastal dialect communities we have examined, *some* may be attached to an adjective, as in *The meal sure was good-some*. However, we have found it used in contrasting ways; on the Outer Banks island of Ocracoke, *-some* strengthens the degree of the attribute whereas on Smith Island in the Chesapeake Bay it weakens it (Schilling-Estes 1997). Thus, *good-some* in Ocracoke means that the food was very tasty, but on Smith Island it means that it was not very tasty. The adverbial use of *but* with a negative in *He ain't but fifteen* or *There ain't but so much I can do* also is found with a meaning of 'only' or 'no more than'.

Enclave dialects are like most other vernacular dialects of English in their regularization of comparatives, so that multisyllabic words like *beautifullest* or *awfulest* may attach the comparative suffix rather than the lexical comparative forms *more* and *most* that are used in standard varieties. Pleonastic marking in *most beautifullest* and *more older* is also found. Fairly extensive absence of adverbial *-ly* is common in these varieties, so that we find sentences like *I was exceptional scared* or *I'm frightful bad at that*. Again, this is a feature shared by many vernacular varieties of English, though it seems to be more expansively applied in the enclave dialect communities than in some other vernacular varieties (Wolfram and Fasold 1974).

### 3.3. Negation

Negative patterns in enclave varieties are quite like those in other vernacular varieties of English, including negative concord and the extensive use of the lexical marker *ain't*. Negative concord, or multiple negation, may occur with postverbal indefinites, as in *It wasn't nothing*, with preverbal indefinites, as in *Nobody don't*

like him ‘Nobody likes him’, and with inversion, as in *Don’t nobody like him* or *Ain’t nobody home*. Cross-clausal negative concord also may occur in sentences like *There wasn’t much I couldn’t do*, meaning that there wasn’t much that the speaker could do. Cross-clausal negative concord, though rare, is shared with other Southern vernaculars (Wolfram and Christian 1976) as well as with AAVE (Labov 1972a).

Like other vernacular dialects, *ain’t* is used as a preverbal negative for present tense forms of *be* (i.e. *am not*, *isn’t*, *aren’t* in *She ain’t here*) as well as for the present auxiliary *haven’t/hasn’t* in *She ain’t been there lately*. The generalized past tense variant *wont* for *wasn’t* and *weren’t* (e.g. *I wont there yesterday*), found in some mainland Southern vernacular varieties, is not found to any extent in coastal and highland enclave varieties, though it is found in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont regions. Enclave communities still exhibit vestiges of older negative adverbs such as *nary* in *I didn’t catch nary a fish last night* or *tain’t* in *Tain’t a thing that will hurt you*.

### 3.4. Nominals

Most noun phrase traits found in enclave dialects are shared with a wide range of English vernaculars, although there are also few features that may distinguish these varieties from other dialects. Plural *-s* absence with quantified measure nouns is quite prominent in most of the enclave dialects we have surveyed, as in *I caught 200 pound\_ of flounder* or *It’s four mile\_ from here*. These varieties also share in the regularization of irregular plurals, including items that shift from irregular to regular suffixation (e.g. *oxes*, *gooses*), the attachment of *-s* to zero marked plural forms (e.g. *three sheeps*, *two corns*), and the redundant marking of irregular plurals (e.g. *firemens*). In this regard, these varieties are no different from other vernacular dialects of American English.

Some noun phrase differences involve selection restrictions with articles. Certain types of diseases, for example, may routinely take an article (e.g. *the earache*, *the toothache*, *the colic*); in most mainstream varieties they do not take an article. Enclave dialect communities also tend to have a small set of unique lexical items referring to local geography (e.g. *up the beach* for ‘off the island’ in Ocracoke, *on the swamp* for ‘neighborhood’ in the Lumbee community), terms differentiating locals from outsiders (e.g. *dingbatters* for outsiders versus *O’cockers* for native islanders on the island of Ocracoke) and terms for community-based social distinctions. For example, *swamp Indian* and *brickhouse Indian* are Lumbee designations for high-status and low-status community residents and the term *Lum* is reserved for a person who has a strong sense of Native American identity. Lexical differences of this type must, of course, be catalogued on a community-by-community basis.

Pronominal differences also characterize enclave dialect communities. Most Southeastern US enclave situations participate to some extent in the widespread

Southern use of second plural *y'all*. In highland regions of Southern Appalachia, *you'uns* is an alternate form for second person plurals, including some African Americans who live in this highland region. The retention of the *- 'n* suffix in *his 'n*, *her 'n* in non-attributive position, as in *It's his 'n*, *not her 'n* is still found in highland enclave communities, but it is receding rapidly. The use of *me* as a possessive in *I lost me cap* is also found to a limited degree among some elderly speakers in highland and coastal communities.

Enclave varieties share the widespread Southern benefactive dative in sentences like *I got me a new car*, as well as null subject pronouns in embedded sentences such as *It's a man come over here yesterday*. The use of *what* as a relative pronoun in *That's the man what I was talking about* is rarely found, though there are vestiges of it in a few elderly speakers. Elderly speakers may also still show remnants of pronominal attachment in which the *wh*-form follows rather than precedes *ever*, as in *everwhat*, *everwho*, and *everhow* (e.g. *I do everwhat he says*), though these forms are rarely if ever found among middle-aged and younger speakers.

Enclave dialects share in the widespread vernacular regularization of reflexives *hissself* and *theirselves* as in *He washed hissself* and *They washed theirselves*; the use of objective forms as demonstratives in *I brought them dogs*; and the use of objective forms of the pronoun in coordinates in *Me and him got it*. Finally, we should note the prominence of existential *it* in *It's a new person here* for *There's a new person here*. While a couple of dialects we have examined occasionally use *they* as an existential in *They's a new person here*, existential *it* is much more pervasive.

### 3.5. Prepositions

A number of prepositional differences typify enclave dialect areas, but most are lexically specific and therefore have to be discussed on an item-by-item basis. One of the common traits is the use of genitive phrases rather than temporal locatives for times of the day and the seasons, as in *She'll be there of the morning* or *You should plant of the fall*. Island communities regularly use the preposition *to* for static locatives in *She's to the dock* or *She's to the restaurant* where other English dialects use *at*. There are other differences, but they relate to individual lexical items and phrases rather than general patterns, as in *upside the head* for 'on the side of', *agin* for 'against', *across the beach* for *on the beach*, and so forth. Some differences apply to verb + particle combinations rather than prepositions *per se*, as in *bless out* for 'curse' (e.g. *They blessed him out*), *happen in* (e.g. *The happened in on us*), *left out* (e.g. *They left out the house*), and so forth.

#### 4. Conclusion

We summarize our conclusions in several comparative charts. Descriptive studies of enclave communities include European American island communities on the Outer Banks (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1997; Wolfram, Hazen and Schilling-Estes 1999) and in the Chesapeake Bay (Schilling-Estes 1997; Schilling-Estes and Wolfram 1999; Shores 2000); bi-ethnic coastal communities (Wolfram and Thomas 2002) and highland communities (Mallinson and Wolfram 2002); and the tri-ethnic community in which the Lumbee Native Americans reside (Wolfram and Dannenberg 1999; Dannenberg 2003). To situate these varieties in terms of a broader base of vernacular varieties, general Southern rural vernacular English and non-Southern Northern vernacular English are included, based on works such as Wolfram and Fasold (1974), and Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998). Separate tables are given for the verb phrase (Table 1), for nominals (Table 2), and for other structures, including negatives, adverbs, and prepositions (Table 3). In the comparison, a check ✓ indicates that the feature is present and parentheses around the check (✓) indicate that the feature is infrequent. The checklist is naturally subject to the usual kinds of limitations associated with qualitative summary inventories of this type.

Table 1. Comparative dialect profile of the verb phrase

Grammatical Structure	Euro. Am Coastal	Afr. Am. Coastal	Euro. Am. Highland	Afr. Am. Highland	Lumbee English	Rural Southern (Euro. Am.)	Non-Southern
<i>a</i> -prefixing e.g. <i>He was a-fishin'</i>	✓	(✓)	✓	(✓)	✓	(✓)	
3 <sup>rd</sup> pl. -s marking e.g. <i>The dogs barks</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
3 <sup>rd</sup> sg. -s absence e.g. <i>The dog bark</i>		✓		✓			
Finite <i>be</i> e.g. <i>It bes like that</i>		(✓)		(✓)	✓		
Copula absence <i>are</i> ; e.g. <i>You ugly</i> <i>is</i> ; e.g. <i>You ugly</i>		✓ ✓	(✓)	✓ (✓)	(✓)	✓	
Perfective <i>be</i> e.g. <i>I'm been there</i> <i>I might be done it</i>	(✓)	(✓)			✓ ✓		
<i>weren't</i> regularization e.g. <i>It weren't me</i>	✓	✓			✓		
Completive <i>done</i> e.g. <i>He done fixed it</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	

Table 1. (continued) Comparative dialect profile of the verb phrase

Grammatical Structure	Euro. Am Coastal	Afr. Am. Coastal	Euro. Am. Highland	Afr. Am. Highland	Lumbee English	Rural Southern (Euro. Am.)	Non-Southern
Counterfactual <i>liketa</i> e.g. <i>I liketa died</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Double modals e.g. <i>He might could come</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>for to</i> complement e.g. <i>I want for to get it</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
causative <i>have...to</i> e.g. <i>I have him to do it</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>was/were</i> regularization e.g. <i>We was there</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
irregular verb							
(1) generalized past/part. e.g. <i>She had came here</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
(2) generalized part./past e.g. <i>She done it</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
(3) bare root as past e.g. <i>She give him a dog</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
(4) regularization e.g. <i>She knowed him</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
(5) different irregular e.g. <i>He retch up the roof</i>	(✓)		✓				

Table 2. Comparative dialect profile of nominals

Grammatical Structure	Euro. Am Coastal	Afr. Am. Coastal	Euro. Am. Highland	Afr. Am. Highland	Lumbee English	Rural Southern (Euro. Am.)	Non-Southern
-s-pl absence, measure nouns e.g. <i>40 pound_</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	
Long plural with -s + stop e.g. <i>postes</i>	✓	(✓)	✓	(✓)	✓		
Regularized plurals e.g. <i>oxes, sheeps</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2nd pl. <i>y'all</i> e.g. <i>Y'all are a crowd</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2nd pl. <i>you 'ns</i> e.g. <i>You 'uns are a crowd</i>			✓	(✓)			

Table 2. (continued) Comparative dialect profile of nominals

Grammatical Structure	Euro. Am Coastal	Afr. Am. Coastal	Euro. Am. Highland	Afr. Am. Highland	Lumbee English	Rural Southern (Euro. Am.)	Non-Southern (Euro. Am.)
Absolute -'n e.g. <i>It's his'n</i>			✓				
Benefactive dative e.g. <i>I got me a new bike</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
ever + pronoun e.g. <i>everwhat, everwho</i>	(✓)		(✓)		(✓)		
Expletive <i>it</i> e.g. <i>It's nothing to do it</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)
Embedded null subject pro e.g. <i>It's a woman come here</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pronominal <i>what</i> <i>The man what I talked to</i>	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)		(✓)		
Regularized reflexives e.g. <i>He washed hisself</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Objective demonstratives e.g. <i>them people</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 3. Comparative dialect profile: Negation, adverbs, prepositions

Grammatical Structure	Euro. Am Coastal	Afr. Am. Coastal	Euro. Am. Highland	Afr. Am. Highland	Lumbee English	Rural Southern (Euro. Am.)	Non-Southern (Euro. Am.)
NEGATION							
Postverbal concord e.g. <i>It wasn't nothing</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
preverbal concord e.g. <i>Nobody don't like it</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Affirmative negative inversion e.g. <i>Didn't nobody like it</i>	(✓)	(✓)	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	
<i>ain't</i> for <i>be + not, have + not</i> e.g. <i>She ain't there</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>nary</i> e.g. <i>It's nary a fish</i>	✓	(✓)	✓	(✓)			
ADVERBS							
Verb phrase placement e.g. <i>We once and a while travel</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Table 3. (continued) Comparative dialect profile: Negation, adverbs, prepositions

Grammatical Structure	Euro. Am Coastal	Afr. Am Coastal	Euro. Am Highland	Afr. Am Highland	Lumbee English	Rural Southern (Euro. Am.)	Non-Southern (Euro. Am.)
Positive <i>anymore</i> e.g. <i>We watch DVDs anymore</i>	✓	(✓)	✓	(✓)	(✓)		(✓)
Punctual <i>whenever</i> e.g. <i>Whenever I lost my mother</i>	(✓)	(✓)	✓	(✓)			
Intensifying <i>right</i> e.g. <i>He's right smart</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Absolute <i>plumb</i> e.g. <i>The fell plumb asleep</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	(✓)	
Intensifying <i>-some</i> e.g. <i>The food was good-some</i>	✓	(✓)					
Regularized comparatives e.g. <i>It's the most beautiful</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PREPOSITIONS							
Genitive time and season e.g. <i>She's there of the morning</i>	✓	(✓)	✓	(✓)			
Static locative <i>to</i> e.g. <i>She's to the dock</i>	✓	✓	(✓)				

The comparison reveals that enclave communities in the Southeast share the majority of their dialect structures with other vernaculars of English, particularly Southern rural vernacular varieties. At the same time, there are distinctive traits that set them apart. Some of these traits are shared by all of the enclave varieties we have surveyed but a few structures are unique to a particular enclave dialect community or a subset of communities. Distinctive traits may represent conservative language change and founder effects, but they may also indicate accommodation from language contact and independent language change. The resultant configuration may unite different enclave dialects with each other and with more widespread vernacular dialects, following the principle of *vernacular dialect congruity*, but the constellation of changes may also set apart these varieties from each other and from other dialects. Although dialect surveys of the South and of American English sometimes overlook the role of longstanding enclave dialects, these varieties are clearly an essential part of the unique dialect landscape of the American South.

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