Verbal -s in African-American Vernacular English:
Affective, social, grammatical, and dialectological influences

Dissertation

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By
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Abstract

This study examines the influence of affect, aspect, and subject-type on verbal –s (in this case, the non-standard application of –s on present tense verbs) in African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). AAVE speakers were asked to judge when verbal -s is most appropriate, and also to provide information via rating tasks on the frequency of their own use of verbal –s and the frequency of its use in their surrounding communities. In order to gather these data, a survey has been carried out in which different discourse contexts/scenarios were presented to participants who were then asked whether an –s inflected verb is more appropriate than an uninflected one. Participants were also presented with sentences where verbal -s was used and asked to rate how frequently they and the people in their respective communities speak such a sentence.

It was found that participants were significantly more likely to choose -s when contexts contained emotional stimuli, when lexical aspect was stative, and when the subject was third-person singular. There was also evidence of a significant effect from the affect/age interaction, with older subjects being less likely to choose -s in affective scenarios than the two younger groups.
With regard to the ratings tasks, participants rated the frequency of their own use and the use of others in their communities significantly higher when contexts were affective. In terms of self-ratings, older participants rated the frequency of their use to be significantly higher than younger groups. In their rating of the frequency of others’ use, gender proved to be significant, with female participants rating the frequency of verbal -s in their communities higher than the males’ ratings.
Dedication

To my mother, Judy, and my cousin, Nick, who couldn’t quite make it to see me finish.
Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge His Divine Grace, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The John Lennon once asked him, “How do we know if somebody else, Yogananda, Maharshi, and all these different people that have translated it [Bhagavad-Gita], how are we to tell that their version isn't Kṛṣṇa's word from your version?” To this, Prabhupada responded, “Therefore I say if you are serious student, then you study Sanskrit, original.” I had been interested in the language for some time, but never tried to learn it. So, it was at that very moment that I decided to learn, and thus became a linguist, I guess. After all, it was my first linguistics class that really helped me to make sense of the language.

This brings me to the next person, to whom I am very much indebted: the late Dr. John Greppin. After learning Sanskrit for some time, I decided to take it up formally at Cleveland State University, and it was Dr. Greppin (also, by chance, a linguist) who taught the class. It was year-two Sanskrit, so he wasn’t too keen on me signing up that semester, but he took a chance on me, and everything bloomed from there. He introduced me to Greek, Latin, and Classical Armenian as well, and kept up with me all the way up until a month or so before he passed.

One other favor that Dr. Greppin did for me was introduce me to Dr. Brian Joseph, who was (to me) a visiting scholar at CSU, there to speak about Sanskrit. Dr.
Greppin was always big on fine dining and was kind enough to take us both out for dinner that same evening. Brian ended up taking me under his wing, so to speak, when I got into The Ohio State University’s linguistics department, and with that, I began the most difficult (but rewarding!) educational process of my life. Brian always looked out for me, and whenever I was unsure of myself, I always felt better after leaving his office. Indeed, he served as co-advisor for this very dissertation! The list of favors could go on for quite a while with Brian. So, I’ll keep it simple and just say thank you.

Brian may have been my advisor, but I had so much help from both Dr. Donald Winford and Dr. Kathryn Cambell-Kibler. Don’s practical insight in all things linguistic and his teaching methods really helped to keep me on track, and our meetings from the work on my QP1 to this very dissertation have been the most productive and encouraging. From his knowledge of AAVE to his scholarly insight on research methods and AAVE history, he has been an essential contributor to my research during these years as a graduate student. And Kathryn completes that scholastic circle (for me, at least). In a world that demands us to be cutting-edge in our research, she was my link to all of that. It was from her that I first began to learn R, a scripting language that I had no clue I’d love so much, and which led to my love of other object-oriented programming languages, such as Java and JavaScript. It hasn’t fully fructified yet, but Kathryn pushing me to learn R changed the path of my destiny, and the first sign of that comes in the form of this dissertation. Thanks to the two of you, truly.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Andrew Pantos, Dr. Marina Gorlach, and Dr. Cindy Carlson, who took me in at Metropolitan State’s English department. They
gave me the promise of the beginnings of my career, and I have taught quite a few classes that proved very helpful in the writing of this dissertation. On a side note, I would like to add Dr. Chereka Dickerson to that list. We were both taken in at the same time here at MSU, and her help, friendship, and encouragement ended up being indispensable.

And finally, as far as early education goes, I would like to acknowledge the late professor Rick Halstead. He wasn’t a Linguistics professor, but it was Rick who made me want to be a professor. He would sit on the classroom desk and use his chair for a foot rest, and then he would pull out some old tattered novel, full of notes and highlighted texts, and he would talk about its secrets, squinting his eyes in seriousness and usually connecting something or another to Zen Buddhism.

All of these people were essential in getting me to where I am today, but the dissertation would not have been written if it weren’t for the people of Brooklyn, Cleveland, Houston, and Los Angeles. I found myself wandering into neighborhoods that some would find a bit intimidating, but those folks were full of smiles and laughter. They were so interested in the subject and curious as to what I thought verbal -s really meant. It is that beautiful dialect of the English language and its speakers that served as the driving force behind my research. My desire to understand the history, value, and systematic nature of AAVE has been instrumental in getting me through grad school and through this dissertation. I am in the debt of all those who not only participated, but who also made the experience so fun and rewarding.

I would also like to thank my family and friends. Prabhupada’s books may have gotten me interested in Sanskrit, but it was my father, Phillip Mitchell, who gave me the
books! He has always been an intelligent man and I’d like to believe that it rubbed off on me. A special thanks is due to my mother, Judy Mitchell, who passed away not long after I finished collecting data for this study. Kindness, patience, and endurance were her thing, and all of those features were necessary to get me through grad school. The love and support of my sisters, Daya and Theresa, along with my best friend, Julian Garcia (Macho!) were also so important for me at a time when I felt isolated and out of my league. Thank you so much to you all. I don’t have the words, but the feeling is there and I hope you know that.

I would also like to acknowledge the African-American community in general, as this year (2019) marks four hundred years since our first documented arrival (1619) to English-speaking colonies. It is my hope that I’ve paid homage to my people in this dissertation by showing the historical and functional value of AAVE grammar.

Last but not least, I would like to give thanks to the Hare Krishna House in Columbus, Ohio, along with its primary monk, Jagannatha Das. I’ve eaten hundreds of free lunches and dinners there, and that proved to be very helpful to a poor graduate student trying to get by and stay healthy! He kṛṣṇa karuṇa-sindho dīna-bandho jagat-pate gopeśa gopikā kānta rādhā-kānta namo 'stu te!
Vita

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Publications


Fields of Study

Major Field: Linguistics
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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.0 Verbal -s

African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) has arguably existed in some form since the 1600s (Mufwene 2000). With it came some linguistic innovations in the English language (Cooke 2003), but also the retention of some grammatical patterns brought from British emigrants to the U.S. during the colonial period (Rickford 1986; Montgomery 1993). One of those patterns is the non-standard use of the -s marker for present tense verb inflection. That is, for many AAVE speakers, this -s marker is not solely used to reference a third person singular subject. Historically, scholars have noted not only its use as a marker of aspect (Pitts 1981; Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001), but also the influence of subject-type and proximity of the subject to the verb (Bailey et al. 1989; Montgomery 1993). Its grammatical use in present varieties of AAVE is much less frequent, but there is some evidence that it is still being used to mark aspect, and that is used as a marker of affect (Moody 2011; Mitchell 2013). The use of this non-standard verbal inflection pattern in the Black community has been discussed by scholars since the 1950s (Putnam and O’Hern 1955) and analyzed quantitatively since the late 1960s (Labov 1968; Wolfram 1969), but even today the grammatical and/or social value of this -s marker is not fully understood.
1.1 Terminology and summary

Here, the term *verbal -s* is used in reference to the -s morpheme used to inflect finite present tense verbs in English. There are two broad generalizations that can be made here: one where *verbal -s* is confined to use with third person singular subjects, which here is called *standard -s*; and one where the use of the -s marker is subject to non-standard constraints in some British and American dialects of English. When -s inflection is missing/null, it is written here as a -ø. It is also simply referred to as a *zero marker*. For example, *Sharee lives around the corner* is a typical standard English (SE) utterance using the third singular present tense -s. However, as was just mentioned, there are other English dialects where this -s can be found affixed to verbs without regard for person/number concord, and these non-standard cases, referred to here as *non-concord -s*, can be exemplified by a sentence such as *I lives around the corner*.

In addition to the more general term *verbal -s*, other more specific terms have been used to describe this morpheme, such as *narrative -s, habitual -s, durative -s, hyper- and affective -s*. These names have been used to describe it according to the grammatical and pragmatic contexts, and they may be used here as well while discussing these previous works.

Because of changes in the contact situation between White and Black varieties of English, there came a reduction in the frequency of *verbal -s*, and possibly a reanalysis of its function by AAVE speakers. Because of this, along with terminology for the -s morpheme itself, terms for the time periods in which *verbal -s* was being used are very important to know, and here each time period is labeled differently. Here, three periods
are labelled: one where non-concord -s was dominant and frequent; one where a zero paradigm arose and the frequency of non-concord -s began to decrease; and one where verbal -s is extremely rare, but still used occasionally. These periods are listed and explained in further detail below.

Those varieties of AAVE spoken from the point of its earliest documentation in 1834 (Montgomery 1993; Van Herk and Walker 2005) to the end of the First Great Migration (1916-1930) (Smallwood and Elliot 1998) are labeled Early-AAVE. Those varieties spoken from the 1960s to the 1980s are labeled Middle-AAVE. And the AAVE varieties spoken from the 1990s to the present are here called Present Day-AAVE.

This change from a paradigm where -s was used frequently to one where -Ø becomes dominant seems to have begun with the First and Second Great Migrations (1913-1970) (Smallwood and Elliot 1998), which increased contact with White varieties of English, but an extreme reduction in frequency of -s among all AAVE speakers does not seem to have taken place until the 1980s. That is, relative to other post migration studies (Labov 1968; Wolfram 1969; Fasold 1972), the frequency of verbal -s, especially among younger urban AAVE speakers, is extremely low in studies beginning in the 1980s (Labov 1986; Myhill and Harris 1986; Bailey et al 1989; Rickford 1999).

Therefore, Early-AAVE (1831-1950) represents a period where many speakers used non-concord -s frequently (Schneider 1989; Montgomery 1993, 1996; Poplack and Tagliamonte 1989, 2001; Van-Herk and Walker 2005). Middle-AAVE (1951-1980) represents a period where there was a mixture of those who used it frequently and those who either rarely used it, or only used it with third singular subjects (Fasold 1972; Labov
1968; Pitts 1986; Wolfram 1969). And Present Day-AAVE (1981-Present) represents a period where very few, if any, people use non-concord -s frequently (relatively speaking), leaving us primarily with either the zero-inflected paradigm or the standard use (Moody 2011; Rickford 1999; Wolfram & Thomas 2001).

It is argued here that -s inflection can be applied to verbs with subjects of any person and/or number to convey affect in contemporary varieties of African-American Vernacular English. This is demonstrated by way of a survey designed to elicit participant judgements on whether this -s marker is more appropriate in contexts in which the speaker expresses strong emotion, as opposed to contexts that lack emotion. Moreover, the possible influence of grammatical constraints, namely subject-type, lexical and grammatical aspect, and stativity, which have been noted in past research is explored. And finally, the influence of the social factors: age, gender, region, and the region where one’s parents spent their childhoods is tested for significance.

1.2 Verbal -s

For quite some time now, studies in various areas around the country, such as northern California (Rickford 1999), Texas (Bailey et al 1989), Indiana (Huang 2000), and Georgia (Moody 2011) have been showing evidence of an uninflected present tense verbal paradigm for the contemporary urban AAVE speaker. Moreover, verbal -s is not necessarily distributed throughout the present tense paradigm in the same way in all varieties of AAVE, or even within a given community (Labov 1968, Wolfram 1969,
Fasold 1972, Rickford 1999). That is, it may be more frequent for some persons and numbers than others, and may not appear at all for some persons and numbers.

However, studies on the earliest forms of documented *Early AAVE* (Montgomery 1993; Schneider 1989; Van Herk and Walker 2005) show that it was possible to add the -s marker optionally with subjects of any person-number combination. This continued to be the case by the *Middle AAVE* period and is still the case today, although the frequency of its use is greatly reduced in most varieties (Fasold 1972, Huang 2000, Labov 1969, Moody 2011, Rickford 1999, Wolfram 1968).

Moreover, many AAVE speakers use *standard* -s, and to complicate things further, many AAVE speakers also have access to more than one of these three patterns of use (zero-paradigm, optional -s paradigm\(^1\), standard 3\(^{rd}\) singular paradigm (Fasold 1972; Rickford 1999: 127-31)). Below are three tables illustrating these patterns. Historically, the use of *verbal* -s with subjects of all persons and numbers, and the use of *standard* -s are the older patterns where AAVE is concerned\(^2\), because they are the older patterns found in the input dialects. A zero inflected paradigm does not seem to have become common place in AAVE varieties until the mid-twentieth century. The first studies mentioning the possibility begin with investigations on *Middle AAVE* (Fasold 1972; Labov 1968; Wolfram 1969), and subsequent investigations on *Early AAVE* always show *verbal* -s occurring frequently with subjects other than third person singular (Montgomery 1993, 1996; Schneider 1989; Van Herk and Walker 2005).

\(^1\) The term “optional” refers to the fact that -s varies with -ø in all persons and numbers. The presence or absence of -s is constrained by many factors, as discussed in chapter 3.

\(^2\) In the southeast part of England, there are dialects with a zero inflected present tense paradigm as well.
Table 1. Standard -s inflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1ST PERSON</strong></td>
<td>I get</td>
<td>We get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2ND PERSON</strong></td>
<td>You get</td>
<td>You get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3RD PERSON</strong></td>
<td>S/he get-s</td>
<td>They get</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Optional -s paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1ST PERSON</strong></td>
<td>I gets or get</td>
<td>We gets or get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2ND PERSON</strong></td>
<td>You gets or get</td>
<td>You gets or get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3RD PERSON</strong></td>
<td>S/he gets or get</td>
<td>They gets or get</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Zero-inflected paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1ST PERSON</strong></td>
<td>I get</td>
<td>We get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2ND PERSON</strong></td>
<td>You get</td>
<td>You get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3RD PERSON</strong></td>
<td>S/he get</td>
<td>They get</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There has been direct evidence of variation between -s and -Ø throughout the AAVE present tense paradigm since the nineteenth-century with non-concord -s occurring frequently in Early AAVE, as evidenced by the Ex-slave Narratives and the Ottawa Repository of Early African-American Correspondence (Schneider 1989, Montgomery 1993 & 1996, Van Herk and Walker 2005). That was the case at least until the advent of Middle AAVE when linguists began to notice a rapid decline in the frequency of this verbal -s among some speakers in a given community (Baily et al. 1989, Fasold 1972, Labov 1968, Wolfram 1969), while studies on Present Day AAVE show that verbal -s has become quite rare (Huang 2000, Moody 2011, Rickford 1999, Wolfram 2001).

However, despite the fact that its use is far less frequent today than it was before the mid-twentieth-century, non-concord -s still surfaces occasionally among AAVE speakers across the country. Interest in non-concord -s has reduced greatly in the last 30 years, but Moody (2005), Rickford (1999), and Wolfram and Thomas (2001) all found some evidence of its use.

It can also be seen frequently in hip hop lyrics. For example, rapper E-40, a Vallejo (Northern California) native, uses verbal -s with first person singular subjects in his song *D-boys Got Love for Me* (4.1). Rapper Scarface, a Houston Texas native, uses first person singular gives in his song *Open Minded* (4.2). Nikki Minaj (4.3), who was raised in Queens, New York and Keith Murray (4.4), just across the East River in Yonkers, use verbal -s with habitual be. Snoop Dogg, from Long Beach, California uses the -s marker with second singular subjects in his song: *Gin and Juice* (4.5). MJG
(Memphis, Tennessee) uses non-concord -s repeatedly in his song, *Shine and Recline*, some cases of which are with third person plural subjects (4.6). Krazie and Lazie from the rap group Bone Thugz n Harmony (Cleveland, Ohio) use verbal -s for first person plural and singular subjects with the verb got (4.7-8) in the song *Pimps, Thugz, Hustlaz and Gangstaz*. These few examples alone come from the east, west, Midwest and southern United States, and they serve as evidence that non-concord -s is a very widespread phenomenon in AAVE.

Table 4. Examples of verbal -s in hip hop

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td><em>I lives at the bar like an alcoholic.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td><em>I gives a fuck about your bad mouth.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td><em>I bes in the trap.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td><em>It bes like that sometimes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td><em>’cause you gets none of these</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td><em>T makes the beats that heats the whole streets</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td><em>Hey, there Mo Thug and we got to give ’em some love</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td><em>Erasin’ my poverty and I got to be that soldier claimin’ Mo</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Statement of problem

Currently, there is a large amount of literature on verbal -s in AAVE, but these studies tend to have differing methods, data types, and foci, and this makes it difficult to
compare their results. Despite this, there are some points of uniformity. They are listed below:

1. Studies tend to focus on one specific time period.
   a. Early AAVE
   b. Middle AAVE
   c. Present Day AAVE

2. Studies tend to focus on a limited number of linguistic variables (a-e) that correlate with the use of non-concord -s.
   a. Aspect (Grammatical and Lexical)
   b. Subject-Type (sometimes along with proximity of subject to verb)
   c. Person/Number of Subject
   d. Temporal Reference
   e. Affect/Emphasis (pragmatic effect)

Studies on Early AAVE take into consideration a wide variety of the factors listed above, and it has been demonstrated by way of quantitative analyses of written and audio recorded production data, that non-concord -s was strongly favored by habitual aspect and the subject type/adjacency (the northern subject rule [NSR]) constraints (Montgomery 1989, 1996; Pietsch 2005; Van Herk and Walker 2005) during this time period. Some scholars also argue that non-concord -s is favored with historical present
verbs (present tense inflection but with temporal reference to the past) (Myhill and Harris 1986) and with stative verbs (Pitts 1986; Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001; Schneider 1989).

On the other hand, most studies on Middle and Present-Day AAVE varieties have focused primarily on social factors and their correlation with -s inflection patterns, and only consider verbs with third person singular subjects. Age, gender, and socioeconomic status and their relationship with this -s variable were primary, while very little attention has been given to grammatical factors. Because of this, we still do not have a thorough understanding of the influence of aspect (grammatical or lexical) or person and number (subject) in the present tense paradigm for verbal -s in any Middle or Present-Day AAVE varieties. Another issue is that individual studies on verbal -s in Middle and Present-Day AAVE varieties rarely, if ever, span across dialectal regions. Instead what we have are separate studies performed in separate regions, by separate researchers using different methods (Chapter 4).

Furthermore, some studies on contemporary varieties of AAVE have also given some attention to a pragmatic factor: affect, which has also been referenced with the labels expressive, intensity, emphatic, emotive and in sociolinguistics, stance. This affect factor indicates strong emotion and/or emphasis, and scholars claim that it can be conveyed by non-concord -s. For instance, Labov (1968) mentions the possibility of its influence briefly in his study on New York City AAVE. Pitts (1981; 1986) goes a step further and claims directly that affect plays a role in –s inflection (in Texas AAVE). Moody (2011), in her Georgia study, went yet another step further and asked subjects to
differentiate between sentence pairs that were identical with the exception of the presence/absence of –s inflection on the verb, and they consistently noted that –s inflection conveys emphasis or affect. However, in these studies, it is only spoken of speculatively and/or with no accompanying tests for significance. This is all with the exception of Mitchell (2013), who performed a study in central and northern Ohio, which did demonstrate that urban AAVE speakers from those areas find –s more appropriate when the accompanying contexts explicitly conveyed strong emotions.

The shortcomings of previous work on verbal -s can thus be broken down as follows:

1. Studies on contemporary AAVE do not analyze the influence of aspect on use of verbal –s.
2. Most studies on contemporary AAVE do not analyze the influence of subject type on use of verbal –s.
3. Contemporary AAVE studies do not analyze the influence of region on the use of verbal -s.
4. Neither contemporary nor Early-AAVE studies analyze the influence of affect on use of verbal –s.

This study, which focuses on Late AAVE, addresses all of those issues, but in order to do this, one must also deal with methodological problems: (1) verbal -s is far less frequent in all varieties of contemporary AAVE. Obtaining production data via the
sociolinguistic interview or other similar methods would result in very few tokens, which would limit the possibilities for a reliable statistical analysis. (2) Verbal -s being used to convey affect is difficult to identify by simply counting tokens, because finding grammatical contexts that identify the presence of affect is not reliable. That is, one could deduce that in the sentence, I walked to the store yesterday, the -ed inflection on the verb walk conveys past temporal reference, and collection of more data would produce quantifiable evidence of this. However, finding a correlation between affect and the -s inflection is not so straightforward, because, after all, how does one state with certainty that affect was present?

Before moving forward, as mentioned earlier, there are as many terms describing this -s inflection as there are influencing factors. Here the term verbal -s is used as a cover term, but other researchers have used labels that are specific to an influencing factor. This includes labels such as affective –s, narrative -s, hyper-z and habitual -s, which all refer to the factors that have been found to favor -s inflection. Therefore, here, it is considered that there is one non-standard –s (non-concord –s), which is influenced by multiple factors, as this is the simpler perspective.

1.4 Research questions and goals
This study investigates the influence of affect, lexical and grammatical aspect, and subject type on verbal –s use, along with the influence of social factors: region, gender, and age. The perspectives of the participants themselves regarding the frequency of their own verbal -s use and that of the people in their surrounding area are also investigated.
An investigation of these factors will help to shed some light on who in the urban AAVE speaking community is still using verbal –s and under what circumstances they deem its use appropriate. Specifically, the results of this study provide valuable input regarding the questions listed below.

1. To what extent do affective contexts, e.g. the feeling of joy, fear, anger or excitement while speaking, influence the choice of –s, and to what extent does aspect influence that choice?
2. To what extent does expression of habitual meaning alone influence the choice of –s?
3. To what extent does subject type influence the choice of –s?
4. Do the constraints on the use of -s differ by regions, age, family roots, and gender?
5. How frequently do participants themselves and the people in their communities use verbal –s, will participant ratings of their use differ according to region and/or age, and is it used primarily for affective purposes?

To answer questions (1-3), an experimental study was conducted which aims at eliciting judgments of acceptability of the use of –s in various contexts. Participants had to read hypothetical scenarios and choose when –s was most appropriate. With regard to question (4), data were collected in four different regions, namely Brooklyn (New York), Cleveland (Ohio), Houston (Texas), and Los Angeles (California) from participants of different ages and genders in order to provide a cross-regional and social comparison of the use of -s. With regard to question (5), this study sought to determine who in these
four AAVE speaking communities is using verbal -s to convey affect, based on the judgments of the participants themselves. Participants rated the frequency of their own use of affective -s and that of their surrounding community. Because the use of non-concord -s inflection in AAVE is much more limited today, this rating tasks to the appropriateness judgments is crucial for understanding the use of a morpheme that may no longer be frequent enough for the quantitative analysis of production data to provide reliable results.

The results of this study also shed important light on the theoretical issue of emotivity in language, because they provide yet further evidence that emotion/intensity can be conveyed directly through the morpho-syntactic structure of language. This study is also important from a methodological perspective, because the traditional method of acquiring data via the sociolinguistic interview has not been sufficient for finding correlations between linguistic forms and the emotional dispositions of the speaker. Instead, for this study, a survey was used where participants could provide acceptability judgments concerning a potential marker of affect, based on context.

This current chapter has been an introduction to non-concord -s as it is used in some varieties of AAVE along with a brief description of the factors that have been claimed to favor its use. Chapter 2 is a summary of the contact situation during the Colonial period, which would have provided the circumstances necessary for AAVE dialects to have been formed and equipped with the many apparent functions of non-concord -s. Then, in chapter 3, an in-depth review of the literature on verbal -s both in British and American English varieties is provided. This is presented chronologically, but
within each timeframe there were varying constraints on non-concord -s, which are discussed separately as well. Chapter 4 reviews the literature dealing with affect in language, covering both brief descriptions and in-depth attempts at theoretical frameworks. And finally, the methodology (Chapter 5) and results of analyses (Chapters 6-7) for the present study are presented and followed by conclusions and discussion (Chapter 8).
2.0 Introduction

Before discussing how non-concord -s came to be what it is today in varieties of AAVE, it is best to describe the situations that led to its use among AAVE speakers in the first place. There is strong evidence that this was due to contact between speakers of colonial varieties of English in the seventeenth century --many of whom had roots in southern England, Ireland, and Scotland-- and Africans who were either directly or indirectly brought from Africa. There are many factors that affected the transmission of English from colonial Whites to the African arrivals, which complicate the issue, but in this section, an attempt is made to provide a summary of these factors in an organized fashion. It is argued here that, due to contact with the above mentioned varieties of English, all of which were known to have utilized non-concord -s during the colonial period, many AAVE speakers came to use non-concord -s in some function and thus it has been a part of AAVE since the seventeenth century.

This section is a discussion of the contact between colonists and Africans in two regions: the Chesapeake Region (Virginia and Maryland) and South Carolina. These two regions are considered to the exclusion of other areas in the south that maintained slave
culture because nearly three quarters of the African population lived in the Chesapeake and Low Country all the way up to the eve of the American Revolution (Morgan 1998).

Moreover, they are considered separately for four reasons: (1) because in the Chesapeake region the primary cash crop was tobacco, with wheat and corn becoming more important by the eighteenth century, whereas in South Carolina the primary crops were rice, indigo and cotton, and this influenced the nature of contact between incoming Africans and colonial Whites. (2) Because the timeframe for the importation of slaves was different for the two regions. Slaves began to arrive to the Chesapeake in the early 1600s, but it was not until the late 1600s that the importation of slaves began in the South Carolina. (3) Proportions of Whites to Blacks were different for these two regions. In the Chesapeake, Whites greatly outnumbered Africans, despite their dramatic increase in numbers by the eighteenth century. But in the Low Country, the number of slaves equaled that of Whites not long after the turn of the century, and their numbers surpassed that of Whites by the mid-eighteenth century. And (4), linguistic inputs to the two regions were different. These factors are important because the nature of the contact had an important linguistic influence on the varieties of AAVE that were to result from it.

Other than these four factors, there are other influences that need to be considered as well in relation to the formation of African-American communities, and therefore AAVE. For instance, the type of job that was being performed by the slave influenced the intensity of contact with English speakers. The situation of lower class Whites also was important, as they often worked side by side, even in the fields, and had many other social interactions with Africans throughout the 1600s and much of the 1700s. And,
finally, the slaves themselves were of different origins: those who were born and raised in the colonies as slaves, those who were brought from the Caribbean islands, and those who were brought directly from Africa. Naturally, their comfort level among Whites, and their acceptance of White culture and language would be heavily influenced by their origins, and in turn would influence their adoption of English.

Thus, for each of the two regions, the following factors are considered:

1. Origins of arriving slaves
2. Time-frames of earliest contact
3. Demographic proportions
4. Social interactions
5. Crop-types

These factors all influenced the nature of the contact between Whites and Africans, which was important for the formation of AAVE, and thus the adoption of verbal -s.

2.1 The earliest arrivals
At the end of August, in the year 1619, Africans first arrived in Point Comfort, Virginia and from there were sold in Jamestown. Making most of their voyage from Africa on the Portuguese slave ship, Sao Joao Bautista, they were eventually hijacked by Dutch
brigands. Some did not survive the voyage. Others were sold in Jamaica. Ultimately, twenty were taken to Virginia (O’Malley 2014: 88) where they were taken in and used primarily as domestic servants (Tate 1965), but domestic servitude should not be considered to be the only aspect of early life for Africans in Jamestown. For instance, there is also the famous story of Anthony Johnson who was sold in Jamestown not long after those first arrivals in 1621. He labored on the Bennett family’s plantation, and eventually found himself the owner of his own farm (and with his own slaves) on the eastern shore of Virginia (Berlin 2003: 37-38). With that being said, work on small plantations was probably also commonplace for the earliest arrivals.

In terms of the origins of the first African arrivals, many, if not most of those who arrived during the seventeenth century were stolen from Portuguese and Spanish slave ships heading for Spanish America from Angola, while still others were taken from Spanish settlements such as Cuba and Veracruz as well (O’Malley 2014: 91-2); however, during the latter half of the seventeenth century, and the earlier part of the eighteenth century, large numbers of Africans were brought from Barbados and Jamaica (both English speaking colonies) as well and taken to colonies along the Atlantic coast, including the Chesapeake and Virginia (O’Malley 2014: 119). Therefore, these particular people probably already had differing levels of English and Spanish proficiency.

In addition, some Africans who arrived to the mainland colonies may have also had some access to Portuguese. For instance, during the seventeenth century, it was noted

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3 Ballagh (1902: 7-8) states that a ship (called The Treasurer) commissioned by prominent Virginians: Sir Robert Rich and Deputy Governor Argall, intentionally sent out to prey upon Spanish commerce, brought a single African (most likely a woman) to Jamestown, in September 1619, just a bit later than the arrival of the 20 from the Dutch frigate.
by the colonist, Richard Ligon, that the slaves in Barbados exhibited work-skills that hinted at their being “bred up amongst the Portuguese” (O’Malley 2014: 93). Of course this does not serve as direct evidence, but it does hint at the possibility that Portuguese was spoken by some slaves in the Caribbean, and that some of those people were eventually brought to the mainland colonies. Another example in support of this can be found in a newspaper entry about a runaway slave who “talks very good Portuguese, and pretty good English” (Read 1939: 254). Many of the slaves from Barbados and Jamaica were taken to South Carolina, but there is some anecdotal evidence that most of the colonies were taking in Africans from Barbados between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (O’Malley 2014: 119).

From this, a very basic picture of the initial contact situation in the Chesapeake region during the mid to late seventeenth century begins to form: West African slaves from the Caribbean (O’Malley 2014: 91-2), many of whom already spoke Spanish, Portuguese, and English, but also who spoke their native languages (Read 1939: 254-5), were serving either as domestics or on small tobacco plantations.

2.2 The Chesapeake region

In the Chesapeake region, early life for slaves was a bit different, not only when compared with later arrivals, but also with arrivals to other areas. First and foremost, the social status of these first Africans was not certain, and slavery itself had not yet been codified. But the general consensus is that the earliest Africans held a status more similar
to that of the white indentured servants, than to that of a slave (Jewett and Allen 2004: 259).

Moreover, Africans were highly outnumbered by whites. For instance, even 30 years after their first arrival, there were only about 300 Africans living in Virginia (Ballagh 1902: 10), and by 1690, Africans only made up about 15% of the Virginia population (Winford 2015: 90). This disproportionate black/white ratio left little room for incoming Africans (who themselves were of disparate cultures) to maintain any sort of cultural solidarity. Morgan (1998: 19) argues that, “The black population was not generally numerous enough to provide the critical mass for autonomous cultural development. Many of the earliest blacks in both the Chesapeake and the Low country assumed the customs and attitudes of their white neighbors and acquaintances.” Mufwene (2000) too, in consideration of the circumstances of life during the seventeenth century, argues that “the kind of social setup that would have favored the restructuring and divergence of their new vernacular did not obtain yet. The Africans were scattered and integrated within a European majority.”

The types of labor performed by early African arrivals are usually divided into three groups: domestic, skilled, and field-work (Tate 1965: 19-20). It is clear that the first two would necessitate ample interaction with the white population, but with regard to field labor, it is not quite so straightforward to determine how much contact with colonists would have taken place. In Virginia and Maryland, tobacco was the crop of choice, with corn and wheat grown when the soil was exhausted, and cattle raised for meat and fertilizer (Brackett 1889: 39, Isaac 2012: 22-30).
One might imagine hundreds of slaves working in a field, watched over by one or two white men on horses, but tobacco farms usually functioned in small groups. In fact, Berlin (1998: 118) states that, “During the seventeenth century, few planters had owned more than one or two laborers, and most had worked in the field alongside their slaves and servants in a manner that necessarily promoted close interactions.” Close oversight, Berlin argues, was important because it also increased production. Even those who possessed large numbers of slaves usually did not keep them all together. Kolchin (2003: 33) provides a few examples of slave owners from the early to late 1700s who kept hundreds of slaves but spread them out among multiple different residences.

In addition to the slave/slave-owner and slave/overseer contact, the seventeenth century saw much more side-by-side labor among Africans and other lower-class European settlers. During this period, plantation owners were still of two minds as to whether slave labor was superior to that of white indentured servants, and so during the transition from white to slave fieldwork, there was an in-between period where both were used (Smith 1961: 21). In further support of this, Morgan (1998) makes the following observation:

The multiracial composition of the typical work group suggests yet another similarity between Chesapeake and Lowcountry. In both societies in the late seventeenth century, blacks more often than not were to be found laboring alongside members of other races. The South Carolina estate of John Smyth, who died in 1682, included nine Negroes, four
Indians, and three whites. All sixteen undoubtedly worked shoulder to shoulder at least some of the time. The picture of Elias Horry working "many days with a Negro man at the whip saw" was hardly an isolated incident in the late-seventeenth century Lowcountry. Similarly, in late-seventeenth century Virginia, white servants and slaves--both Indian and black--often worked side by side.

In addition, there is some other anecdotal evidence of side-by-side labor between indentured servants and Africans early on in Virginia. James Revel, a white man born in London in the mid-seventeenth century, who was brought to Virginia to work on a tobacco farm as a form of punishment, wrote in his poetry of “working among the negroes.” In another poem he states that “We and the negroes both alike did fare, of work and food we had an equal share.” And earlier in the same poem, he also states that, “My fellow slaves were five transports more, with eighteen negroes, which is twenty-four.”

With regard to the recreational aspect of their contact, there is also evidence for intermingling of Africans (free men and slaves) and lower-class whites. For instance, Kolchin (2003: 16) states that:

Within the colonies, there was often little clear demarcation between blacks and lower-class whites during the first decades of settlement. Indentured servants were subject to many of the same constraints as
slaves, and the two groups often lived together, worked together, played together, and sometimes slept together and ran away together.

Morgan (1998) adds to this with a few more dramatic examples:

In 1676, black slaves and white servants joined together in a striking show of resistance. With Nathaniel Bacon dead and his rebellion petering out, one of the last groups to surrender was a mixed band of eighty blacks and twenty white servants. In the 1680s, a slave named Frank and a servant named Peter Wells, who were drinking in Mrs. Vaulx's parlor in York County, joined forces in fighting two yeoman whites who had insulted the slave by saying "they were not company for Negroes" and the servant by referring to his lowly status as an indentured tailor.

This leaves one to hypothesize that there were Africans in the Chesapeake colonies who were able to speak the local “lower-class” dialects of settler English rather well. Moreover, there is evidence, not only that Africans spoke English, but also that they learned it in as little as two to three years (Read 1939: 251). There is even an account of a slave who could speak understandable English within eight months, but whose companion, who had been there for the same amount of time could not, which hints at a desire to learn, age, and/or linguistic aptitude being factors as well (Read 1939: 252).
However, as the turn of the century drew near, African and indentured white relations began to cool for three reasons, according to Morgan (1998: 300-01). For one, laws were gradually being put into place to keep the two apart, such as the laws against interracial marriage and the selling of alcohol to slaves without their master’s permission. Other laws were set in place to differentiate the severity of punishments between slaves and whites.

Second, there was the dramatic increase in slave importation. Pirating in the Caribbean had calmed, and slaves were being imported directly from Africa, and in larger numbers than before. So many of the new arrivals did not know any English, nor did they have much experience with European cultures. Most of these newcomers were unable to speak English and were “utterly alien in appearance and demeanor” (Morgan 1998).

And lastly, the number of white field laborers decreased. White indentured servants had gradually been all but fully replaced in the fields by slaves (Morgan 1998). However, despite these changes, there was already a well-established base of English-speaking Africans for newcomers to build on (Wood 1974: 6-9).

With all of this in consideration, there is ample evidence of contact between Whites in the Chesapeake region and Africans that would have facilitated a transfer of English from the former to the latter. But, as pointed out by Montgomery (2001), the mere identification of contact is not sufficient to justify claims that a particular linguistic pattern, in this case verbal -s, was transferred. Therefore, evidence is provided here to show that, not only did Africans living in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Chesapeake regions have sufficient contact with colonists to learn English, but also that
those particular English speakers were known for their use of non-concord -s. Because the earliest African arrivals came from the Caribbean, Barbados and Jamaica are a good place to begin a discussion on the particular varieties of colonial English that Africans were in contact with before arriving to the Chesapeake, and later to the Low Country.

On the whole, there is evidence that criminals and the poor working-class people of England were emigrating to the American mainland colonies early on (Smith 1965: 43-45). However, according to Smith (1965: 6-7), around the mid-seventeenth century, perceptions of the working-class whites in England began to change and the idea of dispersing them overseas lost its value. Smith then goes on to argue that “the chief result of this change in opinion was that the servant trade thenceforth got a bad name for depopulating the mother country, found its operations hindered by official obstacles, and transferred much of its activity to Germany, Scotland, and Ireland” (1965: 7). That is, by the mid-seventeenth century, there was probably a shift in emigration from South West Englanders to Irish and Scottish people who may have had some influence on the English being spoken by Africans.

Despite this later reduction in the number of English being taken to the colonies, Smith (1965: 332-3) claims that by the mid-seventeenth century, there were already 8000 white indentured servants in Barbados (settled by the English in 1627), and that they were primarily of Scots and Irish descent. Rickford (1986), however, cautions against any exaggerations of influence, because many of the Irish immigrants during this period spoke very little English themselves and were probably learning it from the English
settlers. Therefore, even the English spoken in seventeenth century Barbados most likely had a strong southwestern English influence (Winford 2015 via Niles (1980)).

With regard to the mainland colonies, Rickford (1986: 246) presents a number of sources (Stewart 1970: 246; Davis 1971: 93; Wolfram 1971: 60; Traugott 1972: 191; Sledd 1973; Rickford 1974: 106-9; Hill 1975) as evidence for Irish English as an influence on AAVE in Virginia and northern colonies, but also stresses the influence from Scotch-Irish English as well, particularly during the eighteenth century (although he also admits that their contact with Africans was probably far more limited, given their backwoods and frontiersman lifestyles).

With this being said, there is evidence for poor, working-class influence from southern England in the seventeenth century, along with an influence of Irish and Scotch-Irish in the eighteenth century. Much of this influence began in the Caribbean, after which slaves were taken to Virginia, but there was also continued contact between the above-mentioned people in Chesapeake region. All of these speakers of English have been documented as using non-concord *verbal -s* patterns and it is therefore likely that the English spoken by slaves also had *non-concord -s*.

2.3 South Carolina
The situation for areas farther south, particularly South Carolina, was different from that of the Chesapeake region. For one, the region was not settled until 1670, much later than Virginia, and farmers and slaves from Barbados made up the majority of the earlier settlers (Wood 1997: 64-5). Moreover, slavery was an established fact in this region from
the very beginning, and the primary crops grown were rice, indigo, and a bit later, cotton rather than tobacco.

With regard to the connection between white colonists and Africans, the very earliest decades allowed for relatively intense contact, while the eighteenth century showed a much different situation. About these early years, Morgan (1998) states the following:

South Carolina was never at any time an open slave society. And yet seventeenth century Lowcountry society also had more flexible race relations than its eighteenth-century successor. By comparison with seventeenth century Virginia, early South Carolinian race relations scarcely seem flexible, but, in the overall history of Lowcountry slave society, the first thirty or so years of slavery constitute something of a privileged era, a time when relations between the races contained an element of spontaneity and unpredictability that they subsequently lost. White servants and black slaves resided on the same plantations in early South Carolina, and where white immigrants might work "comme une esclave," as one Huguenot arrival put it, black newcomers might labor like hired hands. Servants and slaves traded with one another, leading the colony's legislators to pass laws against the practice in 1683, 1687, and again in 1691. In play, as in work, blacks participated rather fully in early
Lowcountry life—to the point that their involvement in the trade for strong liquors elicited official displeasure in 1693.

Nevertheless, by the early eighteenth century, with the transition from the raising of livestock to rice and indigo, slave numbers grew dramatically in the Lowcountry. By 1720, the African population was in the majority, and by the end of the century it reached about 84 percent (Kolchin 2003: 31). These numbers alone present a very different picture from that of the Chesapeake region in terms of African newcomers and their ability to assimilate local cultures. Morgan (1998) also argues this point, claiming that “in the Lowcountry, an assimilationist slave culture had little chance to put down roots before it was swept aside by a rising tide of African slaves. Although these growing numbers of Africans had to adapt to an embryonic cultural system, they swamped it more than they were incorporated within it.” Weir and Whitt (1983: 175) also state that more than 80 percent of the slaves coming to South Carolina by the early 1700s were brought directly from Africa.

With regard to the people that Africans were exposed to in South Carolina, as already stated, it was settled primarily by English Barbadians who were essentially squeezed out by limited land and monopolizing plantation owners there. There were also immigrants from Switzerland and Germany (Wright 1976: 58), and French Huguenots too who settled the area early on in the late 1600s (Weir and Whitt 1983: 47-8).
In terms of those who emigrated directly from Great Britain, Smith (1961: 38) claims that “disbanded soldiers, defeated rebels\(^4\), orphans, convicts, destitute Irish, and poor Protestants made up the more important contributing groups.” The term *rebels* refers to the Scottish, although Wright (1976: 55) argues that many of the Scottish came voluntarily. Just how likely it is that the Scottish served as an early source of linguistic input for what would become AAVE is questionable, for the same reason that Rickford (1986) cautioned against early Irish influence. Lefler and Newsome, citing old reports, argue that many of the Scots spoke Gaelic, knew almost no English, and despite their gradual transfer to English, “there were survivals of the ancient tongue for more than a century” (1963: 74). In the 1750s, the Scotch-Irish also began to pour in, primarily from Pennsylvania, and settled in the Piedmont region (the middle area located between the coastal regions and the mountains). As they settled and began to take to plantation life by the end of the seventeenth century, relying primarily on cotton as their cash crop, there came a dramatic increase in slaves in those areas as well (Winford 2015: 11).

Despite this diversity, regarding the coastal areas, Winford (2015: 9) states that “English Barbadians remained a majority of the white population for the first two decades of settlement, and they shaped the fabric of South Carolina society in many ways.” He later adds that Barbadian English as spoken by servants and slaves served as a significant linguistic input, and that “these forms of English were modeled after South West English dialects in particular.”

\(^4\) Smith later clarifies that these defeated rebels were Scottish (1961: 38).
Given this information, there is evidence of close contact between Africans and colonial English speakers of various backgrounds that may have allowed for the adoption of those varieties of English during the formative years of the black communities in the South Carolina. Despite the strong possibility that this process of assimilation was *swamped* by the large number of newcomers in the eighteenth century, there were probably some slave communities where Southwest English was adopted during the first three decades in the coastal regions indirectly, via varieties of Barbadian English, which was influenced by southwestern English. Given that the dominating varieties of English were those of Southwest England, an area where even recently *non-concord -s* has been used (Cheshire 1982), it is likely that non-standard *verbal -s* patterns were also adopted English speaking slaves in South Carolina.

Moreover, with the later Scotch-Irish arrivals to the Piedmont areas, probably came a strong secondary input from their English as well, and these varieties have also been demonstrated to utilize *non-concord -s* (Montgomery 1993).

2.4 Summary

Both the Chesapeake and South Carolina regions began with a situation suitable for the acquisition of the English language on the part of early arriving Africans. The ratio of white to black lay heavily with the former. The African communities themselves were small and spread out, especially in the Chesapeake area, but at least partly so for the first few decades in South Carolina, and this left little room for cultural autonomy. Moreover,
there is evidence of intermingling between slaves and lower-class whites in terms of trade, romantic interest, and general festivities in both of these areas.

Both the Chesapeake and South Carolina saw a rapid increase in the number of African arrivals in the eighteenth century, who were brought directly from Western Africa (as opposed to those brought early on from or via the Caribbean who had already had ample exposure to European cultures) and this probably offset or slowed the process of assimilation, even on linguistic grounds. This increase was probably a much stronger influence in the Lowcountry, which had far less time for cultural and linguistic assimilation before the increase in slave importation began. This strong African influence helped to create a linguistic situation much different from that of the Chesapeake regions. There were varieties of English spoken by slaves that ranged from those that were close to local white varieties, to varieties that were heavily influenced by incoming Africans, to Gullah. This along with the movement of coastal slaves to the Piedmont regions where they were further influenced by the Scotch-Irish creates a very complicated linguistic situation, but the evidence for a non-concord -s among Black communities in South Carolina is still very strong.

2.5 Conclusions
The purpose of this chapter was to provide a brief outline of the contact situation between early arriving Africans and British colonists, because it points to a development of AAVE where verbal -s is very likely to have been passed down from British varieties of English (primarily southwest and Scotch-Irish varieties), rather than being due to some internal
innovation on the part of the early AAVE-speaking community. This is important because some studies on verbal -s (Bailey et al 1989; Poplack and Tagliamonte 1989) take it for granted that transmission of verbal -s from British English is the case without sufficiently accounting for the socio-historical situation that may have led to it.

It is argued here that influence from the southwest English settlers was of primary importance for both the Chesapeake and South Carolina regions (Niles 1980, Winford 2001) during the seventeenth-century. An estimated nine-tenths of European emigrants in the seventeenth century were English, and even though Scots, Irish, and Germans represented the majority of the eighteenth century emigrants, the largest portion of them did not arrive until after 1760 (Kulikoff 2000: 169-70). As far as the regions spanning from the Chesapeake to regions farther north are concerned, one form of evidence of the origins of seventeenth century colonists can be found in local architectural style. New Englanders adapted East Anglian and West Country styles, whereas in Virginia, southern English styles were adapted (Kulikoff 2000: 121). Therefore, a strong southwestern English input for early AAVE in the Chesapeake region is fully possible and should be carefully considered.

With regard to South Carolina in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries, the issue is much more complicated because it was one of the most diverse regions in the country, perhaps second only to Pennsylvania, containing large numbers of English, Scots, Scotch-Irish, Irish, and Germans (Wright 1976: 49-62). Moreover, the African-to-European ratio began to weigh heavily in favor of the Africans even as early as the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and the nature of the labor afforded much more
autonomy among slaves. Therefore, their English sources of input were probably much
more diverse, much more restricted, and less accessible than was the case with their
Chesapeake counterpart.

As for the influence of South Carolina varieties of English on the overall future of
AAVE, it is worth noting that the nature of South Carolina slave conditions was unusual
in comparison with the Chesapeake regions. There were influences not only from English
settlers, but a strong Scotch-Irish input as well in the late 1700s, along with influences
from African-born slaves and creole varieties. With the production of cotton came a large
migration of slaves from the coastal regions who were accustomed to English, African,
and creole influence, to areas where Scotch-Irish English was the primary input. This
diversity combined with mixture is an issue that goes beyond the scope of the present
study.

The potential for strong southwestern English input for AAVE in the Chesapeake
is a definite possibility from the perspective of the history of verbal -s, because there is
ample evidence of non-concord -s being used across south and southwest English, even
as early as the fifteenth century (Bailey et al 1986; Cheshire 1982; Clarke 1997; Cole
2014; Klemola 2000), as will be explained in more detail in chapter 4. This perspective is
contrary to that of other scholars such as Poplack and Tagliamonte (1989) who proposed
a northern English input for early AAVE to make sense of the presence of verbal -s,
which finds little historical support and is rejected by Montgomery (2001) and Winford
(2017), among others.
Chapter 3. Expressive/Affective Grammar in Language

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the importance of affect in language, frameworks and basic attempts to describe it, issues where there is disagreement, examples of affect expressed in AAVE, and the placement of verbal -s in a theory of language that allows for the grammaticalization of affect, are all discussed.

3.1 The importance of recognizing affect in language

There is little doubt that the role affect plays in communication is important, but the nature of linguistically expressed affect and its importance in a larger theory of language is still in question. Discussion on affective communication goes back to the time of Aristotle, who argued for the importance of the role of pathos in rhetoric, and the grammarian Panini (VI, 1. 9), who acknowledged that Sanskrit can show intensification via reduplication of the first syllable of a root.

Some scholars, such as Sapir (1927), spend a great deal of time arguing for its importance, but nevertheless, only consider it as existing in the “marginal” realms of language, such as prosody. Weinreich (1966: 399) however, argues that whether “there is any point to semantic theories which are accountable only for special cases of speech--namely humorless, prosaic, banal prose--is highly doubtful.” Hymes (1974: 146) also
argues that a theory of language that only accounts for its referential function is inadequate. Hubler (1998: 2-3), as well, sought to reestablish the importance of affect in language. And Labov (1984: 47) even states that:

As long as we can locate a plausible interpretation of aspect particles in cognitive terms, oriented to the processing of information, it is not a vital matter to recognize emotional meanings like ‘intensive’ or social meanings like ‘moral indignation’. They lay no more important role than any other redundant features that cluster about grammatical structure. It is quite otherwise when no cognitive or referential meaning appears -- a cognitive zero -- or when the context is inconsistent with the cognitive meanings usually recognized -- a cognitive contradiction. We then have no choice but to recognize social and emotional meanings as an integral part of the central grammatical system.

Moreover, as will be discussed in more detail later, many models of meaning in language include affect. Psychologists, linguists, and anthropologists alike, including Marty (1908), Bally (1909), Buhler (1934), Morris (1946), Jakobson (1960), Irvine (1982) and many more, all incorporate an affective/expressive component in their descriptions of linguistic meaning. Even cognitive semanticists such as Foolen (1997) acknowledge its importance and attempt to find its place in a more cognitively based model of meaning.
Their respective views, however, on the nature of *affect*, the role it plays in language, and the extent of its importance, vary greatly. Before elaborating on this, an attempt will be made to cover a wide range of terminology that scholars have been using, and to establish a set of terms for this dissertation.

3.2 Terminology and meaning
A wide variety of terms have been used over the last one hundred years or so to describe the affective component of language. Most prominent among them are *expressivity*, *affect*, *emotivity*, and *intensity*. Moreover, different scholars may use the same term, but provide a different definition of that term. In this section, many (though not all) of those terms are outlined along with the meanings behind them.

3.2.1 Terminology defined by etymology
In order to gain clarity in a situation where terminology is multiplying, and it is by no means certain that any past researchers used these terms literally or in some broader, more figurative way, it is important to list them and consider them according to their dictionary definitions and respective etymologies. These can then be compared to the variety of functions that scholars have attributed to “affective language” to see whether any of the terms and their meanings line up with those functions. The terms defined here are *affect*, *emotive*, *expressive*, and *intensity*.

The noun *affect*, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is a term used in Psychology and simply means ‘emotion or desire as influencing behavior.’ Historically, it
comes from the Latin verb *afficere*: ‘to do; treat, use, manage, handle; act on; have an influence on.’

*Emotive*, on the other hand, is defined as ‘arousing or able to arouse intense feeling.’ Etymologically, it comes from the past participle stem *emot-* in Latin, which in turn is derived from the verb *emovere*, meaning ‘to move out, move away.’

*Expressive* is the adjectival form of the verb *express*, which means ‘to effectively convey thought or feeling,’ and comes from the Latin verb *exprimere*, which literally meant ‘to press out.’ And *intensity* refers to ‘the measurable amount of a property.’ It comes from the Latin word *intensus*, which meant ‘stretched, strained, high-strung, tight.’

The first three of these terms deal with feeling or emotion, while intensity refers to the extent of that emotion. The first two terms, however, deal not only with emotion, but also with the fact that said emotions are somehow influencing others. Expressive, on the other hand, deals mainly with the conveyance of thought or feelings, although the definition also makes it clear that this conveyance was effective (i.e., that the receiver of those thoughts/feelings being communicated understood them, but was not necessarily influenced, and this influence may or may not have even been intended).

3.2.2 Terms and definitions of scholars

A lesser-used term, but ancient and important, especially for the field of pragmatics (Caffi and Janney 1994: 330), is *pathos*. This comes from the Greek word for ‘suffering or sensation,’ but the Aristotelian sense would define it as ‘playing upon the feeling of the
Aristotle’s sense of emotions (or feelings) are spelled out as follows:

Emotions are all those (feelings) that so change men as to make their judgments different, and that are accompanied by pleasure and pain; such are anger, pity, fear, and the like, as well as their opposites (Wisse 1989: 67).

One can see right away that the term *pathos*, coupled with Aristotle’s view of emotion, hints at a very interpersonal view of affect in language. Maynard (2004) also takes up this term, and it is central to his claims about human communication. Among the more widely used terms, perhaps emotivity is the most common. Marty (1908: 275) defines emotive utterances as “signaling momentary evaluative stances or volitional states, which are performed by speakers to strategically guide partners’ attention and influence their behavior.” Jakobson (1960: 4) argues that “the so-called EMOTIVE or ‘expressive’ function, focused on the addressee, aims at a direct expression of the speaker’s attitude toward what he is speaking about.” Volek (1987: 12) defines emotive language as “those linguistic devices that serve for the direct expression of the actual emotive attitude of the speaker” which are “established as special signs expressing emotion in a given language.” Caffi and Janney (1994: 328), on the other hand, define emotive language as:
…the intentional, strategic signaling of affective information in speech and writing (e.g. evaluative dispositions, evidential commitments, volitional stances, relational orientations, degrees of emphasis, etc.) in order to influence partners’ interpretations of situations and reach different goals.

Maynard (2004: xi) seems to follow this as well with her take on emotive language and her discussion about the term:

Linguistic emotivity refers to emotives. These include the speaker’s attitude toward the speech act, toward the content of what is conveyed, feelings toward partners, emotions associated with interaction, as well as the general mood, feelings, and sentiment the speaker and the partner experience and share in communication.

However, it should be noted that other scholars have a different view of what it means for a linguistic sign to be emotive. For instance, Hubert (1969: 34-35) warns that the term emotive is also used for words that naturally tend to arouse emotions, such as love or hate. He also gives the example of the word sea, which he speculates would arouse more of an emotional response from a reader/hearer than ocean.

The term affect (or affective language) is also very common among scholars in various fields. Irvine (1982) does not give a direct definition, but instead follows Kagan’s (1978: 16-17) report on the perspectives of psychologists at the time:
…at present many psychologists…regard the category affective as being characterized by the following dimensions: (a) a change in feeling state that is derivative of internal physiological events, (b) produced by an immediate incentive event (c) that is short-lived in duration, (d) linked to cognitive structures, and (e) not related to physiological deprivation.

However, Irvine then cautions that feeling state, internal physiological events, and incentive events, may or may not “accord the same importance in other cultural articulations of the domain of emotion” (1982: 33). Ochs and Schieffelin (1989: 7) define affect as being broader than the term emotion and argue that it deals with “…feelings, moods, dispositions, and attitudes associated with persons and/or situations.” That is, a true definition of affect, in their view, is culturally dependent. Besnier (1990: 420) states that “affective meaning is seen as the encoding of the speaker’s emotions, which the interlocutor decodes in verbal messages by giving precedence to intentionality.”

More specifically, he defines affect as being “the subjective states that observers ascribe to a person on the basis of the person’s conduct” (1990: 421). Caffi and Janney (1994: 326) argue that “the term ‘affect’ is usually reserved for feeling states that are ascribed to others on the basis of their behavior in different situations,” but then provide a more specific definition of linguistic affect, stating that it is “used simply as a broad synonym for ‘feeling’, and is regarded as subsuming not only traditional psychological notions of emotion, mood, and attitude, but also notions of character and personality, and
notions related to interactional linguistic phenomena such as masking, hedging, undercutting, and so forth.” Besnier (1990: 421), however, warns against referencing “Western taxonomies of psychological processes” and encourages linguists to stick with broad but malleable definitions of affect.

Even though others have referenced the term intensity (Caffi and Janney 1994: 339), it usually does not equate to or line up directly with affect and emotivity, but rather serves as one out of many facets comprising the phenomenon of expressive language, which will be discussed in more detail later. However, Labov (1984: 43-44) defines intensity as “the emotional expression of social orientation toward the linguistic proposition: the commitment of the self to the proposition,” and this does in fact resemble definitions of affect and emotion. Therefore, it has been added to this list of usable terms.

The definitions mentioned above all mention emotion on a broader level, but also tend to fall into a few different categories: (a) the view that emotion is expressed based purely on how the speaker feels about what is being said, (b) the view that the speaker is trying to arouse emotion in the hearer, (c) the view that the speaker is trying to persuade the hearer (pathos), and (d) the view that some expressions naturally arouse emotion in the reader/hearer (this view is considered a separate issue and is not addressed here). The first view tends to be taken by researchers working in cognitive semantics (Foolen 1997) and psychology (Caffi and Janney 1994), who attempt to explain the cognitive sources of affective grammar, such as metaphor and metonymy. The second two fall together and are usually taken up by linguistic anthropologists, pragmaticists, and scholars of rhetoric. This latter group seeks to explain affect by analyzing production data directly. These two
perspectives, it seems, are essentially cognitive vs. functional approaches. A more detailed review of the theoretical perspectives in these various fields, which make affect a central concern, is presented below.

3.3 Semiotics: affect as an index

Before getting into theoretical accounts of affective language, it is important to understand some basic assumptions about different types of linguistic signs, most importantly, indices. That is, in one way or another, we are attempting to signal information by way of language, but different types of information can be signaled, and different methods can be used to convey those signals. This section offers a brief look at where grammatical affect sits within the larger view on linguistic semiotics (signs).

Lyons (1977), relying heavily on the works of C.S. Peirce (see Peirce 1940 for a survey of his most influential writings), separates signs into three groups: symbols, icons, and indices. This tripartite distinction is based on the different relationships between the sign and the signified (also called significatum (Lyons 1977), denotatum (Morris 1948), and referent in many current textbooks).

According to Lyons, Peirce defines symbol as the arbitrary, conventional relationship between the sign and its signification. That is, there is no inherent relationship between the two. With regard to icons, on the other hand, there is some sort

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5 Lyons (1977) is also the work referenced by many others (Besnier 1990, Caffi and Janney 1994, Maynard 2004) on this subject, and so it will be the primary source here as well.
of resemblance between sign and signified. A good example of this would be onomatopoeic words like *cuckoo*, which are iconic in the phonic medium.

An *index* is defined as “a sign that would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if there were no interpretant” (Peirce 1940: 104). For this category of sign, Peirce gives examples such as a man’s rolling gait as an indication that he is a sailor, but he also states that an index is anything that focuses the attention or startles us. But Lyons, on this point, chooses to follow Abercrombie’s (1967) more linguistically oriented definition, which states that indices are “signs which reveal personal characteristics of the writer or speaker.” Abercrombie also makes a three-way distinction between index types, namely those that indicate membership of a group; those which characterize the individual; and those which reveal changing states of the speaker (1967: 7).

Laver (1968) makes a biological, psychological, and social distinction between index types. That is, one can index one’s biological, psychological, and social state through language. Lyons (1977: 107-8) argues, “…a person’s pronunciation or handwriting indicate his membership of a particular regional or sociocultural group, his sex and age, who he is, what his emotional state is, and so on,” and this (changing) emotional state, is labelled by Abercrombie (1967) as affective, and by others as *attitudinal*. Lyons (1977: 108) also, however, combines both Abercrombie and Laver’s definitions, preferring the term *symptom*, and states that, “Any information in a sign or signal which indicates to the receiver that the sender is in a particular state, whether this be an emotional state (fear, anger, sexual arousal or readiness, etc.), a state of health
(suffering from laryngitis, etc.), a state of intoxication, or whatever, will be described as symptomatic* of that state.”

Given these views on the nature of the relationship between sign and signified (symbol, icon, and index), and given the different kinds of indices proposed by Abercrombie (1967), Laver (1968), and Lyons (1977), it seems most appropriate to categorize affective speech (particularly grammaticalized affect) as being indexical.

3.4 Theoretical perspectives on affect

3.4.1 Perspectives from rhetoricians

Caffi and Janney (1994: 330) sum up Aristotle’s Rhetoric “as a metapragmatic treatise on the construction of the shared knowledge necessary for effective emotive communication. Starting from what today would be regarded as a social psychological perspective, Aristotle analyzes different kinds of argumentation which must fit different types of audiences.”

Aristotle, in Rhetoric I, (A), 3, 1358b, divides discourse into three parts, the speaker, the topic, and the hearer. His view on emotive language is directly connected to speakers’ “continuous effort to adapt to their addressees” (Caffi and Janney 1994: 330), thus giving this perspective a strong interpersonal orientation. Furthermore, he breaks down what he calls proofs provided through speech into three categories: the character of the speaker (ethos), the condition of the listener (pathos), and the argument itself through demonstration (logos) (Rhetoric 1.2, 1345a 1-4). Of these, the proof of concern for this
brief summary is pathos because it deals with appealing to human emotions for the purpose of persuasion (Dow 2015: 100).

However, aside from taking a speaker/content/hearer stance and referencing emotional arousal in the audience as a means of persuasion, a theory of Rhetoric does not give much attention to the expression of affect via grammatical (or other linguistic) means. The model presented in Aristotle’s pathos is important in the sense that its emphasis on the importance of emotion in language serves as a precursor for a pragmatics of affect. For instance, Maynard (2004: 6) states:

Following the Aristotelian rhetoric, when investigating language, one cannot ignore elements of pathos, for those elements are likely to alter the logo-based semantic content. More fundamentally, is it even possible to separate the semantics of logos and the meanings of pathos in the first place? At minimum, I must conclude that linguistics of strictly formal semantics is not sufficient to account for the full meaning of language.

3.4.2 Early linguistic perspectives

This section presents the work of some early scholars who touch upon affect but did not expound upon the idea. Early perspectives among psychologists on the importance of the emotive dimension of linguistic meaning that were also accompanied by an attempt to incorporate it into a model of language perhaps began with Anton Marty (1908). He first of all argued that we must distinguish between emotional (cathartic, expressive) and
emotive (instigative, appellative) affective uses of speech in order to investigate language and affect from a systematic pragmatic perspective (Caffi and Janney 1994: 331).

Marty’s (1908) description also seems to have been focused on the speaker’s desire to signal evaluative stances or volitional states and to influence the hearer’s behavior, which places him with Aristotle and Maynard (2004). He saw a direct relationship between explicit linguistic forms and their implicit emotional significance. According to Caffi and Janney (1994: 331), “He noted that speakers habitually modify explicit forms of linguistic expression in order to emotively ‘color’ them and steer interpretations of their implicit, intended significance.” Another perspective that perhaps began with Marty (1908) was his division of emotive expressions into two types: evaluative and volitional, which is somewhat different from later psychological models comprising evaluation, potency, and activity (Caffi and Janney 1994: 339).

Buhler (1934), via his Organan Model of language, separated the speech act into a discourse triad (speaker, hearer, and external situation), and communication into three functions: representation, expression, and what Lyons (1977: 52) translates as vocative. With regard to expression, he argued that the speaker could impose a kind of ‘communicative valence’ on the situation and influence the hearer’s perceptions of literal ideational communication (1934: 31). These works served as a primary influence for future scholars, such as Roman Jakobson, who also attempted to present a model of linguistic communication (1960).

Bally’s (1909) linguistic stylistics is an important early source for linguistic perspectives on affect. A student of de Saussure, he, in a sense, parted ways with his old
mentor by focusing on the expressive dimensions of language. Whereas de Saussure’s focus was on *langue*, Bally’s was on *parole*, or perhaps a blending of the two (Maynard 2004: 26). He makes a distinction between mode *vecu* (*affect*) and mode *pur* (*intellect*). The former is performative and involves senses and feelings. The latter is more analytic and descriptive. Maynard (2004: 26) gives the example: *I am getting mad* for mode *pur*, and *Dammit!* for mode *vecu*. The distinction is that one is more information based or propositional, while the other is “a live performance of the sensation” (Maynard 2004: 26). According to Caffi and Janney (1994: 333), these two modes are not a true dichotomy, but rather, the poles of a continuum in which a message is more or less oriented toward one or the other.

Furthermore, Bally distinguished between two types of expressive processes: *direct* and *indirect* (Caffi and Janney 1994: 334). The first involves lexical choices, whereas indirect processes involve prosodic and syntactic choices, which is important because this takes expressive language beyond the lexicon and into the grammatical system.

Aside from these two processes, he also argues for two types of affective features: *natural* and *evocative*. These align roughly with (a) and (b/c) respectively, from section 3.2.2 in that natural affect is speaker-oriented and deals with intensity, evaluation, and beauty, while evocative affect is hearer-oriented and refers to the capacity of linguistic choices to evoke a response from the hearer.

Linguists from the Prague School have argued for decades that the emotive component of language must be taken into consideration. They place great emphasis on
the “intellectuality and the emotionality of language manifestations,” arguing that these two linguists from the Prague School have while other times, one will win out over the other (Mathesius 1929: 88). According to Caffi and Janney (1994: 336), “In the Prague functionalist view, ‘intellectual’ speech is always socially oriented; ‘emotional’ speech, on the other hand, may be itself an outlet of the speaker’s emotion…; it may also have a social orientation: for example, when it aims at causing emotions in the hearer…”

Because the Prague School emphasized function of language over form, it by necessity then presupposes a speaker and hearer, along with their expressive intentions (Maynard 2004: 23). Mathesius (1929) states it very clearly:

Whereas earlier linguistics, which primarily relied on the interpretation of texts, started from ready-made language structures and inquired about their meaning, thus proceeding from form to function, the new linguistics, relying on its experience with present-day language, starts from the needs of expression and inquires what means serve to satisfy these communication needs in the language being studied. It thus proceeds from function to form.

Maynard (2004) refers frequently to a contemporary member of the Prague Linguistics Circle: Danes (1987; 1994), who also advocated an interactive approach to emotive discourse where the speaker, hearer, and situation are central. For Danes (and supported by Maynard), emotion is constantly being experienced and there is always an
“affective involvement toward the object of our cognitive intentionality” (2004: 24).

This, according to Maynard’s, makes language and emotion inseparable.

Jakobson (1960) does provide some details about the grammatical expression of affect. His model follows and supplements Buhler’s (1934) Organon Model, and it includes a speech act (addressee, context/message/contact code, and addressee), along with a scheme of six basic functions of communication, namely, emotive (Buhler’s Ausdruck [expression], referential (Buhler’s Darstellung [representation]), conative (Buhler’s Appell [vocative], but different in that the conative function also serves to express desires and commands), poetic, phatic, and metalingual. Jakobson defines this emotive function (which he uses synonymously with expressive) stating that it is “focused on the addresser, [and] aims at direct expression of the speaker’s attitude toward what he is speaking about.”

Finally, Mathesius (1964) offers interesting views on linguistic reinforcement and emphasis as two primary traits of affective speech, which shed more light on Prague School views of affective language and was summarized as follows by Caffi and Janney (1994: 336):

Whereas reinforcement is mainly a lexical matter, involving choices of graded suffixes, marked lexemes, slang, and so forth, emphasis is mainly a matter of syntax and prosody, and involves choices in sentences in which the particular Satzmelodie and intonation express the emphatic orientation of the speaker to the content.

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In summary, any model of language from the perspective of the Prague School must include an emotive function, and it must account for syntactic, prosodic, and morphological means of expressing this function. Jakobson’s model does not describe affect itself in detail, but descriptions from Mathesius and Danes do serve as useful supplements.

3.4.3 Pragmatics

The modern linguistic use of the term Pragmatics can be attributed to Morris (1938) whose focus was much broader, being aimed at a science of signs (semiotics). He distinguished between three separate branches: semantics, which is the study of the relation of signs to their designated objects; syntax, which is the study of the formal relation of signs to one another, and pragmatics, the study of the relation of signs to their interpreters (1938: 6), which is the focus here.

Levinson (1983: 1-24) provides a multitude of definitions for pragmatics, but the following three are the ones he claims to be the most accurate: (1) Pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language; (2) the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding; (3) the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate.

Crystal (1985: 240) provides a definition that is not only relevant for this study, but also falls into agreement with Halliday’s (1985) system network theory, claiming that pragmatics “…is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the
choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants.” And LoCastro (2003), relying on the works of Clark (1977), Crystal (1985), and Duranti and Goodwin (1992) defines pragmatics as “the study of speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and nonlinguistic signals in the context of socioculturally organized activities” (2003: 15).

Although these definitions vary from one scholar to the next, they all focus on the relationship between meaning, context, and choices, which is a clear indication that one could provide a strong account of affect in language via a pragmatic approach, particularly by way of their account of context, which was central according to Danes (1987) and Maynard (2004). Despite the potential, the importance of affect is not usually expressed in definitions of context in the field of pragmatics. Levinson (1983, x), for example, provides the following definition:

Context… includes only some of the basic parameters of the context of utterance, including participants’ identity, role and location, assumptions about what participants know or take for granted, the place of an utterance within a sequence of turns at talking and so on.

Ochs (1979: 2-6), a linguistic anthropologist, incorporated the following four factors in her definition:
1. **setting**: “the social and spatial framework within which encounters are situated”

2. **behavioral environment**: “the way that participants use their bodies and behavior as a resource for framing and organizing their talk.”

3. **language**: “The notion of contextualization cues, that is, the way language itself provides a context for other language” (LoCastro 2003: 13).

4. **Extra situational context**: “background knowledge, that is, social cultural, historical, political frames within which local instances need to be interpreted” (LoCastro 2003: 13).

LoCastro (2003), using a partial quote from Ochs and Schieffelin (1979: 1) adds sociocultural and cognitive dimensions to these definitions, arguing that “context is to be regarded as the linguistic, social, and psychological world ‘in which the language user operates at any given time.’” Although, LoCastro provides no detailed description of affect itself, she does mention it in passing⁶ while discussing indexicality, specifically social deixis. What she says is that, in Japanese, personal pronouns, which are only used optionally, can convey social and attitudinal meanings in addition to their pointing function (2003: 69), and she provides the following example where a speaker is conveying a negative attitude toward another person for being habitually late by using the third person singular objective pronoun which, despite its existence, is not normally used in Japanese.

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Kanojo wa, itsumo osoi n desu. [Her, she’s always late.]

With that being said, it appears that pragmaticists would describe affect as a type of social index, which is in line with the discussion on indices in section (3.3) and which is discussed in further detail in section (3.4.5).

In terms of investigatory frameworks being presented specifically for a pragmatics of affect, perhaps the only source is Caffi and Janney (1994), which is briefly outlined here. The major issues presented deal with identifying what constitutes an emotively significant linguistic contrast and the importance of a baseline with which to compare an emotive marker, along with the types of emotive devices available in linguistic communication.

In response to the first of these issues, Caffi and Janney propose divergence from linguistic norms as a primary means of identifying emotive contrasts, claiming that “we can hypothesize that emotive significance is associated mainly with features of discourse that strike interpreters as being in some sense ‘unusual’, ‘unexpected’, or ‘surprising’ in the situation” (1994: 349). This unexpected behavior would then lead to some form of interactive destabilization, which would then trigger a “reorganization of interpretive assumptions” (1994: 349). This being the case, Caffi and Janney also side with the view that emotive communication is an interactive achievement, rather than a process. Language as an interactional achievement is dynamic and intersubjective, whereas emotive communication as a process is static and deals more with a speaker’s objective
knowledge of language. Maynard (2004: 28) calls the former an {I-you} relationship which hints at its intersubjective nature, and the latter an {I-it} relationship.

Another issue that Caffi and Janney (1994) deal with is that of divergence, which, according to them, is the establishment of an unmarked, neutral form, or a linguistic baseline to identify for comparison with the marked forms. The problem of what the Prague School calls markedness, according to Sapir (1927: 893) is to be dealt with by identifying variation and finding nuclear patterns of behavior. He later argued that it is always the implicit variation against some anticipatory schema that matters emotively, and not the individual activity itself (Sapir 1949: 542), and it is this anticipatory schema that Caffi and Janney (1994) unpack into three different dimensions, namely, contextual schemata, cotextual schemata, and degree.

Contextual anticipatory schemata deal with “expectations about kinds of communicative behavior that different types of speakers or writers are likely to produce in different situations” (Caffi and Janney 1994: 352). The example they give is of a mother admonishing her child under normal circumstances: “Johnny, stop that” vs. a different method which tends to generate more notice, namely, by calling out the child’s full name: “John James Smith, stop that!”

Cotextual anticipatory schemata refer to “expectations about types or successions of verbal and/or nonverbal activities that are likely to occur in particular stretches of discourse, given the communicative events preceding them” (Caffi and Janney 1994: 352). For example, speaking informally with someone, but then switching to formal speech would form a contrast.
Degree refers not to contrast per se, but to how contrasts diverge. This implies the assumption that emotive contrasts are on a more/less scale, i.e. they require an approach that is based on notions of gradient relationships, and are therefore analogic, rather than digital. This was previously argued by Wescott (1976), Labov (1984: 44), Brown and Levinson (1987: 85), Foolen (1997), and later by Maynard (2004: 27) as well. Labov (1984: 44) states that “Intensity operates on a scale centered about the zero, or unmarked expression, with both positive (aggravated or intensified) and negative (mitigated or minimized) poles.” Caffi and Janney (1994: 355) provide examples on numerous linguistic levels, one of which is lexical repetition:

OK, I’ll do it. OK, OK. I’ll do it. OK, OK, OK. I’ll do it!

Furthermore, Caffi and Janney (1994) also attempt to narrow down what is meant by emotive meaning, by first of all pointing out that linguistic studies of affect are, for the most part, silent on the issue; secondly, by considering what has been said in the field of psychology; thirdly, by attempting to organize the large variety of terms used by linguists under the three basic dimensions of affect argued for by psychologist: a positive or negative evaluative dimension, a power, control, or potency dimension, and an activity, arousal, or intensity dimension. Caffi and Janney ultimately settle on the terms used by Osgood et al. (1957) as representative of the psychological perspective: evaluation, potency, and activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological categories</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Potency</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Main Contrasts</td>
<td>positive/negative</td>
<td>Powerful/unpowerful</td>
<td>Aroused/unaroused</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linguistic categories</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>Specificity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main contrasts</td>
<td>Positive/negative</td>
<td>Near/far</td>
<td>Clear/vague</td>
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*Adapted from Caffi and Janney (1994: 344)*

As can be seen, the clearest parallels between linguistic and psychological categories lie with evaluation and activity, while on the other hand, in linguistics there are many different categories that have been assumed in separate, unrelated studies, where psychology presents only potency. Caffi and Janney are straightforward about their doubt as to whether all of these could or should be presented under potency.

As it stands, this comparison between linguistic and psychological views on affect is interesting and helpful for anyone desiring to approach affect in language in an organized fashion, but these dimensions of affect do not readily lend themselves to a pragmatic approach, because they do not address the interpersonal nature of emotive communication. Caffi and Janney (1994: 43-49) attempt to use notions of involvement to
bridge the gap between psychological perspectives and a pragmatics of affect. They point out that at least a few linguistic definitions of involvement seem to point to the functional, interpersonal side of emotive language, whereas the table above only points to meaning.

Linguists, it seems, have used the term involvement with reference to (1) inner states as preconditions of interaction, (2) speakers’ emotive identifications with speech acts, (3) uses of linguistic techniques and strategies to establish rapport, (4) overall rhetorical effects, evoking various senses of vividness, (5) speakers’ cognitive orientations to shared discourse topics, and (6) meta messages of rapport. (1) and (2) seem to focus on the individual and his/her attitude toward the speech act, but (3-6) are clearly interpersonally oriented. It should also be noted, however, that Caffi and Janney (1994) placed emphasis on the fact that current notions of involvement are still very underdeveloped.

3.4.4 Cognitive Semantics

The use of cognitive semantics as a framework for analyzing the expressive function of language has also been considered, at least by Foolen (1997), who argues that metaphor, metonymy, polysemy, and grammaticalization can be of use as analytical tools.

Whereas Hubler (1987), Besnier (1990), and Caffi and Janney (1994) all placed emphasis on communicative needs, variation, and choices in their attempts to understand the source of emotive communication, semanticists look to cognitive processes as its potential source. For cognitive semanticists, emotion and cognition are strictly kept separate in terms of language because humans draw on different parts of the brain for
emotion and cognition; however, it is also admitted that emotion can be communicated directly in a way that is not “purely conceptual” (Foolen 1997: 23). Moreover, and quite intuitively, their focus is more on the speaking individual and does not deal with the interpersonal dimension of emotive communication.

Foolen (1994: 22-23) draws a parallel between the birth of epistemic modals out of forms that originally functioned on the level of ideational content, and what may be occurring with the appearance of grammaticalized emotive forms, primarily arguing for metaphor and metonymy as the potential mechanisms of change. He states specifically that when modals “function on the epistemic level, these forms do not represent a content anymore. Instead, they indicate a procedural operation that the cognitive apparatus of the speaker carries out on the cognitive content of the utterance” (1994: 23). That is, modal verbs can indicate cognitive operations of inference, rather than simply describing them.

Similarly, then, purely expressive meaning can be derived out of what used to be purely referential. For example, the phrase *If only he were here*, which is originally an embedded conditional clause can now function as a primary clause and directly expresses some affective tone. In the case of metonymy, Foolen (1994: 24) argues that there must be an attitude that, in time, becomes associated with a referent where the conceptual meaning, although still dominant, takes on a connotation. But there is then the potential for semantic bleaching of the conceptual meaning, thus leaving only the expressive meaning.

As for the metaphorical mechanism of change, Lyons (1995: 310-11) provides the example of the demonstrative pronouns: *this* and *that* as a potential example of
expressive meaning stemming from the conceptual domain, where physical proximity and remoteness act as a metaphor for emotional closeness and distance. For example, someone holding something in her hand would normally say, “What’s this?” But in order to express some dislike or aversion, she may also say, “What’s that?”

This grammaticalization of expressive meaning out of propositional content was proposed by Traugott (1982, 1989) and has found support from studies such as Hubler (1998), who looked at six grammatical phenomena across time from Old, to Middle, to Modern English. And according to Maynard (2004: 30), who also supports this view, “Linguistic devices become more personal; in theoretical terms, the language change goes through the process of subjectification.”

While this perspective on affective grammar does contribute to our understanding, its contribution is purely explanatory of the birth of affective grammar. To be sure, a theory of affective grammar should include its inceptions along with its functions. However, Foolen’s explanation on how affect is expressed directly through the grammar seems a bit ad hoc. To say that it is not possible but that it does sometimes happen and here is where it comes from seems to be a contradiction. Nevertheless, this process of change could be in line with perspectives on the variable currently under investigation: verbal -s, which originally also had grammatical meaning (see chapter 4).

3.4.5 Sociolinguistic meaning

Early on in the world of sociolinguistic investigation, variation was thought by many to indicate, or index, broader social categories, such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (see Labov 1968, Wolfram 1969, and Fasold 1972 for early sociolinguistic studies
on AAVE). Moreover, the role of the speaker was considered a passive one. That is, the use of a particular linguistic variable was considered to be due to a person’s membership in some social category, as stated above, rather than an active attempt to convey something about oneself.

This early take on sociolinguistic meaning would have little value for a theoretical discussion on affective meaning and its place in a linguistic system; however, later there was a shift in methods in sociolinguistics. Researchers began to move from surveys to ethnographic studies (provide citations), and with this came a strong interest in local social categories, such as Eckert’s (2000) two-year investigation on suburban high school students just outside of Detroit. Although the broader, global categories were still found to be significant factors in her study, they fell second to local categories, the most well-known of which were the jocks and burnouts.

It was out of this “second wave” (Eckert 2012) of sociolinguistic research that a new view of meaning in variation surfaced, and this new view was that the linguistic variable does not necessarily index global social categories, and perhaps not always categories at all, but rather, they indicate personal characteristics, just as some might wear a certain cut of jeans or do their eye makeup in a certain way to convey something about themselves (Eckert 2012: 97). This take on meaning also changes our understanding of the speakers’ role in their use of certain variables from that of a static passive one, to a dynamic active one that is created and recreated by the speaker throughout time and according to circumstance.
This expansion in our understanding of meaning from one of global categories to local categories and/or personal characteristics broadens the span of potential indexical meaning in a way that allows for the inclusion of affect, and the exploitation of linguistic variables to convey these personal characteristics is called style. In a way, this brings us full circle, back again from Bally’s (1909) take on style, which Caffi and Janney (1994: 333) argued would be better termed “expressive”.

However, Bally’s natural and evocative categories of affective features (see section 3.4.2 above) line up very closely with Eckert’s (2008: 469) distinction between stances and permanent qualities (respectively), the former referring to the means speakers use to position themselves with regard to the ongoing talk (Wardhaugh and Fuller 2015) and/or interlocutors (Kiesling 2009), the latter to local social categories/characteristics, both of which she claims are inherent components of sociolinguistic meaning. She does not provide a definition of stance, but Biber and Kinegan (1989) define it as “the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message.” This definition is very similar to the others that were covered above, but Biber and Kinegan include evidentiality, rather than just affect, as being covered by the idea of stance. Ochs (2005: 78) describes stance as “a display of a socially recognized point of view or attitude.” According to Chafe and Nochols (1986), stance involves displays of affective attitudes, such as intensity of emotion… about some referent or proposition. These definitions sound very much the same as the definitions of grammatical affect provided earlier in the chapter.
But sociolinguists have been struggling to identify *affect* in language empirically for quite some time. Labov (1969) was tempted to attribute some uses of *verbal -s* among New York AAVE speakers to *affect*, but seems to have felt that his methods were inadequate to demonstrate this. A more recent example which is also relevant to the current study, is Rickford and McNair-Knox’s (1994) investigation on *style* in Palo Alto AAVE, where they note that the subject, Foxy, “is extremely animated and involved” (261), and that this enhanced emotional state correlated with a significant increase in *habitual be* use and copula absence. They later consider the possibility that these linguistic features can be accounted for with Finegan and Biber’s (1989) situational parameters (informational vs. affective communication, based on the topic of discussion) but, like Labov, they abandoned that account in favor of more empirically based approaches.

The third-wave (Eckert 2012) take on sociolinguistic meaning, according to which *affect* can be indexed as a form of *stance* is still relatively new and a framework on the level of Caffi and Janney (1994) or even Besnier’s (1990) pragmatics of *affect*, it seems, has not yet been developed. This forces researchers to set aside the issue for now in favor of those features which are more amenable to observation and identification like gender or social class, or, as Biber and Kinegan (1989) did, to attempt an investigation without referencing any framework. It seems that identifying some personal feature of a subject, such as their gender or their status in a local social group is much more straightforward than identifying what they are feeling at a given moment. When a subject
uses a particular linguistic form, it is difficult to claim any correlation with certainty with those particular feeling under investigation.

3.4.6 Affect as Allolanguage

A less mentioned description of affect in language is Wescott’s (1976) paper on allolinguistics, which builds on George L. Trager (1955), distinguishing microlanguage from macrolanguage. Thorough accounts of affect such as Besnier (1990), Caffi and Janney (1994), Foolen (1997), and even entire books on the subject, such as Maynard (2004) do not mention Wescott’s allolinguistics, and this may be due to its unique use of terminology.

Trager’s (1955) distinction between microlanguage and macrolanguage was an attempt to separate the core of language from what he calls “(1) prelanguage, such as pongid vocalization and infantile babbling, (2) paralanguage, such as non-grammatical interjection and speech deformation, and (3) metalanguage, such as poetry and song” (Wescott 1976: 497). It is these three categories that Wescott merges into one umbrella term: allolanguage, which he defines as “language that is alienated from conventionally structured speech” (1976: 497). To give an idea of this micro/macro linguistic distinction, Wescott provides a table showing the attributes of each, which is presented below in table (2). One can see right away that much of what he places in allolanguage is also mentioned by later accounts on affect.
Table 6. Features of microlanguage and allolanguage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microlanguage</th>
<th>Allolanguage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gestureless</td>
<td>co-gestural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>digital</td>
<td>perceptual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>symbolic</td>
<td>iconic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grammatical</td>
<td>grammarless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>businesslike</td>
<td>playful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standardized</td>
<td>privatized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>denotative</td>
<td>connotative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specific</td>
<td>polysemic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Wescott, allolanguage is co-gestural in the sense that it is more likely to elicit “strong kinesic accompaniment” (1976: 498). That allolanguage is analogic, refers to the view that it is more likely to be of the more/less kind, rather than all or none, and many others also take this stance (Besnier 1990; Caffi and Janney 1994; Foolen 1997). The perceptual aspect of allolanguage deals with echoics, i.e., not only the use of reduplication (e.g. *clink* and *cackle*), but also the actual echoing of sounds heard in one’s environment. Directly connected to the perceptual aspect, iconicity of allolanguage deals with the resemblance of speech sounds to extra-linguistic realities, such as the use of high front vowels to represent things that are very small (e.g. *itty-bitty, teensy-weeny*).
The so-called grammarless feature does not mean that allolanguage is without grammar, but rather that (a) its forms resist analysis, and (b) that its structural paradigms are “absent from microlanguage” (Wescott 1976: 499). Another term he uses is *counter grammar*, meaning that allolinguistic forms can have paradigms and structural features, but contrast with their microlinguistic counterparts.

The playful aspect refers to speakers’ sportive experimentation with speech forms for expressive, rather than informative purposes. The term privatized refers to the restriction of certain speech forms to subgroups within the larger speech community. And finally, allolanguage is both connotative (i.e. it invokes strong impressions), and polysemic, in the sense that allolinguistic forms tend to have more meanings than microlinguistic forms.

Furthermore, echoing pragmatic and functional accounts, Wescott (1976: 500) argues that the function of these two components of language differs in that “the thrust of microlanguage is toward decontextualization, deaffectualization, and disambiguation. That is, microlanguage does not depend nearly as much as allolanguage does on context, where context is understood to mean situation, communicative body movement, and voice quality.”

3.5 Subjectivity in language
One other interesting perspective on expressive language is Lyons’ (1982) discussion on deixis and subjectivity. He defines this term subjectivity as “the way in which natural languages, in their structure and their normal manner of operation, provide for the
locutionary agent’s expression of himself and of his own attitudes and beliefs” (1982: 102). Following this, Lyons also argues, based on the reasoning of Bar-Hillel (1954), that subjectivity is nothing more than indexicality, which deals with the notion of pointing (in the case of subjectivity, pointing at oneself). This idea of subjective language is distinguished from objective language, which is propositional in nature. Lyons provides the utterance “I am hot” as an example of a sentence that is both subjective and objective, because it simultaneously conveys the speaker’s feeling of discomfort (subjectivity) and the simple proposition that the speaker is hot (objectivity).

Benveniste (1971: 224) defines subjectivity as the capacity of the speaker to posit himself as “subject”, which clarifies the agent’s expression of himself part of Lyon’s (1982) definition. The foundational example Benveniste provides for demonstration is the first-person pronoun: “‘Ego’ is he who says ‘ego’” (1971: 224). One can make oneself the subject of an English utterance by directly referring to oneself with “I”.

With this in mind, subjectivity in language is the act of referring to oneself referentially, emotionally, and/or socially in an utterance. In AAVE varieties that utilize verbal -s, for example, the utterance You needs to leave has nothing to do with the speaker from a purely objective standpoint. However, the speaker is in fact making herself the subject of this utterance by using verbal -s. The use of the -s morpheme not only points at the speaker’s emotional state, but also at the speaker’s social status because in the United States, it is well-known that this is an AAVE feature.
3.6 Summary

In this chapter affect in language is considered from multiple perspectives. Studies such as Labov (1984), Wolfram (1994), Baugh (1984), Spears (1982), and Biber and Kinegan (1989) take on the issue without working under any specific framework for analysis. Caffi and Janney (1994) and Maynard (2004) present a framework deeply rooted in pragmatics, but only the latter follows up with an actual study of affect. Wescott (1976), Lyons (1982), and Eckert (2008) propose broader fields of linguistic meaning that encompass linguistic emotivity, namely allolanguage, subjectivity in language, and third wave sociolinguistic meaning, respectively. These are all attempts to describe the non-referential world of linguistic meaning. And scholars such as Bally (1909), Bühler (1934), and Jakobson (1960) have attempted to create models of language as a whole that include linguistic emotivity. Caffi and Janney’s (1994) framework represents the culmination of almost a century of discussion on the matter.

Some key points shared among these sources, such as the indexical nature of affective grammar (i.e. in what ways can certain linguistic forms index affect), the speaker- vs. hearer-oriented aspects of affective language, the evaluative nature of affect, the use of contrast or unconventional grammar to convey affect, and the importance of the connection between context and affective grammatical devices are important and proved useful for the data collection process in the current study. Whereas most studies tend to focus on the speaker-oriented aspect, here, more emphasis is placed on the hearer-oriented aspect. Also, evaluation, the element of contrast, and context are also
incorporated into the survey used to elicit responses from participants. As will be seen, this adds objectivity to the analysis in a way that past research has struggled to provide.

It is also worth clarifying the difference between the function of a linguistic marker and the constraints on that marker (rules controlling whether or not it is used). Constraints are like release valves: *When circumstance A is true, allow the linguistic marker to be expressed. When false, do not allow the marker to be expressed.* Humans, depending on the culture, have certain needs or requirements for their language that need to be fulfilled. They want their language to do certain things, i.e. perform certain functions. If that function is to express a social characteristic, grammatical aspect or personal emotion, a linguistic marker’s use is then constrained by social, grammatical and/or emotive circumstances, respectively.

3.7 Affect in AAVE

3.7.1 Progressive *steady*

Baugh (1984) discusses the use of the word *steady* as an aspectual marker in AAVE. It is a predicate adverb that typically precedes progressive verbs (e.g. He be steady rappin’), and it provides that following progressive verb with a sense of *intensity*, *continuousness*, and *consistency*. Baugh distinguishes *steady* from the standard *steadily* because the latter implies calmness and control, whereas AAVE *steady* must always be associated with intensity. To support this, he provides the following anecdotal evidence from a conversation he had recorded between some older African-American gentlemen who
were discussing “black intelligence, Arthur Jensen, and the complexity of the human brain” (1984: 6):

As the gentleman spoke the passion in his voice escalated, and it was in the excited atmosphere that he exclaimed, “And inside of you you’ve got a mind that’s… that’s… see, your mind is steady workin’. It’s your subconscious mind.”

That Baugh attributed the function of steady to a mere marker of aspect is unfortunate, because he makes it quite clear, as can be seen from the above example, that intensity is an important component of its use. However, in his view, intensity is itself also a marker of aspect in what he calls “BE” (Black English) and he is straightforward about this when he states, “It is, once again, the intensity of the action which is the unique aspectual quality for BE” (1984: 6).

3.7.2 Indignant done

Labov (1984), like Baugh (1984) uses the term intensity to describe certain uses of the preverbal done particle found in AAVE, but he parts ways with him in that he, as shall be seen, sees the potential for complete separation between the intensity component and the grammatical function (in this case, perfect aspect). That is, he argues that intensity can be conveyed on its own, stating that “certain aspect categories tend to acquire the feature of
intensity, and eventually the aspect marker is used to signal intensity even when its other associations do not apply” (1984: 46).

In many varieties of AAVE, the done particle serves to express this completed action or perfect aspect. Baugh (1984) provides some typical examples of its use, one of which is:

(1) I done forgot to turn off the stove “I have forgotten to turn off the stove.”

What Labov noticed was that there are some occasions when the done particle may not work as a perfect marker, such as in the example taken from Baugh (1979: 150):

(2) So he went to where she was... and got the nerve to lie to me... talking ‘bout he done went to work.

It is cases like these that Labov argues to be the most likely interpretation to be that of intensive, moral indignation. With regard to the broader significance of such use of done, he states the following (Labov 1984: 47):

As long as we can locate a plausible interpretation of aspect in particles in cognitive terms, oriented to the processing of information, it is not a vital matter to recognize emotional meanings like ‘intensive’ or social meanings like ‘moral indignation’. They play no more important role than
any other redundant features that cluster about grammatical structure. It is quite otherwise when no cognitive or referential meaning appears-- a cognitive zero --or when the context is inconsistent with the cognitive meanings usually recognized --a cognitive contradiction. We then have no choice but to recognize social and emotional meanings as an integral part of the central grammatical system.

This is a strong stance to take, especially considering that none of the examples of indignant done in Labov’s (1984) analysis can be counted as cognitive zeroes when we could easily interpret them as perfect constructions, rather than this concept of completely verb-ed that he offers.

3.7.3 Semi-aux come

Spears (1982) also noted the expression of speaker indignation in AAVE with the use of what he calls semi-aux come. Interpreting come as a verb of motion does not work for AAVE in some cases, such as the following sentence: We sitting there talking, and he come hitting on me for some money. In this case, the pronoun he is included in the referent of we, so both parties are already sitting together and talking, thus making it difficult to interpret come as being a verb of motion. Instead Spears argues that “Typically… the complement of the come of indignation expresses an action that is presumptuous, antisocial, or grossly inappropriate, and it is that action toward which indignation is directed” (1982: 854).
However, unlike Baugh (1984), who argued for steady as an intensive aspect marker (i.e. he pinned what he calls intensivity to the realm of aspect), and Labov (1984), who viewed intensivity as a phenomenon of its own, which could be potentially separated from aspect completely, Spears argues that the indignation conveyed with semi-aux come belongs to the category of mood. Finding most traditional definitions of mood to be inadequate, he cites Jakobson’s (1971: 135) definition where he states that mood ‘characterizes the relation between the narrated event and its participants with reference to the participants of the speech event’ which sounds very similar to Morris’ (1938: 6) definition of pragmatics.

3.7.4 call Verb-ing constructions

One other construction that may be associated with affect is the call NP V-ing construction, which was reported by Wolfram (1994), who provided the example: They call themselves dancing, as an illustration of its use. He claims that it primarily is used to mean that what may appear to be the case, in fact is not. So in the above example, the people who were trying to dance, were not perceived as doing a good job of it.

This construction has what Wolfram calls an evaluative function, which Caffi and Janney (1994) consider to be one of the many facets of emotive markers (see table (1) in section 3.4.6). This is most likely akin to the constructions of indignation discussed above.
3.8 Methodological issues in the analysis of affect

The push for a pragmatics of linguistic affect makes sense because it demands that we look to other factors outside of the speaker for evidence, namely situational and linguistic context. However, a method that a particular linguistic element is a marker of affect is still lacking. Labov (1984) attempts to identify the done particle as a marker of affect by finding cases where it cannot be interpreted as a perfective marker, but his examples and do not exclude the potential for done as a pluperfect marker. Maynard (2004) argues that situational context is essential but uses comic strips to find connections between affect and affective markers. That is, he looked for emotional physical gestures that might accompany linguistic affect markers. Others, such as Volek (1990) simply take it for granted that they are dealing with affect with certain words and grammatical structures.

All of the above methods are presumptuous and therefore lack the objective tone that is required in a scientific investigation. How can we know that the speaker is using a certain grammatical form to convey added emotion? Finding this connection is not as straightforward as finding evidence that the -s morpheme found on standard English verbs correlates with third person singular subjects. Nor is it as straightforward as finding a correlation between a group of high school students who identify as male burnouts and some certain vowel qualities (Eckert 2000).

Fortunately, a theory of language that stresses the importance not only of the speaker, but also of the hearer and the context makes the survey method a possibility. Wolfram (1994), Labov (1984), Spears (1982) and Moody (2011) all collected data using this method and the results were consistent with their respective hypotheses in their
analyses of the pragmatics of various morphosyntactic features in AAVE. However, (a) these results were still somewhat speculative in nature because very few people were surveyed and tests for significance were never performed, and (b) they rarely took full advantage of the pragmatics perspective in that they did not provide both situational and linguistic context in their surveys. As will be seen in chapter 5, the methods for the current study provide participants with a much more detailed description of the situation and the linguistic context, so that their judgments are much more informed. Moreover, many surveys were completed so that a statistical analysis could be performed rather than simply speculating on the results.
Chapter 4. Previous Literature on Verbal -s

4.0 Introduction

In this section, the uses of verbal -s over time are reviewed. This includes its uses in pre-colonial British and colonial American varieties of English, and its uses in Early, Middle, and Late-AAVE varieties. The approach taken here is chronological, but each section (for British English and AAVE) is divided either according to the factors known to have influenced the outcome of present tense inflection or according to the most prominent studies on verbal -s from that time period.

The goal in this chapter is not only to provide an account of verbal -s as it is/was used in different varieties of English, but also to account for its origin and to describe its path from its inception, up to the its present use in AAVE varieties today. Of course, the changes verbal -s has gone through cannot be described entirely because there are gaps, i.e. time periods where no data were available, and research methods and foci on extant data vary quite a bit. However, an attempt will be made to discuss a large number of sources which looked at each stage that verbal -s went through. It is first of all argued here that the patterns from southern and southwestern England were the most widespread and served as linguistic inputs to many American colonies in the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century. Later, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Scotch-Irish also served as an input to the colonies and Early AAVE.
This view has been advocated by many traditional authorities, such as Montgomery (2008: 122), who states that “New England culture and speech are traditionally linked to London and south-eastern England, especially East Anglia…” With regard to the south between 1750 and 1850, Montgomery attributes influence, particularly in the backcountry region, from Pennsylvania to Georgia, to the Scotch-Irish (2008: 126). As for Virginia, he states that, “Those sponsored by the London Company to found Jamestown in 1607 were English, mainly from the south and London, but… early Virginian settlers were soon outnumbered by a much larger second wave, one coming from southwestern England and London” (2008: 129). In terms of the present tense paradigm, Montgomery (2008: 146) identifies four varieties: suffixal -s generalized across the present-tense paradigm, which occurs in the southwest of England; the Scotch-Irish pattern, found in northern England, Scotland, and much of Ireland, which was the northern subject rule; the standard pattern (third-singular -s) and the zero-paradigm in the southeast.

Klemola (2000: 329) argues a very similar, but slightly different view, claiming that in the southwest too, a zero-paradigm existed. In contrast with this, he claims that in some southern and southwestern dialects, “the inflectional marker -s has been generalised over the whole paradigm” (2000: 329). He then concludes with a northern/North Midlands pattern, which depended on type-of-subject and proximity of the subject to the verb (the Northern Subject Rule) (2000: 330).

Schneider (2006: 59) also attributes the dialect of early Virginia to southern England and the Great Valley of the Appalacian mountains in the eighteenth-century to
the Scotch-Irish. These views also found support in Winford (2015) and are followed here, but with a bit more detail in terms of the constraints on verbal -s inflection in the southwest. As can be seen from this brief summary, the idea of a “generalized pattern” seems to be prevalent, but this ignores the possible presence of the Northern Subject Rule (Cole 2014), habitual aspect (Clarke 1997), and the embedded clause constraint (Cheshire 1982, Clarke 1997). That is not to say that the pattern was not generalized, but simply that there are constraints that have been identified with the variation that does occur, even in these southern/southwestern varieties where -s is more frequent across the paradigm.

According to Cole (2014: 48-61), the most wide-spread pattern found in England has been one which is constrained by the Northern Subject Rule (NSR), and so an extended review of this is presented in the following section, although a syntactic constraint found in southwest England and a grammatical aspect constraint are covered as well. The Northern Subject Rule has also been claimed to operate in earlier AAVE, but other explanations have been offered for the patterns of use in earlier AAVE. These include both social and grammatical influences.

The three above-mentioned constraints will be discussed in more detail but, to summarize briefly, the NSR is the combination of two constraints, a subject-type constraint and a proximity constraint. The former refers to the fact that full NP subjects favor the -s inflection. The latter refers to the fact that non-adjacent pronoun subjects also favor the -s marker (Pietsch 2005). This represents the northern pattern. The syntactic constraint refers to the southern/southwestern pattern, where -s is favored in complex sentences when the complementary clause contains a non-finite verb (Cheshire 1982;
The grammatical constraint refers to what scholars believe to be an -s marker favored when aspect is habitual, which was arguably used in the south (Clarke 1997) and in Scots English (Montgomery 1996).

4.1 Verbal -s in British English

Of the three constraints mentioned above, the NSR (subject-type and proximity constraints) and grammatical (habitual) aspect are the only two investigated as possible factors for the use of non-concord -s in AAVE. Moreover, the NSR was most likely the constraint factor for verbal -s at its inception, so its description takes more time to cover. A summary of these constraints is provided below, beginning with the NSR, then dealing with habitual aspect and the syntactic constraint.

4.1.1 The Northern Subject Rule

Pietsch (2005) and Cole (2014) provide more recent and comprehensive takes on the history of the Northern Subject Rule (NSR) and are therefore the primary sources for this section. Pietsch (2005: 4) defines the NSR as being the generalization that verbs “take the -s form with all subjects, except with the personal pronouns I, we, you and they when they are directly adjacent to the verb”. According to this definition, one would expect a present tense paradigm of the following sort:
Table 7. Northern Subject Rule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NP and Non-Adjacent PRO Subjects</th>
<th>Adjacent PRO Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st}</td>
<td>-s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>-s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd}</td>
<td>-s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pietsch’s primary goals were two-fold: (1) to provide a diatopic analysis (crossing geographical regions) of the use of the NSR, and (2) to provide a connection between empirical work and grammatical theorizing which attempts to explain NSR.

To summarize Pietsch’s (2005: 53-4) claims for the origin of the NSR (and therefore, verbal -s), he first of all proposes a sound change for northern English speakers by which the old third-person singular and third plural present tense markers, namely -θ, gradually changed to -s and then spread to the rest of the paradigm. Parallel to this (but in the south, rather than the north) was an innovation of suffixless forms when the subject was an adjacent pronoun. From there, this pattern supposedly made its way up to the north due to language (dialect) contact and merged with the northern -s system, thus giving the contrast that we see in the NSR. This variation between -s and -Ø, he claims, has been attested in Northumbrian documents since the mid-tenth century, but not again after that until about 1300.

Pietsch (2005: 54) attributes the southern -Ø affix rule to the West Saxon dialect, arguing that it was a case of inflectional loss with first- and second-person plural verbs when preceding the first- and second-person plural pronouns: we and ge, respectively.
Complicating the matter, he proposes that this change began with the subjunctive -n affix and then took hold in the indicative by analogy.

In order to account for these changes, Pietsch turns to usage-based theories, specifically frequency effects, for his explanation after considering and then rejecting generative perspectives on the matter (2005: 56-67). That is, due to the possibility that these verbs occurred frequently with a post-verbal clitic pronoun, it is possible that reduction and then deletion took place under these circumstances.

In order to reconcile this new pattern with the proximity constraint, Pietsch hypothesizes that “a Type-of-Subject constraint may arise whenever combinations of verbs and personal pronouns, owing to their high discourse frequency, are entrenched\textsuperscript{7} separately and attain unit status. A Position-of-Subject constraint will be a corollary of the fact that both the more specific and the more general schema may compete with each other in the production of a usage event” (2005: 75). That is, an immediately adjacent pronoun is more frequent than a non-adjacent one, and this pronoun + verb-Ø construction is memorized as a linguistic unit, but can be overridden or maintained in the (less frequent) case that the verb is not adjacent to the pronoun, thereby allowing the pronoun... verb-s construction to surface.

It is beyond the scope of this study to address the matter in depth, but some considerations are in order. First Pietsch’s (2005) conclusions are brought into question. Then an alternative is proposed.

\textsuperscript{7} The term entrenched here refers to a phenomenon offered in theories of frequency effects in language (Bybee 2001).
First, Pietsch’s claim that the northern varieties underwent a change of $-\theta > -s$ does not seem completely implausible; however, phonetically induced sound change is extremely regular and this is accepted as basic tenet of historical phonology (seen as such in textbooks such as Campbell 2013, Hock 1991, Hock and Joseph 2009, Ringe and Eska 2013). Therefore, the first thing a historical linguist should do is check is to see if this change occurred elsewhere in word-final position, outside of the present tense verb system.

Second, to argue that first- and second-plural endings began to weaken and delete in the West Saxon dialect due to analogy with a weakening effect in the subjunctive, spread throughout the rest of the paradigm, and then were adopted by the speakers of the Northumbrian dialect seems very complicated and unlikely.

Historically, there has been great rivalry between these two regions. So much so that many English and Scandinavian rulers alike from the period when the NSR was taking shape did not try to rule the north directly, but rather through some Anglo-Scandinavian representative, who was native to the area. It was made clear that this was the best path to take when Edward the Confessor attempted to place Tostig, the brother of King Harold of Wessex, in command at York. Despite being half Danish, he was quickly ousted by the people in that region due at least partly to their resentment of his West Saxon origins (Holman 2007: 104). The idea that there was “agreeable” contact that was intense enough between these two regions to allow for structural transfer of verbal patterns is doubtful.
Moreover, no evidence is provided that this combination of an uninflected present tense verb with a following first- and second-person plural pronoun clitics is very frequent, and the idea that this -ø inflection in the first and second plural overtook the intuitively more frequent first- and third-person singular inflections by analogy gives cause for some caution about Pietsch’s hypothesis. Quantitative evidence, which future research may provide, is needed to support or reject Pietsch’s claim.

This push to explain the origins of the NSR solely through language internal mechanisms has been an issue for linguists at least since Holmqvist (1922). Pietsch considers briefly the possibility of Scandinavian influence (2005: 53), but makes no attempt to provide a full explanation of this view. However, it is proposed here that this view should at least be taken more seriously. The Scandinavians had been raiding and looting the area since the eighth-century and began to establish settlements in the late 800s. And by the end of the ninth-century documentation began to surface of Scandinavian kings in York (Holman 2007: 95), only a century before the first extant cases of -s/-ø variation were noted. Indeed, the Scandinavians not only settled the north, they ruled it intermittently from the ninth-century all the way up to the Norman Conquest. This goes without considering the relatively brief, but important, Scandinavian rule over all of England during the eleventh-century (Holman 2007: 89-118).

On the subject of an Anglo-Scandinavian societal merger, Holman (2007: 186) states the following:
As we have already seen, although the Danes of the Danelaw are rather hard to track down in the sources, there does seem a good deal of evidence for the emergence of a new Anglo-Scandinavian society and culture in northern and east England. Just as the law of the Danelaw was neither Scandinavian or English, so the stone sculpture produced there in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the artefacts found in archaeological excavations and the personal names used by the settlers all testify to something that was different from what had gone before but also, crucially, from what was found back in Scandinavia. So, yes, there was both a regional and an ethnic dimension to the Danelaw -- but the ethnicity in question is not Scandinavian, it is Anglo-Scandinavian.

With that being said, the time, the place and the circumstances were all ripe for an Anglo-Scandinavian dialect at the exact time and area(s) where the NSR was forming. Although the NSR specifically was not addressed, the view that present tense -s inflection has its roots in Scandinavian influence is also proffered by Thomason and Kaufman (1992: 290).

An alternative hypothesis then could be that the present tense paradigm was leveled during this “norsification” process, and that the verbal -s marker simply was used to mark agreement with the plural noun -s marker, which Northumbrians had also generalized throughout the nominal system in lieu of the many other possibilities (nominative plural -ren, -en, -an, -e, -a, -u, etc.) (Thomason and Kaufman 1992: 295).
This means there was almost certainly a period of variation between plural -s and -θ, in which case the third singular -θ could have begun to vary as well by analogy, after which the -s spread to the other persons and numbers. Subject pronouns, not being inflected with -s even in the plural, and being frequent enough to resist change, were not affected by this spreading pattern of plural -s inflection. The proximity constraint would factor in in the same manner that was proposed by Pietsch: the frequency of pronoun + adjacent verb-Ø constructions caused resistance to the spread of verbal -s, but verbs fell back to their default verb-s when this “entrenched” unit was not present (i.e. when some word or phrase intervened between a pronoun subject and its verb). Although this approach also requires some speculation, it is both simpler than Pietsch’s hypothesis (Occam’s Razor) and has the support of contact between Old Norse and Old English. However, as was stated earlier, the origin of the NSR is beyond the scope of this study, and so no strong claims are being made for the proposed hypothesis.

This pattern found with the Northern Subject Rule, according to Pietsch, was most consistent in what he calls the central north area of England, which covers the counties of Cumberland, Westmorland, Durham, and the southern half of Northumberland (2005: 12). However, dialects of Scots English (Montgomery 1989, Cuesta 2011, Rodriguez Ledesma 2013), as well as Scotch-Irish (Montgomery 1989, 1996), Scottish, and Irish via Scotland and England (Montgomery 2001: 146, Pietsch 2005: 56) all show evidence of the NSR.

Furthermore, varieties of English aside from northern England also show signs of the NSR. Some were simply trends, while others were significant, and Cole (2014)
discusses them in detail. She first of all cites Schendl’s (1996, 2000) studies on Early Modern English literature, namely the works of Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth, and Spenser. According to Schendl (1996: 150), “none of the c. 160 instances of plural -(e)s in Shakespeare occurs in the pattern ‘they + adjacent plural indicative verb’ though the construction is attested more than 300 times in Shakespeare’s works.” In the Elizabeth data, plural -s occurred 18.6% of the time, with 67.7% of those being NP subjects, while the other 32.3% comprised non-adjacent pronouns. Adjacent pronoun subjects, however, showed 0% -s inflection (Schendl 1996: 152). Schendl’s (2000) investigation, again on Shakespearean data, provided similar results.

Cole also cites Wright (2002), who found evidence in the Bridewell Court Minutes from London prisoners from the 1500-1600s. A look at the table provided in her study clearly shows evidence of the NSR, with third-plural -s/-th found 21.6% of the time when the subject was an NP, but 0% of the time with the they pronoun subject (2002: 253). Wright does concede that there were only 12 tokens of verbs governed by non-adjacent they. Two of those tokens took the -s/-th forms while the others were uninflfected (2002: 253). This would lead one to assume that the 0% inflection with the they pronoun subject refers only to when it is adjacent. One other study mentioned by Cole (2014) about the NSR in London was Bailey et al. (1986), who found evidence of the NSR via the Cely letters in London.

In the southwest of England too, Cole (2014: 55) dares to venture with the hypothesis of a wide-spread subject-type/proximity constraint. She first of all cites Godfrey and Tagliamonte (1999), who looked at Devon English and found a significant
effect from the NSR with plural subjects. It should be noted however, that they did not find significant evidence of the NSR with first- and second-person subjects (1999: 106). However, Cole does not mention Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001) who, despite not finding a significant effect, did find a trend, with full NP subjects having 46% -s inflection, while pronouns only showed 33%. The influence of the NSR was further substantiated by Tagliamonte (2009: 115, 118), who analyzed data from Wincanton, Somerset. Cole (2014: 55) also cites Peitsara’s (2002: 218) analysis of Devon data using the Helsinki Devon Corpus. Verbs were inflected 54% of the time with NP subjects and only 21% of the time with the they subject pronoun.

Cole (2014: 56) then challenges the Klemola’s (2000: 332-3) claim that there was no subject-type constraint in the south:

A strip, running broadly speaking from the southern counties of Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire up to the West Midland counties of Oxfordshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, shows variable verbal -s usage with plural third-person pronoun and NP subjects alike (Klemola 2000: 332-335; Wright 2002: 247), but the distribution in Devon differs strikingly. A survey of the responses given to Question 3.10.7, which asked informants to provide the usual cries animals make (e.g. bulls bellow, horses neigh, cows bellow, etc.) reveals an incidence of 52% -s usage with full NP subjects…
Cole then goes on to note that the they subject pronoun, at least in response to questions 8.5.2 and 4.6.2 showed no signs of -s inflection. Question 8.5.1 did reveal 36% -s inflection with the they pronoun subject, but “interestingly, the only three instances of non-adjacent they triggered verbal forms in -s” (2014: 56), thus showing some evidence that even the SED shows signs of the NSR, at least in the southwest.

To these, Cole (2014: 56-7) adds the Bailey & Ross (1988: 199-205) research on “Ship English”, which was spoken by British sailors, “many of whom hailed from the southwestern counties of England.” Quantitative evidence is lacking in the study, but there was some indication of the subject-type constraint.

Cole (2014) finally challenges Clarke (1997: 235-6), who found no significant effect from the NSR:

While it is noteworthy that we and you favour uninflected forms more so than they, Clarke erroneously assumes that a nominal/pronominal distinction only applies to the third person plural. The historical record indicates that the subject-type constraint also involves first and second-person plural pronoun subjects, so there is more of a subject-type constraint in her data than Clarke concedes. Furthermore, the fact that speakers in the under 35 age group favoured significantly higher rates of -s than the over 65 group suggests that the absence of a they-constraint in Newfoundland Vernacular English may reflect “subsequent linguistic
change rather than original absence” as suggested by Godfrey & Tagliamonte (1999: 111).

In order to provide a historical account for the existence of the NSR to the south, Cole (2014: 49) relies heavily on Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 122-123), who argue for two waves of migration south: one in the latter half of the fifteenth-century, the other coming a century later.

Thus, as argued by Cole (2014), the literature is slowly building to show that the NSR was a wide-spread phenomenon in Middle and Early Modern British English. The nature of this rule varies from one region to the next, sometimes involving the -en, -eθ, and/or -o suffixes along with verbal -s, and sometimes only affecting only third-person contexts (Godfrey and Tagliamonte 1999) rather than existing for all persons and numbers of the present tense paradigm. But what they all seem to have in common is the NSR as a possible source.

4.1.2 Other factors
Despite strong evidence for the NSR in many areas of England, other factors influencing the use of verbal -s have been noted as well, and these factors tend to operate independently of the NSR. These are aspecual and syntactic constraints and they have been noted in south/southwest and northern England (Cheshire 1982, Clarke 1997) as well as in Scottish English (Montgomery 1996) during the colonial period in the U.S. The details of these factors are briefly summarized in this section.

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Clarke’s (1997) careful and detailed analysis of *-s* inflection in Newfoundland Vernacular English (NVE) made use of 26 subjects who ranged from their teens to 60+ years of age. Despite the fact that NVE is a North American variety of English, she argued that because it is spoken in an enclave community, the NVE spoken there is likely to be more highly representative of southern and southwestern England (Dorset and Devon), and southeastern Irish varieties of English from the colonial period, than other American dialects, which have been subject to dialect mixing.

In her study, Clarke (1997) did not find a significant effect from the subject-type or the proximity constraint in NVE\(^8\). Rather, what she found was significant influence from both aspect and clause type. With regard to aspect, Clarke looked at habitual, durative, and punctual aspect, and found that habitual aspect strongly favored *-s* inflection in comparison with the other two. She defined habitual aspect as representing, “an iterative event understood to have occurred on a regular basis prior to the temporal reference point (the present) and expected to recur beyond this reference point” (Clarke 1997), and it appears she considered aspect as a single factor with habitual, durative, and punctual as separate levels for that factor; however this may not have been the best approach considering that notions like “durative” and “punctual” refer to the lexical aspect of verbs, and should not be confused with notions like “habitual”, which refer to viewpoint or grammatical aspect. By coding the data as such, this would have allowed Clarke to consider possible interactions between grammatical and lexical aspect.

\(^8\) The trends were there in the means, hinting at an NSR, but the effect was not significant, which should give rise to great caution when considering other claims for the presence of the NSR in studies that did not perform statistical tests.
With regard to the syntactic constraint, Clarke (1997) looked at clause type (embedded vs. matrix) and complement type (nonfinite, heavy NP, light NP, no complement, sentential). She found that embedded clauses favored -s marking significantly more than matrix clauses, and also that -s was favored by all complement types, with the exception of sentential complements.

Cheshire (1982) collected data directly from southern England (Reading) from 37 children ranging from 9-17 years of age. Again, subject-type and proximity were not found to be important factors. However, complement type did prove to be influential. She compared embedded clauses that did vs. those that did not contain a finite verb and, like Clarke (1997), found that the -s marker was strongly favored in the matrix clause when the embedded clause did not contain an inflected verb (the effect was strongest with -ing verbs, but also with infinitives). No test for significance was performed, but the standard pattern was found almost 100% of the time when followed by a sentential complement, whereas the rate of non-standard inflection was over 60% with complements containing non-finite verbs. Below are a few examples that Cheshire gave as instances of the embedded clause constraint:

Examples of embedded clause constraint:

a. I fancies going over Caversham.

b. I wants to kill animals.

c. I just lets her beat me.
One other study performed on a small sample of English speakers in southwestern England, in this case Devon, was that of Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001). They looked at data from eight subjects and did not consider syntactic constraints, but did analyze aspect and the NSR. Moreover, they considered these factors for third person singular, plural, and non-third person subjects separately. They found that with third person singular subjects, habitual aspect significantly favored -s inflection, whereas subject-type and adjacency did not. When the subject was third person plural, no factors proved significant. And in the case of non-third person subjects, both habitual aspect and the NSR were significant factors. The fact that third-person plural subjects did not show significant signs of influence from aspect or the NSR (although see above for Cole (2014) summary above on the issue) may be a sign that the syntactic constraints analyzed by Cheshire (1982) and Clarke (1997) were an important factor, which should have been considered in Poplack and Tagliamonte’s (2001) analysis.

Thus, with regard to verbal -s patterns in British varieties of English, the NSR seems to be a very wide-spread phenomenon and may have had its roots in northern varieties of Early Middle English (or late Old English) and then spread to southern parts of the country as well as to Scottish and Northern Irish English via Scots and Northern English. Aspect as a significant factor seems to have been isolated to the southwest and possibly the north, but much more work would need to be done to argue this point with any confidence. Both of these patterns made their way to the American colonies and have been found in earlier AAVE. Given that the southern/southwestern varieties were brought to the colonies earlier and had the most influence, one would expect that pattern
(generalized -s) to surface in Early AAVE, and it does, at least in Schneider’s (1989) data, which is supposed to represent the nineteenth-century. However, the results of other investigations also showed signs of the NSR, which would have had its effect in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century. All of this is discussed in more detail below.

4.1.3 Early cases of verbal -s in the Americas

In this section, the use of verbal -s in White and Black varieties of English in the Americas is discussed. AAVE is divided into Early, Middle, and Late stages. The Early period deals primarily with varieties spoken by people who lived around the time of the Civil War, and who lived all across the South. Data collected by linguists for the Early AAVE period ranges from audio recordings and transcriptions by amanuenses from interviews with ex-slaves between 1932 and 1975, to letters written by soldiers to members of the government and/or to their families, to audio recordings of people who live in enclave communities outside of the United States.

The Middle AAVE period, it seems, began at the end of the Second Great Migration in the early 1970s. This movement of people was not only from north to south, but also from rural to urban communities, and drastic changes occurred in terms of verbal -s patterning, i.e. there began a reduction in the frequency of its use, as was found by Labov (1968), Wolfram (1969), and Fasold (1972).

Coincidentally, it was also around this time that sociolinguistic analyses of these varieties of AAVE began to surface, most notably with Labov (1968), Wolfram (1969), and Fasold (1972). Because of this, the nature of the data (audio-recorded linguistic
interviews) and the questions being asked began to change as well. That is, linguists began to focus only on the presence or absence of the -s morpheme for verbs with a third-person subject. They also placed more emphasis on social influences rather than grammatical ones.

If the mid-twentieth-century marks the point where verbal -s began to decline in favor of the zero-paradigm, sometime around the 1990s, verbal -s became much rarer and is very infrequently heard. Thus, the time from the year 1990 to the present (for the purposes of verbal -s analysis) is labelled here as Late AAVE because of the shift from a mix of frequent use of non-concord -s and the zero-paradigm to the zero-paradigm with non-concord -s appearing infrequently. Along with its dwindling usage, came dwindling interest from sociolinguistic researchers, who rely heavily on quantitative analysis to find patterns and connections between a linguistic form and other internal (grammatical) or external (social) phenomena.

In each subsequent section, an attempt is made to consider the nature of verbal -s in White varieties of English first, and then to follow up with a more detailed review of the literature on Black varieties of English.

4.2 Verbal -s in Colonial White English

Compared to Early AAVE, not much interest has been shown in verbal -s in early White varieties of English. Clarke’s (1997) study of Newfoundland Vernacular English, as summarized above gives evidence that there was indeed verbal -s usage among British colonizers, and that in this case they were arriving from the south/southwest. But of
particular interest from her study, Clarke (1997) makes reference to some data taken from one Newfoundland man in 1718. His -s marking patterns were similar to those of contemporary standard American English, but there were 60 tokens of third-plural present tense non-auxiliary verbs, thirteen of which displayed non-standard -s marking. This is not nearly enough data to make any claims about factors constraining verbal -s use in the 1700s, but she does note that there was some evidence of a heaviness of subject constraint, specifically conjoined NPs, and NP+PP, which was not a significant factor in her contemporary data. The former of these two patterns, Clarke (1997) notes, may also be evidence of an adjacency constraint, which also was not significant in her analysis of contemporary data.

Montgomery (1993, 1996) looks at two related varieties of colonial White English and considers the influence of the NSR, primarily. He used written letters as his source of data, one set being written by four plantation overseers, three from the Piedmont of North Carolina, and one from the South Carolina Low Country, all of which date from the early to mid-nineteenth-century. Another source comprised by letters written by emigrants from Ulster (Scotch-Irish). These letters, which Montgomery calls the McCullough Letters, were written by people who were living in upstate South Carolina, and ranged in date from 1823 to 1874. With the exception of one writer, verbs with the pronoun they as the subject were categorically lacking -s inflection among both the overseers and the McCullough letters. For plural NP subjects, verbal -s was used 78% of the time by the overseers, and 54% of the time in the McCulloughs data. With regard to the proximity constraint Montgomery (1993) found that verbs with non-adjacent coordinate subjects
were inflected by the overseers 32% of the time, and the McCulloughs: 70% of the time, which would be expected for the NSR. Interestingly enough, he also found no evidence of -s as a marker of habitual aspect or as a historical present marker.

Comparing studies like Montgomery’s and Clarke’s, one quickly notices two separate patterns of non-concord -s inflection in the present tense paradigm emerging in colonial America. Moreover, Clarke’s (1997) data come from a people who originated in southern England and settled in America as early as the seventeenth-century, whereas Montgomery’s data stem from a people with Scottish and Irish roots, particularly northern ones, who did not become a prominent part of the colonies until the eighteenth-century. Thus, it is safe to conclude that these differing patterns represent two separate verbal -s paradigms, which originated in the British settler dialects introduced to the south, which would have come from both the south and later the north. These two outcomes are in line with the discussion on input dialects from the beginning of this chapter.

4.3 Early AAVE

The speakers who provided the data that is available for Early AAVE can be separated into two categories: those people who lived in the southern U.S. and those who moved and established enclave communities outside of the country in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. Among the former, there are three separate sources of data. First are the ex-slave narratives, most of which were hand-typed by a third party, although eleven interviews were audio-recorded (Pitts 1982, Poplack and Tagliamonte
1989, 2001). These interviews took place in the early 1900s, but the people themselves lived around the time of emancipation and were slaves for at least some period of time.

Second are the *Freedman’s Bureau Letters*, written between the 1850s and 1860s by slaves or freed African-Americans living in a variety of areas across the Midwest, Northeast, South Atlantic, the Mississippi River Basin, as well as border states (Missouri, Tennessee, and Kentucky). These men were contacting government officials seeking relief and/or discharge from the military (Montgomery 1993, 1996). Third are the letters written by African-American settlers in Liberia between 1834 and 1866 (Van Herk and Walker 2005). Despite being located in Liberia at the time the letters were written, here these people are not grouped with the other enclave communities because they were all originally from the U.S. during the nineteenth-century, and therefore more accurately represent the speech from that period than their twentieth-century descendants (Singler 1989).

With regard to the enclave data, they come from three separate communities: Nova Scotia (Guysborough and North Preston), Samana, and Liberian Settler English. The first two communities were studied in the early 1980s and the Samana data were collected in 1990. The former three varieties were analyzed by Poplack and Tagliamonte (1989, 2001). Liberian Settler English was investigated by Singler (1999).

4.3.1 Early AAVE: The Ex-Slave Narratives

In terms of *verbal -s*, the two most in-depth linguistic analyses of the ex-slave narratives were Schneider (1989) who looked at both the hand-typed and the audio-
recorded data, and Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001), who only analyzed the audio-
recorded data from eight participants. These narratives were part of a larger attempt by
the Federal Writers’ Project to document the lives of ex-slaves, and interviewers collected
over two thousand narratives between 1929 and 1938 in seventeen states (Rawick 1972).
Not all of the writers attempted to portray the speech of the speakers accurately in terms
of phonology, morphology, and/or syntax, but Schneider himself makes a strong
argument for the validity of many of the interviews (at least on a morpho-syntactic level)
and mentions similar support from many other linguists as well on the matter (1989: 49-
53).

In order to limit his investigation to accurate transcriptions, Schneider (1989: 53-
58) identified writers who produced more than five interviews (each being at least two
copies long), and whose transcriptions showed over 70% non-standard copula use. He
argues that this serves as evidence that writers were attempting to document the speakers’
speech as accurately as possible. Ultimately what he was left with were 12 interviews
selected randomly from a larger set, from each of nine separate states: North and South
Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas\textsuperscript{9}, and Texas.
Among the speakers, there were 51 men and 53 women, who ranged in age from 58 to
109 years of age.

The factors influencing verbal -s considered in Schneider (1989) were phonetic
environment\textsuperscript{10}, person and number of the subject (but does not take into consideration the

\textsuperscript{9} Four were deducted from Arkansas for not strictly meeting all criteria, leaving him with 104 interviews.
\textsuperscript{10} Phonetic environment will not be covered in any detail here. Although it has been found to have a
significant influence on verbal -s in some studies (Poplack and Tagliamonte 1989, 2001; Myhill 1995: 125,
pronominal vs. nominal effect), regular vs. irregular verbs {do, have, say}, temporal reference, region, gender, occupation, education. Below in table (1) is a reproduction of the person/number results from his study for both audio-recorded and hand-typed data combined (1989: 70-71). The first striking feature is that percentages are high in all persons and numbers. Moreover, the third-person singular does not even approach 100%, which was not the case with either Montgomery’s (1993, 1996) or Clarke’s (1997) study. And finally, verbs with second person subjects show a relatively low rate of -s inflection. This resembles the generalized pattern that has been found in southern/southwestern England. Thus, given the widespread nature of this pattern, it can be assumed that those British patterns served as input to the AAVE varieties investigated by Schneider (1989).

Table 8. Verbal -s by person, number, and state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ga</th>
<th>NC</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>Ala</th>
<th>Tex</th>
<th>Miss</th>
<th>Ark</th>
<th>Mo</th>
<th>Tenn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st sg</td>
<td>79.60%</td>
<td>61.50%</td>
<td>54.40%</td>
<td>77.80%</td>
<td>47.30%</td>
<td>47.90%</td>
<td>45.80%</td>
<td>38.30%</td>
<td>28.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd sg</td>
<td>59.30%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
<td>23.50%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>39.10%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>23.50%</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd sg</td>
<td>93.90%</td>
<td>83.30%</td>
<td>70.50%</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>71.00%</td>
<td>65.50%</td>
<td>61.10%</td>
<td>93.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pl</td>
<td>83.30%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>70.20%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>35.70%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>77.60%</td>
<td>64.60%</td>
<td>57.40%</td>
<td>59.80%</td>
<td>47.20%</td>
<td>46.00%</td>
<td>45.10%</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
<td>27.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the differences in data types, overall, the audio-recorded data show much lower rates of -s inflection in all persons and numbers, with the exception of the

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third-person singular. However, it is worth noting that about 40% of the audio data come from a single speaker who was from Virginia, which is a state not analyzed by Schneider in his hand-typed data. This makes a reliable comparison difficult. Moreover, by limiting his hand-written data to subjects who also showed over 70% non-standard copula use, he is most likely only getting a certain variety of AAVE (i.e. AAVE with very little influence from the varieties that utilize concord -s), whereas it is uncertain what the copula patterns were for the audio-data, because Schneider does not report on it. Table (2) shows a comparison between the two data types in Schneider’s study.

Table 9. Verbal -s by Person and Number in the Ex-Slave Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person/number</th>
<th>Hand-Typed</th>
<th>Audio-Recorded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>% of -s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1sg</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With regard to regular vs. irregular verbs, Schneider’s data show that *have, do, say* usually have higher frequencies of *-s* than regular verbs with the exception of the cases where there is a third-person subject. The amount of difference is unclear, though, because of the manner in which his statistics are presented. However, he does make a direct comparison among regular and irregular verbs with past temporal reference, and the proportion of verbs inflected with *-s* does not seem to be very different between the two (7.5% (*n*=201) for regular verbs and 6.2% (*n*=259) for irregular verbs).

Glossing over Schneider’s (1989: 234) map showing regional variation, there seems to be evidence of regional differences, with North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi showing a stronger preference for *verbal -s*, while Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas, although having large proportions of *-s* marking, appear not to favor it as much. The pattern is the opposite for past temporal reference, with deep southern states showing no signs of *verbal -s* at all, while states farther to the north and west do.

With regard to other external factors, women were found to use the *-s* marker more often in the third-person singular, but less so in all other cases. Among field hands (occupation) *verbal -s* was more frequent in all cases except the third-person plural, when compared to patterns among house servants. And level of education seems to have a negative correlation with the frequency of *-s* use (higher education = smaller portions of *-s*), even in the third-person singular.

Poplack and Tagliamonte’s (2001) analysis of the audio-recorded data from the ex-slave narratives is of interest here as well. Unlike Schneider (1989), they consider
aspect and the NSR with verbs having third-person singular, third-person plural, and non-third person subjects. Third-singular and non-third person verbs showed significant influence from aspect, but not the NSR. However, third-plural cases showed significant influence from both aspect and the NSR. The fact that the NSR shows up even in the Ex-Slave Narratives (via the audio data) serves as evidence that the later Scotch-Irish arrivals may have had a lasting effect, at least on some varieties of Early AAVE. This is further corroborated by the results of Montgomery’s (1993, 1996) and Van Herk and Walker’s (2005) studies, which are discussed below.

4.3.2 Early AAVE: other sources

Both Montgomery (1993, 1996) via the Freedmen Letters, and Van Herk and Walker (2005) via the Ottawa Repository of Early African American Correspondence (OREAAC) provide an analysis of hand-written letters which were drafted by AAVE speakers themselves in the nineteenth-century. The latter study is of particular importance considering that they analyze verbal-s according to both grammatical constraints and regional ones, along with their intersection.

The nature of Montgomery’s data has already been summarized, so only Van Herk and Walker’s (2005) data is elaborated upon here. The OREAAC is a collection of 427 letters written by 235 African-American settlers in Liberia between 1834 and 1866. The authors estimate that the writers were between the ages of 18 and 49, and while over 60% were slaves while living in the United States, 90% were from slave states. In their study they consider internal factors, namely the NSR, aspect (habitual, non-habitual),
grammatical person (third-singular, third-plural, and non-third person), regular vs. irregular verbs. They also consider the following social factors: literacy, slave status, and state of origin, which they divide into the deep south (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), and the non-deep south (Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington DC, and New York). The distinction deep and non-deep south was made on the basis of the size of a typical plantation and the number of African-born slaves.

How wise it was to group New York and Pennsylvania with the other non-deep south states is questionable, though, as the dialects (and cultures) of the colonists were very different between these two areas (Montgomery 2001), and there is at least some evidence that their use of verbal -s in particular was different (Montgomery 1993: 350).

Van Herk and Walker (2005) found quite a few details of interest in their analysis. First, they noted a significant increase in third-singular -s use among writers with a higher level of literacy compared with those of lower literacy level. They also found a stronger preference for the -s marker in the third-plural among non-deep south writers, but in the non-third person cases among those from the deep south, which is somewhat in line with Schneider’s (1989) slave narrative data (table 1). Moreover, freeborn writers were more likely to use third-plural -s than non-freeborn. This hints at a lasting influence from Scotch-Irish in the non-deep south, and influence from the southern/southwestern generalized pattern in the deep south.

With regard to verb type, regular verbs in habitual contexts significantly favored the -s marker in the deep south. However, in the non-deep south, it was the NSR,
comprising adjacent pronouns and all other contexts, which proved significant, regardless of verb type. And when the verb type was not under consideration, the NSR proved significant for third-person plural verbs, regardless of region, but habitual aspect was still only found to favor the -s marker in the deep south.

Montgomery’s (1993, 1996) analysis of the Freedmen Letters also showed a strong influence from the NSR in terms of the subject-type constraint, however, tests for significance were not performed. With regard to the proximity constraint, he found that verbs were not as likely to favor -s when there was simply an adverb or some phrasal element intervening. Rather, only an intervening coordinating context favored verbal -s. There was not enough data to make any strong claims about regional influence, but there were some signs that the farther south one goes, the more likely one was to see verbal -s with the pronominal they subject. The NSR, in this case, would predict -ø with immediately adjacent verbs.

4.3.3 Early AAVE: enclave communities

Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001) performed an in-depth analysis of verbal -s patterns found in Samana, a city in the Dominican Republic, and in North Preston and Guysborough, both towns located in Nova Scotia. The Samana subjects consisted of 21 people (13 women and 8 men) who were interviewed in 1981. Participants ranged in age from 58 to 103, and they were the descendants of refugee slaves who emigrated just after the War of 1812, primarily from Delaware and Maryland.
Poplack and Tagliamonte’s (2001) Nova Scotia subjects comprised 68 people, 30 from North Preston and 38 from Guysborough. The early settlers in the former went there from the Chesapeake and Georgia. Early settlers in the latter were also from the Chesapeake, but also from South Carolina and other areas of the south. All were either Black Loyalists from the post-Revolutionary War period, or refugee slaves from just after the War of 1812.

The data collected on verbal -s can be divided into three groups: verbs with third-person singular subjects, those with third-person plural subjects, and those with non-third-person subjects. In third-person singular contexts, their Samana participants showed signs of significant influence from aspect (-s being favored in habitual contexts), but not the NSR, which contradicts the results Van Herk and Walker’s (2005) study, given that the majority of these people were not from the Deep South. Their North Preston data show influence from the NSR, but not aspect, and the Guysborough data show no significant influence from either.

In third-person plural contexts among the Samana participants, it was found that both aspect and the NSR were significant factors, but again, despite their proximity, North Preston and Guysborough differed, the former favoring -s only in habitual contexts, while the latter showed a preference for -s with non-adjacent pronouns or NPs. And with regard to verbs with non-third person subjects, the data from all three areas showed a significant preference for -s marking in habitual contexts, but there was no influence from the NSR, again lining up with Van Herk and Walker’s (2005) analysis.
What Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001: 194-195) also found was that, despite there being a strong preference for verbal -s in habitual contexts, when -s was used on a punctual verb, it was primarily when temporal reference was in the past, and with non-third person subjects. Moreover, there was an overall preference for -s with non-stative verbs, rather than statives. One confusing element in their analysis is that they list habitual, durative, and punctual as the levels of the aspect variable, despite the fact that they are not all mutually exclusive. That is, habitual contexts are durative by nature and are compatible with both punctual and stative verbs. This potential for overlap and the difficulties it presents for performing a thorough analysis is addressed by both Green (2001) and Moody (2011). Moreover, this was also an issue in Clarke’s (1997) study. A habitual/non-habitual factor and a durative/non-durative (punctual) factor should have been considered separately, especially considering that Comrie (1976) was their primary source for understanding and incorporating aspect in their analyses.

4.3.4 Summary of Early AAVE

From the early British studies (Bailey et al. 1989; Clarke 1997; Montgomery 1989, 2001; Pietsch 2005; Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001; etc.) , there is ample evidence of two separate patterns. One began in northern England and studies (Pietsch 2005) showed evidence primarily of a third plural verbal -s, which was being influenced by the NSR. The other pattern has existed mainly in the southwest and shows influence from habitual aspect, along with a syntactic constraint where -s is favored in primary clauses when the
subordinate clause contained a non-finite verb. *Verbal -s* in these southern varieties also tends to be far more generalized in that it occurs frequently in non-third person contexts.

Despite the heterogeneous methods of analysis and the wide variety of data types, what scholars are seeming to find in Early AAVE is something of a merger between the dialects where NSR (probably non-deep south varieties) is dominant and those where aspect (probably deep south varieties) is the dominant factor, but also some regional idiosyncrasies. Both the southern and middle Atlantic areas (somewhat lining up with Van Herk and Walker’s (2005) deep and non-deep south) had a strong influence early on from southern and southwestern England, and both were later influenced by Scotch-Irish varieties in the eighteenth-century (at least along the Piedmont areas of Virginia and North Carolina (Winford 2015: 207)) and beyond, which does allow for a hypothesis involving a merger of the two patterns. If there were a merger, it would then be no wonder that third-plural verbs were more likely to favor the -s marker according to the NSR constraints, whereas habitual aspect was the primary influencing factor with non-third person verbs.

In Van Herk and Walker’s (2005) study, the deep south favored -s in both non-third person and habitual contexts. In the non-deep south, -s was favored in third-person cases and influenced mainly by the NSR. Much, though not all, of this is corroborated by the results of Poplack and Tagliamonte’s analysis of the audio-recorded ex-slave narratives. Montgomery (1993) too, found some evidence of a weakening of the NSR effect in states located farther to the south. With all the movement of slaves during this period, due to the outlawing of international slave trade at the beginning of the
nineteenth-century, one could most certainly expect the waters to be muddied on a linguistic level by waves of migrating slaves.

Nevertheless, the other external factors do provide a clue as to which pattern prevailed ultimately. The fact that Van Herk and Walker (2005) found that higher literacy correlated with higher third-singular -s rates, but Schneider’s (1989) relatively later data did not, is a sign that the third-singular and NSR constraints were probably overtaken by a pattern in which verbal -s was generalized across all persons and numbers with aspect as the primary influence. This would not be an absolute replacement, as there has been some indication that the NSR remained in a variety of AAVE near Houston, Texas (Bailey et al 1989), but most studies of later varieties of AAVE do not show evidence of it. Huang (2000) did not find evidence of it in Indiana. Wolfram and Thomas (2001) did not find evidence of it in North Carolina. Nor did Moody (2011) find evidence of it in Georgia.

One other important factor not considered in an AAVE study is the syntactic constraints identified in southwestern British varieties by Cheshire (1982) and Clarke (1997). In this case, there is a strong possibility that the syntactic constraint persisted into some varieties of Early AAVE, most likely the varieties that show the habitual constraint and have increased frequencies of the -s marker in non-third person contexts, as is the case for the southwestern British varieties, and perhaps even some early southern American varieties (Ellis 1994: 137).
4.4 Middle AAVE 1960s-1990s

As the Great Migration north began to come to a close in the mid-1900s, a linguistic study on AAVE by Putnam and O’Hern (1955) was undertaken, which analyzed data from five AAVE speakers in an impoverished neighborhood in Washington D.C. called *Columbus Court* in 1953. Their process for selecting these five individuals out of the 74 that they interviewed is sketchy and this leaves us with a sample that may not be representative of the larger community. More specifically, Putnam and O’Hern argue that “the authors had enough familiarity with the speech of the group members to assure themselves that the speech of the selected informants was at least reasonably typical” (1955: 4).

Moreover, Putnam and O’Hern (1955) focused on the phonetic aspect of Washington D.C. AAVE and provide very little information about the morphology. However, their study is still interesting in terms of verbal -s, because they do mention two things: (a) that the -s marker appeared regularly throughout the present tense paradigm with the exception of the third person singular, and (b) that this pattern of use of -s occasionally alternated with the standard paradigm. Because no strict methods were mentioned, this serves as weak evidence at best, but it does hint that a present tense paradigm was used at least among these speakers in the 1950s, which still very much resembled the ex-slave narratives analyzed by Schneider (1989). Just a cursory glance through Greene and Ryan’s (1965) data, which was collected not long after the Putnam and O’hern study (in 1961), provides ample examples of verbal -s throughout the paradigm as well. No linguistic study has been performed on these data, which were
collected from school children in Harlem who were speaking casually in a classroom setting.

It was not until Labov (1968) that strong evidence of a preference for the uninflected present tense paradigm began to surface, and because this paradigmatic shift also aligns itself with the end of the Great Migration, it is this point in time that marks the beginning of Middle AAVE for the purposes of this particular study. That is not to say that the paradigm frequently utilizing the -s marker had disappeared by the late 1960s. The preference for the -s paradigm may have persisted longer in the south and rural areas in the north, but there are no studies on southern AAVE from this early point in Middle AAVE. Cukor-Avila (1995) does show some evidence that the frequent verbal -s paradigm slowly shifted to the ø-paradigm much later for some rural AAVE-speaking Texans. Many scholars during the earliest part of the Middle AAVE period noted both interpersonal and intrapersonal variation between what seems to have been the concord -s paradigm, the generalized -s paradigm, and the uninflected paradigm (Labov 1968, Wolfram 1969, Fasold 1972).

4.4.1 Labov (1968): New York City

Labov’s (1968) data were collected via audio recorded interviews during the 1960s from 156 African American participants located in "urban ghetto areas" from New York City to Cleveland, Ohio. A total of 191 boys between 9 and 18 years of age and 100 adults, 50 men and 50 women, who were also equally divided into two age groups: 20-39 and 40+ years of age were interviewed in both one-on-one and groups sessions. Younger
participants were all considered as being working-class and adults were selected from both working-class and middle-class social groups. Interviews included one-on-one conversation, groups sessions where the speakers were able to control the conversation, readings of about nine sentences, correction tests, and perception tests. Only the one-on-one and group interviews were used for the analysis of verbal -s, and these interviews were done only with the Harlem youths and adults. In terms of phonological constraints, Labov (1968) took into account verbal -s when followed by a consonant and a vowel. He also separated formal and informal speaking styles. And two separate groups were created for those above and below the age of 18. The younger group was subdivided into their respective cliques, while the older group was separated by socioeconomic status.

In this study, the use of -s in non-third singular contexts was not formally analyzed, but Labov did note that it occurs “in odd, unpredictable, and idiosyncratic positions” and that he frequently found the -s marker with other persons besides the third singular. He also mentioned that “some individuals do it a great deal, and others hardly at all… and more common among adults than children” (1968: 165). With regard to verbs with third singular subjects among the youth groups, the frequency of -s marker usage ranged from 42-100%, depending on the style, group, and phonological environment. Among the adults it ranged from 0-82% depending again on style group, and phonological environment, but was for the most part, under 40%.

Considering the fact that Labov mentions the adults using non-third singular -s more often than the children, this observation in combination with the results of his study, which show that adults use third singular -s less often than the youth group, aligns itself
with the Putnam and O’Hern (1955) claim that the -s marker was used frequently with non-third singular subjects, but not so often with third singular subjects. That is, the children from Labov’s study seem to mark a transition from a frequent -s paradigm to a Ø-paradigm with -s surfacing occasionally with non-third singular subjects, and more frequently with third singular subjects.

4.4.2 Wolfram (1969): Detroit

In Detroit, Wolfram (1969) performed an analysis of data that had been gathered in 1966 and, like Labov (1968), focused mainly on 3rd singular -s variability. His study included 48 participants selected randomly out of 100, who were all African-American. Participants were divided evenly across four social classes: upper middle class, lower middle class, upper working class and lower working class. Participants were also divided into three age groups: 10-12 years old, 14-17 years old, and 30-55 years of age.

Wolfram does not provide specific information on the relative frequencies of verbal -s with each person and number in the present tense paradigm, but he does make some relevant comments on the matter (Wolfram 1969: 138)\textsuperscript{11}.

Generally, the incidence of -z on third person singular forms is greater than it is with other persons. When all occurrences of -z with third person singular verb forms are compared to its occurrence on non-third person singular forms for the working-class informants, -z occurs over three times

\begin{footnote}{Wolfram’s use of -z is another way of referring to verbal -s.}
\end{footnote}
(233 out of 304 instances) as often with third person singular than with other persons. Only 3 of the 24 working-lass informants have more occurrences of -z with non-third person singular than with third person singular... Of the occurrences of -z on non-third person forms, over half of the cases (39 out of 71 occurrences of -z with non-third person singular forms) occur with third person plural.

Given this information, a few hypotheses can be made: (1) the majority of the people in that study show a strong preference for the ø-paradigm, with some tendency to use concord -s as well. (2) There were at least a few who still showed signs of the older generalized -s paradigm and, if the pattern is like that of Labov (1968), these were probably older people who also did not show much preference for third singular -s. (3) This pattern resembles the northern English and Scotch-Irish pattern in the sense that there is a strong preference for verbal -s with third-plural subjects. In order to have a better understanding of the nature of verbal -s in the Detroit area at this point in time, one would need to recover, transcribe, and reanalyze the data which are still available, because no reference is made to subject-type.

Tests for statistical significance were not provided, but social class was found to show differing patterns, with the upper (56.9%) and lower (71.4%) working classes showing far greater third singular -s absence than the upper (1.4%) and lower (9.7%) middle classes (table 5). Middle-class female speakers used third-singular -s more often than males but this gap closes among working-class AAVE speakers. With regard to age,
lower-working-class adults seemed to favor third singular -s in comparison with the two younger groups, but still preferred ø-inflection 57.1% of the time.

4.4.3 Fasold (1972)
In Washington D.C., Fasold (1972) carried out a study on tense marking in AAVE and he also found evidence that AAVE speakers were beginning to use an uninflected present tense paradigm. The data he collected were audio recordings and interviews were based on a questionnaire. Questions were designed to elicit different tenses and a quantitative analysis was performed to determine what manner of inflection is used by D.C. AAVE speakers to indicate these different tenses. In his chapter on the past tense, he does not indicate any use of verbal -s as a historical present, nor does he indicate that some of the -s inflection found in the chapter on the present tense actually has past time reference.

The data were collected in the late 1960s and divided as evenly as possible among 47 participants according to gender and three age groups (10-12, 13-19, and 21+ years of age). With regard to social class, Fasold limited his study to those of the upper and lower working-classes and with regard to linguistic factors, he analyzed verb type, phonological constraints, and other non-phonological factors which he labels as collective subjects and conjoined verbs (1972: 128-29). Again, only the third person singular was considered for analysis due to the assumption that meaningful variation only occurred with third person subjects, and that the -s marker occurring elsewhere was only due to hypercorrection. Finally, he also took into account individual variation, something that has been considered and discussed.
Verb type, as stated, deals with the distinction between irregular and regular verbs. Fasold includes *have*, *do*, and *say* as his irregular verbs and all others in his data as regular. With the verb *have*, he found that it had a higher rate of -s inflection (47.1%) than regular verbs (34.9%). The results for the verb *do* were not presented, but Fasold does mention that it had zero inflection rates as high as regular verbs.

Fasold’s analysis did not reveal any evidence of influence from phonetic environment. The difference between effects from preceding vowels and consonants were "statistically negligible "and following environments showed only "the slightest difference" between consonants and vowels (1972: 126). One interesting aspect of these results is that, with regard to following environments, Fasold's results were opposite those found in Labov (1968). That is, Labov’s (1968) speakers seemed to favor the -s marker more before a following consonant, whereas Fasold’s data show a preference for -s before a vowel.

Below is an adaptation of his table comparing the two studies. It seems that these conflicting results are evidence for a lack of any historically relevant phonological influence in varieties of AAVE, which was also argued by Clarke (1997).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>_C</th>
<th>_V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington D.C.</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York (Harlem)</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The non-phonological factors tested were *collective subjects* and *conjoined verbs*. The former refers to nouns that are not inflected for the plural, but refer to a number of individuals, such as the word *team*. Fasold (1972: 129) hypothesized that perhaps AAVE speakers would view these nouns as plurals and therefore show a stronger preference for the null marker in comparison with other nouns. The results did not show a significant difference in -s frequency between the two (62.5% -s absence for collective subjects and 65.4% for non-collective subjects).

The term *conjoined verbs* refers to two third singular present tense verbs joined by a conjunction. For example, one might say, “It rains and pours here in Ohio.” What he found was a trend toward the -s + -ø pattern, but only in the reading style, and he speculates that the "results seem to indicate less a linguistic constraint than the rapid onset of a fatigue factor" (Fasold 1972: 130). Regardless, these results are opposite of what would be expected if this were a vestige of the NSR, which would require -s inflection on the non-adjacent verb rather than the adjacent one.

A helpful component in Fasold’s book is the addition of a figure showing the number of speakers on the y-axis and the percentage of -ø on the x-axis. Below is an adapted version of that figure.
We only see what is happening in the third person singular, but Fasold was faced with a problem here. He wanted to argue that some participants were speakers of SE with some interference from AAVE (these would have lower rates of -$\emptyset$ inflection), while others were almost categorical AAVE speakers with some influence from SE (these would have high rates of -$\emptyset$ inflection). However, the participants found somewhere in between were difficult for Fasold to explain.

Fasold was not thinking in terms of historical AAVE patterns where -s inflection in non-third singular positions is grammatical, and with possible inputs stemming back to British dialects of English with similar patterns. If we were to think in this way, the pattern above might not seem so counter-intuitive after all. For instance, the speakers on
the far right of figure (1) could be considered to be using the relatively recent zero-paradigm. The people in the middle could be considered as still using the old paradigm where -s occurs frequently in all persons and numbers. The participants on the far left side could be considered bi-dialectal with some influence from AAVE and/or also speakers of the older paradigm who just have high frequencies of -s inflection in the third person singular position, which is certainly possible considering the high frequencies found in table (1) from Schneider's (1989) study on early AAVE.

Plotting every participant's proportion of -s inflection as one data point on a similar chart and separating them with different colors according to age, gender or social class (upper working class versus lower working class) may have been even more revealing. These factors were recorded, but strangely, Fasold does not utilize them or even mention them in any way as possible factors that might help to understand the use of verbal -s.

4.4.4 Smaller studies

There were a few other AAVE studies conducted in the 1980s, but they involved very few participants and were not so detail oriented as the above-mentioned works. For instance, Pitts (1986), relying on anecdotal data from Texas, argued that verbal -s was most likely to be used by rural AAVE speakers and primarily with “psychological statives, which are continuous by proposition, in non-continuous environments”. The terms he used to
identify these cases were *emphatic* and *affective*. Pitts also proposed that this use of *verbal -s* was a case of grammatical expansion. However, as noted earlier, Labov (1968) also suggested the possibility that *verbal -s* was being used to convey emphasis in his Harlem AAVE investigation.

Myhill and Harris (1986), analyzed data from five northern Philadelphia AAVE speakers (3 women and 1 man). They divided their data between first- and third-person subjects and found evidence that *verbal -s* is preferred in narrative contexts (present tense inflection with past temporal reference). However, the number of tokens they analyzed was small (3 cases of -s in narrative contexts versus 4 cases in non-narrative with first singular and plural subjects) and very little later evidence has surfaced to corroborate these findings.

Bailey et al. (1989), who analyzed *verbal -s* as it was used in the Cely letters, also compared their findings with those of some AAVE data that had been collected in Brazos Valley Texas, just northeast of Houston (Bailey and Maynor 1987). They interviewed 27 AAVE speakers, 7 adults and 20 children and found evidence of the subject-type constraint, although proximity was not considered, nor were non-third person subjects.

### 4.4.5 Summary of Middle AAVE

The studies on *verbal -s* in Middle AAVE are very limited due to the fact that scholars, failing to account for the history of *verbal -s*, only focused on the third-person singular. Our knowledge of *non-concord -s* use for this time period is limited to informal observations. However, those observations show strong signs that this was a transitional period where the paradigm showing frequent *verbal -s* in all persons and numbers was in
the process of shifting to one where the -s maker rarely occurred at all, with the exception of the 3rd person singular, and this appears to be variation between the standard paradigm and the uninflected one.

Those who did use verbal -s frequently from this time period were usually either older individuals, or younger speakers who moved to the city from a rural area (Wolfram 1969, Cukor-Avila 1997). The fact that this shift aligns itself with the end of the Great Migration, i.e. a migration of African-Americans from the rural south to northern urban areas, also serves as evidence that AAVE speakers might have begun to shift away from verbal -s due to its stark contrast with the null marker, which occurs everywhere in the paradigm of their new standard-English speaking neighbors, of course with the exception of the third-person singular.

Obtaining the data from these studies and reanalyzing them may be the only way to come to any reliable conclusions on the status of verbal -s in Middle AAVE, but it is worth noting that Greene and Ryan (1965) provide the transcripts for their Harlem school children study, and while reading through them, one quickly sees verbal -s being used frequently, but with very little evidence of a proximity or subject type constraint.

4.5 Late AAVE

The children of the 1950s and 1960s became the parents of the children of the 1970s and 1980s. These parents represent the first wave of African-Americans to live in a post-

Brown vs. Board of Education (desegregated schools) society and the speech of their children represents any influence that may have occurred from this increased exposure to standard varieties of English. Studies like Pitts (1982), Bailey et al. (1986), Labov (1986),
and Myhill and Harris (1986) show strong evidence that the frequent \textit{verbal -s} paradigm was rapidly decreased in use. Cukor-Avila (1997) also found that even late-comers to cities from rural areas quickly dropped their \textit{verbal -s} use within as little as a year.

By the 1990s, \textit{verbal -s} was very infrequent among most AAVE speakers, and the seemingly chaotic mixture of frequent -s, frequent -ø, and Standard English paradigms began to settle into a zero vs. standard dichotomy with non-standard -s marking surfacing only occasionally for reasons that had not been fully explained. It is for this reason that the period from the 1990s to the present is called here \textit{Late AAVE}. Unfortunately, at this stage, \textit{verbal -s} has become so infrequent that coming to any solid conclusions via quantitative analysis has become difficult as well, and with this, it seems, variationists have lost some interest.

4.5.1 Rickford (1999)

John Rickford's (1999) study gives fresh insight on \textit{verbal -s} in AAVE primarily in three ways: (1) the study was carried out in northern California, an area that has not been investigated very thoroughly. (2) He takes style shifting into consideration in ways other than the Labov/Wolfram method of testing casual, formal, and reading styles, and (3) he makes an attempt at a real-time study, something that has been much needed in order to contribute to or to weaken the results of so many past apparent-time studies, where evidence of change in progress was found, but may have simply been age-grading.

The study was done in East Palo Alto where six African-Americans from working-class backgrounds were interviewed. They were distributed evenly into three age
groups: 14-15, 38-42, and 76+ years old and all but one were female. Details on linguistic influences are sparse, but Rickford does mention briefly that there were no significant effects from phonological environment or subject-type, and -s inflection during narratives never occurred with any participants. An interesting result is the extremely low frequencies of verbal -s. Below is a table adapted from Rickford (1999: 264).

Table 11. Rates of zero-inflection on third-singular present tense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>3rd singular -ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older participant 1</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older participant 2</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged participant 1</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged participant 2</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenager 1</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenager 2</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table above shows, the younger subjects used -ø inflection almost categorically. In order to consider his results as being a part of a real-time study, Rickford compares his numbers with those of Labov (1968) and Fasold (1972) and argues that the younger groups in all of these studies showed similar rates of -s inflection, varying from 75-100%. But one other reason for doing a real-time study (in this case) was to discover whether these apparent changes can be attributed to age-grading. Therefore, a comparison was made regarding the rates of younger subjects from the older studies with the middle-aged subjects from Rickford (1999).
The frequency with which younger participants in Labov's (1968) study used zero, as Rickford mentions, ranged between 75-100%. In Wolfram (1969) -ø inflection among younger subjects of the ages 10-12 and 14-17 showed a mean rate of 80.5% and 76.5% respectively. These people would have been around 40 years old by the time of Rickford's (1999) study, which matches closely with the two middle-aged participants for whom Rickford found a mean rate of 54% and 44% respectively.

The circumstances are far from optimal, given that the participants from each study of comparison are located in very different regions, nevertheless this can be considered as some evidence that AAVE speakers do use more third-singular -s as they grow older. More work would need to be done in the same regions where the old studies were performed in order for results to be more convincing, and it provides very little information on non-third-singular patterns. Rickford's justification for considering this a real-time study in the first place was based on the strong linguistic similarities in AAVE dialects across regions (199: 262). With that being said, some evidence in Rickford's study points to age-grading as a possible factor. That is, older AAVE speakers used more -s inflection in the third-person singular than their hypothetical younger selves did.

4.5.2 Huang (2000)
Xiaozhao Huang (2000), carried out a rarely mentioned study in Muncie, Indiana. His study, like Rickford (1999), attempts not only to analyze linguistic change in AAVE, but also addresses the real-time/apparent-time issue. He interviewed 32 African-American subjects who were divided into two groups, those interviewed for Huang’s
earlier study (1980) and those interviewed for the more recent study (1993). In his earlier study the proportion of male to female was uneven, with 12 males and 4 females, but his more recent study did divide gender evenly. The participants in the older study were divided into two groups according to age: an older group where participants ranged from 45-86 years of age, and a younger group where participants were all 17 years old. The participants in Huang’s (1993) study were also divided into two separate groups and older participants ranged from 48-75, while the younger group ranged in age from 16-19.

Phonological factors were not considered. With regard to other linguistic factors, the following were investigated: what Huang calls lexical verbs (regular verbs), auxiliary verbs have and do plus their negative counterparts, and present tense verbs with past temporal reference (narratives). Also, only the use of present tense marking in third-person singular contexts was considered in Huang's analysis. Below is an adaptation of his results.

Table 12. Percentage of -ø inflection for the third-person singular in Muncie, Indiana AAVE. (Adapated from Huang 2000: 192)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Regular Verbs</th>
<th>Have(n't)</th>
<th>Do(n't)</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980 Young</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 Young</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 Elderly</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 Elderly</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unlike Rickford (1999), Huang's (2000) data do come from the same area as the data from his earlier study, and as we can see, the younger (1980) group used far more \( \theta \) inflection than the older (1993) group. This being the case, it serves again as evidence that age-grading has an effect on -s frequency among AAVE speakers. It may be worth noting though, that the number of tokens for the younger (1980) group was only 8/18.

One other thing that should be mentioned is that there may have been a hidden factor which was not explored by Huang: connection with white vernaculars in the area. He himself admits (2000: 74) that in his initial attempt to recruit participants by going to every third house in a "black neighborhood" he frequently came across homes with white inhabitants. Huang states that "the areas are not at all as homogenous as those in larger cities" (2000: 74). Whether this mixture is recent or has always been was not mentioned, but if it is a recent change, we might also expect a change in the AAVE of the area as well.

Moreover, neither habitual aspect, the NSR, nor non-third singular positions were considered or even discussed. Regardless, it seems that Huang's study points in the direction of Indiana varieties of AAVE that are either moving toward a zero paradigm or a standard present tense paradigm, given the low proportions of -\( \theta \) inflection in table (5).

4.5.3 Wolfram and Thomas (2001)

Wolfram and Thomas's (2001) study is also an example where evidence points in the direction of change from a frequent -s paradigm to -\( \theta \) in all grammatical persons. They collected audio data from African-Americans living in an enclave community in Hyde
County North Carolina. Because of the relative isolation of this community whose members can trace their families back well over one hundred years, Wolfram and Thomas (2001: 36), among others (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001; Singler 1999; Clarke 1997) argue that the speech there has not changed as rapidly as, for example, the AAVE found in urban areas today.

The study included 35 African-American speakers of AAVE, of whom 12 were aged 14-23; 6 were 32-43; 6 were "senior" with ages ranging from 55-70; and 11 were "elderly", aged 77-102. Wolfram and Thomas comment that there was a mix of both male and female gender, but admit that the effects of gender itself were not tested. Also, their analysis of present tense -s marking in general was kept relatively simple. With regard to linguistic constraints, they tested subject-type (but not proximity), differences in frequency between third singular and plural, and the overall rate of 3rd singular -s inflection across age groups (2001: 85-89).

What Wolfram and Thomas found was that there was no significant effect on use of -s or zero from subject-type. Moreover, younger participants rarely used third plural -s at all. Third singular -s patterns were somewhat different, with frequencies holding relatively steady over all age groups in Hyde County, and ranging from 51.1% to 61%. The use of third singular -s was labelled as optional and no tests were performed that might help to understand what constraints, social or linguistic, are influencing the use of -s for inflection.

In summary, Wolfram and Thomas's (2001) study has provided evidence for a trend toward zero marking throughout the present tense paradigm with the third singular
position being the last place where -s inflection still occurs somewhat frequently. This is extremely important information, as very few other studies on contemporary varieties of AAVE present a quantitative analysis of -s outside of the third person singular.

The subject-type type constraint was not found to have a significant effect on -s frequency, though proximity was not considered. This may have been an important factor and should not have been excluded because the proportion of -s marking found on verbs with non-adjacent pronouns may have showed different results. That is, if non-adjacent cases had been removed, the difference in -s frequency between pronouns and NPs may have turned out to be significant (as found in studies on the NSR effect on some varieties of southern English), with adjacent pronouns disfavoring inflection.

With regard to these results in comparison with other studies, it is difficult to say whether they hint at an earlier paradigm that has -s across all grammatical persons or -s primarily with third person subjects because Wolfram and Thomas do not provide an analysis of non-third person -s occurrences. Regardless of what the paradigm was before, it seems that this study serves as yet more evidence that verbal -s is falling out of the grammar for AAVE speakers in communities across the country in both urban and rural communities.

4.5.4 Moody 2011

Moody (2011: 125) collected data on verbal -s in coastal and inland southeast Georgia between 2005 and 2010. She reported on data from 21 AAVE-speaking people: 12
women and 9 men, obtaining both production data and speaker judgments. All of her participants were lower or working-class and over the age of 45.

In her study, Moody (2011) found evidence of a connection between verbal -s and two grammatical factors: habitual aspect and what she calls generic aspect, along with affect, but not the NSR. She also did not report on any of the syntactic constraints considered by Clarke (1997), Cheshire (1982), and Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001). However, quite a few of the examples she provides show evidence of non-standard -s inflection in main clauses that are accompanied by subordinate clauses containing an finite verb. Below is one example that Moody provides from her study (2011: 24):

*When you got HIV, you gets a check in a hurry.*

This and every other example she provides, serves as direct evidence against the embedded finite clause constraint in Georgia AAVE, which would require *when you got HIV* to contain a non-finite verb in order for verbal -s to surface in the primary clause. However, it does align with Van Herk and Walker (2005) who found evidence from Early AAVE that verbal -s is strongly favored by habitual aspect in the deep south.

Most interestingly for the purposes of the current study, Moody also found evidence of verbal -s being considered to be a marker of what she calls subjective intensification. She presents the following argument:
Speakers use *verbal*-s to intensify the action being described by a verb. There is some overlap between this use and the habitual in that eventualities that occur over and over again, particularly those that are pleasing or displeasing to the speaker, can evoke reactions from the speaker such that they use -s to intensify the eventuality described by the verbs. Here we see the interface between Aspect and Modality in aspect uses of verbs when -s is used to highlight a speaker’s subjective evaluation regarding the degree of intensity of an action or event described by a verb (2011: 244-5).

Aside from some speculation on her production data, Moody also presented the results of a survey of participant judgments on minimal pair sentences, such as *Y’all get on my nerves* vs. *Y’all gets on my nerves*. With that she found that eight out of twelve participants observed that an AAVE speaker would feel more strongly about the situation described when the sentence contained *verbal*-s (2011: 246). It is uncertain what situations were described, if any, or whether they were presented by the field worker or simply imagined by the participants. Moreover, she found evidence, contra what has been hypothesized in this study, that speakers with high rates of -ø inflection utilize the -s marker for emphasis with third person singular subjects as well.

This view that *verbal*-s is used to add emphasis, along with the strongest likelihood of getting *verbal*-s with generic verbs aligns with Labov’s (1968) observation that *verbal*-s may be used to mark emphasis, as well as with Pitts’ (1986) claim that
verbal -s is used not only to mark emphasis, but that it specifically marks this emphasis with stative verbs (a term that somewhat fits with Moody’s generic aspect (2005: 242)).

4.5.5 Mitchell (2013)

One other study of interest concerning the evolution of verbal -s in AAVE is Mitchell (2013) who took Moody’s (2011) approach of eliciting participant judgments a step further in a few ways and shed further light on the idea of an emphatic -s. What Mitchell argued was that verbal -s did not necessarily add emphasis to the verb per se, but rather pointed to an elevated emotional state of the speaker. That is, verbal -s is subjective but does not point to the speaker, the way that the first-person pronoun does. Instead, it points at the speaker’s intensified emotional state.

25 AAVE speakers were surveyed in Ohio and presented with 24 scenarios, half containing some clear indication that the character speaking in the scenario was experiencing heightened emotion, the other half containing no such indications. After each scenario, the participant had to choose between two minimal pair sentences (one with an inflected present tense verb, the other without). What Mitchell found was that AAVE speakers strongly preferred the -s marker in affective scenarios and likewise preferred -ø in non-affective scenarios. These differences in preference were both found to be statistically significant.
4.6 Summary and Conclusions

What has been presented in this chapter shows great change for the present tense paradigm in English. The Old English pattern, after a dark period that aligns closely with the Viking invasions a thousand years ago, reemerged after about 400 years but looking far different from before in the north. The old pattern was giving way to many new potential paradigms (Pietsch 2005), but three basic varieties that showed some kind of -s inflection prevailed: the standard pattern used in the U.S. today (third singular -s), and two non-standard varieties, both showing signs of an -s marker that could occur with all persons and numbers. The northern English varieties seemed to constrain the use of -s via the NSR, while the southern English varieties showed signs of syntactic and aspectual constraints. Aside from these patterns with variable -s inflection, there was also the East Anglian zero paradigm.

It is very likely that early seventeenth-century African arrivals were exposed primarily to the southern pattern at first in both the Chesapeake, coastal North Carolina, and South Carolina (via Barbados), then to the northern pattern in the eighteenth-century along the Piedmont where the Scotch-Irish were settling (Winford 2015: 207), and to a lesser degree, the standard paradigm throughout these centuries. Studies by Bailey et al. (1989), Montgomery (1993, 1996), Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001), and Van Herk and Walker (2005) all show evidence that Early AAVE speakers utilized the NSR and aspectual constraints with the upper south showing stronger signs of the former, and the deep south preferring the latter. These two varieties made their way even into Middle AAVE as well, it seems. Scholars were not quite so interested in tracking the use of non-
concord -s during that period, so it is difficult to say with any certainty, but there has been mention in studies such as Putnam and O’Hern (1955) which mention -s generalized across the paradigm, and Bailey et. al (1989), who found evidence of the NSR in Texas.

By the time of the first and second Great Migration, AAVE speakers, having come into more intimate contact with English speakers who were using the standard paradigm, quickly began dropping this verbal -s in favor of a -∅ paradigm, probably because of its closer resemblance to the standard. This transition was still in flux around the mid twentieth-century, and this was demonstrated in a number of urban AAVE studies. However, somewhere around the 1980s and 1990s, the paradigm containing frequent -s fell into disuse, perhaps with the exception of a few rural areas in the south (Cukor Avila 1997; Green 2002). Despite this, verbal -s was and is still being used at a very infrequent level.

As scholars analyzed copious amounts of data to make sense of this non-standard -s marker in Middle and Late AAVE, it was repeatedly observed that perhaps it had some pragmatic value, and some referred to this as emphatic or intensive, while others used terms like affective or emotive. Even as the older aspectual and syntactic constraints continue to fade in influence, it appears that verbal -s still holds an important role among AAVE speakers for conveying this affective information, and the following chapters provide the methods and results of this study, which was designed to shed more light on the issue.
Chapter 5. Methods

5.0 Introduction

In order to answer the research questions which are again provided below, a questionnaire was developed. There were two reasons for using the survey method instead of obtaining production data. One is that non-concord -s is simply not used frequently enough in contemporary AAVE and this makes doing a quantitative analysis of production data difficult. Another reason is that it is difficult to identify a correlation between suspected affective grammatical markers and affective contexts. Using production data, the researcher would have to choose subjectively whether the speaker was feeling emotional or not with each case of the grammatical marker being investigated.

Therefore, instead of collecting production data, a survey was designed which elicited judgments from a sample of African-Americans, who were to judge when –s is most appropriate under a variety of conditions, namely the presence or absence of affect, the type of aspect (grammatical and lexical), and/or a change in subject-type from first- to third-person singular. In a separate survey, participants were also given three different sentences in which verbal –s was used, and asked to rate (a) how likely they would be to utter such a sentence, and (b) how likely the people living in their area would be to produce each. Answering these questions provides insight into the function of verbal –s in contemporary varieties of urban AAVE in four different areas of the country.
Investigation of factors that condition the use of verbal -s

1. To what extent does affect influence the choice of –s?
2. To what extent does habitual aspect influence the choice of –s?
3. To what extent does subject type influence the choice of –s?
4. To what extent does a subject’s regional origin or residence, age, family roots, and/or gender influence the choice of –s?

Investigation of participant impressions of their own use and that of their community

5. How frequently do participants believe that they themselves and the people in their communities use verbal –s, and is there a relationship between their impressions and factors such as region, age, and/or affect?

5.1 The participants

The sample consisted of 45 African-American AAVE speakers12 from four separate regions of the country (New York City, Cleveland, Los Angeles, and Houston), which amounted to 17613 participants total. These locations were selected because they have been noted in past research as being places where verbal –s is used by AAVE speakers (Bailey et al. 1989 in Texas; Baugh 1979 in California; Labov 1969 in New York City; Mitchell 2013 in Ohio).

Only African American participants were selected. To the best of my ability as a

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12 “AAVE speakers” here are defined as urban African-American adults who profess themselves as being competent to take a survey designed to find out about AAVE speech. If a potential participant confessed that s/he does not know enough about AAVE to take the survey, s/he was not be added to the study.
13 Four surveys were misplaced and cannot be found. 18 others had to be discarded due to mistakes made by the participants.
fieldworker, even numbers of men and women were recruited (62 women, 92 men), and
equal numbers of participants across three separate age groups were recruited. These age
groups consisted of those who were younger (under 30), middle-age (31-60), and old
(over 60). There were 36 younger participants, 93 were middle-age, and 25 were older.
These groups were chosen because the earliest mention of the -s marker as carrying an
affective meaning was Labov (1968). If affect is indeed an innovation that only began to
take place around the time of his study, then the older participants for the current study
would be expected to have a reduced effect from affect in comparison with the younger
group, which was divided into younger and middle-age in order to see if there is evidence
of change still in progress. All participants were recruited from working-class,
predominantly African-American neighborhoods and paid $10.00 each for their time.

Participants were approached by the fieldworker and asked if they had time to
take a survey that deals with the way some African-Americans speak, which paid ten
dollars and would take approximately 20 minutes of their time. The components dealing
with affect, aspect, and subject-type were not explicitly revealed. Instead, participants
were simply told that they were to read each scenario pair in the survey, and to choose
what they felt to be most appropriate between two follow-up sentences that only differ by
way of –s inflection, given the accompanying scenario. An example of this is presented
below in section 5.4.1.

5.2 Linguistic factors

Affect, grammatical aspect, lexical aspect, and subject-type, all binary independent
variables, are here considered linguistic factors which were taken into account in this study. *Affect* refers to emotional contexts which were provided in the scenarios that participants had to read. When there were strong emotions in the context presented to the participant, it was considered affective. When there were no overt signs that the characters in the scenarios were highly emotional, it was considered non-affective.

*Grammatical aspect*, which here refers specifically to *habitual aspect*, refers to a situation that occurs iteratively over an unspecified period of time. Cases where the situation did not occur iteratively were considered non-habitual. *Lexical aspect* here only refers to the distinction between stative and non-stative verbs.

*Subject-type* refers to the person and number of the subject of the verb. Here it has been categorized as either third-person singular or non-third person singular. All non-third-singular cases were first-person singular subjects.

Verbs used for the present study were as follows:

*Verbs:*
get$^{14}$
like
type
don't
think
stay
keep
need
get
see
live

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$^{14}$ As in “I gets mines.”
These verbs were chosen at random, but the process was constrained by the need
to have the variety of linguistic constraints required for this study. No strict criteria were
used to identify stative verbs other than the fact that they refer to the state the speaker is
in rather than a physical action.

5.3 Social factors
Age, gender, region raised, and family roots were the independent social factors
considered in this study. Age was included in the study because Mitchell (2013) found
marginal evidence that Ohio AAVE speakers over the age of 40 were more likely to
choose the –s marker in non-affective situations than the younger participants. Older
speakers’ also judged -s to be more appropriate in habitual contexts, while younger
speakers did not.

Retesting the influence of age with a sufficient number of participants may
therefore provide more evidence for or against affective –s as a relatively recent
innovation. In this study, it was coded as a categorical variable (younger (under 30);
middle age (30-59); older (over 60)) as explained earlier. If affective –s is an innovation,
we would expect to see younger participants choose the –s marker in affective situations
more frequently than the older participants.

In the case that affect is also in the process of crowding out the other constraints,
as it were, we would expect older participants not only to choose verbal –s in non-
affective situations more frequently than the younger participants but also to show
significant influence from the habitual and/or lexical aspect, which were known to have
constrained verbal -s in older varieties of AAVE.

Gender: Mitchell (2013) showed marginal effects from gender, with women finding –s both more appropriate in affective situations and less appropriate in non-affective situations than men. Again, results were unclear due to a paucity of data. Therefore, gender was again considered in this study. Classification will be straightforward and simple, limited to a binary variable: male or female.

Region raised refers to the city where the data were collected. Cleveland was labelled as Midwest, Los Angeles was the West, Houston was the South, and Brooklyn was the East. Also investigated was family roots: i.e. the area where the participants’ parents were raised. It has been my experience that AAVE speakers in my own hometown spoke differently depending on where their parents were from. Therefore, family roots may serve as a more accurate predictor than the region where the questionnaire was completed. The variants for family roots are the same as the variants for the region factor (divided into Midwest, East Coast, West, and South). Participants were asked to state where their family was from originally, and at what point in time, their family moved to the area where they currently live.

5.4 Questionnaire
The questionnaire consisted of three sections: section (1) was used to obtain data on the participants’ age, gender, place of birth, parents’ birthplace, and familiarity with AAVE. Section (2) contained 16 questions and elicited appropriateness judgments concerning the use of -s. It consisted of three parts, one for testing the effects of affect, one for habitual
aspect, and one for subject-type. Section (3) contained 6 questions and elicited ratings of how frequently the participants use verbal –s and how frequently they hear it used in their respective communities.

5.4.1 The influence of affect, lexical aspect, and grammatical aspect

Section (1) of the questionnaire was designed to investigate whether a verb inflected with -s would be selected as being more appropriate than an uninflected verb in affective situations, i.e. when the participant feels that the character in the scenario is wishing to convey emotion. A preference for –s in affective situations was already demonstrated in my previous work (Mitchell 2013) and this study expands upon it by increasing the number of participants, by controlling for affect and verb when testing habitual aspect, and by testing the influence of subject-type. New verbs and scenarios were also used so as to avoid the possibility of continued lexical and/or scenario influence on participants’ choices from the previous study.

Participants were faced with four pairs of these hypothetical scenarios (affective vs non-affective), containing fictional AAVE-speaking characters, and were told specifically to judge based upon what they believed these characters would say, and not on what they themselves would say. These scenarios were no longer than a short paragraph each. Each scenario in a pair was very similar to its counterpart, distinguished primarily by the presence or absence of a situation involving strong emotion on the speaker’s part.

For each scenario within a pair (one affective, one non-affective), participants
were presented with a choice between the same two possible follow-up sentences. One of these follow-up sentences contained a present tense verb inflected with –s. The other was exactly the same, but the verb was uninflected. Participants were instructed to read both scenarios before making any choices, and it was brought to the participants’ attention that one of the follow-up sentences contained a verb inflected with –s. After carefully considering both scenarios, they were to choose which of the follow-up sentences would be most appropriate given the provided context. If participants did not feel that the sentence containing an inflected verb was appropriate for either scenario, they were told that they did not have to choose it at all. Below is a sample from the survey to illustrate these details.

1. (affective). Sharee is telling a story about how she got a great new job offer. Here’s how it went:
   Girl! I ain’t even know they was hirin! Ol’ dude called me up and said they heard about me and wanted me to come in with a resume. I was happy as hell, but to be honest, I ain’t even got no resume! (laughs out loud)
   a. So I types one up.
   b. So I type one up.

2. (non-affective). Sharee is telling a story about how she got a new job offer. She’s not very interested in the job, but needs the money Here’s how it went:
   Sharee: Girl, I wasn’t even finna apply, cuz I ain’t trynna work there. But I needed the money and they hirin right way. All I needed was my resume.
   a. So I types one up.
   b. So I type one up.

The above example illustrates how affective scenarios contained emotionally
intense circumstances where characters are extremely happy, sad, excited, angry, or joking. Non-affective scenarios differ from their affective counterparts in only one respect: they do not refer to emotionally intense circumstances.

Finally, as was mentioned earlier, other factors have also been known to influence –s inflection and these were also investigated here. In order to do this, the follow-up sentences mentioned above contained verbs that conveyed different combinations of grammatical (habitual) and lexical aspect (table 1). This allowed for the independent variables to be isolated, so that their influence could be tested without interference from other possible factors, as far as that was possible. Table (1) gives an idea of the different possible combinations of lexical and grammatical aspect that were included in the questionnaire.

Table 13. Four different possible combinations of grammatical and lexical aspect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination type</th>
<th>Example sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitual−stative</td>
<td>I needs my coffee everyday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual-non−stative</td>
<td>I hops in the car every morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-habitual−stative</td>
<td>I feels like singing right now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-habitual-non−stative</td>
<td>So, I grabs my wallet (telling a story).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.2 The influence of grammatical aspect

In addition to the detailed scenarios and sentence pairs that tested for affect, lexical

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15 In the actual survey, each sentence would be presented to the participant twice, once with and once without –s inflection.

16 Note that this introduces the additional factor of temporal reference.
aspect, grammatical aspect, and the possibility of their interaction, four questions were designed to investigate aspect alone. What was needed were circumstances where participants had to choose between –s and -Ø when aspectual reference was habitual and then when it is non-habitual, but also where there was no possibility for influence from affect or temporal reference (Myhill and Harris 1986).

Therefore, this section of the survey contained two pairs of sentences. In each pair the sentences were very similar except for the fact that one sentence conveyed habitual aspect, while the other did not. The verbs used were all stative in terms of lexical aspect. An example of this would be I live(s) with my sister (right now) versus I live(s) with my sister (usually). The verbs chosen for the survey were think and stay.

Stative verbs were chosen because they can be used in both habitual and non-habitual contexts. Simple present time reference in English is usually conveyed by an AUX + present progressive participle rather than simple present tense verbs. For example, a person, if asked what she is doing at this very moment, would say I am driving instead of I drive. However, because stative verbs are not limited to that construction, they were the best option for testing habitual aspect’s influence on verbal –s.

Moreover, stative verbs with a relatively neutral meaning were used. By neutral, it is meant that the verb did not naturally entail some strong emotion such as love or hate, because if these were used, it would have been possible to have influence from affect, which is also known to favor –s inflection. In this way, non-habitual, non-affective statives represent the least likely context for verbal –s to appear.
Also, sentence pairs were preceded by brief non-affective scenarios. Below is an example. One can see that the verb (*think*) and *affect* (non-affective) are held constant, while *habitual aspect* and *verbal –s* are manipulated in the sentence pairs.

1. Travis is describing the type of person he is to a friend.
   a. I thinks like that (It’s just the way he is in general).
   b. I think like that (It’s just the way he is in general).

2. Travis is describing the type of person he is to a friend.
   a. I think like that (Not always, but from time to time).
   b. I thinks like that (Not always, but from time to time).

Each participant was instructed to read all four sentences first. Other than the information given in parentheses, there was no explicit indicator that one conveyed *habitual aspect* while the other did not, although, it was brought to the participants’ attention that one of each sentence pair contained a verb inflected with –*s*, and that they were to choose the case in which –*s* would be most appropriate. Participants were also instructed to judge based not on what they feel is *proper*, but simply based on what they and the people in their own neighborhood would say when speaking casually with one another. If participants did not feel that the –*s* marker was appropriate in either scenario, they did not have to choose any verb with –*s*. If it was found that –*s* was selected significantly more in the habitual constructions, this would suggest that *habitual aspect* is still an influencing factor for *verbal –s* in AAVE. If the difference was not significant, then it would suggest that participants are referring to some other factor(s) in their choice of *verbal –s*. 
5.4.3 Use of –s with third-person singular verbs

The aim regarding subject-type was to test the influence of affect on participant choices between -s and -Ø when the subject is third-person singular. Past research suggests that affect will have the same effect even in third-singular contexts. This claim was made by Moody (2011: 247) who stated that, "One example of an intensifier\textsuperscript{17} use involving a third-person singular subject was used by Linda, who is normally a very high user of -zero marking in third–singular contexts." She then gives the following example.

*He really plays that* (talking about Tyler Perry playing the role of Madea)\textsuperscript{18}.

Based on this observation, it is important to test the influence of affect in third-person singular contexts. Therefore, in the questionnaire participants were faced with pairs of hypothetical scenarios just like the ones described above but with third-singular verbs.

5.5 Statistical analysis

In order to test research questions 1-4, a mixed effects logistic regression model was created using R (R Core Team 2016). The maximal model contained choice between -s and -Ø as the dependent variable, and affect, lexical aspect, grammatical aspect, subject-type, age, region raised, family roots, and gender, along with interaction effects

\textsuperscript{17} Which would be considered affective –s, here.
\textsuperscript{18} Note that Moody (2011: 224-25) also added that there was no strong evidence of a subject-type rule.
from affect and region raised, affect and grammatical aspect, grammatical aspect and region raised, and lexical aspect and region as the independent variables. Subject (participant) and verb were also added to the model as random effects, along with random slopes for verb over affect. By adding subject and verb as random effects in this way, the clustering effect that comes with performing repeated measure (of subject and verb) is accounted for without actually adding them directly into the statistical model. Thus the assumption of independence is not violated.

The step-down approach was taken (Barr et al. 2013) to find the model that was the best fit. That is, one factor was removed at a time from the model. After removing a factor, the anova() function was used to compare the fuller model with the reduced model. If the ability of the model to predict the presence or absence of -s was not significantly reduced, that factor was left out. In the case that the model’s predictive power was significantly reduced by removing a factor, it was put back in. These steps continued until no more factors could be removed from the model without significantly reducing its predictive power.

5.6 Questionnaire: Ratings Tasks

This section deals with a separate part of the questionnaire which was designed to elicit ratings from participants on how often they view themselves and the people in their communities as using verbal -s. Having participants judge when the –s marker is most appropriate via hypothetical scenarios with fictitious characters does not provide information as to whether the participants themselves are using verbal –s. For this reason,
participants were given the opportunity to provide ratings not only about their own usage, but also that of their respective communities. Participants were asked to read two sentences where affective –s was used and one where the context was not affective, and then respond according to the scale (a-d) listed below, which refers to how frequently they tend to use it in that kind of sentence.

a. I would never say this.
b. Sometimes I might say this.
c. I say this frequently.
d. That's the only way I would say it.

Likewise, with regard to their communities, participants were asked to provide similar ratings, as is listed below:

a. People around here never say this.
b. People around here say this sometimes.
c. People around here say this frequently.
d. That's the only way people around here would say it.

These hypothetical scenarios containing fictitious characters gave the participants an opportunity to answer honestly when verbal –s is most appropriate, and at the same time, to put some distance between themselves and what they might or might not view as a stigmatized linguistic form. However, the ratings section gave them a chance to state whether they themselves use verbal –s.
5.6.1 Ratings tasks: Linguistic and Social Factors

For the ratings tasks, affect and grammatical aspect were the only two linguistic factors considered. With regard to social factors, age, gender, and region were considered. The levels of these factors were coded in the same way as they were for the binary task.

5.6.2 Ratings Task: Statistical Methods

In section 5.5, it was pointed out that the choice participants had to make concerning their own use of verbal -s as well as that of their communities was essentially: never, sometimes, frequently, and always. Because there is a ranked increase from never to always, the nature of these two dependent variables is ordinal. Therefore, in order to test the influence of the above listed linguistic and social factors, cumulative link mixed models (CLMM) via the ordinal package (Christensen 2018) were used.

The process of model-building was similar to that of the logistic mixed effects modeling process that was used for the binary variable above. All factors were added to the models and a step-down process was used to find the best fit. The maximal model contained all of the factors mentioned in section 5.5.1 along with the interaction between affect and age, and affect and region. The resulting best fit for participants’ ratings of their own use was a model containing only affect and age, with random intercepts for subject and verb, and random slopes for subject over affect. For the rating of others’ use, the best fit contained affect and gender, with random intercepts for subject and verb, and random slopes for verb over affect. The reason random slopes could not be considered for both subject and verb was because the model failed to converge when it was that complex.
Chapter 6. Results for Binary Response

6.0 Introduction

This chapter reports the results of the influence of linguistic factors (affect, subject-type, and grammatical and lexical aspect) and then social factors (age, region raised, and gender) on participant choices between verbal -s and the null marker. But first an illustration of the overall distribution of the data is presented in figure (1). As can be seen, the frequency with which verbal -s and the -ø marker chosen were almost equal, with a 51% preference for the former and 49% for the latter.
Below in table (1) are the results from a mixed effects logistic regression model, which incorporated subject and verb as random effects, along with by-item (verb) random slopes over affect. The maximal model contained choice between -s and -∅ as a function of affect, lexical aspect, grammatical aspect, subject-type, age, region raised, family roots, and gender, along with interaction effects from affect and region raised, affect and
grammatical aspect, grammatical aspect and region raised, and lexical aspect and region. Using the methods described in chapter (5) the best fit resulted in a model which included affect, lexical aspect, region raised, subject-type, and the interaction between age and affect as fixed effects.

Table 14. Results for binary response variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIC</th>
<th>BIC</th>
<th>Log-Lik</th>
<th>Deviance</th>
<th>Df.resid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2415.0</td>
<td>2503.4</td>
<td>-1191.5</td>
<td>2383.0</td>
<td>1832</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Scaled residuals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1Q</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>3Q</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2.1584</td>
<td>-0.9033</td>
<td>0.4661</td>
<td>0.8807</td>
<td>2.1223</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Random effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Std.Dev.</th>
<th>Corr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>2.307e-10</td>
<td>1.519e-05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>8.547e-03</td>
<td>9.245e-02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affect: Affective</td>
<td>7.575e-02</td>
<td>2.752e-01</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of obs: 1848, groups: Subject, 154; Verb, 6

| Fixed Effects          | Estimate | Std. Error | z value | Pr (>|z|) |
|------------------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|
| (Intercept)            | -1.11504 | 0.18844    | -5.917  | 3.27e-09 |
| Affect: Affective       | 1.21400  | 0.23333    | 5.203   | 1.96e-07 |
| Lexical Aspect: Stative| 0.35431  | 0.12526    | 2.829   | 0.00467  |
| Region: Midwest        | 0.40437  | 0.13868    | 2.916   | 0.00355  |
| Region: South          | 0.06393  | 0.14008    | 0.456   | 0.64812  |
| Region: West           | 0.25354  | 0.14260    | 1.778   | 0.07540  |
| Region: Other          | -0.54891 | 0.32983    | -1.664  | 0.09606  |
| Number: Third-Person   | 0.49570  | 0.12325    | 4.022   | 5.77e-05 |
| Age: Middle-Age (30-59)| 0.20549  | 0.17353    | 1.184   | 0.23634  |
| Age: Older (Over 60)   | 0.21134  | 0.22312    | 0.947   | 0.34354  |
| Affect: Affective / Age: Middle-Age | -0.21739 | 0.24010 | -0.905 | 0.36524 |
| Affect: Affective / Age: Older | -0.93319 | 0.31397 | -2.972 | 0.00296 |

The important aspects of table (1) above are the random effects, which are essentially a manner for accounting for repeated measures from participants and verbs, which would otherwise violate a cardinal rule in statistics: the assumption of
independence. The variance for these two random effects is extremely low, which means that participants and verbs were not “behaving” very differently from one another. At the bottom of the table, the results for the fixed effects are presented. The intercept represents the following:

1. Non-affective scenarios
2. Non-stative Aspect
3. Region: East coast
4. Non-third-person singular
5. Age group: younger

Fixed effects separated by a forward slash represent interaction effects. Effects listed in bold font were found to be significant. The estimates represent how much participants favored -s vs. -Ø. When estimates are negative, participants favored the -Ø marker, whereas when they are positive, -s was favored.

6.1 The influence of affect

Figure (2) below shows the results of the influence of affect on participant choices between the -s and -Ø marker. The hypothesis here was that participants would judge verbal -s as being more appropriate when the scenarios entailed some affective contexts than the similar scenarios which lacked these contexts. Participants chose the -s marker 41% of the time in non-affective scenarios, and this preference increased to 62% in affective scenarios, a strong indication that even across the regions investigated, affect is indeed an important factor with regard to the appropriateness of verbal -s use. As was
seen in table (1) above, this increased preference for the -s marker in affective scenarios and was significant ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 3. Choice of Morphological Form by Affect
6.1.1 The influence of grammatical (habitual) aspect

With regard to the influence of grammatical aspect on participants’ choice between the -s and null marker, contrary to what would be predicted based on earlier studies (Pitts 1982; Greene 2001; Clarke 1997; Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001; Van Herk and Walker 2005; Moody 2011, etc.), habitual aspect was not found to be significant. Verbal -s was preferred about 49% of the time in non-habitual contexts, and this preference only increases to 53% in habitual contexts. There were some signs of an interaction effect from grammatical aspect and affect, but this was not found to be significant either.

6.1.2 The influence of lexical aspect

The case of stativity (lexical aspect) is different from that of grammatical aspect in that it has a much stronger influence on participant choice, independent of affect. With regard to lexical aspect alone, figure (3) below shows that verbal -s was chosen 42% of the time when the verb was non-stative, and that this preference increased to 56% when the lexical aspect was stative as opposed to non-stative.
Table (1) shows that the preference for verbal -s with stative verbs over non-statives was significant ($p < 0.005$). These results were unexpected because Mitchell’s (2013) Ohio study did not find significant influence from lexical aspect alone. However, there have been reports as early as Pitts (1982) and late as Moody (2011) that lexical aspect does have an influence on verbal -s use and this expanded version of Mitchell (2013) supports those claims. It is very possible, however, that the stative verbs chosen for this study (despite attempts to avoid that) were inherently affective in some way. If
this was the case, participants would have been more likely to choose the -s marker even in scenarios that were designed to be non-affective.

The verbs *keep* and *need* show the highest numbers of verbal -s and, intuitively, they also seem to be the most likely to have a natural emotive aspect to them (Black 1949). The verb *like* might also qualify as being naturally emotive, but it is commonly used in a relatively neutral way as a middle ground between *love* and *hate*, so it was thought to have been okay to use for this study. The verb *get* may possibly be the most neutral stative in the list.

6.1.4 The influence of subject-type

The influence of person and number (*subject-type*) in Present Day AAVE has long been excluded from many investigations, with researchers focusing primarily on verbs with third-singular subjects. It was mentioned in chapter (3) that *affect* may be conveyed not by the linguistic sign per se, but rather by the fact that an unexpected form is used. In this case, -s would be expected in the third-person singular, so the use of the unexpected -ø marker would be used to convey *affect*, whereas in non-third singular cases, *verbal -s* would be used. A look at figure (4) shows that the -s marker overall is preferred when the verb has a third person singular subject, and the model in table (1) shows that this increase in preference was highly significant ($p < 0.001$). This was to be expected given the ever-increasing exposure that AAVE speakers have to varieties of English that incorporate *concord -s*.
The next question then is whether there would be an opposite effect in the third-person singular, i.e. whether there would be a preference for the -ø marker in affective scenarios. The results did not reveal any interaction between subject-type and affect, which serves as evidence that AAVE speakers find verbal -s more appropriate in affective contexts, regardless of the subject-type. Similar results were found by Moody (2011) in her Georgia study where she found that AAVE speakers still found -s to be
affective even on verbs with third-singular subjects. It is possible that for the AAVE speakers who have a zero-inflected present tense paradigm, verbal -s, regardless of person and number, will be more appropriate in affective scenarios. On the other hand, AAVE speakers who do utilize the third-singular subject constraint may choose the -ø marker in affective scenarios; however, that could not be tested here.

6.2 Social Influences
In this section, the fourth research question, which deals with the relationship between social variables and verbal -s, specifically in terms of their connection with affect and aspect, is addressed. The influencing social factors reported on here are region, age, and gender.

6.2.1 Region
The first factor investigated here is region as represented by the four cities: Brooklyn, Cleveland, Houston, and Los Angeles (East, Midwest, South, and West, respectively). Figure (5) below illustrates a main effect of region, and its influence on participant choice of verbal -s. The East and South showed very similar results (38% and 37% in non-affective scenarios, and 57% and 60% in affective scenarios, respectively). The West and Midwest also patterned together (46% and 42% in non-affective scenarios, and 68% and 67% in affective scenarios).
The model from table (1) shows that participants in the Midwest were significantly more likely to select verbal -s \((p < 0.004)\) in non-affective scenarios, compared with the mean of all regions, with marginal effects from the West as well \((p < 0.07)\).

There was some evidence of an interaction between stativity and region, but it was not significant. Moreover, there was no significant interaction between habitual
aspect and region. This was highly unexpected, given the evidence from studies such as Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001), Van Herk and Walker (2005), and Moody (2011), who all found evidence of a significant influence of habitual aspect on verbal -s, the latter two specifically in the South.

6.2.2 Age

With regard to age group, although it was not significant on its own, there was a clear significant interaction ($p < 0.003$) with affect. While the younger and middle age groups both showed an increase of well over 20% concerning their preference for verbal -s in affective scenarios, the older group’s preference only increased by 6% (figure 6 below).

This adds support to Pitts (1982) and Mitchell (2013) who both argued that the use of -s to index affect is an innovation on the part of AAVE speakers. That the older group was not so strongly affected by affect shows evidence that this constraint is not in their grammar (or at least that it is not the dominant constraint). This older group would have been small children right around the time of Labov (1968) and Wofram (1969). Many of them would have been the first-generation children after the Second Great Migration and would have been born around the time of Brown v. Board of Education. That being said, they would have been the last of the older generations who utilized other constraints such as the NSR and grammatical aspect, while the following generations, having moved from the rural south into southern and northern urban areas, would go on to innovate the affect constraint.
However, there is only partial support for this view due to the lack of evidence for a \textit{habitual constraint}. If it were the case that the older group’s choices were influenced by different constraints such as \textit{habitual aspect}, then one would expect to find an interaction between it and \textit{age}. However, this anticipated interaction neither significantly contributed to the model, nor did older individuals prefer the -s marker significantly more in \textit{habitual contexts}. Nor was there evidence for an interaction effect from \textit{age} and \textit{lexical aspect}. The \textit{NSR} was not tested here, so it is possible that this is the constraint most \textit{affecting} the older group’s choices.
6.2.3 Gender and Affect

Mitchell (2013) found evidence that participants identifying themselves as *female* were more likely to choose the -s marker in affective scenarios than men. However, no interaction was found between *gender* and any linguistic constraints, nor did *gender* contribute significantly to the model.
6.3 Conclusions and Discussion

6.3.1 Conclusions on Grammatical Factors

It was hypothesized that verbal -s is used as a marker of affect in four cities in the U.S., just as Mitchell’s (2013) Ohio study found evidence for, and the results of this larger study show strong evidence that this is the case. However, it was also argued in Mitchell (2013) that lexical and grammatical aspect no longer have a significant effect on the use of verbal -s on their own. In the present study, this was the case with grammatical aspect and though there was an interaction between it and affect, it did not have a significant influence on participants’ choice. Here though, it was not the case with lexical aspect, which did end up being significant for participant choices and did not show signs of any interaction with affect.

This demonstration of the influence of affect provides yet more evidence that emotivity can indeed be conveyed not only grammatically, but specifically via verbal morphology. It sheds light on the possibility of a theory of expressive meaning in language that includes indexing not only oneself referentially as we do with first person pronouns, and socially as the jocks and burnouts were doing in Eckert (2000), but also indexing one’s emotional state (Lyons 1977 and 1982, Caffi and Janney 1994, Maynard 2002, Eckert 2008, etc.). This demonstration is important for studies on verbal -s in AAVE in general, which have failed to explain a substantial amount of variation between the -s and -ø markers, even after accounting for several important factors, such as the NSR, aspect, and temporal reference (tense) (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001; Van Herk
Studies like Labov (1968), Wolfram (1969), Fasold (1972), etc. account for social factors as well, and age and socio-economic status seem to have been important. What this study has done was add an explanation in terms of emotive meaning to the referential (grammatical) and social accounts, as suggested by Lyons (1977, 1982).

With regard to the findings concerning the significance of grammatical aspect, two possible reasons come to mind for this and both involve a methodological flaw. One is that the lexically stative verbs chosen for the survey have an inherently emotive or intense quality and, because of this, participants were more likely to interpret them as affective even when the contexts were designed to be non-affective. Table (2) above showed a list of the stative verbs that were used and some of them may possess this naturally affective trait.

The second reason may be frequency effects. Verbs that more commonly take the -s marker (i.e. they are more commonly used in affective situations and are therefore more likely to be inflected) may also be more likely to be inflected even in apparently non-affective situational contexts. For instance, the verb got(s) seems relatively neutral in terms of affect, but the phrase I gots to go is so common that one may be more likely to use it even when the situation does not warrant an affective -s.

Despite these possible explanations, on the face of it, the results of this study provide strong evidence that the choice of verbal -s is still very much affected by lexical aspect, much more so lexical than by grammatical aspect. It is suggested that future studies place more emphasis on lexical aspect and employ a variety of verbs that range from being naturally emotive to as neutral as possible. This would help us to understand
how much influence lexical emotivity has along with situational/contextual emotivity has on participant choices. It is hypothesized here that there will be a clear influence from lexical emotivity which drives the preference for verbal -s in connection with stativity.

Moreover, there were issues with the models in this study converging, most likely due to the small number of items (verbs). Reducing the complexity of the model did solve the problem, but with reduced complexity comes reduced power as well. Barr et al. (2013) found strong evidence that increasing the number of items (in their case, from 12 to 24) dramatically increased the ability of the glmer function to detect random effects and to avoid convergence issues. The longer the survey, the less likely the fieldworker is to convince people to participate, but for the sake of obtaining the absolute most reliable results, a survey with 24 items (verbs) is strongly recommended here.

6.3.2 Conclusions on Social Factors

The results of these analyses show that there are significant differences in preference for verbal -s by region and age group, along with an interaction between age and affect, but nothing significant in terms of gender.

It is unclear why the Midwest and West would favor verbal -s use over the East and South in non-affective contexts. On the contrary, the opposite was expected, namely that areas where older varieties of AAVE are still relatively well-preserved (especially the South and possibly the East) and not seen as sounding more “proper” (Mitchell et al. 2017) would favor non-concord -s more than the other areas.
The increase of preference for verbal -s with third-singular subjects was to be expected, given the amount of time that Black communities have been exposed to White varieties of English; however, the question as to whether the use of verbal -s itself was the marker of affect in non-third singular contexts or if it was the use of an unexpected form that signified affect has been addressed to some limited extent. That is, one would expect the -ø marker to convey affect with third-singular subjects if it were the case that unexpectedness was the true conveyer of affect. Instead, the results showed that even with third-singular subjects, verbal -s signaled affect, rather than the null marker. It is possible that this is only the case for AAVE speakers with a fully uninflected present tense paradigm, whereas those who do have some access to concord -s would do the opposite. One would need to take a production sample from each participant and mark them according to their use of concord -s before doing this kind of study in order to find out.

It was surprising that there were no significant differences between men and women, considering that Mitchell (2013) did find women to favor verbal -s in affective contexts. This led to the view that women were more sensitive to the affective constraint and therefore better equipped to choose the appropriate contexts for its use. However, the results for the gender variable from this larger cross-regional investigation do not support such a view.

Finally, another important finding in this study was the interaction between age and affect. Unlike the two younger groups, the older group’s preference for verbal -s was not significantly influenced by affect. This could very well be a case of age-grading, with
an overall lack of preference for non-standard -s use among older AAVE speakers. However, all age groups did show significant influence from stativity. So, if this is a sign of change in progress rather than age-grading, it is possible that affect as a constraint was born out of stative contexts as argued by Pitts (1986).

This is important because it not only shows evidence of change in progress. It also shows the potential source of an emotive grammatical marker (stative verbs that are inherently emotive). Moreover, the evidence for verbal -s as a marker of affect is an important contribution to the study of affect expressed grammatically in language because most of the literature reviewed in chapter 3 does not reveal much empirical evidence for emotive markers existing specifically as verbal inflections. Moreover, much of the past literature on affect relies heavily on assumptions of affect on the part of the speaker in order to find a correlation between it and a linguistic marker. Tokens of affective speech are generally taken for granted (Dressler and Barabaresi 1994), whereas the correlation between affect and verbal -s was not assumed here, but instead was demonstrated more objectively.
Chapter 7. Results for Ordinal Response

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter, question 5 from chapter (1) is explored. This question has to do with the participant views of the frequency with which they themselves and those in their communities to use verbal -s in connection with affect, aspect, age, region, and gender. The intention was to give participants an opportunity to rate just how much they (self) use verbal -s, and also to rate the use of verbal -s in their respective communities (others). They were presented with sentences containing affective and non-affective scenarios and asked to rate how often they use such sentences along with how often they hear such sentences in their communities (see Appendix A for full questionnaire).

Two separate dependent variables were examined, which were both ordinal in nature: self-rating and the rating of others in the community. Participants were to choose between never, sometimes, frequently, and always concerning the frequency with which they use verbal -s for each sentence. These can be considered to be an ordinal variable spanning from 1-4, respectively. Predictors tested were grammatical and lexical aspect, affect, gender, age group, and region. Because there are two separate dependent variables, two best fitting models had to be found, which are listed below in tables (1) and (2). When rating their own use of verbal -s, participant ratings were significantly
affected by age group and affect. With regard to their ratings of others’ use of the -s maker, gender and affect were significant predictors. No other predictors were significant.

Table 15. Statistical Output for Self-Ratings

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<th>logLik</th>
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<th>niter</th>
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<td>1183.21</td>
<td>608(2402)</td>
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<td>6.7e+01</td>
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Random effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Std.Dev.</th>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
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<td>0.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fixed Effects

|                        | Estimate | Std. Error | z value | Pr(>|z|) |
|------------------------|----------|------------|---------|---------|
| Age_Group2             | 0.4314   | 0.3233     | 1.334   | 0.1821  |
| Age_Group3             | 1.0625   | 0.4439     | 2.394   | 0.0167 *|
| Affect: Affective       | 1.0056   | 0.2202     | 4.566   | 4.97e-06 ***|

Threshold coefficients:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>z value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>0.3794</td>
<td>0.3048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>2.0710</td>
<td>0.3258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>3.6879</td>
<td>0.3703</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, without considering affect, as can be seen in figures (1) and (2) below, participants seem to view verbal -s more as a phenomenon used by others in their community, rather than something they themselves use. Note how the “never” rating is 42% for self, but only 18% for others. This shows that participants are far more likely to say that they never use verbal -s but acknowledge hearing it quite a bit in their communities. These judgment data also align with production studies in that AAVE speakers around the country and across time have ranged from never to frequently in their actual verbal -s use, but no study has ever shown a person to use it always (Labov 1968, Fasold 1972; Schneider 1989; Montgomery 1993, 1996; Van Herk and Walker 2005).
7.1 Self-Ratings

7.1.1 Affect

Figure (3) below shows signs of affect’s influence on self-ratings.
In the case of participant ratings of *self*, when the sentence was affective, ratings increased (compared with non-affective sentences) significantly (i.e. ratings in categories of higher frequencies {sometimes, frequently, always} become more likely) \((p < 0.001)\). These results are important because we now see evidence that takes Mitchell (2013) and even chapter (6) of this study a step further by showing that, in addition to hypothetical scenarios involving fictitious characters, AAVE speakers even rate the frequency of their
own use of *non-concord -s* higher in affective contexts. Acquiring data on the use of *verbal -s* and its connection with *affect* from more than one perspective adds weight to claims that it is a marker of emotivity.

7.1.2 Self-ratings and Age Group

With regard to *age*, figure (4) below shows interesting results for *older* participants. They chose “never” 14% less than the *younger* group did in non-affective scenarios. The model from table (1) shows that with the increase from *younger* to *older*, there comes a significant increase in ratings ($p < 0.017$).

These results show evidence that *older* participants believe that they use *non-concord -s* more often even in non-affective scenarios than *younger* participants. What is also interesting is that they showed a stronger preference for “always” when the scenarios were affective. This is somewhat in line with past studies (Wolfram 1969, Labov 1968, Fasold 1972, Schneider 1989) on Middle AAVE, which show much higher rates of *non-concord -s* inflection than we see with Present Day AAVE speakers (Rickford 1999, Moody 2011).
7.2 Ratings of the frequency of the use of -s by others in the community

7.2.1 Affect

In the case of participant ratings of others’ use, affect again was found to be highly significant \((p < 0.001)\). Figure (5) shows an increase in the choice of “frequently” at the expense of the “never” and “sometimes” options, which decrease from 24% to 8% and
42% to 38%, respectively, in affective scenarios by comparison with non-affective contexts. What is also interesting is that participants not only showed a decrease in their own preference for “never” in affective scenarios, but they also gave higher ratings to others’ use of affective -s than they gave to their own use. This view that others tend to use non-concord -s frequently, whereas the participants themselves only use it sometimes was expected. Considering that non-concord -s is viewed as “improper” by many AAVE speakers (Mitchell 2013 and many comments from participants in the current study), one would anticipate an attempt by participants to separate themselves, at least to some extent, from its use.

In this study there are judgments from AAVE speakers not only concerning fictitious characters, but also concerning the frequency of their own use of verbal -s, along with how frequently they perceive it to be used by others in their communities, and in all three cases affect is indeed a very important factor. Approaching the verbal -s variable from multiple different angles and finding the same result adds strength to the claim that it is a marker of affect, which was the central hypothesis for this investigation.
7.2.2 Gender

Participant *gender* also was an important factor with female participants being significantly more likely to view others’ use of *verbal* -s as more frequent than male respondents did. \((p < 0.04)\). Below in figure (6) men showed a stronger preference for the “never” option in both affective and non-affective scenarios. The “sometimes” and
“frequently” were chosen with similar frequency between men and women, but the women favored the “always” option more than men.

When presented with scenarios that contained more detail and a binary choice (-s vs. -ø) as described in chapter 6, gender was not a significant factor, nor was it in the case of self-rating. But it appears that when judging the frequency of verbal -s use in their communities, women perceive non-standard -s inflection to be more frequent than men. It could be that women are simply more sensitive to the variation between -s and -ø (Labov 2008: 4) and are therefore perceiving higher frequencies of non-concord -s in their communities.
7.3 Conclusions

From these results we see evidence yet again that affect is the primary factor in participant judgments of when verbal -s is most appropriate. Whether AAVE speakers are faced with fictitious characters in hypothetical scenarios, are made to judge their own use, or even the use of verbal -s by others in their communities, the results remained the
same: *affect* is an extremely important factor for *verbal*-s use. This is then an important next step in accounting for gaps in the explanation of variation between -s and -ø that have remained in every previous study on the issue even after accounting for other important factors such as grammatical and lexical aspect, the NSR, and temporal reference. Moreover, although it is very difficult to identify the correlation between *affect* and *verbal*-s by analyzing corpora data, this strong demonstration of its importance will hopefully inspire researchers to look again at old data and to continue attempting to find new ways of demonstrating the connection. A theory of the grammatical expression of *affect* will be taken much more seriously if can be shown objectively to be a phenomenon of language.

As of yet, researchers continue to speculate, using examples that they take for granted to be cases of affective grammar. However, two promising cases, which were reviewed in chapter (4) were Labov (1984) and Maynard (2002). Labov considered neighboring adverbs that intuitively would be more likely to occur with some grammatically expressed affective form. One could analyze some data from a time when *non-concord*-s was more frequent and test to see if it was significantly more likely to be used with intensifying/affective adverbs. Maynard (2002) analyzed data from comics so that she could take situational contexts into consideration, which was found to be important in this study as well.

With regard to the other significant factors found here, *age* was again found to be significant with older AAVE speakers judging the frequency of their own use of *non-concord*-s to be much higher than that of younger participants. Both age groups seem to
be sensitive to the *affect* constraint, but the *younger* group was keener to judge the frequency of their own use to be very low relative to the *older* group in non-affective contexts. This again hints at language change in progress. The *older* group is probably choosing higher frequencies in non-affective scenarios because they are referring to other grammatical constraints to justify its use, whereas the *younger* group relies much more heavily on *affect* to determine the appropriateness of verbal -s.

*Gender* was also a significant factor, but only when participants were considering the frequency of verbal -s use among *others* in their communities. It is uncertain why this was the case, but it could be due to women being more sensitive to certain linguistic variables in their community, in which case they would naturally notice them with higher frequency than men.
Chapter 8. Conclusions and Discussion

In this study, the nature of verbal -s use in four urban varieties of AAVE was addressed in a number of ways. Historical contexts were provided, other variation studies on its use were summarized, a review of affect in language was provided, and then the results of this investigation were presented. With regard to historical contexts, verbal -s found its origins in a “dark” period in the attestation of English literature, but the evidence is strong that it arose via contact with incoming Old Norse speakers who were transitioning over to English in northern England. The timing and the location of its early appearances points us to these conclusions, although there is still a strong push by some scholars to explain verbal -s as an internal phenomenon (i.e. the effects of sound change on the morphology of Old English). After more than 50 years of debate, scholars as recently as Pietsch (2005) have been pushing for a theory of regular sound change as the mechanism of change, but it has been argued here that language contact provides a simpler and historically supported cause.

From there, various versions of a non-standard paradigm (i.e. a paradigm that differed from the southwestern Old English present tense pattern, spoken by the likes of King Alfred) spread throughout England and by the time colonization had begun, there were more than enough users of non-concord -s to have made up a substantial portion of those emigrating to colonial America. The varieties of influence were most likely spoken
by people in southern England initially, but also by people from northern England and the
Scotch-Irish by the eighteenth-century. It was also concluded that the communities of
new British arrivals who used non-concord -s were also more likely to have had intense
and prolonged contact with early African arrivals as well. These “verbal -s” dialects
(primarily, the variety incorporating the NSR and the varieties where aspect and syntactic
constraints seem to have been the primary constraint) must have served as their primary
English inputs, both directly from colonizers and indirectly via creole varieties of English
spoken in various Black communities in the deep south (Winford 2015).

What happened to verbal -s in AAVE from that starting point has been the
primary subject of this study. Evidence from sources such as the letters analyzed by
Montgomery (1993) and Van Herk and Walker (2005), along with the Ex-Slave Narrative
data (written and audio) and data from enclave communities (Singler 1997), Poplack and
Tagliamonte 2001) all suggest that non-concord -s was used frequently by Early AAVE
speakers. However, opinions vary as to what constrained the use of -s at this time. It was
concluded here that the relatively later arrival of the Scotch-Irish to the south, and dialect
mixing among slaves during the 1800s has obfuscated our view of the older patterns, but
that there seems to be evidence that the NSR was more prominent in the upper south,
while the lower south showed signs of influence from aspect. To date, I do not believe
anyone has checked for the syntactic constraint that Cheshire (1982) and Clarke (1997)
found.

By the mid-twentieth-century, the frequency of verbal -s began to fall
dramatically nationwide, and it has been hypothesized that the older constraint systems
are either no longer existent in contemporary AAVE or, at least, lacked significant effect. Because scholars (Putnam and O’Hern 1958, Labov 1968, Wolfram 1969, Fasold 1972) were not concerned with the use of -s outside of the third-person singular, and because their concern lay more with social than grammatical constraints, much is still unknown about the present tense verb paradigm in AAVE during this time period. An attempt to gather those old data sets and to reanalyze them properly would be beneficial to say the least.

The change from frequent and grammatically constrained use of non-concord -s to much less frequent use constrained primarily by affect was probably introduced by migrating AAVE speakers who found themselves in communities where there was a noticeable contrast between their present tense inflection patterns and the patterns of local dialects, which resembled the standard third-person singular pattern. Verbal -s quickly declined in frequency but did remain in some limited way and AAVE speakers then began to utilize this variation between the -s and the null marker to serve another purpose, namely to express affect. It does not seem unreasonable for a morphological marker to be reanalyzed after its original use becomes uncertain to speakers, but why it was reanalyzed as a marker of affect is uncertain.

Despite this uncertainty, it is worth speculating that social meaning is an important factor here. Even in many varieties of AAE that are considered standard, there are hints of “Black speech” in those speakers’ accents, Barack Obama being a good example. From the very beginning, Africans were resistant to White culture and language. Their music, their food, their clothes, and their speech has always been unique.
to them, and this non-concord -s, having been lost in standard White varieties of American English, sticks out as belonging to the Black community. Its grammatical value(s) may have been lost, but its usefulness as an identity marker remains. Of course, overuse might incite ridicule even in the Black community, as it has been connected with an old timey slave sound (noted by participants in the audio data that was recorded in Mitchell (2013)). But this would explain why non-concord -s might remain, and be reanalyzed for a different purpose, instead of falling into complete disuse. No longer having clear grammatical value, it was reanalyzed and given pragmatic function: used to convey affect. It was also suggested in chapter 7 that the affect constraint may be much older than the migration north in the twentieth-century, but became more dominant and salient when the other constraints began to fade. This would both explain how it ended up in varieties of AAVE in four distant locations of the country, and why it was retained by AAVE speakers in the first place, after its grammatical value had been all but lost.

This brings us to an apparent anomaly in the results. In chapter 6, older participants did not increase their preference for -s (as much) when scenarios were changed from non-affective to affective, as the two younger age groups did. This indicated that they either do not have the affect constraint (language change), or that AAVE speakers simply do not use -s to convey affect as they get older (age grading). However, in chapter 7, when rating the frequency of their own use, older participants’ ratings were higher than the two younger groups. This may not seem like a conflict at first glance, but when figure (7) is viewed more closely, one might expect that in non-affective scenarios, given the ratings results, the older group would show a stronger
preference for the -s marker, but they do not. Conceptually, it makes more sense that this 
\emph{affect} marker is much older than the older group (i.e. shared innovation of -s in all four 
cities indicates age grading rather than language change in progress), so for them to seem 
less affected by the \emph{affect} constraint would then be a symptom of age-grading, with older 
people using it less to convey \emph{affect} as they get older. That is not to say, though, that they 
do not use \emph{non-concord} -s as much in general. On the contrary, they still are influenced 
by grammatical constraints and view their use to be very frequent, which explains the 
higher self-ratings. So, why did they not show a higher preference for -s in non-affective 
scenarios in the binary task? This could simply be because the older group, despite 
\emph{believing} the rate of their own use to be very frequent, actually do not use \emph{non-concord} -s 
more frequently than the younger groups, or at least, they do not view it as being more 
appropriate in non-affective scenarios when put to the test.

It is clear that \emph{affect} is indeed a phenomenon of human language; however, the 
subject of \emph{affect} being expressed directly by way of grammatical forms/constructions has 
not been investigated for very long, relative to other fields of linguistic research.
Moreover, because it is difficult to identify when a person is attempting to utilize some 
morphological/syntactic construction for expressing \emph{affect}, the empirical strength of 
many past investigations on the matter has been questionable. For example, finding a 
statistically tested correlation between some innovative vowel quality and a certain 
socially identifiable group of people in a community is strong empirical evidence for a 
connection between the two, but how does one demonstrate a correlation between the use 
of \emph{verbal} -s and emotion? A number of measurable factors could be considered, such as
prosodic patterns, heart rate, or even neuron stimulation in certain parts of the brain by way of an MRI.

Here, though, a different approach has been taken that does not involve directly analyzing speech production and finding correlations. Here the survey approach has been chosen and participant judgments of speech were analyzed rather than their own speech. Such methods tend to draw criticism because it is viewed by some that a truly empirical approach should entail direct analysis of the phenomenon in question. For instance, Maynard (2002) argues that “the adequacy of a theory must ultimately be tested against data”. This may indicate a shortcoming of the survey approach that involves participant judgments rather than spoken language data. However, it is again stressed that getting reliable data on the affective value of verbal -s from a production would have been impractical, given its relatively low frequency of use and the issues that come with identifying empirically a correlation between verbal -s and the emotional stance that the speaker is taking on what (s)he is saying.

In addition, at this point what qualifies as a truly empirical linguistic investigation becomes a matter of semantics. In order for a study to be adequately empirical, one must find a correlation between verbal -s and emotion by way of linguistic data, but Maynard (2002) herself argues throughout her entire book that the phenomenon of language is more than just a system of grammatical rules and a lexicon. The role of the speaker, the listener, and context are important components of language as well. Performing a single study that accounts for all three of these factors would be very difficult, and so a variety of approaches to a single linguistic phenomenon that can work together to capture all of
these aspects is essential. It is therefore concluded here that the current approach, although lacking empirically in some ways, has been successful in that it does account for context and the interpretation of the listener.

Moreover, the use of advanced statistical methods, such as mixed effects modeling, takes the results of this study a step further than others, such as Moody (2011), who simply provided summary statistics from her survey data. Others, such as Bailey et al. (1989), Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001), Van Herk and Walker (2005), etc., do perform some limited form of statistical testing, but none of them adhere to the assumption of independence: a foundational and most basic rule in statistics, which can lead to type I errors (the rejection of a true null hypothesis).

With regard to the results of this study, it has been demonstrated on a much larger scale than Mitchell (2013) that *verbal -s* in AAVE has a direct connection with *affect*. There is a growing body of evidence that speakers can convey *affect* via phonological, syntactic, lexical, and morphological means and this use of *verbal -s* would fall under the morphological expression of *affect*. With regard to this, few studies have been dedicated to investigating *affect* in the realm of verbal morphology, but instead focus on expressivity by way of nominal inflection, such as Dressler and Barbaresi’s study of nominal diminutives (1994). AAVE, however, seems to have a rich repertoire of verbal expressives, such as remote BIN, *done* verb-*ed* constructions and, *quod erat demonstratum, verbal -s*. This study therefore adds yet more support not only for the existence of grammatically expressed *affect*, but also for the potential of verbal morphology to index it.
It also lends support to the world of grammatical change, when compared with another case of verbally conveyed affect, which draws an amazing parallel with non-concord -s: Stein (1987), who looked at the change from the \(-\theta\) endings on present tense Middle English verbs, to the -s marker. He argued too that after the -s marker had become the more dominant (or at least more frequent) inflectional marker, the \(-\theta\) was retained for quite some time as a marker of affect, usually reserved for use by villains and comedy in Early Modern English literature. That is, this is no isolated incident, but quite possibly a natural part of grammatical change, given the proper circumstances.

Another interesting result of this investigation was the strong connection between verbal -s and lexical statives. It was not expected (contra Pitts 1986) that stativity would be a significant factor because verbal -s has been shown to occur with non-stative (punctual) historical present verbs, and this expansion of use may be a sign of the generalization of -s inflection. However, static aspect was in fact still a significant factor for AAVE speakers in all four regions investigated. This is most likely due to the intimate connection between stative verbs and affect. That is, intuition suggests that stative verbs are far more likely to be naturally expressive, not only from an emotional standpoint, but also from a temporal one, and scholars have suspected for quite some time that extended duration may be connected to expressive meaning. Aside from this, many statives, by nature, bear strong affective meaning, and so it would be quite natural for the connection to be made between the variable -s and that emotive component.

On another note, for verbal -s to be more strongly preferred in the Midwest and West than the South and East is very counter-intuitive. It was expected that, since the
former two areas are considered to be more “proper” even by AAVE speakers themselves (Mitchell et al. 2017), the grammatical constraints would be less accessible, thus leaving participants only with affect, and thus lower preference for the -s marker in non-affective scenarios. However, the opposite proved true. This may be connected to something historical in terms of migration patterns (something akin to colonial lag). That is, it is possible that people migrated North/West and retained the grammatical constraints, whereas the people in the South and East innovated. It is also possible that having third-person singular contexts could be influencing the results. If the Midwest and West are indeed more likely to use a more standard variety of AAVE, it is possible that their selection of -s in third-singular contexts was significantly higher, which would in-turn make their overall selection of -s higher in non-affective scenarios.

Finally, despite a large body of evidence from past research, the influence of habitual aspect, was not found to be a significant factor, as was suggested by Mitchell (2013). It was expected that performing this study in four separate regions of the country would reveal the connection between aspect and region, as has been suggested by Montgomery (1996), Clarke (1997), and Van Herk and Walker (2005). But even in the area where the effect of habitual aspect was most anticipated (the south) it did not end up being a significant factor. Given the vast size of the south and the multitude of AAVE varieties spoken there, it is still quite possible that habitual aspect is influential for some speakers.

From a methodological standpoint there is still some room for growth. Barr et al. (2013) demonstrated that increasing the number of items from 12 to 24 significantly
increased the predictive power of a mixed effects model and reduced the likelihood of convergence issues. Quite a few of the models designed here had to be reduced because of failure to converge and it is highly likely that this was due to the small number of verbs (items) used for this study. This probably resulted in a loss of predictive power.

The issue here lay with finding a balance between what is practical for the fieldworker and what is practical for the statistician. That is, convincing people to take a survey is a task in itself and it was not uncommon for people to refuse participation after seeing how many pages the survey was. Increasing the number of verbs to 24 would likely result not only in an increased amount of rejection from the participants, but also in a larger number of participants who might grow tired of the task and begin to answer at random in order to speed up the process. In order to maximize predictive power by incorporating at least 24 items, it is recommended here that future researchers develop a survey that requires less reading. For instance, instead of reading scenarios, participants could judge when verbal -s is most appropriate based on two photos (one where there is obvious added emotion and one where there is not).

With that being said, verbal -s has proven to be important for our understanding of the connection between social meaning and linguistic forms in the sense that we have yet more evidence for the direct expression of stance by way of grammatical inflection. Moreover, in this case, nonconcord -s is not only a marker of affect in AAVE, but is also a salient marker of the AAVE dialect and, as was expressed by many of the participants themselves in post survey interviews, is viewed as improper or broken English.
Investigations such as this add to something once viewed as broken in that they show practical use and value, both present and historical.

This study also contributes to the field of language change in that we have an instance of semantic change from grammatical to pragmatic (affective). The goal of the historical linguist is not only to identify and label change, but also to understand what kinds of change are possible. Although ideas about metonymy and shifts in meaning from concrete to more abstract are widely acknowledged and a part of standard textbook instruction (Hock and Joseph 2009: 218; Campbell 2013: 236), the shift from grammatical to affective meaning is not so well understood and has not been empirically demonstrated in the past, as it was using the methods in this study. There are most certainly other linguistic variables in human language that can be analyzed using similar methods to find out whether they are being used to convey affect.
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Appendix A. Questionnaire

Instructions: I’d like you to read some short stories that I’ve grouped into pairs. Each pair describes two slightly different situations involving the same person. In each case, you have a choice of two sentences that you can say in that situation. Please select the sentence that you think the person is more likely to say in the situation. Example: I stay up north. vs. I stays up north.

Section I.
1. Carnell and his boy Mike are having a discussion about Carnell’s financial status. Here’s how it went.

Mike: What you talkin bout? You know you ain’t had no money since you lost that job down the street!
Carnell: Psshhh… Please! You ain’t even got to worry about me!
   a. …I get mines.
   b. …I gets mines.

2. Carnell and his boy Mike are having a discussion about Carnell’s financial status, but Carnell doesn’t get upset or offended. Instead he is relaxed about the situation. Here’s how it went.

Mike: Yo Carnell, I heard you lost that job down the street, cuz. You need some cheddar to hold you over?
Carnell: Nah, I’m good, yo. You ain’t even got to worry about me.
   a. …I get mines.
   b. …I gets mines.
Section 2
1. Reggie is walking up the street talking to his girl. While they were walking, a brand new Lexus rolls by. Here’s how the conversation went.

Reggie: So I tell my dude, he need to leave by 5 and get my house key for me.
Girlfriend: But why he needed to leave by 5?
A brand new Lexus rolls by. Reggie’s eyes get big and he says:
a. I likes that.
b. I like that.

2. Reggie is walking up the street talking to his girl. While they were walking, an average looking car rolls by. Here’s how the conversation went.

Reggie: So I tell my dude, he need to leave by 5 and get my house key for me.
Girlfriend: But why he needed to leave by 5?
An average looking car rolls by.
Girlfriend: I’m finna get me a car like that one right there. What you think?
It’s not that great but he doesn’t want to make his girl feel bad, so he says with an unenthusiastic tone:
a. I likes that.
b. I like that.

Section 3
1. Sharee is telling a story about how she got a great new job offer. Here’s how it went:
Girl! I ain’t even know they was hiring! Ol’ dude called me up and said they heard about me and wanted me to come in with a resume. I was happy as hell, but to be honest, I ain’t even got no resume! (laughs out loud)

a. So I types one up.
b. So I type one up.

2. Sharee is telling a story about how she got a new job offer. She’s not very interested in the job, but needs the money Here’s how it went:

Sharee: Girl, I wasn’t even finna apply, cuz I ain’t trying to work there. But I needed the money and they hiring right way. All I needed was my resume.

a. So I types one up.
b. So I type one up.
Section 4

1. Gary and his friend Daquan are having a normal conversation about random stuff. Daquan is telling Gary about his routine with his kids mother, who he’s not with anymore. Here’s how the conversation went:

Gary: So when you be getting yo kids?
Daquan: I keep the kids, yo.
Gary: Oh, you do? So when she get the kids?

a. I drop the kids off whenever she want.
b. I drops the kids off whenever she want.

2. Gary and his friend Daquan are having a discussion and Daquan is extremely upset and emotional. He just had a huge fight with his kids’ mother. Here’s how the conversation went:

Gary: So she dropped yo kids off and ain’t even ask?
Daquan: Yeah! Can you believe that mess? I swear to God, I’m takin her to court, bruh! She don’t even barely be seein her own kids!
Gary: How often do she get em?
(Daquan yells):

a. I drops the kids off whenever she want.
b. I drop the kids off whenever she want.

Section 5

1.
   a. I thinks like that (in general).
   b. I think like that (in general).

2.
   a. I think like that sometimes.
   b. I thinks like that sometimes.
Section 6

1.
   a. I stays with my sister, usually.
   b. I stay with my sister, usually.

2.
   a. I stays with my sister now.
   b. I stay with my sister now.

Section 7

1. Deon and his wife, Shawna, just moved into a big new apartment. They’re really excited, so they decided to have some friends over. One friend asked for something to drink and went through the fridge to see what they have. Here’s what was said:

Visitor (while going through the fridge): Aw snap! I know ya’ll ain’t got no kool-aid up in here!
Deon: Hell yeah! Shawna made it this morning (laughing).

   a. She keeps kool-aid in the fridge.
   b. She keep kool-aid in the fridge.

2. Deon and his wife, Shawna, moved into a new apartment, but it’s been a while, so the excitement is over. They decided to have some friends over and one friend asked for something to drink and went through the fridge to see what they have. Here’s what was said:

Visitor: Ya’ll got anything to drink?
Deon: Yeah... (no excitement in his voice):

   a. She keep kool-aid in the fridge.
   b. She keeps kool-aid in the fridge.
Section 8
1. Andre’s 16-year-old daughter has a boy over to study for an exam. Andre doesn’t trust the boy at all. The boy shows up and the daughter goes to tell her dad. Here’s how it went:

Daughter: Daddy, Jimmy here. We finna go study in the kitchen, okay?

Andre gives his daughter a very stern look and says:

a. Come six o’clock, he need to leave.
b. Come six o’clock, he needs to leave.

2. Andre’s 16-year-old daughter has a boy over to study for an exam. Andre trusts this boy because he’s a good kid. The boy shows up and the daughter goes to tell her dad. Here’s how it went:

Daughter: Daddy, Jimmy here. We finna go study in the kitchen, okay?

Andre: That’s fine, baby. Dinner gon’ be ready by 5:30 so:

a. Come six o’clock, he need to leave.
b. Come six o’clock, he needs to leave.

Instructions: In the following two sections, rate how likely you’d be to speak the given sentences, and how likely one would be to hear it in the city where you live.

Section 9
(Seeing a brand new iPhone on tv that you really want.)
“I gots to get me one of them!”

1. 
   a. I would never say this.
   b. Sometimes I might say this.
   c. I say this frequently.
   d. That's the only way I would say it.

2. 
   a. People around here never say this.
   b. People around here say this sometimes.
   c. People around here say this frequently.
   d. That's the only way people around here would say it.
Section 10
(Talking casually about a job.)
“I sees the same people here everyday.”

1.
a. I would never say this.
b. Sometimes I might say this.
c. I say this frequently.
d. That's the only way I would say it.

2.
a. People around here never say this.
b. People around here say this sometimes.
c. People around here say this frequently.
d. That's the only way people around here would say it.

Section 11
(Talking casually about where you live.)
“I lives on the north side of town.”

1.
a. I would never say this.
b. Sometimes I might say this.
c. I say this frequently.
d. That's the only way I would say it.

2.
a. People around here never say this.
b. People around here say this sometimes.
c. People around here say this frequently.
d. That's the only way people around here would say it.