A Descriptive Grammar of Southern American English Spoken in the Eastern Highland Rim Region of Middle Tennessee

Introduction

In this paper, I describe the phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon of the dialect of Southern American English spoken in the Eastern Highland Rim region of Middle Tennessee. Counties in which this dialect is spoken include Franklin, Coffee, Warren, Moore, Cannon, and DeKalb. In particular, I focus on the features that differentiate this dialect from “General American English”. Eastern Highland Rim English (from here on referred to as EHRE) bears a close enough resemblance to “Southern Appalachian English” as described by Ellis (2006) and Hazen (2004) to be considered a subdialect of the latter. Indeed, EHRE bears a close resemblance to many of the dialects spoken throughout the southeastern portion of the United States, as well as to those spoken in regions of the western United States, such as in the Ozark Mountains. I have drawn such geographic boundaries for this study not because the dialect presented in this paper stands out as peculiar, but rather as a precautionary measure so as to avoid false generalities. By choosing a more specific region as my area of study, I intend to retain the sense of local idiosyncrasy of the dialect and avoid a totalizing picture of all Southern and Appalachian speech. Although it is spoken within my region of study, I do not attempt to describe "African American Vernacular English", since this variety of American English differs
substantially from EHRE and would comprise a separate study.

Since it presented such a prominent topic among my informants as I collected my data, it stands to indicate that a necessary step in appreciating this study is to abandon linguistic prejudices and to consider Southern and Appalachian English varieties as legitimate manifestations of American English. Many of my informants reacted with shock when I explained to them that I wanted to study Southern American English, which they considered to be an inferior, delinquent version of a “pure” standard heard through the media and in professional and academic circles. In writing this paper, I hold that Southern American English, like any linguistic variety, is its own fully developed mode of communication, and it is fully capable of expressing any philosophy or poetry that can be expressed in General American English. One has only to overcome his or her prejudices that Southern American English represents the speech of "hillbillies" and "rednecks"; as will be evident, EHRE possesses as many complexities lacking in GAE as are contained in GAE but lacking in EHRE (See McWhorter 1998 for a fuller illustration of language prejudice).

In linguistics, the terms "language" and "dialect" are problematic, for there is no clear distinction between the two. In general, a "dialect" is a mutually-intelligible variant of a given "language", which is understood to be the prestige dialect of an indefinite number of total dialects. However, the term "dialect" frequently carries the connotation of a corrupted "language", and the prestige dialect is often regarded as the true, pure language. In reality, as no language is the superior of any other, so no dialect is the inferior of any other. An official dialect carries its prestige by virtue of its speakers' contemporary or historical economic or social prominence, not because of any linguistic purity. Furthermore, "colloquial dialects" do not necessarily descend from the prestige dialect; in the case of English, for example, GAE, EHRE,
and even British English can all be thought of as descending from a common ancestor, and the "colloquial dialects" inherited just as many features from that common ancestor as did the prestige dialects (Schilling-Estes 2006, McWhorter 1998). In order to avoid the unwanted connotations of "language" and "dialect", some linguists prefer to use the term "variety" for both, referring to the prestige dialect as the "standard variety" (Meecham et al. 2001). In this paper, I use "variety" and "dialect" interchangeably to refer both to GAE and EHRE, though GAE is understood to be the prestige variety; however, I consciously avoid the term "language" in order to evade any unwanted connotations it contains, and it must be remembered that, though I refer to "dialects", I do not imply the existence of a pure "language" from which the dialect has been somehow corrupted.

*Origin of the Dialect*

The majority of residents of the Eastern Highland Rim (and, indeed, of Middle Tennessee in general) trace their ancestry to England and especially to Ireland and Scotland. As stated by Kennedy (1995), "It is estimated that up to 75 percent of Warren County's early settlers (1800-1840) were of Scots-Irish origin." As most of the region is rural or urbanized only slightly, immigration is marginal, and many families have been living in the same area for several generations (Kennedy 1995, Womack 1969). Since the population is mostly sedentary, has experienced little immigration, and descends from a distinct social group, it can be presumed the speech of the modern inhabitants of the Eastern Highland Rim has been affected by the speech of the founder population. With respect to Southern Appalachian English in general, many features, such as the use of "might could" for "might be able to" and the suffix "un" to form a noun from an adjective, can indeed be contributed to Scots-Irish influence. Other
characteristics, however, can be traced to various regions throughout England; Southern Appalachian English and EHRE are perhaps best described as an American mix of various colonial English dialects as opposed to any particular one (Montgomery 2006).

*Sociolinguistic Differentiation and Changes in Register*

EHRE is not inflexible and varies substantially among different socio-economic and age groups. In general, the older and poorer the speaker, the more his or her dialect will differ from General American English. In addition, the most conservative feature of the dialect is its sound system, so highly educated speakers may pronounce words according to the sound rules of EHRE but use fully standard grammar in most formal occasions. This also depends on the linguistic register; young, educated speakers who speak fully standard English may speak more "Southern" in certain contexts, such as among family members. The more formal the setting, the more standard the speech one is likely to use--many informants whose speech before differed recognizably from GAE instantly spoke in a more standard register upon the appearance of my voice recorder. This owes to linguistic prejudice against "vernacular" dialects; speakers who cannot emulate GAE in some settings are more likely to have difficulty obtaining better education or social advancement (Montgomery 2006). I have tried to indicate which characteristics are common among which social groups. In addition, I have tried to indicate with characteristics are most likely to be replaced by their "standard" counterpart in more formal registers.

**Phonology**

See the appendix for a table representing the consonant phonemes of EHRE. What
follows is a description of phonemic and phonological differences between EHRE and GAE.

Consonants

In general, consonants and their allophones in EHRE correspond to those in General American English. For example, as in GAE, /t/ is realized as various allophones, such as [tʰ], [t], [ɾ], and [ʔ], depending on the context. That many of the same allophonic variations takes place in both dialects contributes to a high degree of mutual intelligibility between GAE and EHRE; however, while all consonant phonemes in EHRE correspond directly to those in GAE, some slight allomorphic variation does occur, or variation occurs in different circumstances. Differences in the realization of consonants between EHRE and GAE that I encountered are as follow:

Final /iŋ/, especially in gerunds, is almost always realized as [ɨn] or as [ŋ]. This may affect the allomorph of /t/ that appears before the nasalized consonant. For example, "meeting" /miɾɨn/ changes to [mɪiʔn], and "walking" /walkɪn/ changes to [wɔdɬɪn].

Intervocalic /s/ is voiced to [z], so the word "greasy", for example, is pronounced [ɡəˈrɪzi]. This includes /s/ that is intervocalic due the the plural suffix and that would otherwise be realized as voiceless; for example, "houses" is realized as [hæuˈzɪz].

Final /l/ is heavily velarized to [ɬ] and, in some circumstances, such as after a rounded vowel, may even be realized as [w]. For example, "cold" may be realized as /kʌʊwd/, and "cool" may be realized as /kəu̯w/. While /l/ is velarized to an extend by all speakers, only older speakers tend to realize /l/ as [w] in the contexts described above.

Verb forms ending in /znt/ are realized as ending in [ɾnt], and the /t/ is afterwards dropped. This is most evident in forms of "to be" and "to do"; for example, "isn't" is pronounced as [iəɾn],
"wasn't" is pronounced as /wʌɾn/, and "doesn't" is pronounced as /dʌɾn/ by most speakers of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds in informal registers. In addition, older speakers often pronounce "business" as /biədnis/, though this has been avoided by the younger generations.

EHRE exhibits the "intrusive R" described by Montgomery (2006). I encountered this phenomenon only in certain words, for example, in the word "wash", which was realized as [warʃ], and in "water", which was realized as [warɻə]. One older speaker of lower economic status pronounced "yesterday" as [jaʃtɹi]. Younger and educated speakers tend to stigmatize this pronunciation, which has led to this pronunciation appearing only among older, less educated speakers.

Vowels

Highland Rim English differs substantially from Standard American English with respect to vowel qualities. Most notably, Highland Rim English exhibits the “Southern drawl” and the “Southern twang”, both of which will be explained below.

The "Southern Drawl" refers to the diphthongization of the front vowels /æ/, /ɛ/, and /ɪ/ to [æʃə], [ɛʃə], and [iʃə], respectively (Hazen et al. 2004). Because of this feature, some monosyllabic words in GAE may be realized as disyllabic in EHRE. For example, "man" may be pronounced as [mɛʃən]. However, while these vowels may be pronounced as two syllables in some circumstances, such realizations appear only in dramatically stressed syllables (such as in animated speech); they are more likely to be realized as the simple monosyllabic glides [æʃə], [ɛʃə], and [iʃə], respectively. For instance, "He hit him" in EHRE may be realized as [hɪʃ iʃɹim].

The "Southern Drawl" has led to the "Southern Chain Shift" (Hazen et al. 2004), in which the diphthongs containing /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ that result from the "Southern Drawl" are tensed to [ɛ] and
[i], respectively. In compensation, /i/ and /e/ are lax to [ɪ] and [ɛ], respectively. Therefore, "pet" is realized as [pʰeɪt], "pit" is realized as [pʰiɛt], "Pete" is realized as [pʰɪet], and "late" is realized as [lɛɪt]. Both the "Southern Drawl" and the "Southern Chain Shift" are common among speakers of all backgrounds, though younger, educated speakers only use this pronunciation in informal registers.

The "Southern Twang" refers to the monophthongization of the diphthong /aɪ/ into [a:] (Ellis 2006). The monophthongization of /aɪ/, however, is not absolute in all contexts, and the same speaker may pronounce this phoneme as the full diphthong [aɪ], as [æ], or as [a:] all within the same sentence; all of these realizations may take place in all circumstances and do not affect comprehension. For example, "bite" may be realized as either [baɪt], [baʊt], or [baːt]. In this case, even if "bite" is realized as [baːt], it does not form a homophone with "bat", since the [aː] is long in the former even though the following consonant is unvoiced. A similar phenomenon to the Southern Twang, though not identified by the term, is the monophthongization of /ɔɪ/ to [ɔː] or to [ɔə]; for example, "boil" may be realized as /bɔːl/, and "boy" may be pronounced as /bɔə/.

Final /oʊ/ is most often realized as a schwa [ə]. Older speakers also pronounce final /o/ as the "r-colored schwa" [ə] in some circumstances, though they also used [ə] in the same words in other circumstances. For example, "potato" was pronounced by speakers of all backgrounds and ages as [pʰətəɪɾə] and by older speakers in some contexts as [pʰətɪɾə]. Similarly, "fellow" was realized as either [feəl] or [feələ]. Older speakers tended to use [ə] when they were replicating the speech of their older relatives or making fun of "hillbillies", and one may speculate that the [ə] pronunciation was once more widespread but has been reduced due to stigmatization.

EHRE exemplifies the pin-pen merger (Ellis 2006), so pin and pen are both realized as
[pʰɪ̃n] by younger educated speakers and as [pʰɪ̃jən]/[pʰɪ̃ən] by everyone else; none of my informants, regardless of age or education, differentiated between /pɛn/ and /pɪn/.

Non-final /ɪŋ/ is realized as [ɛɪŋ] by all speakers in certain registers. For example, "think" is pronounced as a homophone with "thank" [θɛɪŋk], and "string" is pronounced [ʃtɛɪŋ]. "Put your ring finger on the D string" is pronounced [pʰʊʃtʃɪəɹɛ̃ɪŋfɛ̃ɪŋɡɚɑɒdɪʃtʃɪɹɛ̃ɪŋɡ].

/ɔ/ before /ʃ/ is frequently realized as /ɑ/ among older speakers. For example, "for" and "far" are pronounced as homonyms [fʊ].

/ɑ/ is realized as [ɑd] among speakers of all ages and social backgrounds in most registers. For example, as is stereotyped in impressions of Southern speech, "dog" is often realized as [dɑdɡ].

"Can't" is pronounced to rhyme with "ain't" [kʰɛ̃ɪnt]. Most older speakers use this pronunciation, but younger, educated speakers tend to avoid it in formal registers; in informal registers, even younger speakers unconsciously used this pronunciation.

By many speakers of all age and socioeconomic groups, the final vowel in names for days of the week and in the word "yesterday" are realized as a close front unrounded vowel [i]. For example, "Monday" is pronounced [mʌ̃ndi], and "Friday" is pronounced [fæːdi].

/ʌ/ is generally pronounced further forward [æ]; this takes place in certain registers of all speakers, though it is the sole realization of older speakers and speakers of less privileged socioeconomic classes. For example, "but" is frequently realized as [bɔt].

*Morphophonology*

A notable morphological process that takes place in all varieties of English is the reduction of direct object pronouns, articles, and some pronouns in rapid speech. While this is
evident, sometimes even familiar, in GAE, EHRE utilizes this feature more extensively. For example, returning to a previous example, "He hit him" in EHRE may be realized as [hɪ hiəɪm]. In general, morphophonological processes in EHRE correspond to those in GAE.

**Morphophonology**

As in most varieties of American English, personal pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions in EHRE may be reduced in rapid speech. For example, "and" and "than" are both most often realized as [ŋ]; one may hear [jʊmɛi] for "you and me" and [bɪɑʊnjʊ] for "bigger than you".

The following personal pronouns undergo notable modification in certain situations:

"You" will palatalize a previous /t/ or /d/; for example, "Get you" is realized as [ɡiəʃu], and "would you" is pronounced as [wəʊʤu]. The vowel in "you" may be reduced to a schwa after a verb; for example, "would you" may be pronounced [wəʊʤə]. As with the other pronouns, which vowel that appears, reduced or fully pronounced, depends on where the stress falls in the sentence, which may change to subtly change the meaning of the sentence. For example, there is a difference between "Would you?" and "Would You?"; in the first instance, stress falls on the first word, and the speaker is asking "Would you really do that?" In such cases, the vowel will most likely be reduced. In the second instance, the speaker is asking if that person would do the action as opposed to someone else, in which case the vowel would be pronounced unreduced with the emphasis on the personal pronoun itself.

"Him" and "her" often lose their initial aspiration after a verb; e.g., "stop him" is pronounced [stɔpʰim], and "stop her" is pronounced [stɔpʰə]. Similarly, "them" loses the initial /ð/ after a verb; e.g., "stop them" is pronounced [stɔpʰəm]. When the personal pronouns
are reduced after a verb, one differentiates "him" and "them" by the vowel sound; "him" becomes -[ɪm] and "them" becomes -[əm].

### Morphology

#### Personal Pronouns

The oldest speakers of the least privileged socioeconomic classes used "youins" [jœu̯nz] for the second person plural personal pronoun when imitating the speech of their older relatives or when they were mocking the speech of "real hillbillies"; one may assume that this pronunciation was once more widespread but has, like [θ] in place of final /ɔʊ/, been reduced in order to avoid stigmatization (One speaker used "youins" unconsciously on one occasion when telling a story about her childhood, so it is still used somewhat). However, all speakers of all ages and backgrounds do use "y'all" [jɑʊl] for the second person plural personal pronoun. Once "y'all" is used once in a sentence, it may be replaced by "you" later on in the same sentence. For example, one may hear either, "Y'all didn't tell me you was coming," or "Y'all didn't tell me y'all was coming."

"It", when appearing at the beginning of a phrase, is pronounced as "hit" [hɪt] among some older speakers of lower socioeconomic classes. This is an example of "h-retention", which is also common in various regions of England (Montgomery 2006). In EHRE, only the oldest speakers used this pronunciation, and it is stigmatized by the younger generations.

A striking feature distinguishing EHRE from GAE is the use in the former of the dative form of the personal pronoun as a reflexive, whose usage is reminiscent to that in German and in the Romance languages. This usage is generally avoided by many younger speakers of more privileged socioeconomic backgrounds, though many of these same speakers use such
constructions in some registers. For example, one may hear, "Go and get you another one" for "Go and get another one for yourself". Also, one may hear "He got him a girlfriend," and, "We picked us some good blueberries."

The emphatic personal pronoun "hisself" [hɪəzɛzl] is used in place of "himself"; this was exhibited by most speakers of all ages and backgrounds. Older speakers also used "theirselves" [θərselfz] in place of "themselves". This represents the regularization of the emphatic pronoun system, so each emphatic is formed using simply "-self" suffixed to the possessive form of the respective personal pronoun.

The construction "they is" or "they's" replaces "there is" or "there's" in the speech of older individuals or individuals of poorer socioeconomic classes expresses existence. For example, "They's one in yonder" and "They's some guys coming" express that "there is one of the specified object in another room" and "There are some guys coming", respectively.

Older speakers of EHRE may also employ "existential it" (Hazen et al. 2004); this appears in such constructions as "Hit's a problem all them cars have is that the center console just breaks". This construction is rare among other groups, but can be heard among speakers of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. More common is the use of "it" in another phrases that expresses existence; for example, any speaker might say, "It came a storm" or "I don't think it's a whole lot of students went there".

Demonstratives

"Them" replaces "those" among speakers of all ages among less privileged socioeconomic classes both as a pronoun and modifier. For example, one may hear both "Them blueberries're good" [ðɪəm ˈblɔubərizəʊ ɡʊd] and "Them're good" [ðɪəmˈ ɡʊd]. Educated
speakers of all ages stigmatize this usage.

In formal registers, speakers of all socioeconomic backgrounds and age groups used "this here", "these here", "that there", and "them there" in place of "this one", "these", "that one", and "those", respectively, for emphasis (however, "those" replaces "them" among more educated speakers"). This usage is somewhat stigmatized, and younger generations only used "this here" and "that there" when answering a question in which the phrase could stand alone as an answer. For example: "Which one's yours?"; "This here". Older speakers and speakers of less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds used this construction exclusively for emphasizing a demonstrative. For example: "This here truck is mine" (as opposed to the others, which belong to someone else).

As opposed to usage in Standard American English, I encountered older speakers of all socio-economic groups who used the demonstrative “yonder”. This demonstrative denotes a distance farther than that denoted by “there” or “that”; “here” or “this” refers to an object or place near the speaker, “there” or “that” refers to a space within sight, and “yonder” refers to a distance out of sight or in another room. However, I never encountered “yonder” used as a demonstrative pronoun, but rather exclusively adverbially and modified by a preposition. For example, it was always used in phrases such as “in yonder” or “over yonder”. “That” is the demonstrative pronoun used in these constructions, for example in the phrase “that book in yonder” (in another room).

Adverbs

While in GAE one attaches the suffix "-ly" to an adjective to form an adverb, in EHRE this only rarely take place, and the adjective and adverbial forms are more often identical. For example, instead of "really pretty", one finds "real pretty"; instead of "He walks quickly", one
finds "He walks fast" (Note that in this last example "quick" is replaced with "fast"; I never encountered "quick" used adverbially).

**Verbs**

The past-tense system for irregular verbs in EHRE differs considerably from that of GAE. In general, the preterite of many verbs has either been regularized or replaced by the past participle form. In some cases, strong verbs that have been regularized in GAE have been preserved in EHRE; in others, GAE strong verbs appear regularized in EHRE. What follows is a list of all verbs whose preterites differed from those of GAE.

Be, (see below for a description of the preterite)

Bring, brung

Catch, catched

Come, come

Dive, dove

Drag, drug

Do, done

Drink, drunk

Go, gone

Grow, growed

Know, knowed

Run, run

See, seen
Throw, threwed

As is evident from the list, the past participle has been substituted for the preterite for the verbs "come", "do", "drink", "go", "run", and "see". For example, "I saw him" would be rendered "I seen him"; "He came over" would be "He come over". The verbs ending in /ʌʊ/, "grow", "know", and "throw", as well as "catch", which are all irregular in GAE, have been regularized in EHRE. For example, "I knew that wasn't going to work" is rendered "I knowed that wasn't going to work"; "I caught a fish" is "I catched a fish". "Dove" is the universal preterite for "dive", though "dived" and "dove" may both appear in other regions of the United States. "Drag" is also inflected like a strong verb, though the standard preterite is regularized to "dragged".

"Be" requires some special explanation. As in GAE, it is conjugated according to person and number; however, the pattern of conjugation differs. In EHRE, among older and less educated speakers, one finds the following conjugation:

I was
You was
He, she, it was
We were/was
Y'all were/was
They were/was

As is evident from the paradigm, all singular persons take "was" in the preterite. In the plural, one may hear either "were" or "was" for all persons, though "were" is more common for the first
and second persons, and "was" is more common in the third person. For example, "You were smaller then" is rendered "You was smaller then"; "They were smaller then" may be rendered either "They were smaller then" or "They was smaller then". The above conjugation reflects the speech of older and less educated speakers; younger and educated speakers use "to be" as it is used in GAE.

"Could" is used in place of the infinitive "to be able to" in compound constructions including "might" and "used to". For example, instead of "I used to be able to do that", one finds "I used to could do that". Also, instead of "She might be able to help you", one finds "She might could help you".

The formation of negative tenses in EHRE require special attention. "Ain't" is used by speakers of lower socioeconomic classes to express the negative of "to be" and "to have" in verbal constructions. This use is heavily stigmatized and avoided by educated speakers. For example, "I haven't got one" is rendered "I ain't got one", and "It isn't pretty" is rendered "It ain't pretty". "Ain't" is not conjugated for person or number. Similarly, though "to do" retains its irregular affirmative present tense conjugation, in the negative "don't" is used for all persons and numbers. Like "ain't", this use is stigmatized by educated speakers.

Syntax

In general, EHRE syntax coincides with that of GAE; the key differences lie in certain verbal constructions and in constructions already covered above under morphology (e.g., "this here" in place of "this one"). It is the verbal constructions that comprise one of the most salient features of EHRE and of Southern American English in general, and it is those constructions that will be given the most weight in this section.
First of all, the preterite of "to do" in EHRE, "done", plus the past participle of any verb carries the same meaning of the adverb "already". Thus, "I've already seen it" is rendered, "I done seen it." This usage is heavily stigmatized by younger and more educated speakers, but is prevalent among the lower socioeconomic classes. An exception to the general rule is "to have already done it", which is rendered "I done did it" or "I done it already" in place of the expected "I done done it".

"Fixing to" takes the place of GAE "about to"; this construction was utilized at some point by all of my informants. Thus, "I'm about to go" is rendered "I'm fixing to go." While "going to" indicates any time in the future, "fixing to" denotes the immediate future.

Older speakers of all socioeconomic backgrounds used the construction "liked to" to express what almost happened because of some violent motion or happening. For example, one may hear, "That car liked to hit me!" Also, one may hear, "You liked to give me a heart-attack!" This construction is only marginally used by younger speakers, though it does occasionally occur among younger speakers of less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds.

"Liable to" is used by all speakers to express strong probability. For example, if one asks, "Why don't you pet that dog?", the answer may be: "Cause he's liable to bite me."

EHRE exhibits the "double negative", which different speakers use to different degrees. While educated speakers regard this usage as "incorrect", the lower socioeconomic classes, in a negative clause, replace "any", "anything", "anyone", "anywhere", etc. with "no/none", "nothing", "no one", and "no where", respectively ("No" is used as a modifier, and "none" as a substantive). For example, "I don't have any" is rendered "I ain't got none".

Inanimate objects that are habitually the objects of a transitive verb will often be put in place of the subject to express how well those objects receive that action. For example, "That bed
sleeps good" means that one sleep's well in that bed. "That car don't drive good" means that it is uncomfortable to drive that car or that that car is somehow not working correctly.

The phrase "up and" is used verbally to express a sudden, unexpected action by an animate being that was previously in a resting position. For example, "He just up and left" means that the specified individual unexpectedly stood up from a seated position and left without explanation. "The dog up and run" means that the dog, which had been lying down, suddenly stood up and ran away, possibly frightened by something.

As in many varieties of GAE, in EHRE "that", when used as a relative pronoun, may be omitted from a sentence; "that" as a relative pronoun only appears in formal registers among educated speakers. For example, "I saw that you were coming" is rendered "I saw you was coming".

As in most varieties of GAE, prepositions universally fall at the end of a phrase. In addition, prepositions are always used in questions about location or direction. For example, if one is told that his or her friend is going somewhere, he or she may respond, "Where to?" If one asks where something is, he or she may say, "Where's it at?" This is true of all speakers, regardless of age or background.

**Lexicon**

What follows is a list of words in common usage in EHRE that do not appear in GAE. If not otherwise specified, the word is used evenly by speakers of all ages and backgrounds.

"Lay" is universally substituted for "lie". For example, "I was laying down when y'all called me."

"Reckon" is often used in place of "guess". For example, "Is he coming?"; "I reckon".
This is more common among older speakers, but occurs to an extent among all speakers.

"Chill bumps" is used in place of "goose bumps".

"Put up" is used in place of "put away"; for example, one might say, "Would you put that damn thing up?"

"Fix" is used for "prepare" when talking about food. For example, one might say, "I'm going to fix a casserole for tonight."

"House shoes" is used for "bedroom slippers".

"Toboggan" is used to refer to a "beanie".

"Buggy" is used by older speakers to refer to a "shopping cart".

"Blinds" is used to refer to "window shutters" in addition to "window shades".

"Coke" is used to refer to all carbonated sodas; the specific brand name and flavor is used to differentiate among particular sodas. For example, "Would you like a coke?" can be answered with either, "Yeah, I'll take a Sprite" or "Yeah, I'll take a Coke" (in this last case, referring to the brand itself) (Ellis 2006, Montgomery 2006).

"Old Country Sayings"

As this paper attempts to provide a full picture of EHRE as it differs from GAE, it is necessary to mention the frequent use of metaphorical, often-times humorous "old country saying" by many of my informants. These saying are prevalent in speech, and some situations necessarily call for them. Informants were eager to share as many of these sayings with me as they could think of, but most only appeared when the correct situation called for them. What follows is a short list of common sayings and an explanation of each. The use of these sayings is what my informants themselves most associated with Southern speech. What follows is a very
short list of some of the more prevalent expressions:

"Sometimes you got to put the hay down where the goats can get it." - This refers to having to re-explain something in simpler terms so that a stupid person can understand it.

"Ain't you putting the big pot in the little one?" - This implies that the amount of food that someone is preparing probably will not be enough for everyone.

"He can't carry a tune in a bucket," or, "He can't carry a tune in a basket if it has a lid on it." - This means that someone either cannot sing or cannot play an instrument "for the life of him/her".

"He don't know what side of his bread is buttered on." - This means that someone needs to "come to terms with reality".

"You look like you been rode hard and put up wet." - This means this someone appears to have just suffered some physical strain.

Conclusions and Further Study

I have presented a linguistic description of the phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon of Eastern Highland Rim English as it differs from General American English. My study was handicapped in that I studied the speech of a group of people in a single moment in time; for further study, a description of how the dialect has changed through time would offer further information on the differences between EHRE and GAE. Furthermore, such a study would offer clues concerning the origins of the dialect. Another route of study would be the comparison between EHRE and other languages and varieties of English. For example, it should be researched to what extent "African American Vernacular English" has influenced EHRE and to
what extent Native American languages have influenced the same; such studies fell outside the breadth of my research. Finally, it would be beneficial to study more fully how speakers view their speech and which traits are most likely retained in more formal registers. Such a study would help elude which features of the dialect are regarded as "incorrect" by its speakers and how the sociolects spoken by educated speakers are related to the higher registers of less educated speakers.

**Appendix A**

Consonant phonemes for EHRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labio-dental</th>
<th>Dental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Post-alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
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<td>t d</td>
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**Works Cited**


