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Investigating Nonstandard Southern American English in Written Sources: A Historical Sociolinguistic Approach to the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires*

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INVESTIGATING NONSTANDARD SOUTHERN AMERICAN ENGLISH IN WRITTEN

SOURCES: A HISTORICAL SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACH TO THE *TENNESSEE CIVIL*

WAR VETERANS QUESTTIONNAIRES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe vernacular speech in East Tennessee during the nineteenth-century. This study combines strategies and methodologies from both historical and sociolinguistics to examine dialect in written sources. Specifically, this study utilizes phonological and grammatical data from the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires* supplemented with data from other written sources to describe East Tennessee vernacular speech. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the geographic and social distributions of nonstandard past tense verbs *to be* and *do* are analyzed. The findings from this study suggest that nineteenth-century East Tennessee vernacular speech of white men was relatively homogenous with respect to geographic location, but was highly socially stratified. The results from this study also demonstrate that the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires* are an underutilized source for linguistic inquiry and that this and other nineteenth-century written sources need further examination in order to fully describe vernacular speech.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

AAVE…………………African American Vernacular English

AHL…………………...Appalachian Heritage Language

DARE…………………Dictionary of American Regional English

LAGS……………........Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States

LAMSAS……………...Linguistic Atlas of the South Atlantic States

SAE/SAmE…………....Southern American English

SAVE…………………Southern American Vernacular English

SPOC…………………Southern Plantation Overseers Corpus

TCWVQ………………Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaries

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine and describe vernacular speech in East Tennessee during the nineteenth-century. This project combines strategies and methodologies from both historical linguistics and sociolinguistics to examine dialect in written sources. Specifically, this study utilizes phonological and grammatical data from the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires* supplemented with data from other written sources. Like Schneider and Montgomery (2001), by looking at a relatively vernacular corpus, I aim to stand "at the intersection of historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and the study of language change in general" (p. 388).

These topics are important and relevant in the field of linguistics because the volumes of the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires* have thus far not been heavily utilized in historical linguistic studies. Data collected in this study builds on gaps in previous research to provide a more descriptive account of the vernacular language used in nineteenth-century East Tennessee. The specific scope of my research interests is the language variation and change in Southern English and Appalachian English in nineteenth-century East Tennessee.

My research questions are two-fold:

1. What phonological and grammatical features are characteristic of the East Tennessee vernacular speech found in the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires?*

2. How are the nonstandard past tense forms of the verbs *to be* and *do* distributed socially?

The phonological and grammatical features as a whole are analyzed qualitatively whereas nonstandard past tense verb paradigms *was/were* and *done/did*, chosen for being both irregular and high frequency within the source, are analyzed with both descriptive and inferential quantitative methods. Additionally, I discuss how these results compare to what previous studies have concluded about the phonology and grammar of East Tennessee vernacular speech of the nineteenth- and twentieth- centuries.

The structure of this thesis will begin with Chapter 2: Literature Review, which includes the necessary background of the previous research on which this study is based. Following this, the Chapter 3: Methodology describes the methods used to collect the data, code it, and the quantitative and qualitative methods used for analysis. Chapter 4: Results includes the findings for frequencies of select individual features and the social and geographic distribution of these features as well as a general summary characterizing the East Tennessee vernacular speech found in the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires*. Chapter 5: Discussion includes a comparison of the results of this study to similar results found in previous studies and Chapter 6: Conclusion chapter summarizes the findings, limitations, as well as provides suggestions for future research. This thesis also contains a Reference section, Vita, and Appendix which contains a copy of the questionnaire form used for the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires*

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Using written sources to study language variation: Reliability and limitations

There is precedent for looking at written language in the field of linguistics as a source for information about speech, but it is not without some controversy. As Paul (1891) writes: "No philologist should ever disregard the fact that what is written is not language itself; that speech rendered into writing always needs to be rendered back in speech before it can be dealt with" (p. 433). Schneider (2002) reviews various aspects of using written sources, including "How to Listen without Hearing," precursors in historical linguistics and sociolinguistics, assessing sources and how to approach them, problems, and a summary of the pitfalls and advantages.

How should written documents be conceptualized as linguistic data? Schneider (2002) suggests thinking of the written record as a "filter" of authentic speech acts "that without the written record would have been lost altogether; but at that same time the rendering of the speech event is only indirect and imperfect, affected by the nature of the recording context in certain ways" (p. 68). What becomes most important is being able to understand how the context of the written record is a filter for the accuracy of representation. Thus, Schneider proposes a *Principle of Filter Removal*:

A written record of a speech event stands like a filter between the words as spoken and the analyst. As the linguist is interested in the speech event itself (and, ultimately, the principles of language variation and change behind it), a primary task will be to 'remove the filter' as much as possible, i.e. to assess the nature of the recording process in all possible and relevant ways and to evaluate and take into account its likely impact on the relationship between the speech event and the record, to reconstruct the speech event itself, as accurately as possible (2002, p. 68).

Using his *Principle of Filter Removal*, he creates "five text categories which represent a continuum of increasing distance between an original speech event and its written record," based on the reality of a speech event, the relationship between speaker and person who wrote the utterance, and the temporal distance between speech event and time of recording (2002, pp. 72-73). *The Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires (TCWVQ)* are placed under his "imagined" category, which is defined as:

A writer records potential, conceived utterances by himself which, for lack of the presence of the addressee, need to be written down rather than said; but he remains in a near-speech mode. Clearly, the boundary to genuine writing is fuzzy here, but prototypically this state of affairs characterizes writers with limited proficiency and practice in writing, who simply need to put their thoughts onto paper for some reason. Thus, letters by semi-literate writers belong here, but also some questionnaire responses (2002, pp. 72-73)

Although not a perfect representation of spoken utterances, writing can display features of speech, particularly for semi-literate writers. Montgomery (1995) writes that this "imagined" speech in letters and questionnaires is signalled by "the lack of punctuation and other formal conventions like paragraphing" as well as unpredictable capitalization and phonetic spellings (pp. 6-7). Looking at documents by semi-literate authors requires the consideration of authorship, use of models (i.e. relying on oral models rather than written guides), difficulties in manipulating the written code, and representativeness (Montgomery, 1999, pp. 24-25). Based on

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this criteria, Schneider (2002) writes specifically that the *TCWVQ* is a promising linguistic resource despite being limited in some respects (p. 78).

Though Sweet (1876) cautions that we must "learn to regard language solely as consisting of groups of sounds, independently of the written symbols, which are always associated with all kinds of disturbing associations, chiefly historical" (p. 471, qtd. in Cable, 1990, p. 97), in many cases those written symbols are the only approximations of speech that linguists have as a reference. In spite of challenges, Stephenson (1967) presents four rigorous standards for phonetic interpretations of occasional spellings: (1) spellings should be taken from the original manuscripts; (2) spellings should be classified according to carefully formulated definitions of classes of spellings; (3) interpretations should be in accord with the information provided by historical phonology; and (4) interpretations should be reviewed in light of all the collateral evidence available (p. 33). Occasional spellings, defined as "any departure from the conventional spelling of a word" can be further differentiated between meaningful occasional spellings which do hint at underlying pronunciation versus non-meaningful occasional spellings which do not (Stephenson, 1967, p. 37). Researchers should be careful to remain as objective as possible when differentiating between the two and should use as much linguistic evidence as possible to support their interpretations.

Traditionally, historical linguists often have to rely primarily on written sources like some language variationists in order to study variation and change within a language. Historical linguists using the comparative method presuppose language uniformity for the sake of documenting language change and reconstructing earlier varieties, and as a result historical linguists often set aside variation because "there is nothing built into the comparative method

which would allow it to address variation directly" (Campbell, 1998, p. 146). When using

a variationist approach, a focus on vernacular styles is essential to study both variation and

change, and sources of pre-twentieth century vernacular speech are rare and often problematic

(Schneider, 2002, p. 69). Combining aspects of historical linguistics and sociolinguistics,

historical sociolinguistics "emphasize the broader sociopolitical context of language evolution

rather than detailed descriptive documentations of individual forms of a language", due in part to

the lack of useable data (Schneider, 2002, p. 69). Other linguists like Milroy (1992) strive to look

at language change from a variationist perspective, and disagree that language variation is "an

obstacle rather than a resource" (p. 132).

Moving forward with a variationist view of historical language change, texts should be

considered and assessed with several things in mind. Schneider provides some guidelines for

selecting texts, all of which apply to the *TCWVQ*:

1. Texts should be as close to speech, and especially vernacular styles, as possible.
2. To facilitate correlations with extralinguistic parameters, the texts should be of different origins, i.e. stem from several authors from different social classes, possibly also age groups, and both sexes, and should represent varying stylistic levels
3. Texts must display variability of the phenomenon under investigation, i.e. the use of functionally equivalent variants of a linguistic variable
4. With quantification being the staple methodology of variationism, texts must fulfill certain size requirements. There is no figure specifying any precise minimum number of words required - but usable texts must provide reasonably large token frequencies of individual variants, and they should (though need not) allow quantitative analyses of several phenomena, i.e. display variation in a wider range of linguistic phenomena (2002, p. 71).

Maynor (1987) also discusses the limitations of using written sources, and writes that "in

order for dialectologists to remain credible, it is necessary that more attention be given to the

reliability of their data" (p. 119). As Schneider (2002) phrases it, "Working with written data

requires somewhat more judgment and assessment than an analysis of audio recordings, but the difference is a matter of degree: essentially, with both approaches the goal is the same, and the pathways to reach it are very similar" (pp. 90-91). Therefore, if researchers take the necessary steps to thoroughly examine the validity and reliability of their written source, they should be able to analyze it as they would an audio recording.

2.2 Previous research on language variation in written sources by Southern authors

Maynor (1993) and Abney (1989) are some of the only researchers who have utilized the *TCWVQ* as a source of linguistic inquiry. They note that Tennessee is a particularly interesting state to look for variationist studies because it is sometimes said to constitute three separate states (geographically and culturally), and as for charting dialects, "a large portion of West Tennessee is included in the Southern Coastal (or Plantation) dialect area while the rest of the state is Southern Midland (or Mountain), with East Tennessee in the heart of Appalachia" (Maynor, 1993, p. 180). The attitudes of Tennesseans towards the Civil War also varied, with Middle and West Tennessee voting for secession and East Tennessee remaining Unionist, despite the fact that men from both sides of the state served in either army (Maynor, 1993, p. 180). Abney studied East Tennessee and Maynor studied both East and West, but Maynor's study was limited to the responses in Volume 1 (1993, p. 181). Abney (1989) studied preterites and past participles used by veterans in East Tennessee, and Maynor (1993) compared this to her findings on the same forms in West Tennessee. What Maynor found was that there was a lower percentage of non-standard forms than was expected, but like Abney pointed out, written responses would have more standard forms than spoken, educated informants provided more

data because they wrote longer responses, and illiterate veterans were excluded from the study (1989, pp. 183-184, 186).

Maynor stresses that other factors influenced the data, including the content and wording of the question, resulting in certain verbs appearing more frequently than others and often in the same form used in the question (1993, p. 184). A phonetic study may yield different results because interestingly, the informants did not always spell the words the same way that they appeared in the question. Maynor (1993, p. 184) writes that "Because regional differences in American English are usually more phonological than morphological, an examination of the misspellings by veterans in East and West Tennessee might yield interesting results." Brown (1990) did in fact conduct a phonological-based study using the *TCWVQ*, specifically on the merger of /ɪ/ and /ɛ/ before nasal consonants. She compared written data in the *TCWVQ* to oral data from the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS) and the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States (LAMSAS) to document how the merger has progressed across five states over the span of 150 years, to great success (pp. 121-124).

Schneider and Montgomery (2001) analyzed letters from white overseers on rural Southern plantations before the end of the Civil War to study the English of nineteenth-century working-class whites in the American South (p. 389). They created the Southern Plantation Overseers Corpus (SPOC), which they claim can be put to many historical and linguistic uses: "first, to show that these texts can address fundamental questions and shed light on ongoing discussion of the development of Southern American English, and second, to show their usefulness for in-depth analysis of individual morphological features and to reveal the subtlety of usage conditions that can be observed" (p. 396). Looking at nonstandard varieties is integral in

studying language change, and Schneider and Montgomery chose to look at letters by

semiliterate overseers because "they provide opportunities for a variety of grammatical

expressions [...] but they were also private documents from one individual to another; with no

expectations of a wider readership, the overseer would have been less restrained on formality"

(p. 391). Generally speaking, there are more restraints on formality in the *TCWVC* responses

because many respondents did expect a wider readership. Based on the "near phonemic

character" of the overseers' writing, there is again a possibility of studying their pronunciation

habits. While Schneider and Montgomery do not study pronunciation in this article, they give

two examples: "the phonetic spelling of <liking> for 'lacking', which probably reflects the

monopthongizing of /ai/, and the spellings of <gorn> for 'gone', with unmotivated intrusive /r/'s,

suggest that some overseers were non-rhotic in speech" (p. 394).

Their baseline for analysis is the list of 33 features of white Southern English compiled

by Bailey (1997) (p. 397). On the variation in past-tense copula specifically, they state that

"whether the different grammars on display here are of an individual, regional, or other nature

cannot be determined at this early stage of analysis, but the results for past-tense copula suggest

diversity and probably ongoing change in nineteenth-century white overseer speech" (p. 403).

They conclude that "semiliterate writers from earlier periods provide an excellent source of data

for the study of a variety of phenomena that in themselves may appear idiosyncratic or difficult

to explain but that nevertheless make sense when they are viewed in the light of the overall

development of the English language" (p. 404). There is, however, one notable disadvantage to

the SPOC: specific biographical information including the authors' ages and region cannot be

traced in some cases, meaning that "the label Southern American English (SAE) is applied to

what is more appropriately considered a 'quilt work of dialects' (Carver, 1987, p. 83), rather than a monolithic variety of English" (Trüb, 2006, p. 263).

Trüb (2006) also investigates nonstandard verbal paradigms using the SPOC. From her data she concludes that *was* was dominant in all grammatical contexts but that there was the presence of *were* in all grammatical persons and numbers as well (pp. 257-258). She does not look at extralinguistic variables and instead only focuses on grammatical constraints. Trüb (2006, p. 261) and Schneider and Montgomery (2001, p. 403) suggest that the *was*-leveling found in the SPOC could reflect ongoing diachronic change in nineteenth-century white Southern American Vernacular English (SAVE), though more studies need to be conducted. Comparison data is only limited to Alabama English (Feagin, 1979) and West Virginia (Hackenberg, 1973), as only they investigate *was* occurence in all persons of the plural paradigm. Also, they are looking at speech instead of writing, and as Trüb writes, "their data was collected in areas that, in spite of their common regional label, 'Southern United States,' are well removed from one another as well as plantation country" (2006, pp. 262-262). Because of this, "little can be said about diachronic developments: a mere comparison of overall frequencies obviously obscures linguistic patterns" (p. 262). In order to glean any interpretations of linguistic change, researchers need to look beyond purely frequency and grammatical constraints and investigate the wider social context.

Perhaps one of Trüb's (2006) most interesting observations about the data was the level of variation of *was/were* within idiolects of the individual overseers. She found that the majority of overseers were *was*-leveled (17 total) or used the standard *was/were* paradigm (18 total), but that four overseers used *was* more frequently while one more frequently used the standard paradigm. Only seven overseers used the rarer form singular *were*. Though these findings are

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compelling, unfortunately "the small number of tokens for each overseer does not justify any in-depth grammatical analysis of individual grammars," but perhaps with a large amount of tokens, such a study would yield interesting results (pp. 260-261).

Similarly, Dylewski (2013) studied *a*-prefixing in a smaller corpus of letters written by Civil War soldiers during the war and looked at individual grammars. He states that although *a*-prefixing is a well-documented feature of Appalachian English, "its historical development in American dialects remains largely under-researched, due to the alleged lack of primary sources suitable for historical studies" (p. 43). He chooses to examine *a*-prefixing in the letters of pre-twentieth century commoners in order to "contribute to the continuing discussion on the existence of community grammar, understood as an idea of American commoners of the first half of the nineteenth-century sharing a common grammar, including the set of sometimes subtle constraints" (p. 430). He selected letters based on pseudo-phonetic spellings, poor or absent punctuation, and "ungrammatical" structures and formed a corpus to examine the data qualitatively and quantitatively (pp. 433-434). What he finds is that "even though the material is drawn from a relatively homogenous corpus both socially and geographically, there is an uneven distribution of a-prefixation in the linguistic repertoires of soldiers," requiring an idiolectal approach (p. 443). For most of the idiolects, it is a minority trait, but for others it is the dominant variation (p. 450).

Up until this point in the literature review, all of the studies of linguistic features of written sources have been limited to white male speakers. Montgomery, Fuller, and DeMarse (1993) documented and analyzed how the use of verbal -*s* by African American letter writers compared to white letter writers from the same period. They used letters that included at least

one feature of AAVE: consonant cluster reduction, *r*-lessness, and *pin/pen* variation (p. 341). Additionally, they only used letters that were written and signed by their authors, dateable with confidence (written between 1861 and 1867), localizable with respect to origin of letter and author, representative of authors from across the eastern and southern United States, and written out of "desperation," meaning that the authors felt they needed to write the letters despite limited writing ability (p. 342). Due to these rigorous standards for selection, their sample size was small and did not allow for comparison between regions, but their findings did support Schneider's (1983) claim that "many African Americans in slavery used the same inflectional systems as whites in their speech communities" (p. 353). They also claim that using verbal -*s* was not confined solely to semi-literate people, but was likely a linguistic feature shared by many within a speech community (p. 352).

In contrast to the use of letters and answers to questionnaires by the previously discussed researchers, Ellis (1994) uses fiction with dialogue written in dialect by nineteenth-century Southern writers to examine subject-verb concord. He justifies looking at subject-verb concord specifically because "some patterns of verbal concord are fairly complex and would require a substantial, and to some extent unconscious, knowledge of the actual dialect in order to render it consistently" (p. 130). In the literary dialects he examines, he notes verbs being marked with -s without third-person singular subjects (e.g. *I knows, boys knows*), and simplification of verbal paradigms to invariant forms such as *was*-leveling (pp. 131-132). Interestingly, singular *were* is only common in North Carolina and East Tennessee literary dialects (p. 132). Though he finds numerous examples of other nonstandard concord in all of the texts he examines, he notes that

for the most part, the patterns are not distinctively Southern because they can be found in some other regional literary dialects as well (p. 132).

2.3 *The Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires* and East Tennessee

In the introduction to the five volumes of the *TCWVQ*, Bailey writes that while many politicians and historians ignored surviving veterans six decades after the Civil War ended, in Tennessee this was not the case. The questionnaires were sent out between 1915 and 1922 in an attempt allow "common soldiers the opportunity […] to share their perceptions of the Old South, the Civil War, and the postbellum world" (*TCWVQ*, p. vii). A staggering 1,650 veterans from both the Federal and Confederate armies responded. Archivists Gustavus W. Dyer and John Trotwood Moore collected the questionnaire responses and made every attempt to reach as many of the living veterans as possible. One respondent wrote to Moore that there were "several veterans around here but think all of them have filled out blanks [sic]"; another that "all those… I know have received blanks like this one"; and another that "most [old soldiers] I know of have recd [sic] letters from you" (*TCWVQ*, pp. xii-ix).

There are prompts on the questionnaire addressed to the veterans concerning autobiographical questions (e.g. antebellum lifestyle, how much property his family owned, what his parents did, what type of work he did, what kind of house they had, what type and how much education did he receive, and postbellum lifestyle), perception questions (e.g. social class relations between slave-owners and non-slave owners and opportunities for poor men in society), Civil War experience questions which often prompted narratives (e.g. their first battle, camp life, time in hospital or in prison, and the journey home), and genealogical information (*TCWVQ,* pp.

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vii-viii). Some respondents also included their letters, poems, prayers, and songs they had written during the war that they wanted to share or clippings of newspaper articles about their lives.

As Bailey writes in the introduction, this collection shows "the passions and humanity of the Civil War participants. Each questionnaire reveals the respondent's personality. The soldiers took seriously their opportunity to tell about their lives and demonstrated a tremendous diversity of outlook" (*TCWVQ*, p. ix). The responses to the questions are quite varied in length, spelling, and grammar. To illustrate the wide range of writing abilities, some of the responses from East Tennessee men to the question, "As a boy and young man, state the kind of work you did. If you worked on a farm, state to what extent you plowed, worked with a hoe, and did other kinds of similar work," are reproduced below:

1. I ployed, hoed, cut wheat, hay and oats, gathered corn. In the early young manhood we cut wheat with a cradle and sych. Husked with flail and tread mill. (*C. F. Boyer, Cocke County*)
2. I done all kinds of farm work. I plowed..hoed out ditches and done anything that is to be done on the farm. (*J. W. Barnett, Bradley County*)
   Worked from sunup on till sundown from 9 years on till war opened, plowing, hoeing, making rails, cutting wheat and all general farm work (*C. L. Broyles, Greene County*)
3. worked on a farm. worked with a hoe and a plow. (*J. Cogdell, Cocke County*)
4. I worked on a farm befour I went in the arme an aftar I cam home out of the arma I was a farmear an un tell I got too old to farm (*J. W. Dinsmore, Hawkins County*)
5. farm work plowd hoed Don all kinds of farm labor naly Don on a farm (*W. Harrad, McMinn County*)
6. All kinds that was needed. Plowing hoing mowing with scythes. Clover and Grass. cuting wheat and oats with grain cradle. I could and did swing a cradle or bind wheat from morning till evening for 6 days in the wk; one day bound days and helped shock 75 dozzen of wheat 60 dozzen good work (*J. L. Moore, Greene County*)
7. I worked on the farme hoed corn and plowed with ox or horse, any-thing that was to do on the farm work is onerable in thes cuntry and allways has bin with rich and poore so far as I can remember (*T. W. Arnold, Knox County*)

8. I spent my boyhood days helping on the farm and hunting, fishing, and trapping. I did not have to work, and I was just like all other boys who have everything they wish, not so fond of it. (When I was about four year old I was out playing and an old Indian kidnapped me. His name was Falling. He was very kind to me and I learned to love him very much. Father offered a reward of $900 and Uncle Abraham found me after about 12 or 14 months. I was so fond of the old Indian and begged so hard for him that father put him on one of his farms so that I could be near him. I learned the Indian language and we had wonderful times together hunting and fishing. (*G. W. Brown, McMinn County*)

The great deal of biographical information provided in the responses sets the *TCWVQ* apart from most other pre-twentieth century source written by semi-literate authors. It is at times rare to know the name, age, birthplace, occupation, social class, education level, and family background of informants even in modern linguistic research. The *TCWVQ* supply useful information about extralinguistic variables and the unique opportunity to look at language use within and across several social classes, communities, occupations, and individuals. The longer responses about perceptions and experiences lend themselves to narrative and identity analyses. However, all results of analyses are restricted to describing (more often than not, white) men. Due to the content, scope, and faithfulness of transcribing in print exactly what the veterans wrote by hand, the *TCWVQ* has been an important source for genealogists and historians, but has thus far been underutilized by linguists. Although it is not an audio recording of actual speech, it is one of the most suitable substitutes available for studying nineteenth-century vernacular speech in the rural American South.

As opposed to previous studies that needed to rely on written sources, Pederson (1983) has painstakingly analyzed recorded speech from East Tennessee, drawing his data from the larger project of the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS). LAGS was the first American atlas project to use audio recordings on magnetic tapes rather than solely relying on written

transcriptions in the field (pp. IX-X). Fieldwork began in 1968 and ended in 1980, and the result

was 1,118 interviews from informants in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas,

Georgia, Tennessee and Arkansas (p. XIII). Pederson's *East Tennessee Folk Speech* includes

idiolect synopses from all 70 informants from East Tennessee, and focuses on phonological,

morphological, and lexical evidence (p. 1). He identifies the goals of LAGS as the following:

1. to investigate the full linguistic system, observing all distinctive features of phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary;
2. to record in narrative form the usage observations of the informants and to relate those judgments to a functional set of standards of correctness;
3. to preserve in narrative form the cultural history of the region through the observations of the informants concerning the nonlinguistic cultural institutions of family, government, religion, education, and the arts;
4. to establish the central characteristics of the oral traditions through which language and culture are preserved (pp. 3-5)

Pederson defines *folk speech* as "linguistic forms that have their immediate sources of

authority in the oral tradition" implying "the colloquial style of spoken English in a particular

cultural context without reference to the arbitrary standards of correctness that underlie such

prescriptive designations as nonstandard, substandard, and uneducated speech" (p. 5). Pederson

used the LAGS data to write this essay because before LAGS, "the speech of East Tennessee had

never been systematically investigated," resulting in "the perpetuation of errors in fact,

misrepresentations of the historical process of linguistic change, and unreliable descriptions of

the dialects spoken in this area" (pp. 26-28). The inventorial research data collected by LAGS is

necessary to describe the folk speech (including phonology, grammar, and vocabulary) of speech

communities both large and small.

A: THE UNAKA MOUNTAINS
B: THE GREAT VALLEY
C: THE CUMBERLAND PLATEAU
Cl: THE SEQUATCHIE VALLEY
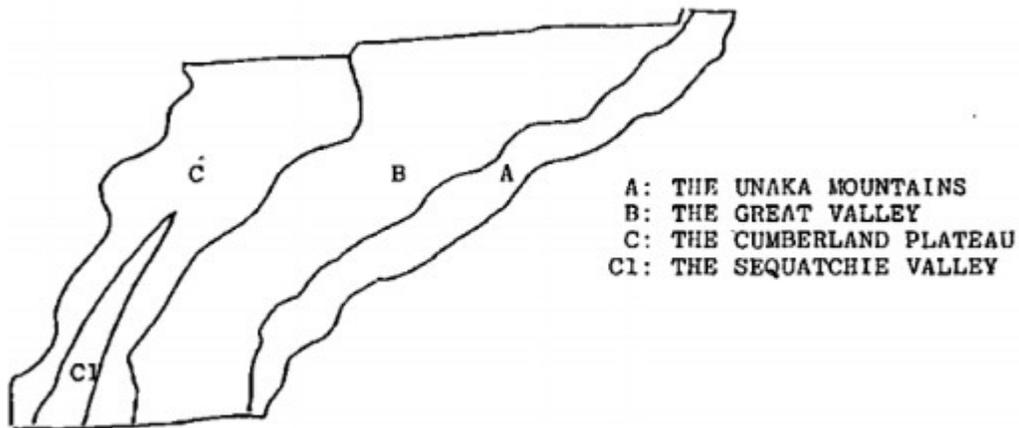
Figure 2.1 Physiographic regions of East Tennessee (Pederson, 1983, p. 10)

A: WATAUGA
B: HOLSTON VALLEY*
C: CARTER'S VALLEY
D: NOLICHUCKY

*Holston Valley was delimited south and
west by the Campbell and Avery Line(1777);
the other interior boundary marks the
western limits of the State of Franklin,
delimited south and west by the Treaty of
Coyatee(1786).

Figure 2.2 Early settlements of East Tennessee (Pederson, 1983, p. 10)

The unique geological feature of the mountains of East Tennessee have influenced

migration patterns, with Scotch, Southern Irish, and Palatine Germans coming from the

Pennsylvania and Delaware Bay area (1725-1775) through the corridors of the Shenandoah

Valley, Appalachia Ridge, and into the southern valley region. With them they brought their own

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varieties of English, eventually shaping the dialects of East Tennessee (Pederson, 1983, pp. 8-9).

East Tennessee is divided into four physiographic regions: the Unaka Mountains, the Great

Valley, the Cumberland Plateau, and the Sequatchie Valley, shown in Figure 2.1 (Pederson,

1983, p. 10). Accordingly, each region is distinct in terms of topography, history, and social

organization based on early settlement patterns, and it follows that their language would also

vary to some extent (Pederson, 1983, pp. 11-12). The different early settlements, shown in

Figure 2.2, were established in the order of Watauga, Holston Valley, Carter's Valley, then

Nolichucky, with the Sequatchie Valley and Cumberland Plateau physiographic regions being

settled later. Lacy (1965, p. 11) describes the settlers' unique social pattern in East Tennessee at

this time:

> Of the residents of these areas, four-fifths lived in the valley. They were superior to the
> mountaineers in intelligence, health, and cultural attainments, and more comparable than
> their highland neighbors to the settlers in Middle Tennessee with respect to education,
> religion, and economic development. Almost entirely of English and Scotch-Irish
> ancestry, the early East Tennesseans migrated from the southern seaboard states, mostly
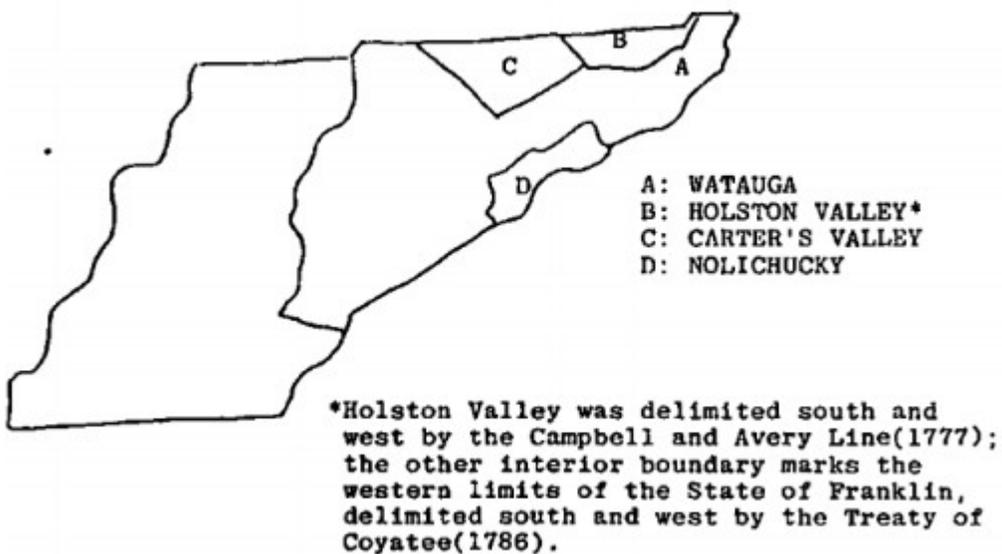> from Virginia and North Carolina. (qtd. in Pederson, 1983, p. 12)

Figure 2.3 illustrates the makeup of the 34 counties of East Tennessee in 1860. The only

changes since then occurred in the 1870s-80s, when Unicoi was formed from Washington,

Hamblen from Jefferson, and Loudon from Monroe. Pederson remarks that the "stability of these

political boundaries is quite remarkable in a state that is approaching its bicentennial" (pp. 16-

17). Figure 2.4 illustrates the county zones that Pederson creates, which reflect the counties'

social histories.

FIGURE 6: EAST TENNESSEE, 1860

A SULLIVAN
B WASHINGTON
C GREENE
D HAWKINS
E SEVIER
F JEFFERSON
G KNOX
H BLOUNT
I CARTER
J COCKE
K MONROE
L MCMINN
M CLAIBORNE
N CAMPBELL
O GRAINGER

P ANDERSON
Q MORGAN
R ROANE
S RHEA
T BLEDSOE
U HAMILTON
V MARION
W JOHNSON
X HANCOCK
Y SCOTT
Z UNION
AA POLK
AB BRADLEY
AC SEQUATCHIE
AD MEIGS

AE CUM-
BERLAND

Figure 2.3 East Tennessee counties, 1860 (Pederson, 1983, p. 18)
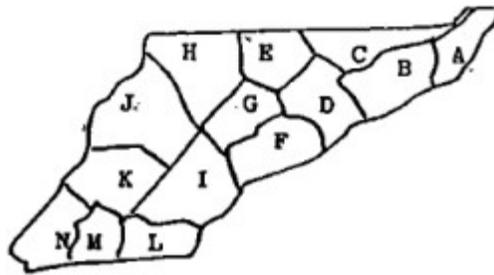
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A: Johnson, Carter
B: Unicoi, Washington, Greene
C: Sullivan, Hawkins, Hancock
D: Cocke, Jefferson, Hamblen
E: Grainger, Union, Claiborne,
F: Sevier, Blount
G: Knox
H: Anderson, Campbell, Scott
I: Monroe, McMinn, Loudon
J: Roane, Morgan, Cumberland
K: Meigs, Rhea, Bledsoe
L: Polk, Bradley
M: Hamilton
N: Marion, Sequatchie

Figure 2.4 Pederson (1983) county zones (p. 25)

Pederson summarizes the phonological data collected from *LAGS* into categories such as the pronunciation of consonants and vowels in different phonological contexts, and also provides information about the idiolects of the informants, doing the same with a selection of morphological and lexical data. He offers possible explanations for the individual variation on the basis of factors like settlement patterns in the region as well as socioeconomic status, race, age, and education levels of the informants. Overall, he finds that there are "configurations of subregional and social distinctiveness, such as the urban speech of Knoxville and Chattanooga and the social dialects of the well-educated, especially younger, natives of those cities and rural places across the region" (p. 131).

Based on the criteria outlined in this literature review, the responses in the *TCWVQ* are worthy of and suitable for linguistic analysis. However, there are still some precautions related to representativeness, validity, analyzing phonetics, and qualitative versus quantitative analysis. Schneider (2002) defines representativeness as "the fit between a sample and the population it stands for," and while the sample size and range of social statuses in the questionnaire responses is wide, all respondents are men who are overwhelmingly white, so the data collected cannot fully describe all nineteenth-century vernacular speech in East Tennessee (pp. 81-82). The questionnaires also leave out any deceased or completely illiterate veterans. Validity has to do with "the quality of a record, its relationship to the target of investigation," which goes back to the *Principles of Filter Removal* (Schneider, 2002, p. 83). The phonetics within written records are difficult to analyze, though Montgomery (1995, p. 25) writes that "unconventional spellings almost always turn out… to be phonetically based in whole or in part" (qtd. in Schneider 2002, p. 88). Therefore, it is possible to look at both phonological and grammatical features in the questionnaire responses.

The questionnaire responses will also lend themselves to quantitative analysis because there is likely to be a correlation between the linguistic variants (phonological and grammatical) and extralinguistic variants, which can be identified and categorized based on the autobiographical information. There is also a possibility for qualitative analysis when it comes to observations about individual grammars as well as the presence or absence of certain variants and the contexts in which they do or do not appear. Francis (1993) presents four different categories of ways to interpret dialect corpora: (1) synchronic language variation; (2) linguistic history; (3) non-linguistic variation; and (4) non-linguistic history, demography, and

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ethnography. (pp. 16-17). Using written dialect, the present study attempts to address 1, 3, and 4

by examining social and linguistic variation, the link between them, and the functional aspects of

their language use.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Informants

Informants were selected based on the East Tennessee counties and zones provided by

Pederson (1983): Johnson, Carter, Unicoi, Washington, Greene, Sullivan, Hawkins, Hancock,

Cocke, Jefferson, Hamblen, Grainger, Union, Claiborne, Sevier, Blount, Knox, Anderson,

Campbell, Scott, Monroe, Mcminn, Loudon, Roane, Morgan, Cumberland, Meigs, Rhea,

Bledsoe, Polk, Bradley, Hamilton, Marion, and Sequatchie. Informants needed to be born in one

of these counties in order to be included in the study and to have lived there or in another East

Tennessee county for the majority of their lives in order to be representative of East Tennessee

vernacular speech. The informants were further narrowed down to make sure that they

themselves wrote the responses rather than them being transcribed by a relative or friend (the

editors helpfully noted if the responses were written by anyone other than the named veteran).

There were no informants in the *TCWVQ* from Unicoi, Union, Campbell, Cumberland, or

Hamilton counties who fit this criteria. Out of the 1,650 total informants, only 225 met all the

criteria.

Next, the informants were categorized by their "type," which was determined by looking

holistically at their biographical information and contextualizing it historically. This was based

in part on the class contrasts identified by Bailey (1986), who used questionnaires sent out to 21

non-combatant, "prominent" Tennesseans at the same time as the questionnaires were sent to

Civil War veterans (pp. 273-274). Although the sample is much smaller, a wide variety of social

classes were represented by the informants: three from the planter class; seven from the patrician

class, who were children of professionals such as attorneys, politicians, and merchants; ten

owners of small farmers, six of whom owned slaves; and one former slave. Bailey (1986) writes

that these questionnaires suggest that "a vast social gulf separated the respondents. Edward

Mitchell, who painfully tilled his father's 200 acres in Washington County, lived in a social

circle radically different from Rachel Jackson Lawrence, who resided in opulent splendor as the

granddaughter of President Andrew Jackson" (p. 277).

Class type in Bailey (1986) and the present study was determined on the basis of type of

housing, number of rooms in house, father's occupation, father's political office, amount of

slaves owned, amount of land owned in acres, school type, and years attempted in school. Types

of housing ranged from two room log cabins to sprawling frame or brick mansions. From the

non-combatants responses, the median number of rooms varied for planters and professionals

(eight rooms), slave-owning farmers (five rooms), and non-slave-owning farmers (four rooms)

(p. 278). As for education, most children of farmers who did not own slaves attended short-term

subscription schools that typically only met during a 2-3 month period between crop cultivation

and crop harvest, whereas wealthier families could afford to send their children to academies or

hire private tutors (p. 282). Additionally, some subscription schools were not well-attended

because children lived far away from them and would in many cases have to walk over a mile each way just to attend (283). Non-combatants and veterans alike were asked about social class differences. Bailey (1986) observed that there was the least amount of unrest in communities where slave ownership was comparatively rare, citing one informant from McMinn county who stated that there was "little class antagonism" because of "very few aristocrats in the county," which another respondent in upper East Tennessee agreed with, adding that there were class disputes further south (p. 284).

Type I informants were the most impoverished and had little to no property and less than a year total of education, usually in poor subscription schools. Type II informants were typically children of non-slave-owning farmers who had over a year of education but did not boast an impressive amount of land or personal property. Type III informants were children of slave-owning farmers or professionals who were able to attend more and/or better quality schooling than Type II informants. Type IV informants were the patrician class, children of wealthy planters and professionals, who were able to live idle aristocratic lives and receive higher education in academies or colleges. The distribution of the informants by county zone, county, and class type is displayed below in Table 3.1 and visualized in bar plots in Figures 3.1 and 3.2.
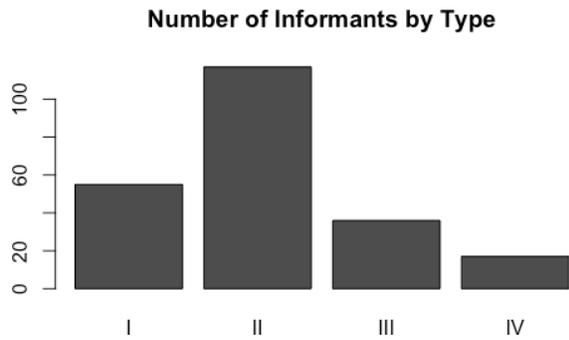
Number of Informants by Type

Figure 3.1 Number of informants by type

Number of Informants by County Zone
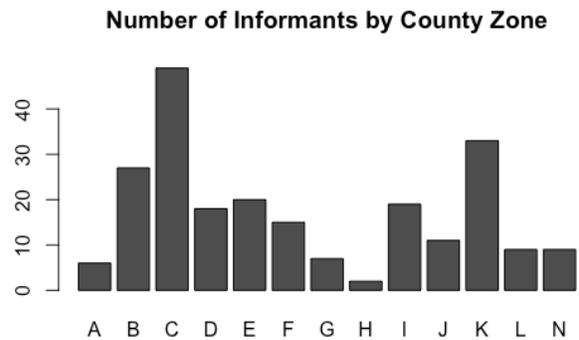
Figure 3.2 Number of informants by county zone

Table 3.1 Number of informants categorized by county zone, county, and type

	I	II	III	IV		I	II	III	IV		I	II	III	IV
A					**F**					**J**				
Carter	2	2	2	0	Sevier	2	5	0	0	Roane	3	4	3	1
			n = 6		Blount	2	3	2	1				**n = 11**	
								n = 15						
B					**G**					**K**				
Washington	2	7	1	5	Knox	1	1	3	2	Meigs	2	5	2	0
Greene	4	4	4	0				**n = 7**		Rhea	2	8	2	1
			n = 27							Bledsoe	0	8	1	0
													n = 33	
C					**H**					**L**				
Sullivan	10	24	1	1	Anderson	0	1	0	0	Polk	1	3	0	0
Hawkins	2	5	4	1	Scott	1	0	0	0	Bradley	1	3	1	0
Hancock	1	0	0	0				**n = 2**					**n = 9**	
			n = 49											
D					**I**					**N**				
Cocke	1	4	0	0	Monroe	0	2	0	0	Marion	3	2	2	0
Jefferson	3	5	3	1	McMinn	4	9	2	1	Sequatchie	0	2	0	0
Hamblen	0	0	0	1	Loudon	1	0	0	0				**n = 9**	
			n = 18					**n = 19**						
E														
Grainger	4	6	2	0										
Claiborne	1	4	1	2										
			n = 20											

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Overall, the average number of informants per county zone is 17, but zone C is overrepresented with 21.8% of the 225 total informants residing there, whereas zone H only represents 0.8%. The median number of informants per county zone is 15 and the range is 47. When looking at informants by type, Type II has the highest representation at 117 informants, the second highest being Type I with 55, followed by Type III with 36, and lastly Type IV with 17. Knox county, which is the only county in zone G, is the only county which has more Type III and Type IV informants than Type I and II. Unfortunately, some counties do not have informants from each type and some are overrepresented by certain types. For example Sullivan county has 10 Type I and 24 Type II informants, but only 1 Type III and Type IV. Because of this, results cannot be overgeneralized for some of the counties and county zones.

The age of the informants was also recorded, and they ranged in age from 65 to 98, with the average and median age being 79. Six of the informants did not include their age in the questionnaire answers. Because there was not a large age range, the effect of age as a variable was not investigated in the present study.

3.2 The Corpora

Due to time constraints, a full corpus of all East Tennessee veterans' responses to the *TCWVQ* was not created, but instead two smaller, separate corpora: 1) all instances of the past tense copula *was* and *were*; 2) instances of *done* and *did* in responses to the two questions, "As a boy and young man, state the kind of work you did. If you worked on a farm, state to what extent you plowed, worked with a hoe, and did other kinds of similar work," and "State clearly what kind of work your father did, and what the duties of your mother were. State all the kinds of

work done in the house as well as you can remember -- that is, cooking, spinning, weaving, etc."
All questionnaires filled out by informants who fit all the criteria were included in the two
corpora and each token of the verb was only included if there was a clear subject for the verb. I
chose to focus this study on *was/were* and *done/did* because being both irregular and high
frequency verbs, I thought they might yield interesting results.

Every time an informant used *was* or *were*, it was entered into a spreadsheet. Each entry
included the form of the verb used, if the verb was standard or nonstandard, the grammatical
number of the subject (singular or plural), the grammatical person (first or third), the phrase in
context, and the extralinguistic informant information of age, county, county zone, and type.
Every time an informant used *done* or *did* in response to the two specific questions previously
mentioned, it was entered into a spreadsheet. Each entry included the form of the verb used, if
the verb was standard or nonstandard, the phrase in context, and the extralinguistic informant
information of age, county, county zone, and type.

For the other grammatical and phonological features, they were not entered into a corpus,
they were simply noted if they occurred in the sample population or not. A full list of these
features and examples from the text can be found in the Results section. These features were
identified using Stephenson's (1967) guidelines for identifying meaningful occasional spellings.
I chose to include only examples that I could confidently interpret as meaningful, and as such
many potential phonological features were omitted, particularly phonological features involving
vowels. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but could be used as a starting point for
future studies utilizing the *TCWVQ*, particularly for studies focused on the lower social classes.
The contents of the *TCWVQ* are valuable for analysis because like the criteria for Montgomery,

et al. (1993), it is noted when a questionnaire has been filled out by the named veteran, almost all of the questionnaires are dated, they are localizable, and often contain a biographical background of the authors' various moves throughout their lifetime (p. 342).

3.3 Types of Analysis

This study involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis. For the list of phonological and grammatical features, I analyze the linguistic characteristics of East Tennessee speech qualitatively and compare them to features found in similar previous studies. Using such a source and corpora allows for qualitative linguistic analysis in the form of synchronic linguistic variation as well as sociolinguistic variation. Using data from the *was/were* and *done/did* corpora, I provide some descriptive statistics. Additionally, I conducted inferential statistical tests using RStudio, namely binomial logistic regression and chi-square analyses, in order to further examine the relationship between the linguistic and extralinguistic variables (Levshina, 2015).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Overview of Features

A large variety of phonological and grammatical features are revealed in the *TCWVQ*,

and are displayed below in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 respectively. "Grammatical features" broadly

refers to morphological, lexical, and syntactic features. Though these lists of 10 phonological and

17 grammatical features are not intended to be exhaustive, as there are surely many more

features to be found within the questionnaire responses, they are presented in order to show some

of the variation in the text that were not analyzed quantitatively in the present study but that have

the potential to be in future studies. Each table displays what the feature is and an example from

the *TCWVQ* with the feature underlined.

Table 4.1 Selection of Phonological Features in *TCWVQ*

(1) Consonant cluster reduction   : my <u>granfather</u> Cotter
(2) Unstressed initial syllable deletion   : We had no <u>ristocrat</u>
(3) Intrusive *r*   : she was bornd in north <u>carliner</u>
(4) Intrusive *l*   : wee the <u>calverly</u> fought
(5) Word final *r*-lessness   : <u>neve</u> returned
(6) *R* deletion   : a <u>poshan</u> of the non slav holdars
(7) Initial *h* retention   : <u>hit</u> was maron county
(8) World final intrusive *t*   : my Educate was good <u>enought</u>
(9) Loss of word final dentals   : mi mother <u>kep</u> house
(10) Syncope   : I dont <u>rember</u>

The phonological features were identified on the basis of Stephenson's (1967) criteria for meaningful occasional spellings, of which there are two types: phonetic spellings and inverse spellings. Phonetic spellings are approximations "in which the writer has substituted for the conventional spelling a spelling based on some familiar correspondence of symbol to sound" (Stephenson, 1967, p. 39). In order to be a phonetic spelling, they need to be phonologically possible and also be known to have existed at some place and point in time (p. 40). In most cases, the phonological features were repeated by the informant throughout their responses, which also suggests the spellings are phonetic (p. 41). Inverse spellings, on the other hand, occur when a writer has "substituted for the conventional spelling of a word a spelling based on the analogy of some other word containing an orthographic fossil, perhaps etymologically justified but no longer symbolizing sound in the writer's dialect" (p. 40). Although some possible inverse spellings were found in the *TCWVQ*, they were not included in this table because of the difficulties associated with interpreting inverse spellings. Because the spellings displayed in this table have been determined to be meaningful, phonetic representations, they can be used to analyze and characterize the informants' pronunciation.

The features included in Table 4.1 are (1) consonant cluster reduction, (2) unstressed initial syllable deletion, (3) intrusive *r*, (4) intrusive *l*, (5) word final *r*-lessness, (6) *r* deletion, (7) initial *h* retention, (8) word final intrusive *t*, (9) loss of word final dentals, and (10) syncope.

Table 4.2 Selection of Grammatical Features in *TCWVQ*

(11) Leveled *was*	: we <u>was</u> made to dig a ditch
(12) Regularized past tense	: I filled this out the best I <u>Knowed</u>
(13) Velar > alveolar nasal - *ING*	: I tuck up shoe <u>coblin</u>
(14) Multiple negation	: <u>didnt</u> own <u>no</u> slaves
(15) Pleonastic pronoun	: <u>Mother she</u> tan and weaved coton
(16) Demonstrative *them*	: <u>them</u> that had slaves was idle
(17) Personal dative	: Fried <u>us</u> some meat
(18) Nonstandard past tense	: I <u>seen</u> many boys older than I
(19) Intensifying adverbs	: it was <u>kindley</u> hard
(20) Copula absence	: They Ø old
(21) Definite articles for terms of illness	: I took <u>the rhumatism</u>
(22) Counterfactual *Liketa*	: I <u>liked to</u> starved
(23) Plural absence nouns of measure	: He was onley about <u>fifty yard</u>
(24) Extension of *-er* and *-est* suffixes	: The <u>awfullest</u> place was built
(25) Adverbial *but*	: there was <u>but</u> very little difference
(26) Suffix *-eth*	: I cane by <u>doneth</u> toiles of this life
(27) Variation of *in hospital*	: I was never <u>in hospital</u>

The features included in Table 4.2 are (11) leveled *was*, (12) regularized past tense for irregular verbs, (13) velar > alveolar nasal -ING, (14) multiple negation, (15) pleonastic pronouns, (16) demonstrative *them*, (17) personal dative, (18) nonstandard past tense, (19) intensifying adverbs, (20) copula absence, (21) definite articles for terms of illness, (22) counterfactual *liketa/liked to*, (23) absence of plural marker for nouns of weight and measure, (24) extension of *-er* and *-est* suffixes, (25) adverbial *but*, (26) suffix *-eth*, and (27) the prepositional phrase *in hospital*.

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4.2 Was/Were

Examples 1-8 below show several sentences from the corpus of the different ways that *was* and *were* were written: (1) is a standard first person singular past tense form and (2) is a nonstandard form; (3) is a standard first person plural past tense form and (4) is a nonstandard form; (5) is a standard third person singular past tense form and (6) is a nonstandard form; (7) is a standard third person plural past tense form and (8) is a nonstandard form. Generally speaking, second person was very infrequent due to the nature of the questionnaire, but there was one example of *was*-leveling in the second person: "if you work & was honest you was respected" (*TCWVQ*, p. 1158)

1. I was carreyed home in an ox cart

2. I were sent to locate the Yankees

3. We were exposed to cold often

4. We was musterd in to servis

5. Hones labor was considered honerabel

6. most of my regiment were made up from Greene

7. The rich and the poor were educated together

8. the peopell was jonerely happy

The percentage of nonstandard forms of *was/were* by county zone are displayed below in Table 4.3 and presented visually in a barplot in Figure 4.2. For convenience, the county zone map is reproduced below in Figure 4.1. Out of a total of 2626 tokens, there were only 213 nonstandard forms of *was* and *were*, or 8%. The county zone with the highest percentage of nonstandard forms is Zone A with 13%, and the county zone with the lowest percentage is Zone

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L with 4%. Ranked from highest percentage to lowest, it is: Zone A (13%), Zone B (12%), Zone

H (12%), Zone I (11%), Zone G (10%), Zone N (10%), Zone C (9%), Zone E (8%), Zone D

(7%), Zone F (7%), Zone K (7%), Zone J (5%), and Zone L (4%). It is worth noting that two

zones with the highest percentage of nonstandard forms (Zones A and H) have a relatively low

number of tokens compared to the other counties

Table 4.3 Percentage of nonstandard forms of *was/were* by county zone

A		H	
10/75	13%	3/26	12%
B		I	
29/347	12%	23/208	11%
C		J	
47/519	9%	12/233	5%
D		K	
15/201	7%	25/355	7%
E		L	
16/206	8%	6/137	4%
F		N	
11/162	7%	11/106	10%
G			
5/51	10%		
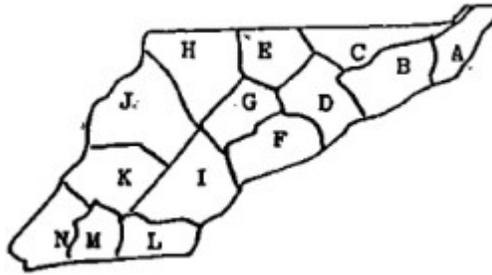
A: Johnson, Carter
B: Unicoi, Washington, Greene
C: Sullivan, Hawkins, Hancock
D: Cocke, Jefferson, Hamblen
E: Grainger, Union, Claiborne,
F: Sevier, Blount
G: Knox
H: Anderson, Campbell, Scott
I: Monroe, McMinn, Loudon
J: Roane, Morgan, Cumberland
K: Meigs, Rhea, Bledsoe
L: Polk, Bradley
M: Hamilton
N: Marion, Sequatchie

Figure 4.1 Pederson (1983) county zones (p. 25)

The percentage of nonstandard forms of *was/were* by informant type are displayed in

Table 4.4 and presented visually in a barplot in Figure 4.3. The percentage of nonstandard forms

decreased as the socioeconomic status of the informant increased, with less than 1% of Type IV

informants (the wealthiest and most educated class) using nonstandard forms, then reaching 4%

for Type III informants (children of slave-owning farmers or professionals class), nearly

doubling at 9% for Type II informants (children of non-slave-owning farmers with over a year of

schooling), and nearly doubling once again at 17% for Type I informants (the most impoverished

class with less than a year total of schooling).

Table 4.4 Percentage of nonstandard forms of *was/were* by informant type

I
75/432   17%

II
112/1211   9%

III
23/618   4%

IV
3/365   <1%
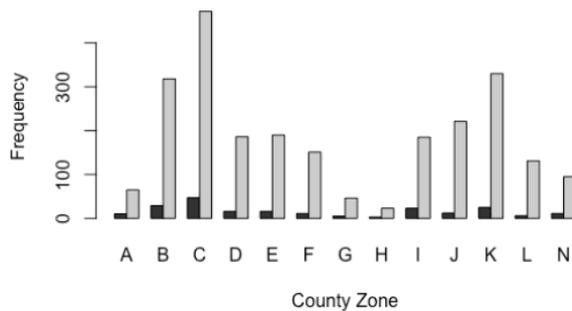
Figure 4.2 Nonstandard *was/were* by county zone
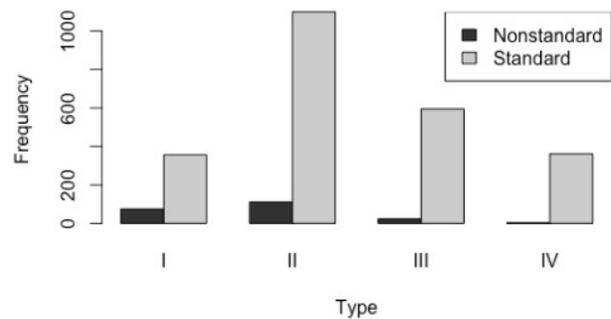
Figure 4.3 Nonstandard *was/were* by informant type

In addition to descriptive statistics, a binomial logistic regression was performed to determine if there was a relationship between the response variable, whether or not the verb was standard or not, and the explanatory variables of county zone and informant type. County zone was not significant, but informant type was significant at all four levels I, II, III, and IV ($p <$ 0.00). Based on the estimate for verb form, the odds of an informant producing a standard increases by 2.42 times when the informant is Type II, by 6.5097 times when the

informant is Type III, and by 28.832 times when the informant is Type IV. Because the *p*-value for all types was so small ($p < 0.00$), we can be confident that the estimates are reliable and reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the given value and reference value of the predictors.

4.3 Done/Did

Examples 9-14 below shows sentences from the corpus of how *done* and *did* were used to answer the questions, "As a boy and young man, state the kind of work you did. If you worked on a farm, state to what extent you plowed, worked with a hoe, and did other kinds of similar work," and "State clearly what kind of work your father did, and what the duties of your mother were. State all the kinds of work done in the house as well as you can remember -- that is, cooking, spinning, weaving, etc.": (9) is a nonstandard first person singular past tense form and (10) is a standard form; (11) is a nonstandard third person singular past tense form and (12) is a standard form; (13) is a nonstandard third person plural past tense form and (14) is a standard form.

> (9) I done all kinds of farm work
>
> (10) I did all kinds of work that was to do on a farm
>
> (11) Mother dune all cinds of house work
>
> (12) My father did all kinds of work pertaining to the farm
>
> (13) They done theire own work
>
> (14) My older sisters did a portion of house work

The percentage of nonstandard forms of *done/did* by county zone are displayed below in Table 4.5 and presented visually in a barplot in Figure 4.5. Out of a total of 186 tokens, there were 84 nonstandard forms of *done* for *did*, or 45%. The county zone with the highest percentage of nonstandard forms is Zone H with 100%, and the county zones with the lowest percentages are Zone J and Zone N both with 20%. Ranked from highest percentage to lowest, it is: Zone H (100%), Zone A (60%), Zone L (58%), Zone I (57%), Zone E (54%), Zone C (47%), Zone B (44%), Zone F (43%), Zone K (41%), Zone D (33%), Zone G (33%), Zone J (20%), and Zone N (20%). However, it is worth nothing that this is a much smaller sample of tokens than the sample for was/were, and for Zone H there are only two tokens, with many of the other zones also having a low number of tokens.

Table 4.5 Percentage of nonstandard forms of *done/did* by county zone

A		H	
3/5	60%	2/2	100%
B		I	
11/25	44%	12/21	57%
C		J	
15/32	47%	2/10	20%
D		K	
4/12	33%	13/32	41%
E		L	
7/13	54%	7/12	58%
F		N	
6/14	43%	1/5	20%
G			
1/3	33%		

The percentage of nonstandard forms of *done/did* by informant type are displayed in Table 4.6 and presented visually in a barplot in Figure 4.4. The percentage of nonstandard forms decreased as the socioeconomic status of the informant increased, with 0% of Type IV informants using the *done* form, then reaching 12% for Type III informants, jumping to nearly half at 49% for Type II informants, and then accounting for over half of the forms for Type I informants at 59%

Table 4.6 Percentage of nonstandard forms of *done/did* by informant type

<u>I</u>
22/37   59%

<u>II</u>
59/121   49%

<u>III</u>
3/25   12%

<u>IV</u>
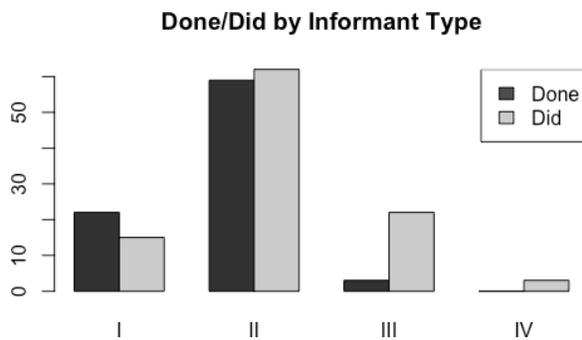0/3   0%

Figure 4.4 *Done/did* by informant type
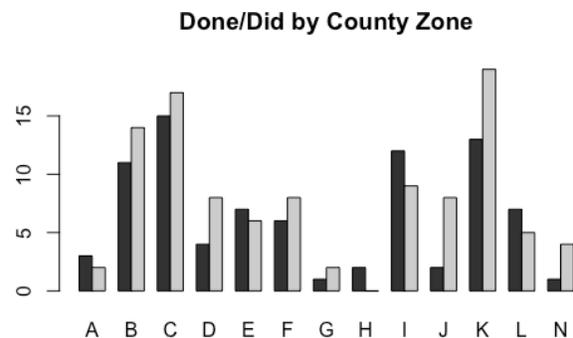
Figure 4.5 *Done/did* by county zone

Unfortunately, the sample size was too small to perform a binomial logistic regression, so I performed a chi-square test to determine if there was a relationship between the form of the

verb, *done* or *did*, and the variables of county zone and informant type. Once again, county zone was not significant, but informant type was, χ^2 (3, N = 186) = 17.26, *p* = .0006. The observed and expected values for informant type as well as the residuals are displayed in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Observed and expected values for *done* and *did* by informant type

		I	II	III	IV
Observed	*Done*	22	59	3	0
	Did	15	62	22	3
Expected	*Done*	16.71	54.65	11.29	1.35
	Did	20.29	66.35	13.71	1.64
Residuals	*Done*	1.29	0.59	-2.47	-1.16
	Did	-1.17	-0.53	2.24	1.06

Because the sample size is relatively small and there are very few Type IV informants, presumably because they did not have much to say in response to how much farm work they did as young men, these results are very preliminary and the corpus would need to be extended to include tokens of *done* and *did* in response to other questions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Phonological and grammatical characteristics of the *TCWVQ*

My first research question, "What phonological and grammatical features are characteristic of the East Tennessee vernacular speech found in the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires*?" can be answered with the results from sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, as well as with a more individualized look at some of the questionnaires that feature a particularly high frequency of dialectal features.

In section 4.1, 10 phonological features and 17 grammatical features were observed in the questionnaire responses. The phonological features are: (1) consonant cluster reduction, (2) unstressed initial syllable deletion, (3) intrusive *r*, (4) intrusive *l*, (5) word final *r*-lessness, (6) *r* deletion, (7) initial *h* retention, (8) word final intrusive *t*, (9) loss of word final dentals, and (10) syncope. Some of these features are shared with the Appalachian informants in Hazen (2006) and Wolfram and Christian (1976) and considered to be Appalachian Heritage Language features, such as: (1) <granfather> for 'grandfather'; (2) <ristocrat> for 'aristocrat'; (3) <carliner> for 'Carolina'; (4) <calverly> for 'cavalry'; and (5) <neve> for 'never'. Although (7), <hit> for 'it', and (8) <enought> for 'enough', are also considered part of AHL, they were not found in the sociolinguistic interviews of Hazen's modern-day informants. Berrey (1940) writes

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that loss of final r (5) occurs "only in districts where lowland influence has crept in" (p. 48). Though these features are not unique to the southern Midland, they are often "more robust" in this region, which includes East Tennessee (Hazen, 2006, p. 131).

Berrey (1940) lists syncope (10), <rember> for 'remember', as the "commonest characteristic of mountain dialect," occurring particularly when two stops are in proximity, when two successive syllables have consonants in common, or to avoid a stop entirely (p. 47). R deletion (6) is also observed by Berrey (1940), who states that [r] is typically sounded, but can be lost in medial positions preceding a consonant such as in the example <poshan> for 'portion' (p. 47). A type of consonant cluster deletion, the loss of word final dentals (9) such as <kep> for 'kept', is another feature Berrey (1940) mentions, and it happens particularly when preceded by a stop, [ɛ], [f], [n], or [l] (p. 48).

The grammatical (including syntactic, morphological, and lexical) features are: (11) leveled *was*, (12) regularized past tense for irregular verbs, (13) velar > alveolar nasal -ING, (14) multiple negation, (15) pleonastic pronouns, (16) demonstrative *them*, (17) personal dative, (18) nonstandard past tense, (19) intensifying adverbs, (20) copula absence, (21) definite articles for terms of illness, (22) counterfactual *liketa/liked to*, (23) absence of plural marker for nouns of weight and measure, (24) extension of *-er* and *-est* suffixes, (25) adverbial *but*, (26) suffix *-eth*, and (27) the prepositional phrase *in hospital*. Again, these are certainly not the only linguistic features present in the *TCWVQ*, but they are the ones that are phonologically or grammatically transparent and that have meaningful examples within the text. Like the phonological features, some of these can be found in Hazen (2006) and Wolfram and Christian (1976), particularly the following: (11) <was> for 'were'; (12) <knowed> for 'knew'; (13) <coblin> for 'cobbling'; (14)

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multiple negation; (15) the pleonastic pronoun; (16) demonstrative *them*; (17) personal dative; (18) nonstandard past tense; (19) intensifying adverbs; (20) copula absence; (21) definite articles with terms of illness; (22) counterfactual *liketa*; (23) plural absence with nouns of weight and measure; (24) extension of *-er* and *-est* suffixes; and (25) adverbial *but*. Berrey (1940) also mentions (13) as [ŋ] universally becoming [n] in the suffix *-ing*, (23) abnormal plurals, and that "abnormal preterites abound," such as the weak preterite replacing a strong in (12), participle used as a preterite in (18), and even the superfluous -(d)ed suffix added to the past tense of some verbs such as <bornd> for 'born' in (3) (p. 51).

The use of the suffix *-eth* is not considered to be a southern or Appalachian feature, but it is certainly an archaic form that is worth noting. The prepositional phrase, *in hospital*, was observed also by Maynor (1993), and is particularly interesting because the question (no. 37 in Appendix) in the *TCWVQ* uses the phrase 'in the hospital,' but "almost every respondent who repeated the phrase omitted the article, using instead what more recent speakers of American English consider British wording" (p. 184). It is interesting to note that one of the most stereotypical features of Appalachian English, *A*-prefixing such as in 'a-working,' was not found in the written responses in the *TCWVQ* despite many other AE occurring frequently. Though some of these features included in the tables are labeled as Appalachian, Hazen cautions that they are not unique to the southern Midland region but instead can "almost all be found in older, rural varieties of European-American Southern US English" (2006, p. 131). Using the *Dictionary of American English* (DARE), some forms such as *knowed*, *kindly* as an intensifier, *liketa*, can be linked more specifically to the South and South Midland, and in the case of *awfullest*, the Appalachians.

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The major findings for *was/were* were that only 8% of the forms in the corpus were nonstandard, with individual county zones ranging from 4% to 13% nonstandard. Zone A had the highest percentage at 13% and Zone L had the lowest at 4%. Interestingly, Zone A is the county zone that is the farthest northeast in East Tennessee, whereas Zone L is in the southwestern part of East Tennessee, much closer to Middle Tennessee. The percentage of nonstandard forms decreased as socioeconomic status of the informant increased, with Type I (the most impoverished class with less than a year total of schooling) having 17%, Type II (children of

non-slave-owning farmers with over a year of schooling class) 9%, Type III (children of slave-owning farmers or professionals class) 4%, and Type IV (the wealthiest and most educated class) less than 1%. The binomial logistic regression showed that county zone did not have a significant effect on whether or not an informant used the nonstandard form, but informant type was significant at all four socioeconomic levels.

The major findings for *done/did* were that 45% of the forms in the corpus were nonstandard, with individual county zones ranging from 20% (Zones J and N) to 100% (Zone H). However, the sample for this corpus was much smaller than for the *was/were* corpus (186 tokens vs. 2626 tokens), and many county zones had very few tokens, which may account for the comparatively higher amount of nonstandard forms. Once again, the percentage of nonstandard forms decreased as the socioeconomic status of the informant increased, with Type I having 59%, Type II 49%, Type III 12%, and Type IV 0%. The low number of Type III and Type IV informants may be due to the fact that they did not have as much to write in response to the question because it was concerned with what sort of manual labor they participated in while

working on a farm and what sort of manual labor their parents did. In a chi-square test, county zone was found to not be significant but informant type was.

Table 5.1 shows a comparison of nonstandard percentages based on county zone and Table 5.2 shows a comparison of the percentages based on informant type for the two corpora. Table 5.1 shows that although in some cases a higher *was/were* nonstandard percentage meant there was also a higher *done/did* nonstandard percentage, there are exceptions and there is no general trend. Table 5.2 shows a much clearer comparison where informant type greatly influences the percentage of nonstandard forms for both corpora.

Table 5.1 Comparison of nonstandard percentages based on county zone and corpus

	was/were	*done/did*		*was/were*	*done/did*
A	13%	60%	H	12%	100%
B	12%	44%	I	11%	57%
C	9%	47%	J	5%	20%
D	7%	33%	K	7%	41%
E	8%	54%	L	4%	58%
F	7%	43%	N	10%	20%
G	10%	33%			

**Table 5.2 Comparison of nonstandard percentages based on informant type
and corpus**

	was/were	*done/did*
Type I	17%	59%
Type II	9%	49%
Type III	4%	12%
Type IV	<1%	0%

The relatively low frequency of nonstandard forms of *was* and *were* was initially surprising, but due to the fact that the tokens came from written material, it is not unheard of. What Maynor (1993) found was that there was a lower percentage of nonstandard forms than was expected, but like Abney pointed out, written responses would have more standard forms than spoken because educated informants provided more data, due in part to the fact that they wrote longer responses as well as the fact that completely illiterate veterans were excluded from the questionnaire (1989, pp. 183-184, 186). This definitely applied to the present study as well, where more educated informants provided much more data than informants who were less comfortable with writing. In many cases, sometimes the most phonologically and grammatically interesting questionnaires were, unfortunately, the shortest.

However, some Type I and Type II informants did provide an ample amount of written data. These responses could serve as a source comparable to letters in the SPOC to examine idiolect. As an example, the responses of one Type I informant, John W. Dinsmore, are displayed below in Figure 5.1 as they appear in the *TCWVQ* volumes. Dinsmore is fairly systematic in his misspellings. He consistently writes <oned> for 'owned', <solgar> for 'soldier', <eney> for 'any', <carliner> for 'Carolina', <tha> for 'they', <gest> for 'just', but many of the other

phonetically interesting misspellings occur only once such as <poshan> for 'portion', <falring> for 'following', and <organashan> for 'organization'. Based on this questionnaire, Dinsmore is completely *was*-leveled, using *was* in all past tense contexts regardless of number and person. Out of 23 total counts of *was*, 30% are used in a nonstandard context. The level of *was*-leveling varied for informant, however, and like Trüb (2006), there was individual variation of *was*-leveling within the responses of certain veterans, and in some cases even in the same sentence: *Some were and some wasent* (*TCWVQ*, p. 652); *My Father don all sorts of farm work such as plowing hoing & Mother did all kinds of house work* (*TCWVQ*, p. 1220). The amount of variation on an individual level within the *TCWVQ* suggests that a more detailed look at some of the idiolects such as Dinsmore's would be worthwhile to make more precise statements about the phonological and grammatical variation within the sample population.

Figure 5.1 Scan of questionnaire responses by J.W. Dinsmore, pp. 45-46

DINSMORE, JOHN W.

FORM NO. 2

1. John W. Dinsmore; mine is Rogersville tennessee
2. mi age is 75 years
3. hawkins co tennessee
4. I was a federal solgar
5. a & f; first tennessee light artilary
6. mi father was a farmer
7. felldan f. dinsmore; Washington Co.; ----; Va.; aftar he got grow he cam to hawkins co tenn; he never was int eney official he nevr riten eney Book
8. Juda Presley; (the name Nancy Presley is in the space for fathers name and the phrase "and his wife" has been crossed over) Nancy Presley she was bornd in north carlner; north carliner untill she was girl then cam to tenn
9. my gran father on mi mothers side was revluchanary solgar an mi gran father on my fathers side was in the war of 1812 mi father nevr ond eney land aftar tha cam out of the wars tha was farmers
10. I one a hous an lot in Rogersville hav bin for 2 years I ond a litel farm befaur I cam to Rogersville
11. We nevr ond eney slaves
12. tha nevr ond eney land
13. the gest ond a mild cow tha was vary pore men tha gest liv in a log caban
14. onla 1 rume
15. I worked on a farm befour I went in the arme an aftar I cam home out of the arma I was a farmear an un tell I got too old to farm
16. mi father was a farmer an mi mother kep house she spun flacksan to
17. tha nevr kep eney servants
18. such work was respected an onest but the price for such was offel low in price 40 an 50 cence per day at that time.
19. yes tha in gaged in such work
20. ----
21. tha dident with them that dident one eney slaves tha thought them a litle betr than the no slave holars
22. the slave holdars thought them selves a litel betr
23. when the sivel war began to com up the non slave holdars wasent a

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Figure 5.1 (cont)

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DINSMORE (cont'd.):
        laud to say eneything
24.     the slav holdar was genrealey democrats  a poshan of the non slav
        holdars was democrats an part waw whigs
25.     the pore men wasent given eney incurgment to mak eney thing tha was
        kep down as much as pasleb.
26.     tha was discuredg an keep down all tha cold
27.     not eney  onley subchripshan choals
28.     In all the cholling I went was about 2 years I ges in all I went
29.     about a mile
30.     subshripshams chools
31.     privet
32.     three month
33.     yes tarleb well
34.     tha was all men
35.     I inlisted in the federal arma her at Rogersville tennessee hawkins
        county
36.     we remand her at Rogersville un tell we had a litel fight at Big
        Creek 3 mil east Rogrsvill
37.     a bout a month or the rise
38.     Big creek  3 mile east of Rogersville hawkins county tennessee
39.     the first place we went aftar was Kantucky camp Nelson we went from
        Camp Nelson Kantucky to nashville tennessee to the Zalea Coffer
        (Zollicoffer) house an from thar out in the west part of tenn to
        camp gilam then I was sent from thar to the hospitel nashville then
        from the hospitel to fort martan.
40.     I was discharged at nashville tennessee on the third day of August
        1865
41.     then I got a free transpertashan to Bools gap tennessee then I had
        to walk home a bout 28 miles
42.     I went on the farm
43.     I hav bin a farmer evr cence the sivel war  I hav liv sevarl places
        cense the sivel war but not over 16 miles from Rogersville tennessee
·       mi church relashan is what uther pepel call dunkerd but we call our
        selvs Brethren I went in that church when I was onley 26 years old
        and I hav remand thar evr cence  we bleve in gest takin the new
        testment an falring evry precept we read in it  we dont beleve in
        eney organashan but the church of crist an we dont want eney book
··      onley the bibel an good equel chashan book  we blev in egachashan.
```

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5.2 Social and geographic distribution of linguistic features

My second research question, "How are the nonstandard past tense forms of the verbs to *be* and *do* distributed socially?" can be answered with an in-depth look at how socioeconomic type influenced whether an informant used the nonstandard or standard form of the verb and how county zone was not a major influence. For both features that were statistically analyzed, *was/were* and *done/did*, the county zones determined by Pederson (1983) were determined to not be a statistically significant factor on whether or not an informant used the standard or nonstandard variety in their writing. Based on the findings, the vernacular speech of East Tennessee with regards to *was/were* and *done/did* was more homogenous than expected. Therefore an analysis of the distribution of *was/were* and *done/did* has to take into account other possible factors playing a central role.

One possible explanation for this is that the morphological features are stratified socially rather than geographically. Throughout the English-speaking world, Schneider (2003) remarks that "inflectional morphology and grammar tend to be socially marked rather than regionally distinctive," and thus much of inflectional morphology found in Southern American grammars is not characteristic of the South alone, including: multiple negation; *ain't*; demonstrative *them*; nonstandard verbal concord; nonstandard copula forms like noncord *is* or finite *be*; uninflected noun genitives; and more (pp. 27-29). Though not exclusive to the region, some forms may occur in the South more frequently than in other regions of the United States (pp. 27-29).

At some conscious or unconscious level, East Tennesseans must have been aware of linguistic differences among the classes. Some informants even commented on the social and linguistic stratification, with H. M. Doak from Washington Co. stating: "Most of the ambitious

young men, however, after going through Washington College, went west or south - Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas and Texas - or to Illinois or Indiana - most of emigrants to northwest, however, were of the lower classes. North Carolina and E. Tenn. supplied thousands of these - 'Twas a standing saying that poor whites moving in covered wagons from N.C. or E. Tenn., asked 'whence and where to' always replied: 'Come fun Nawth Caliner; gwyne ter the Ielinoy; gimme a chaw o' terbaccker.'" (*TCWVQ*, p. 699). Though this caricature-esque quote from the informant is perhaps an overgeneralization that plays into stereotypes of the lower class in the Appalachian region, data from this study show that there may be some truth to this linguistic characterization: the *r*-lessness of <Nawth Caliner>; the form <gwyne> for 'going'; and intrusive *r* in <Caliner>, <ter>, and <terbaccker> for 'tobacco'. *The Dictionary of Regional American English* (DARE) also has some of these forms documented as being regionally or social-class specific. For example, *gywne* is listed in DARE as being chiefly South and South Midland and frequently with African American and rural white speakers, with the earliest documented example in central North Carolina in 1787, but also documented as being used as recently as 1976 in the Appalachians. *Terbaccker* and *Nawth Caliner* are also documented in DARE as belonging chiefly to the South and South Midland region.

Although to some extent someone's geographical location could have contributed to their social class, at this time the segregation of classes was reinforced by access (or lack thereof) to education. Many respondents to the *TCWVQ* as well as the non-combatant respondents remarked that slave ownership did not distinguish social class, but rather as noted by one non-combatant, who was able to attend college and receive a law degree and whose father owned 60 slaves, posterity was determined by "char[acter] and intelligence" (J. Fort, qtd. in Bailey, 1986, p. 282).

However, the luxury of education was inextricably linked to slave ownership, though this respondent and others may not have realized that "land and slave ownership determined the extent of schooling received by his contemporaries" (Bailey, 1986, p. 282). This was because families who owned slaves did not need their children to assist in taking care of the home and farm, and thus their children were able to focus instead on leisure activities and education. A wealthy non-combatant, Sophia Malone, wrote that manual labor "was considered honorable but the best people did not do such work… only the poorer class," and the even more privileged Rachel Jackson Lawrence similarly answered "those who had slaves supervised the work, those less fortunate did it themselves" (Bailey, 1986, p. 280). It is logical that the wealthier classes would be able to write closer to the standard because of their educational background and the fact that they would likely be more accustomed to sending letters and writing other types of documents, but how would linguistic forms travel in spoken language and end up being used by educated and uneducated East Tennesseans alike in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century? Unfortunately, unlike phonological features, the spread and development of grammatical features can be difficult to trace even in oral sources because "several of the most important grammatical stereotypes of SAE are relatively rare in most conversational contexts," and likewise in written sources less-educated informants such as many of the respondents to the *TCWVQ* may avoid using certain grammatical structures entirely, causing a "bias in favor of standard structures" (Bailey, 1997, p. 267).

Even so, the last quarter of the nineteenth-century saw a documented rise of linguistic changes, and it may have been directly related to the social changes following the Civil War, when the South was transformed by railways that reshaped local economies (Bailey, 1997, p.

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269). Country stores became the middlemen between farmers and bankers as well as hubs within villages and towns, and the railroad system allowed for travel and trade between the newly formed communities, working as "parts of complicated and interdependent networks" (Ayers, 1992, p. 20). The spread of linguistic forms can then be explained by Bailey (1997) in the following way: "Networks like these, especially when coupled with extensive intraregional migration, provide ideal conduits for the diffusion of linguistic changes, while the dialect contact situations that arose during the development of villages and towns provide a possible social motivation for the changes" (p. 271). Social motivations such as wanting to preserve a more "rural" Southern dialect could also be a possible explanation for why speakers interviewed in linguistic studies in the mid- to late twentieth-century including the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States continued to use some of the phonological and grammatical features found in the *TCWVQ*. Thus Schneider (2003) proposed a distinction between two prototypical types of Southern English: "Traditional Southern" and "New Southern":

> Traditional southern dialect is associated with the antebellum, rural plantation culture of the Old South and its related value system… New Southern can be regarded as the product of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century developments which are also embodied in the sociocultural catchphrase of 'new South,' associated, amongst other things, with urbanization, industrialization, in-migration, and a characterization of the region as the 'sunbelt' of the United States (p. 34).

Based on this distinction, the language of the respondents of the *TCWVQ* sits at a time when "Traditional Southern" and "New Southern" was in flux, and this is reflected in the wide range of variation in their responses and perhaps a conscious or subconscious desire to preserve "Traditional Southern" language and culture.

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Some phonological and grammatical features found in East Tennessee during the nineteenth-century could be socially motivated phenomena, such as intrusive *r*. This phonological features is common to speakers of non-rhotic dialects who are not sure where to place it, and therefore it is a form of hypercorrection (Montgomery, et al., 1993, p. 341). Pronouncing [r] in the word final position or word-internally could be a sign of "speakers of less prestigious dialects trying to imitate a more prestigious one by adaptations in their pronunciation" (Hock & Joseph, 2009, pp. 181-182). Additionally, the "sporadic" nature of *r*-insertion in dialects of American English accounts for variation across different speech communities and even within idiolects of individual speakers, but it is not something that is tied to a specific region (Hock & Joseph, 2009, p. 182).

Nonstandard past tense and *was*-leveling are other linguistic features that could be a result not of regional factors, but rather language internal or socially motivated factors. The nonstandard past tense forms of *be* and *do* and leveling in general are not regionally bound, but rather present in many vernacular varieties of English. In fact, "the internally based, systemic leveling to *was* and its expansive distribution in unrelated vernacular varieties of English suggest that past tense *be* leveling occurs as an independent, parallel language change apart from historical language contact or diffusion" (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2003, p. 210). Ellis (2017) shows that despite plural *was* being attributed as chiefly Midland and South by DARE, in the nineteenth-century letters analyzed the feature was found to be more widespread, with 53% of Northern letter-writers using the feature and 57% of Southern letter-writers (p. 5). Despite being considered a feature of Southern American English, *was*-leveling does not belong to the South alone.

Without a definitive list of features that are confirmed to be confined to Southern American English, it becomes more difficult to ascertain not only where the features originated but also how to define Southern American English. Perhaps the best action linguists can take in defining early Southern American English is to document and describe the changes within their historical and cultural contexts. As Algeo (2003) writes, no matter the provenance of a linguistic feature, "it is clear that a new amalgam grew up in America, of which a formative influence was the new environment -- that is, whatever was around the speakers to be spoken of" (p. 13). While the current study is ostensibly focused on language variation and change, it is also inextricably tied to sociocultural history due to the fact that dialect "is a source of identity and frequently dignity to the human beings who represent this particular culture" (Schneider, 2003, p. 18) In the *TCWVQ*, the speakers wrote about the inner workings of their communities, their oftentimes inhospitable experiences in the war, memories of their childhood, their religious and political views, their families, their various careers and roles, and the East Tennessee landscape that surrounded them. In turn, the content of their narratives influenced the answers they gave and the language they used.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that while the vernacular language of white male speech in nineteenth-century East Tennessee displays a great deal of variation, particularly with respect to the socioeconomic status of the speaker, it is relatively homogenous when examined by geographic region. Despite county not having a significant effect on whether or not an informant used a standard or nonstandard form of the past tense verbs *was/were* and *done/did,* there is still something to say about the language of the region as a whole. As Francis (1993) writes, "even though there is no sharp boundary around an area, there is a common core of language usage which the speakers themselves are aware of and which allows the linguist to call it a dialect area" (pp. 22-23). The variation of vernacular language contained in the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires* cannot be analyzed without considering the complex social factors that contributed to the class stratification and subsequent educational stratification.

The source material itself did cause some limitations in this study. The content of the questionnaire does not facilitate the production of second person forms or future or present tense verbs in the veterans' responses. By the time the questionnaires reached the veterans, many of them had already passed away or were too affected by illness and physical limitations from blindness, rheumatism, or memory loss to be able to fill out the questionnaires to the best of their

ability, and many of them left comments addressing this such as: "as i cant see good ile close" (*TCWVQ*, p. 570). The questionnaire excludes veterans who lacked enough literacy to respond in writing and those who had died in the war or after. It also excludes women entirely and non-white combatants almost entirely; therefore, the results cannot be generalized beyond the white male population.

Additionally, how the questionnaires were presented in the edited volumes caused additional concerns. One disadvantage to this source is that because the responses were mostly handwritten by elderly men, they were sometimes hard to read for the archivists and editors. There are disparaging comments on some questionnaires, such as for J.M. Davis, that "This spelling is so bad, writing is so bad, that the researcher should take the opportunity to read the microfilm for ones self. Perhaps another reader would be able to decipher it." In fact, the answers for questions 16-46 were not even transcribed and the editor wrote, "No attempt to translate this poor old gentleman's writing" (*TCWVQ*, p. 650). However, from the answers that were able to be "translated," there appears to be many meaningful misspellings in his writing, but because they were not copied they can only be found on the microfilm which is not as easily accessible as the edited volumes.

Because of these reasons, any linguist conducting future research utilizing this source should attempt to consult the microfilms themselves for questionnaires where the editors failed to transcribe them. As Stephenson (1967) cautions, "even professional archivists often make transcripts that are unreliable from the point of view of the linguist, though they might serve well enough for the historian… it should be obvious *a priori* that a text transmitted only from writer to linguist is preferable for linguistic purposes to a text transmitted from writer to editor to

printer to linguist" (p. 35). As such, the *TCWVQ* microfilms demand a closer reexamination by a

linguist using Stephenson's (1967) guidelines.

Future research should also include the data from the non-combatants, which has been

collected and published separately from the veterans' questionnaires (Bailey, 1986). To the best

of my knowledge, this source has thus far not been used for linguistic research. Additionally, a

comparison to the letters written by East Tennessee authors in Montgomery and Schneider's

Southern Plantation Overseer's Corpus would be a worthwhile pursuit. Because this study

analyzed only two grammatical features quantitatively, a comprehensive quantitative analysis of

phonological features in the *TCWVQ* may provide more information about the dialectal

differences in nineteenth-century East Tennessee. Perhaps if informants from West Tennessee

and elsewhere were included in the corpora for *was/were* and *done/did*, more distinct regional

and social variation would emerge for grammatical forms.

A separate conclusion that this study and similar studies expose is how underutilized

written sources are for looking at language variation and change. Discussing the SPOC,

Schneider (2003) writes that "this also involves a plea to do more archival research and to

uncover additional sources… Interdisciplinary collaboration with historians and archivists has

turned out to be fruitful for this particular branch of linguistics" (p. 33). The present study has

shown the value that written sources have for a historical sociolinguistic analysis of vernacular

speech, and perhaps as more written sources are revealed and analyzed, the statement that

"Antebellum Tennessee was more of a land of social seams than seamlessness" (Bailey, 1986, p.

285) will be further strengthened by the social seams of the linguistic forms.

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List of Appendices

APPENDIX

Questionnaire Form No. 1 from *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires*

The chief purpose of the following questions is to bring out facts that will be of service in writing a true history of the Old South. Such a history has not yet been written. By answering these questions you will make a valuable contribution to the history of your State.

1. State your full name and present Post Office address:
2. State your age now:
3. In what State and county were you born?
4. In what State and county were you living when you enlisted in the service of the Confederacy, or of the Federal Government?
5. What was your occupation before the war?
6. What was the occupation of your father?
7. If you owned land or other property at the opening of the war, state what kind of property you owned, and state the value of your property as near as you can:
8. Did you or your parents own slaves? If so, how many?
9. If your parents owned land, state about how many acres:
10. State as near as you can the value of all the property owned by your parents, including land, when the war opened:
11. What kind of house did your parents occupy? State whether it was a log house or frame house or built of other materials, and state the number of rooms it had:
12. As a boy and young man, state the kind of work you did. If you worked on a farm, state to what extent you plowed, worked with a hoe, and did other kinds of similar work:
13. State clearly what kind of work your father did, and what the duties of your mother were. State all the kinds of work done in the house as well as you can remember -- that is, cooking, spinning, weaving, etc.
14. Did your parents keep any servants? If so, how many?
15. How was honest toil -- as plowing, hauling and other sorts of honest work of this class -- regarded in your community? Was such work considered respectable and honorable?
16. Did the white men in your community generally engage in such work?
17. To what extent were the white men in your community leading lives of idleness and having other do their work for them?
18. Did the men who owned slaves mingle freely with those who did not own slaves, or did slaveholders in any way show by their actions that they felt themselves better than respectable, honorable men who did not own slaves?
19. At the churches, at the schools, at public gatherings in general, did slave-holders and non-slaveholders mingle on a footing of equality?

20. Was there a friendly feeling between slaveholders and non-slaveholders in your community, or were they antagonistic to each other?
21. In a political contest in which one candidate owned slaves and the other did not, did the fact that one candidate owned slaves help him in winning the contest?
22. Were the opportunities good in your community for a poor young man -- honest and industrious -- to save up enough to buy a small farm or go in business for himself?
23. Were poor, honest, industrious young men, who were ambitious to make something of themselves, encouraged or discouraged by slaveholders?
24. What kind of school or schools did you attend?
25. About how long did you go to school altogether?
26. How far was it to the nearest school?
27. What school or schools were in operation in your neighborhood?
28. Was the school in your community private or public?
29. About how many months in the year did it run?
30. Did the boys and girls in your community attend school pretty regularly?
31. Was the teacher of the school you attended a man or a woman?
32. In what year and month and at what place did you enlist in the Confederate or the Federal Government?
33. State the name of your regiment, and state the names of as many members of your company as you remember:
34. After enlistment, where was your company sent first?
35. How long after your enlistment did your company engage in battle?
36. What was the first battle you engaged in?
37. State in your own way your experience in the war from this time on until the close. State where you went after the first battle -- what you did, what other battles you engaged in, how long they lasted, what the results were; state how you lived in camp, how you were clothed, how you slept, what you had to eat, how you were exposed to cold, hunger and disease. If you were in the hospital or in prison, state your experiences here:
38. When and where were you discharged?
39. Tell something of your trip home:
40. What kind of work did you take up when you came back home?
41. Give a sketch of your life since the close of the Civil War, stating what kind of business you have engage in, where you have lived, your church relations, etc. If you have held an office or offices, state what it was. You may state here any other facts connected with your life and experiences which has not been brought out by the questions:
42. Give the full name of your father:_____; born_____at_____; in the country of _____. Give also any particulars concerning him, as official position, war service, etc.; books written by, etc.
43. Maiden name in full of your mother:_____; she was the daughter of _____ (full name)_____and his wife_____(full name)_____who lived at _____.
44. Remarks on ancestry. Give here any and all facts possible in reference to your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc., not included in the foregoing, as where they lived, office held, Revolutionary or other war services; what country the family came from to America; where first settled, county and state; always giving full names (if possible) and never referring to an ancestor simply as such without giving the name. It is desirable to

include every fact possible and to that end the full and exact record from old Bibles should be appended on separate sheets of this size, thus preserving the facts from loss:

45. Give the names of all the members of your Company you can remember: (If you know where the Roster is to be had, please make special note of this.)

46. Give here the NAME and POST OFFICE ADDRESS of living Veterans of the Civil War, whether members of your company or not.

VITA

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EDUCATION

Master of Arts (May 2019) in Linguistics at University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi. Thesis title: "Investigating nonstandard Southern American English in written sources: A historical sociolinguistic approach to the *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires*."

Bachelor of Arts (May 2016) in Linguistics, Classics with emphasis in Latin, University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi.

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Graduate Writing Fellow, Department of Writing and Rhetoric, University of Mississippi, August 2016 – May 2018. Responsibilities include supporting undergraduate and graduate students in linguistics courses at all stages of the writing process with a focus on research-based assignments.

Embedded Writing Tutor, Department of Writing and Rhetoric, University of Mississippi, August 2018 – present. Responsibilities include working as an embedded writing tutor in select sections of Advanced Composition (WRIT 250) by workshopping writing activities in class, substituting for the instructor when necessary, and supporting students from various majors at all stages of the writing process with a focus on research based assignments through one-on-one consultations.

PRESENTATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

Norton, J. N. Mud wasps and spiteful hornets: Connecting LANE with folk taxonomy. Diversity and Variation in Language 1, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, February 2017.

Norton, J. N. & Sapp, C. Orthographic variation and the dialect of the *Heliand* poet. Germanic Linguistics Annual Conference 25, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, May 2019.