

## Comments on Homework exercises on the AAE verbal system Due Monday November 21

**Disclaimer:** I'm not a speaker of AAE – my answers here are based on what Lisa Green describes in Chapter 2 of her book on AAE. I've given you the references to specific places for every example, so you can look up the discussion in the book. If I corrected your answers, I'm not judging them as ungrammatical or not possible in AAE – merely as something that's not the closest correspondent to the given example under the system that Lisa Green tells us about – which is what we asked for in this assignment.

### Past perfect:

SAE: At the end of that meal I was stuffed. I had eaten more than I could hold.

AAE: At the end of that meal I was stuffed. I \_\_\_\_\_ more than I could hold.

[see pg. 37, ex. (8)]

Here we expect to find *had ate*:

- The auxiliary form of *to have* cannot be dropped since it carries past tense information.
- AAE uses the same form for both past tense and participle forms in all verbs, including irregular ones, here we expect *ate*.

### Present perfect:

SAE: I'm stuffed. I've eaten more than I can hold.

AAE: I'm stuffed. I \_\_\_\_\_ more than I can hold.

[see pg. 37, ex. (7)]

Here we expect to find *ate*:

- The auxiliary *have* is in present tense – hence it deletes.
- The participle is *ate*, as above.

We've talked about this form in class for a bit. It happens to look like the SAE simple past, but in AAE it's ambiguous between the simple past and the present perfect form.

### Present perfect with tag question:

SAE: I'm stuffed. I've eaten more than I can hold, haven't I?

AAE: I'm stuffed. I \_\_\_\_\_ more than I can hold, \_\_\_\_\_?

[see pg. 37, ex. (7)]

We expect *ate* as above, and *ain't I* or *haven't I* for the tag.

### Present perfect in the negative

SAE: I haven't eaten too much.

AAE: I \_\_\_\_\_ too much.

[see pg. 37, ex. (7)]

I *haven't ate* / *ain't ate* too much.

**Past tense**

SAE: Last year at Thanksgiving I stuffed myself. I ate too much.

AAE: Last year at Thanksgiving I \_\_\_\_\_ myself. I \_\_\_\_\_ too much.

[see pg. 36, ex. (2)]

we expect this forms to be no different from SAE; *stuffed* and *ate*

**Past tense**

SAE: Last year at Thanksgiving I didn't stuff myself. I didn't eat a lot.

AAE: Last year at Thanksgiving I \_\_\_\_\_ myself. I \_\_\_\_\_ a lot.

[see pg. 36, ex. (2 a/a')]

There's a lot of variety here according to Green: *din / didn't stuff / eat;*  
*ain't stuff / stuffed / eat / ate*

**Past Progressive**

SAE: She was talking to her sister last night.

AAE: She \_\_\_\_\_ to her sister last night.

[see pg. 37, ex. (5)]

We expect no difference from SAE: *was talking*

**Present Progressive:**

SAE: She's on the phone—she's talking to her sister.

AAE: She on the phone—she \_\_\_\_\_ to her sister.

[see pg. 37, ex. (4)]

One of the most typical cases. The present tense auxiliary deletes: *She talking.*

**B. Fill in an SAE sentence that is a paraphrase of the AAE sentence. It must carry the same meaning but won't necessarily have identical words to convey it.**

AAE: She be talking to her sister on the phone after supper.

[see pg. 45, ex. (28)]

A case of habitual *be*

“She is always/usually talking to her sister on the phone after supper.”

AAE: She BIN talking to her sister.

[see pg. 45, ex. (29)]

Remote past *bin*

“She has been talking to her sister for a long time.”

AAE: She been talking to her sister

This one actually does not have an extra aspectual marker. It's like its SAE counterpart modulo the deleted auxiliary *have*.  
“She has been talking to her sister.”

AAE: They be done gone to school by then.

[see pg. 46, ex (37)]

This one combines habitual *be* with the resultant state *done*. *Done* by itself does not signal the tense information, but the resultant state – see f.i. ex. (61) for an example of a different tense.

“They usually have already gone to school by then.”