VARIATION AT THE MORPHOLOGY-PHONOLOGY INTERFACE IN APPALACHIAN ENGLISH

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By

Goldie Ann McQuaid, M.Ed., M.A., M.S.

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This dissertation presents results from a qualitative and quantitative study of variable 
a-prefixing (“she’s a-making good money”) in Appalachian English (AppE), using recently 
collected data from speakers in Southwestern Virginia and Eastern Tennessee, areas of 
Appalachia unstudied by previous researchers. The study combines a traditional sociolinguistic 
VARBRUL analysis with formal modeling of the factors that license a-prefixing. The study 
confirms many of the restrictions found in previous sociolinguistic research (Wolfram and 
Christian 1976; Wolfram 1976, 1980; Feagin 1979; Christian et al. 1988; Montgomery 2009), 
and offers a formal analysis using morpho-syntactic features (Cowper 1993, 1995 a, b, 1999, 
2003a,b) and Optimal Interleaving (Wolf 2008).

Chapter 2 reviews the sociolinguistic literature on a-prefixing. Chapter 3 details the data 
used in the present study and the hypotheses tested. Chapter 4 presents results of a VARBRUL 
analysis. Two categorical phonological restrictions described in previous literature hold in the 
data. Five factors affect variation in a-prefixing: sex, perception verb, necessity modal (e.g., 
should) ‘anti-mirative’ elements, and base argument structure.

Chapter 5 offers a formal account of a-prefixing. Based on results for pragmatic factor 
groups in the VARBRUL analysis, it is argued there are two progressive morphs in AppE: the 
variable circumfixal mirative a- … -ing, which alternates with mirative -ing, and the non-
mirative -ing. A-prefixing is suggested to be an exemplar of arbitrary preference allomorphy.

The mirative morphs a- … -ing and -ing are lexically listed. The circumfixed morph places selectional restrictions on possible bases, including the restriction that bases be composed of the morpho-syntactic feature [INTERVAL] (Cowper 1995 a, b, 1999, 2003a,b). Circumfixation is licensed with verbal, but not homophonous nominal bases.

An analysis of allomorph selection is formalized using Wolf’s (2008) serial theory of the morphology-phonology interface, Optimal Interleaving (OI). The circumfixal morph is analyzed as encoding a proper superset of the features encoded by -ing forms. In addition to mapping the feature [INTERVAL], the circumfix faithfully maps the morpho-pragmatic feature [MIRATIVE]. Because it more faithfully encodes underlying features, the morph a- … -ing is preferentially inserted when phonological restrictions of the circumfix are satisfied.
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CHAPTER I

The region known as Appalachia was delimited in 1965 by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC 2012a). This region encompasses a large area of the eastern United States, including all of West Virginia, southwestern Virginia, eastern North Carolina and South Carolina, parts of Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, eastern Tennessee, Kentucky and Ohio, as well as much of Pennsylvania, reaching into the most southwestern region of New York (ARC 2012b). The map below, from the Appalachian Region Commission (2012c), shows the region.
Appalachian English (AppE) refers to the English spoken by residents of chiefly the southern region of Appalachia, who are largely of Scotch-Irish descent (for discussion on the Scotch-Irish immigrations, see Montgomery 2006). There is no single phonological or grammatical feature that uniquely characterizes AppE; instead, this dialect is best conceptualized as the nexus of a unique amalgam of disparate phonological and grammatical properties, which, taken together, distinguish this variety from other dialects of American English (cf. Hazen 2008: 135).

In recent years, non-standard dialects have attracted the interest of generative linguists. Neoteric formal studies of AppE have focused on the morpho-syntactic features of the dialect, including subject-verb agreement patterns (den Dikken et al. 2007, Bernstein and Zanuttini 2010, Tortora and den Dikken 2010), the feature content of the non-standard existential they (Tortora 2006), and the licensing of negative inversion (Zanuttini and Bernstein 2011).

These studies, the first generative studies of AppE to my knowledge, have not endeavored to capture the quantitative patterns of variability in the phenomena under consideration.

This dissertation seeks to provide a synthesis of quantitative and formal theoretical work by undertaking a quantitative and qualitative study of a variable phenomenon in AppE, a-prefixing (e.g., “she’s a-making good money”).

The rich sociolinguistic literature has described a-prefixing as a process constrained by a variety of factors operating together, including semantic/pragmatic, syntactic and phonological factors.
In this literature, the \( a \)-prefix is largely understood to serve a pragmatic or discourse-level function. That is, the meaning of the prefix is not a unique lexical meaning, but a meaning dependent upon one or more contextual factors.

In their seminal study of Appalachian English, Wolfram and Christian (1976) documented several syntactic constraints on \( a \)-prefixing. First, they found that the \( a \)-prefix references the category of \textit{–ing} forms: \( a \)-prefixation is licensed with verbal but not with homophonous nominal \textit{–ing} forms. Second, Wolfram and Christian suggest that \( a \)-prefixation cannot occur if the \( a \)-prefix would be adjacent to a preposition. Third, these researchers posit a constraint that favors \( a \)-prefixation on all \textit{–ing} forms in conjoined verb phrases (e.g., \textit{a-runnin’} and \textit{a-jumpin’}).

In addition to the three syntactic constraints on \( a \)-prefixing, Wolfram and Christian also detail two phonological constraints on \( a \)-prefixation. First, \( a \)-prefixation does not occur with vowel-initial bases (*\textit{a-askin’}). Second, the \( a \)-prefix is not licensed with bases possessing non-initial stress (*\textit{a-discoverin’}).

In Chapter 2, the sociolinguistic literature on \( a \)-prefixing is reviewed, including Wolfram and Christian’s groundbreaking study. From this review, a picture of \( a \)-prefixing in AppE emerges that shows this dialectal phenomenon to be anything but random; \( a \)-prefixing is instead governed by a complex set of interacting constraints that warrants the attention of not only quantitative sociolinguistics, but also formal linguistics.

Also in chapter 2, some problems with existing explanations for the various constraints on \( a \)-prefixing are discussed. Lacunae in the literature are also pointed out. These problems and gaps in the literature point to aspects of \( a \)-prefixing that require further investigation.
In chapter 3, the methods of data collection, the nature of the data used, and the form of sociolinguistic analysis used in the present investigation are detailed. The factors conditioning a-prefixing were examined using recently collected data from speakers in Southwestern Virginia and Eastern Tennessee, areas of Appalachia unstudied by previous researchers of a-prefixing. Details of the corpora used for the study are presented.

A number of syntactic tests are also presented in this chapter. These tests were used to determine the category of those –ing forms that were not clearly verbal or nominal. Crucially, these tests have not been applied in the descriptive literature. The use of syntactic tests enables us to show that some putative nominal a-prefixed –ing forms from the literature are, in fact, verbal.

The rich descriptive literature, beginning with Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976), permits present-day investigators of AppE to formulate precise hypotheses concerning a-prefixing. Also in chapter 3, the hypotheses tested in the present study are presented, and predictions regarding these hypotheses are detailed. Many of the hypotheses tested are motivated by findings and/or observations presented in the literature. Other hypotheses derive from observations made in collecting and extracting data for the present study. Each of the null and alternative hypotheses (and corresponding predictions) presented involve an independent variable that is coded as a factor group for a VARBRUL analysis.

In chapter 4, results from a traditional sociolinguistic VARBRUL analysis are presented. VARBRUL is a multivariate statistical procedure that allows an analyst to determine the relative contribution of different factors in the production of variable forms. While VARBRUL cannot predict precisely when a particular form will be produced, it can reveal what factors favor or disfavor a particular variant.
The VARBRUL results reported in chapter 4 show that sex influences the variable realization of the *a*-prefix: women favor *a*-prefixation, while men disfavor it. These results run counter to some conventional wisdom among linguists concerning sex and vernacular features. Much of the literature on sex and variation has found that men produce more vernacular forms than women (cf. overviews in Labov 1990 and 2001 (Chapter 8)). The finding that women produce more *a*-prefixed forms than men is discussed with reference to some sociolinguistic studies that have found similar results in nonurban communities, such as Nichols (1976, 1983).

A VARBRUL analysis also revealed that the following internal or linguistic factors condition the variable realization of the *a*-prefix: presence/absence of a perception verb (*see, hear*), presence/absence of the necessity modal (e.g., *must, should, would*) presence/absence of ‘anti-mirative’ elements, and verb type (intransitive, transitive, CP-complement).

It is suggested in chapters 3 and 4 that the results for perception verb, necessity modal (*must, should, would*) and ‘anti-mirative’ elements provide us with a way of understanding the pragmatic function of the *a*-prefix.

Verbal *-ing* forms serving as complements to perception verbs were more likely to be *a*-prefixed than *-ing* forms not serving as complements to such verbs. Presence of a necessity modal (*must, should, would*) also favored *a*-prefixation. These results are arguably related to two components of mirativity: evidentiality and modality.

While *a*-prefixing is favored with perception verbs and necessity modals, the prefix is disfavored with what are referred to as ‘anti-mirative’ elements. Anti-mirative elements were taken to be explicit markers for i) a lack of direct (sensory) evidence for a proposition and/or ii) doubt concerning the veridicality of a proposition.
The finding that the *a*-prefix is favored in contexts in which the speaker has sensory
evidence and is certain a proposition is true based on some set of circumstances, and that it is
disfavored in those contexts in which the speaker lacks sensory evidence and/or expresses doubt
concerning the truth of a proposition, provide indirect support for the theory that the *a*-prefix
functions as a kind of mirative marker.

Mirative markers serve to mark information as unexpected or wondrous (DeLancey
1997). Mirativity is a speaker-oriented morpho-pragmatic marker. The analysis of the *a*-prefix
as a kind of mirative marker plays a role in the Optimality-Theoretic (Prince and Smolensky
1993) account of *a*-prefixing.

It is argued that there are two progressive forms in AppE, non-mirative progressive forms
and mirative progressive forms. Non-mirative progressive forms are chosen in contexts in which
a mirative pragmatic meaning is not appropriate. Mirative progressive forms, on the other hand,
are selected in mirative contexts. The *a*-prefixed form is a mirative progressive form. This form
is variably selected in mirative contexts. There are therefore two variants of mirative progressive
forms: *a*-prefixed *a*-X-ing, and non-*a*-prefixed X-ing. It is the distribution of these two mirative
variants that is the focus of chapter 5.

A final factor group selected as significant by VARBRUL was verb type (intransitive,
transitive, CP-complement). The analysis revealed that intransitive verbs favor prefixation,
while CP-complement disfavor the prefix.

It is suggested in chapters 4 and 5 that these results correspond to the frequencies with
which the different verb types appear in the corpora used in the present study. Intransitive verbs
are the most frequently occurring verb type in the data. Verbs selecting a CP-complement are the
least frequently occurring verb type.
In chapter 5, the *a*-prefix is argued to be a relatively non-productive morphological process. Less productive morphological processes often target more frequently occurring bases (Aronoff 1982). The results indicate that the *a*-prefix is targeting bases with a high usage frequency because it is a relatively less productive morphological process. This targeting of high-frequency bases is suggested to account for the preservation of the prefix in the face of leveling or neutralization pressures.

The data investigated here confirm two of the categorical or invariant restrictions on *a*-prefixing that have been posited in the literature. First, the category constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian (1976) was confirmed: *a*-prefixing occurs with verbal –*ing* forms, but not homophous nominal forms. Also confirmed was Wolfram and Christian’s stress constraint: *a*-prefixing is licensed only with those bases possessing initial stress.

Wolfram and Christian also argued for an additional invariant constraint on *a*-prefixing: the vowel-initial constraint. This constraint captured the descriptive generalization that prefixation occurs with consonant-initial but not vowel-initial forms. This constraint holds in the data examined for the present study. However, due to findings from previous studies that show *a*-prefixation with tense-vowel-initial words, the formulation of the constraint must be modified.

In chapter 5, a formal analysis of *a*-prefixing informed by the VARBRUL results is presented. In addition to analyzing data used in the present study, available data from previous studies of *a*-prefixing were taken into account in providing the formal analysis.

The category constraint as presented by Wolfram and Christian (1976) bans the *a*-prefix with nominal forms. An additional constraint proposed by these researchers bans the *a*-prefix immediately following a preposition. It is shown that modifying the category constraint allows us to capture i) the near total non-occurrence of the *a*-prefix with nouns, ii) the failure, on the one
hand, of the a-prefix to occur after certain prepositions, and iii) the appearance, on the other hand, of the a-prefix adjacent to other prepositions.

An analysis is presented that attributes the distribution of the a-prefix to the morpho-syntactic features of the base. This analysis is based on work by Cowper (1993, 1995 a, b, 1999, 2003a, b) on the morpho-syntactic feature structure of nominal and verbal –ing forms. It is argued that the a-prefix attaches only to bases possessing the verbal feature [INTERVAL]. Crucially, the prefix does not attach to nouns because nouns lack this morpho-syntactic feature.

A formal analysis of the phonological restrictions on the realization of the a-prefixed progressive in mirative contexts is presented. As noted, one of the invariant phonological constraints posited by Wolfram and Christian requires modification. The constraint banning the a-prefix with vowel-initial forms is recast as militating against lax-vowel sequences. It is argued that because the a-prefix is itself a lax vowel, it is banned with lax-vowel-initial bases, an anti-identity effect. This reformulation captures not only the data considered here, but the published data as well.

The invariant constraint restricting the a-prefix to bases possessing word-initial stress is found to hold in the data. Putative exceptions to the constraint from a previous study are examined. It is shown that these examples are not conclusive. An alternative explanation for these apparent exceptions is discussed. It is suggested that variable phonological processes may have applied to the bases that possess non-initial stress. These processes result in the deletion of an unstressed vowel (or an unstressed syllable). The resulting base is then suitable for a-prefixation.

In chapter 5 it is also argued that a-prefixing is an exemplar of arbitrary preference allomorphy. Arbitrary preference allomorphy is an allomorphy system in which the distribution
of allomorphs can be described in phonological terms, but nevertheless resists a purely phonological characterization (Wolf 2008: 61). In such a system general markedness constraints cannot be appealed to in order to account for the distribution of morphs. In fact, the insertion of one of the morphs often results in an overall increase in markedness. In the literature, the more marked morph is generally understood to receive preferential treatment by the grammar.

In the case of a-prefixing, it is argued that the mirative progressive prefix-suffix combination [ə-] ... [-ɪn] is best analyzed as a circumfix. Circumfixation involves simultaneous prefixation and suffixation (Spencer 1998). In mirative progressive contexts, the mirative circumfix is variably selected. The form [ə-] ... [-ɪn] alternates with the non-circumfixed mirative progressive form [-ɪn] in mirative contexts. The circumfixal morph places selectional restrictions on possible bases, including the restriction that bases be composed of certain morpho-syntactic features (specifically the feature [INTERVAL]), as well as the phonological restrictions discussed above.

An analysis of the various selectional restrictions briefly described above is formalized using Wolf’s (2008) derivational theory of the morphology-phonology interface, Optimal Interleaving (OI). In this analysis, the circumfixal morph [ə-]... [-ɪn] is analyzed as expressing a proper superset of the features encoded by the non-circumfixed mirative form [-ɪn]. Forms lacking the circumfix ([ɪn] forms) encode the feature [INTERVAL]. Circumfixed forms ([ə-] ... [-ɪn]) encode the feature [INTERVAL] as well; however, these forms additionally realize the morpho-pragmatic feature [MIRATIVE]. This additional feature realized by the mirative circumfix results in the circumfix being preferentially chosen in mirative contexts when all other restrictions (i.e., morpho-syntactic and phonological restrictions) are satisfied.
Chapter 5 also discusses how some of the variation seen in mirative circumfixation might be accommodated in an Optimality-Theoretic (OT) grammar. Because the circumfix is a sociolinguistic variable, a number of complex linguistic factors determine its distribution. These factors require reference to not only the phonological make-up of the base for circumfixation, but the larger discourse context as well. It is suggested an OT grammar with a probabilistic component could model this kind of variation.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation, summarizing the results of the VARBRUL analysis and the formal account of mirative circumfixation using Optimal Interleaving.
CHAPTER II

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews the literature on a-prefixing in Appalachian English (AppE), focusing on those ‘rules’ that govern the appearance of the prefix. Problems with existing treatments of a-prefixing are pointed out and open questions are detailed.

Based on the pragmatic, morpho-syntactic and phonological constraints that go together in licensing a-prefixing, it is argued that the process is an interface phenomenon.

The structure of the remainder of this chapter is as follows: section 2.2 briefly introduces a-prefixing, providing some examples of this phenomenon from the literature. Before delving into the findings of extant studies on a-prefixing, section 2.3 provides a discussion of the methodologies of these studies. This section details what type(s) of data (e.g., interview or questionnaire) each study used, and, where available, the demographics of speakers from which the data come. Also summarized, where available, are the size of corpora, the total number of –ing tokens and the number of a-prefixed tokens examined in each study. In section 2.3.7, two tables are provided that summarize all of this information, allowing for comparison of the different studies.

In next 3 sections, the findings presented in the literature are reviewed. The semantics/pragmatics of a-prefixing, as detailed in the literature, is presented in section 2.4. A review of the literature reveals that researchers largely agree with Feagin’s (1979) finding that the a-prefix serves a kind of discourse-level or pragmatic function.

In section 2.5 the syntactic environments in which the a-prefix is banned are discussed. Wolfram and Christian (1976) found that the a-prefix does not occur in nominal forms and also
does not occur adjacent to a preposition. These are two of the categorical or invariant constraints posited by Wolfram and Christian. As discussed, Montgomery (2009) indicates that the \(a\)-prefix can occur in gerundive forms as well as adjacent to a preposition; though, he notes that \(a\)-prefixation in such environments is disfavored.

Wolfram and Christian also posit two categorical phonological constraints. First, the \(a\)-prefix is banned with vowel-initial bases (*\(a\)-askin’). Second the \(a\)-prefix is not permitted with bases possessing non-initial stress (*\(a\)-discoverin’). Montgomery (2009) finds only several exceptions to these two constraints, suggesting that while the constraints posited by Wolfram and Christian are not categorical, they are nonetheless active in the dialect.

In addition to the two categorical phonology constraints, Wolfram (1980) holds there is also a variable phonological constraint that disfavors the realization of the \(a\)-prefix following a vowel (\(V\# \_\_\) ). The subsequent literature, including Christian, Wolfram and Dube (1988) and Montgomery (2009) find no evidence for this variable constraint, however.

In section 2.6, some problems with existing accounts of \(a\)-prefixing are discussed. Specifically, those challenges confronting explanations for the pragmatic function of the \(a\)-prefix as well as the syntactic and phonological factors that constrain \(a\)-prefixing are presented. Finally, section 2.7 closes the chapter with a brief summary.

2.2 \(A\)-prefixing

\(A\)-prefixing refers to forms such as those in (1), in which “\(a\)” is generally understood to be prefixed before the verb or adjectival/adverbial construction:

\(1\) \(A\)-prefixing on -\(ing\) forms:

a. It just took somebody all the time \(a\)-\(working\), \(a\)-\(keeping\) that, because it
was a-boiling. 1978 Montgomery White Pine Coll. III-2 (Montgomery and Hall 2004: 2)


c. Wilford was kind of sick his last years a-teachin’. 1981 GSMNP-122: 25 (Montgomery and Hall 2004: 2)

(2) A-prefixing on past participial -ed forms

a. I just a-wondered. (Jim Carr, Byrds Creek TN) 1956 Hall Coll. (Montgomery and Hall 2004: 2)

b. Now they’s people gets lost in these Smoky Mountains specially before the park has a-opened up so many bridle trails. 1954 GSMNP-19: 6 (Montgomery and Hall 2004: 2)

c. I would get them a-gentled up and then I put the yoke on them. 1969 GSMNP-46:1 (Montgomery and Hall 2004: 2)

(3) A-prefixing on adjectival/adverbial forms

a. That’s probably what’s a-wrong. (Wolfram and Christian 1976: 74)

b. I said, turn ’em a-loose!” (Wolfram and Christian 1976: 74)

c. We’d have a stack a-way up high. (Wolfram and Christian 1976: 74)

d. I can make a-many of them. (Wolfram and Christian 1976: 74)

Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) observe that while a-prefixing is found in other dialects of American English, it occurs most frequently in AppE. Studies of AppE a-prefixing have focused exclusively on prefixation before verbal/adverbial -ing forms, having set aside a-prefixing on other forms.
In the present study as well, forms such as those in (2) and (3) are not considered. The decision to exclude these forms from analysis is based in part on the exclusion of these forms by previous researchers. In order for the results reported in this investigation to be properly compared with results from previous studies, the study needs to focus on the same class of forms.

The decision to exclude the forms in (2) and (3) is also partly empirical, as well as practical. Existing studies of *a*-prefixing have noted that *a*-prefixed forms like those in (2) and (3) occur less frequently than *a*-prefixed -*ing* forms. In the case of the corpora used here, these forms were absent in the data.

There is also a historical reason for focusing only on *a*-prefixed -*ing* forms and excluding other *a*-prefixed forms from investigation. The *a*-prefix is diachronically derived from the preposition *on/at*, which occurred with -*ing* forms (‘he’s on hunting’) (Nagucka 1984). The *a*-prefix that appears with participial -*ed* forms (as well as the prefix that appears with other forms) is not derived from the preposition *on/at*, however. This indicates the possibility that the *a*-prefix used with -*ing* forms and the prefix used with other forms may not, in fact, be the same form.

Based on the precedent from previous studies, empirical observations/practical considerations and the possibly different historical sources for *a*-prefixing with -*ing* forms and *a*-prefixing with other types of forms, only *a*-prefixed -*ing* forms were considered in the present study. The argument that *a*-prefixed -*ing* forms and other *a*-prefixed forms involve a different *a*-prefix is picked up again in chapter 5. There it is suggested that the so-called *a*-prefix is really a circumfix, involving simultaneous prefixation and suffixation to a base.

The next section is devoted to detailing the methodologies of previous studies of *a*-prefixing.
2.3 Nature of data used in existing studies of a-prefixing: a review

The purpose of this section is to review the methodologies of existing studies of a-prefixing. For each study, the method(s) of data collection (i.e., interview, questionnaire, observation), details of the informants (i.e., number, sex distribution, age-range, social class distribution), and the geographic location(s) of the study are surveyed. Specific details related to each study’s treatment of a-prefixing are also provided, including, where available, total number of -ing tokens and total number of a-prefixixed tokens. In section 2.3.7, all details provided are summarized in two tables that allow for easy comparison of the studies.

2.3.1 Hackenberg (1972)

The first sociolinguistic investigation of a-prefixing in AppE was conducted by Hackenberg (1972). Hackenberg’s corpus comes from tape-recorded interviews collected in July 1971 in the Nicholas County, WV. Hackenberg conducted his own fieldwork, and was introduced to members of the community as a student studying the local speech. The interviews took place in homes, offices and classrooms (for young students).

Three types of data were collected by Hackenberg: interviews, sentences and minimal pairs. Of these three types of data, only the interviews were used for analysis. In addition to the interviews that were analyzed, a forced-choice test (19 items involving a-prefixing) was administered to 120 informants in May 1972. Out of a total of 60 informant interviews, 39 interviews were used for sociolinguistic analysis. The informants from the analyzed interviews ranged in age from 13 to 82. Most of the informants were from the middle and bottom of the social scale.

1 The remaining interviews were excluded either because they did not contain enough of the variables being studied or because the informants were not from Nicholas County (or the surrounding counties).
In the 39 analyzed interviews, only 12 informants produced the a-prefix. Hackenberg notes that these informants produced a total of 51 a-prefixed forms. Only actual a-prefixed forms were tabulated; no count of possible a-prefixed forms was performed.

2.3.2 Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976)

Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) investigated a-prefixing in Monroe and Mercer Counties, West Virginia. In the fall of 1974, six non-linguist fieldworkers trained in sociolinguistic interview techniques interviewed informants throughout the counties. The fieldworkers were given one of two interview schedules (one designed for adults, the other for adolescents) that included topics about everyday living, memories from life experiences, traditions in the community and current activities. Though given interview schedules, the fieldworkers were also instructed to be flexible with interview topics and to follow the interests of the informants (this practice based on Wolfram and Fasold 1974: 46-54). The interviews took place in informant’s/fieldworker’s home, a location convenient to both informant and fieldworker or, in the case of younger children, in school.

Out of the 129 tape-recorded samples from the interviews in Mercer and Monroe counties, Wolfram and Christian selected the interviews of 52 speakers to be used for sociolinguistic analysis. The researchers selected these interviews based upon 3 criteria: the rapport between the fieldworker and the informant(s), the quantity of speech produced, the audio quality of the recording.

Noting that the focus of their investigation was ‘divergent speech’, Wolfram and Christian (1976) note that they did not randomly select speakers for study; they selected speakers
mostly from a lower socio-economic status (10, 11).\(^2\) The 52 speakers selected ranged in age from 7 to 67.

In their quantitative investigation of \(a\)-prefixing in particular, Wolfram and Christian looked at the speech of 13 informants (9 male, 4 female; age range: 11-93). These informants produced a total of 860 \(-ing\) forms.\(^3\) Of these 860 forms, 183 were \(a\)-prefixed (21.3\%) (Wolfram and Christian 1976: Table 18, p. 75).

In the next sections, the methodologies of Wolfram (1980) and Christian, Wolfram and Dube (1988) are reviewed. In both of these investigations of \(a\)-prefixing in AppE, the researchers used data from the 129 samples collected for Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976), though the different studies analyzed different subsets of the larger set of data.

2.3.3 Wolfram (1980)

Wolfram (1980) selected 49 informants from the 129 samples collected for Wolfram and Christian’s original study. Details concerning the sex distribution/age range/social class distribution of these informants are not available.

All of the 49 informants in Wolfram’s investigation realized the \(a\)-prefix on \(-ing\) forms.\(^4\) In total, Wolfram notes his corpora consisted of 300+ examples of \(a\)-prefixing (he does not provide details concerning how many total \(-ing\) forms were produced). In his study of \(a\)-prefixing, Wolfram also analyzed the corpora of Hackenberg (1972) and Feagin (1979) (109).

\(^2\) Though note that there was some social range in the group of speakers.
\(^3\) Note that these also included nominal \(-ing\) forms, which Wolfram and Christian would show are not possible sites of \(a\)-prefixation.
\(^4\) Wolfram does not provide demographic information on the speakers.
2.3.4 Christian, Wolfram and Dube (1988)

From the 129 interviews completed in 1974 for Wolfram and Christian’s original studies, Christian, Wolfram and Dube (1988) selected 62 speakers (31m, 31f). These researchers analyzed 250 instances of a-prefixing out of a total of 1350 –ing forms (18.5%) (figures from Table 4.4, pp. 72-73).\(^5\)

In addition to the samples of naturally-occurring speech, Christian, Wolfram and Dube also distributed a questionnaire on a-prefixing to 31 speakers from Mercer County, WV. The questionnaire was a forced-choice test that asked speakers to select which –ing form in a pair of forms sounded best with the a-prefix. Five different types of sentences were presented:

Categorial pairs (e.g., a pair with a nominal a-suffixed form (Bessie likes a-sailin’)) and a verbal a-prefixed form (Bessie went a-sailin’); Phonological pairs (e.g., a pair with a stressed initial syllable (a-hollerin’) and an unstressed initial syllable (a-confessin’); Adverb pairs (e.g., a pair with a maximizing adverb (really a-starin’) and a minimizing adverb (only a-starin’); verbal pairs (e.g., a pair with a ‘descriptive’ verb (a-fussin’) and a generic verb (a-talkin’); Negated/non-negated pairs (e.g., John wasn’t a-talkin’/John was a-talkin’); and declarative/interrogative pairs (e.g., She was a-goin’/Was she a-goin’?) (all examples from Table 4.1, pp. 62-63).

2.3.5 Feagin (1979)

Feagin (1979) investigated a-prefixing in the speech of residents from Anniston, Alabama, in the southernmost region of Appalachia. Feagin conducted fieldwork in Anniston

\(^5\) Christian, Wolfram and Dube also investigate Ozark English in their study. Note, however, that the number of speakers and tokens discussed above refer only to the AppE portion of their study.
between 1968 and 1973. Feagin interviewed informants mostly in their homes, though interviews also took place in a restaurant, the recreation hall of a housing project and in a classroom of the local high school. Interview topics included childhood games, courting and exciting experiences.

In total, 82 informants were interviewed. Out of this larger sample, Feagin selected 65 informants (32m, 33f) whose productions would be used for analysis (Figure 2.1, p. 26). The informants ranged in age from 9 to 86. Of all the studies on a-prefixing in AppE, Feagin’s involves the most social range; while there are 41 working class informants in her study, there are 24 upper class informants (26).7

In addition to the 65 informants who were formally interviewed, Feagin also uses what she refers to as the ‘anonymous observations’ of 127 speakers (27).8 These consisted of forms she heard in her interactions with others and documented in a notebook. These forms were predominantly produced by lower middle class and working class speakers (Figure 2.2, p. 28).

From the interviews and anonymous observations, Feagin extracted 247 total (interview: 222; observation: 25) a-prefixied –ing forms (taken from Figure 5.1, p. 103). Only a count of actual a-prefixed forms is provided; there is no tabulation of possible a-prefixed forms.

2.3.6 Montgomery (2009)

Montgomery (2009) uses his Corpus of Smoky Mountain English (CSME) to investigate a-prefixing in AppE. The CSME is a compilation of 136 interviews from a six-county section of

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6 Feagin had lived in Anniston as a child but had lived in Washington, DC for approximately 15 years before her fieldwork. Feagin notes that she had lived in an upper class section of town (where her grandparents and other relatives still lived during her fieldwork). It is unclear how Feagin introduced herself to residents in Anniston who did not know her family (i.e., as a student or as a former resident, or both).

7 Feagin notes that her informants range from a tenant farmer to a millionaire.

8 There were 10 additional speakers, but these were non-Alabamians.
the Great Smoky Mountain National Park area, along the Tennessee-North Carolina border (Montgomery 2009: 13-14). The speakers interviewed were born between 1843 and 1915 (most before 1900) and were recorded between 1939 and 1984.

Many of the interviews were recorded by linguist Joseph Sargent Hall. Hall was hired by the National Park Service in the mid-1930s, when the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was being established (Montgomery 2004: 1-2). Hall was charged with documenting the language and culture of the residents who were being displaced by the new park (2). His first fieldwork trip was in the summer of 1937, when he carried no recording equipment (3). In June of 1939, Hall returned to the Smokies to record conversations, stories and music (including ballads, folk songs and hymns) to be used in a phonetic study of Smoky Mountain speech (3).

Hall lived in the camps of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and in the homes of residents in Tennessee and North Carolina for 9 months, recording speech (3-4). Hall would return in 1940 and 1941 to collect more data for his dissertation (6). After the publication of his dissertation in 1942, he returned again to conduct still more interviews (6). After a period of absence, Hall returned to the region in 1949 to find that most of his original informants were no longer living (6). Hall’s last fieldwork in the region was in 1976 (6).

No detailed information concerning the nature of the interviews or the demographics of the informants is available (see also information provided in Montgomery 2012b). The information provided by Hall (1942) and Montgomery (2004) clearly indicates, however that the interviews were informal (Hall was ingenious at eliciting natural speech and made no effort to constrain the topics his speakers would talk about) and that Hall was not treated as an outsider.
From his 400,000-word CSME, Montgomery (2009) extracts a total of 2892 -ing forms; out of these forms 1053 were a-prefixed (1053/2892: 36.4%) (14). 9

2.3.7 Summary of data used in previous studies

The studies investigating a-prefixing in different areas of Appalachia differ in many respects. For example, the studies differ in the number of informants, distribution of informants by sex and/or social class, and quantities of speech samples collected. However, despite such differences, the studies also share much in common. For example, though many investigators used flexible sociolinguistic interview schedules (Wolfram and Christian, for example) while others used charm and ingenuity (Hall, for example), the end result in all of the studies was a corpus of naturally occurring speech. Similarly, though many investigators analyzed only naturally-collected data while others supplemented these data with judgments from questionnaires, most claims made concerning a-prefixing were based upon the quantitative and/or qualitative examination of naturally occurring speech.

The similarities among the studies are evident in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 summarizes the general methodologies of the various studies, while Table 2 summarizes particular aspects of the methodologies relevant to a-prefixing.

9 The -ing forms extracted include both nouns and verbs. The number of actual a-prefixed forms is taken from the text; note that in summaries in Tables 1, 2 and 6 the number is 1054, not 1053, a trivial discrepancy.
Table 1. Existing studies of *a*-prefixing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Type of Data</th>
<th># speakers</th>
<th>Social class</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Length of interview</th>
<th>Area of Appalachia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hackenberg (1972)</td>
<td>Interview/ Forced-choice test</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Mostly lower, with some range</td>
<td>13-82</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>Nicholas county, WV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20f, 19m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfram &amp; Christian (1976)</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>Mostly lower, with some range</td>
<td>7-93</td>
<td>30-60min</td>
<td>Monroe &amp; Mercer counties, WV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24m, 28f</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feagin (1979)</td>
<td>Interview/ Observation</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Upper class: 24; Working class: 41</td>
<td>9-86</td>
<td>30min-2hrs 15min</td>
<td>Anniston, AL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32m, 33f</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfram (1980)</td>
<td>Interview (also, corpora of Hackenberg (1972) and Feagin (1979))</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Mostly lower</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Monroe &amp; Mercer counties, WV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31m, 31f</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery (2009)</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>136 interviews</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Tennessee/ North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Data used in previous studies on a-prefixing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># speakers</th>
<th># tokens -ing</th>
<th># tokens a-prefixed</th>
<th>% a-prefixed tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hackenberg (1972)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfram &amp; Christian (1976)</td>
<td>13 (9m, 4f)</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feagin (1979)</td>
<td>30 (interview) (12m, 18f) 6 (observations)</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfram (1980)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>300+</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian, Wolfram &amp; Dube (1988)</td>
<td>22 (11m, 11f)</td>
<td>1396</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery (2009)</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>2892</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the discussion of the data used for the present study (chapter 3), these tables are repeated with an added row allowing for comparison of the current study with previous studies of a-prefixing.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, the findings of each of the studies detailed in the tables above are presented. Section 2.4 presents findings in the literature concerning the function of the a-prefix. As discussed, researchers largely agree that the a-prefix serves a discourse-level or pragmatic function. Section 2.5 discusses the syntactic factors that constrain a-prefixing, including a constraint banning a-prefixing with nominal –ing forms.
In section 2.6, three phonological constraints on a-prefixing are discussed. Two of these constraints were argued in Wolfram and Christian (1976) to be categorical (no a-prefixing with vowel-initial forms or with forms possessing non-initial stress), while one has been suggested by Wolfram (1980) to be variable (a-prefixing is disfavored following a vowel). Montgomery (2009) indicates that the two categorical phonological constraints are better understood as variable constraints. Both Christian, Wolfram and Dube (1988) and Montgomery (2009) find no evidence for the variable constraint disfavoring a-prefixing after vowel-final words.

2.4 The semantics/pragmatics of a-prefixing

Stewart (1967) was the first to provide an analysis of a-prefixing in AppE. He focused exclusively on the meaning of a-prefixing, arguing that a-prefixed forms and non-a-prefixed forms have different semantics. With the caveat that his evidence came from only his informal observations of Appalachian speech, he maintains that the use of the a-prefix indicates “…the action of the verb is indefinite in space or time,” while the non-a-prefixed forms indicates that the action denoted by the verb is “…immediate in space or time” (1).

Under Stewart’s analysis, the sentence John’s a-workin’ indicates that the subject works every day or that the subject is working out of sight from the speaker. In contrast, the sentence John’s working indicates that the subject is working at the time of utterance, and he is working within proximity of the speaker. In his analysis, then, Stewart explicitly aligns a-prefixed forms in AppE with the use of be in African American Vernacular English.

Hackenberg (1972) and Feagin (1979) also treat the semantics/pragmatics of a-prefixing. Hackenberg investigated a-prefixing in the speech of residents in Nicholas County, West Virginia. Hackenberg argues that the use of the a-prefix “…seems to be a syntactic manifestation
of semantic conditioning” (116). Specifically, Hackenberg argues that the \textit{a}-prefix is selected when a speaker wishes to emphasize the “duration” of an event.

Hackenberg discusses the function of progressives, which he says are used to convey three types of action: continuous, intermittent, and planned action. Hackenberg provides the following sentences to illustrate these three classes of action:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Continuous: They’re playing cards right now.
\item Intermittent: This year they’re playing bridge.
\item Planned: They’re playing cards after supper.
\end{enumerate}

The difference between the continuous and intermittent aspect, Hackenberg says, is that in the former, but not the latter, the action must be in progress at the time of utterance. Hackenberg decomposes the semantics of the three progressive aspects above into features: [+ PLAN(NED)], and [+/- INT(ERMITTENT)] and [+/- LONG-TERM].

Hackenberg’s corpus consisted of only 51 \textit{a}-prefixed forms. Given the small size of the corpus, Hackenberg was not able to test his prediction that the rate of \textit{a}-prefixation is affected by the feature composition of the verb. Hackenberg therefore supplemented his data with an orally administered, 19-item forced choice test.

In this test, 120 speakers were presented with pairs of sentences and asked to choose which sentence “sounded best” with the \textit{a}-prefixed progressive verb. Hackenberg contrasted progressives with the feature [-INT] with [+INT], progressives with [+PLAN] with those with

\footnote{Note that [+PLAN] is a unary feature, not a binary feature like [+/- INT] and [+/- LONG TERM]. This becomes relevant below, in the discussion of features contrasted in Hackenberg’s forced-choice test. Hackenberg does not address why this feature is unary while the others are binary.}
the feature [-INT], [-INT] progressives with the verb KEEP to those without KEEP, and [-INT] long-term with [-INT] short-term. Sentences showing these four putative contrasts, taken directly from Hackenberg’s appendix, are provided below:

(5) CONTRAST 1: [-INT] vs. [+INT]
   a. I see him *a*-jumping the fence right now. [-INT]
   b. He’s been *a*-jumping from one job to another for years. [+INT]

(6) CONTRAST 2: [+PLAN] vs. [-INT]
   a. He’s *a*-going tomorrow. [+ PLAN]
   b. He’s *a*-going along the road right now. [-INT]

(7) CONTRAST 3: KEEP [-INT] vs. [-INT]
   a. He kept *a*-talking.
   b. He was *a*-talking.

(8) CONTRAST 4: short-term [-INT] vs. long-term [-INT]
   a. He’s *a*-hunting for his glasses. short-term
   b. He’s *a*-hunting out in the woods. long-term

Hackenberg submitted the results of the forced-choice task to statistical analysis. He reports that the most dramatic result was with the contrast between [+INT] and [-INT]. This category of the progressive was tested with five forced-choice items. [+INT] favored *a*-prefixing ($\chi^2(1) = 58.9, p < .001$) (125).

In the case of the second contrast, Hackenberg notes that [+PLAN] items were disfavored when compared to [-INT] items, but the Chi-square value was not statistically significant ($\chi^2(1) = 2.9, p > .001$). Hackenberg attributes the tendency for [+PLAN] items to be disfavored to a frequency effect: the planned aspect occurs less frequently with progressive items in general.
For the KEEP/non-KEEP [-INT] items, sentences without KEEP were preferred, though the difference was not statistically significant ($\chi^2(1) = 5.3, p > .001$). In the fourth and final comparison, Hackenberg compared long-term [-INT] with short-term [-INT]. He found that long-term [-INT] favors $a$-prefixing ($\chi^2(1) = 15.4, p < .001$).

Based on the foregoing statistical results, Hackenberg concludes that the $a$-prefix is favored when speakers wish to emphasize that “duration”. In discussing the use of the $a$-prefix to convey duration, Hackenberg points out that $a$-prefixing is less likely to be found with the lexical item KEEP because KEEP itself serves to emphasize duration.

Hackenberg does not spell out what, precisely, is meant by “duration”. It seems, based on Hackenberg’s description, that he means something like iteration. As noted in the discussion below, Wolfram and Christian (1976) point out that it is unclear how the semantics of the $a$-prefix, under Hackenberg’s analysis, differ from the semantics of the progressive participle.

While Hackenberg, like Stewart, argues for a semantic function for $a$-prefixed forms, Feagin (1979) argues that $a$-prefixing plays a pragmatic role. Feagin examines the speech of residents of Anniston, Alabama, in the southern tip of Appalachia. Based on her data, she notes that the use of $a$-prefixed forms adds “…a sense of immediacy and dramatic vividness,” either to the verbs being used or to the discourse in general (108).

Feagin discusses two pieces of evidence that she says point to the pragmatic function of the $a$-prefix. First, the intensifying adverb just is used with the $a$-prefix more than any other adverb. This adverb itself, used in the relevant sense, serves to dramatize the action of the verb it modifies (e.g., …we could come down the street just a-flyin’ and grab that rope and go way up in the air) (example from Feagin, p. 102, ex. 10). Second, Feagin notes that $a$-prefixed forms occurred more frequently in particular kinds of contexts. Speakers used the form most
frequently when telling stories about “…ghosts, accidents, murders, tornadoes, fires, juicy gossip, hunting, or childhood games and escapades” (115).

Based on the discourse-contextual conditioning and the co-occurrence of the *a*-prefix with ‘dramatizing’ Feagin concludes that there are two possible accounts for the use of the *a*-prefix. The first is that the prefix serves as a stylistic device that adds “color and immediacy” to discourse (115). A second possible account is that the prefix is used when speakers become emotionally involved in telling a story, and, as a result, let slip “older, more rural” forms that they normally censor (115). Feagin settles on the first account of *a*-prefixing: *a*-prefixed forms add color or vividness. Ultimately, as discussed below, it is Feagin’s pragmatic-oriented analysis that gains the widest acceptance.

Wolfram and Christian (1976), Wolfram (1976) and Christian, Wolfram and Dube (1988) investigate *a*-prefixing in the speech of speakers living in southern West Virginia. These researchers reject Stewart’s (1967) semantic account of *a*-prefixing. Recall Stewart analyzes the prefix as signaling that the activity denoted by the verb is removed in space in time. Wolfram and Christian observe that Stewart’s characterization predicts *a*-prefixed forms should not co-occur with adverbial modifiers that refer to a particular, proximal activity. Wolfram and Christian provide the following forms, produced by their speakers:

(9)

a. I’s *a*-washin’ one day and to go under the door I had to go under that spider.
b. I’s *a*-cannin’ chicken one time.
c. …all of a sudden, a bear come *a*-runnin’ towards him and he shot it between the eyes.
d. Count to about 10 or 15 so we can see if this machine’s *a*-workin’.
According to Wolfram and Christian, in each of the above examples “…the speaker is located at a specific time or place” (73).

Based on the forms in (9), Wolfram and Christian maintain that Stewart’s account is insupportable. Wolfram and Christian conclude that there is no unique function of a-prefixed forms, though they do not rule out the possibility that a-prefixing may provide the stylistic effect of adding “dramatic vividness” to narrative discourse (73).

In addition to arguing against Stewart’s account of a-prefixing, Wolfram (1976) also rejects Hackenberg’s (1972) analysis. Hackenberg found that a-prefixing occurred most often with INTERMITTENT aspect. He therefore argued the a-prefix serves to emphasize that the activity described by the verb occurs iteratively. Wolfram points out, however, that the INTERMITTENT aspect described by Hackenberg is not contributed by the a-prefix; rather, it is derived from the semantics of progressives in general. Thus, Wolfram essentially concludes that Hackenberg has described the environment in which the a-prefix occurs (i.e., with the progressive participle –ing) and not the function of the prefix itself.

Wolfram also dismisses Feagin’s assertion that a-prefixing is more likely to occur in intensifying contexts. In countering Feagin’s claim, Wolfram observes that the prefix is also found with so-called minimizing adverbs like hardly. Additionally, Wolfram points out non-a-prefixed forms are found with intensifying adverbs such as just (54).11

Wolfram (1988) and Christian et al. (1988) re-examine Feagin’s argument. These researchers test the intensity hypothesis using a selection task. Speakers were presented with sentence pairs differing in whether they contained maximizing adverb (such as really) or a

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11 Note, however, that the co-occurrence of the adverb just with forms lacking the a-prefix does not constitute evidence against Feagin’s analysis. A-prefixation is a variable phenomenon. Thus, forms that both lack the prefix and co-occur with just are expected.
minimizing adverb (such as only). Examples of sentences constructed for the task, taken from Wolfram (1988), follow:

(10)
   a. He was really a-starin’ at the picture.
   b. He was only a-starin’ at the picture.

As reported in Wolfram (1988), a significant difference (p < .001) was found between maximizing and minimizing adverbs. Maximizing adverbs favored the use of a-prefixed forms. Wolfram thus concludes that Feagin’s assertion that a-prefixed forms serve an intensifying function is supported.

Note that Feagin’s treatment of the a-prefix as serving an ‘intensifying’ function (as well as Wolfram’s (1988) and Christian et al.’s (1988) putative confirmation of this function) does not mean that the ‘intensification’ provided by the a-prefix is a semantic intensification. That is, Feagin is not arguing (nor is Wolfram and Christian, Wolfram and Dube confirming) that the a-prefix possesses a lexical meaning encoding intensification. Instead, Feagin describes the relevant notion of intensification as a dramatization, a way of enacting the discourse for the listener so that the listener realizes the event being described was dramatic or exciting for the speaker. This notion of intensification is not semantic; rather it is pragmatic.

More recently, Montgomery (2009) also endorses an account like Feagin’s in which a-prefix serves a discourse-level function. Montgomery agrees with Wolfram’s (1988) and Christian et al.’s (1988) finding that the a-prefix does not possess any unique semantic function.
Interestingly, Montgomery (2009) comments that this function is one which native speakers of the dialect intuitively have a feel for, but one which they are not able to articulate (10). Montgomery also points out that the form is not dying out in the dialect (as had been argued by Wolfram (1976) and also by Feagin (1979)), perhaps because of its function of marking speech as vernacular (10).\footnote{Note that it is not clear upon what Montgomery bases the assertion that a-prefixing is not dying out. Montgomery makes no mention of either a real or apparent time study and he does not reference any other type of evidence for this claim.}

It should be noted that Montgomery does not make explicit whether he believes the a-prefix only marks vernacularity, or whether it is both serves an intensification function and serves as a marker of vernacularity. Of course, sociolinguistic variables can serve more than one function; thus, the a-prefix could serve as a marker of vernacularity as well as marking the discourse as ‘dramatic’ (Schilling 2012, p.c.).

2.5 Syntactic factors affecting a-prefixing

2.5.1 Overview

While Stewart is the first to present an analysis of the semantics of a-prefixing, Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) and Wolfram (1976) are the first to detail the syntactic factors conditioning a-prefixation. To briefly anticipate the discussion below, these researchers describe two invariant constraints and one variable constraint.

The first restriction involves the lexical category of -ing forms: The a-prefix is not permitted in the nominal domain. Thus, we do not expect the a-prefix to occur with gerunds. Additionally, the a-prefix is banned following a preposition. Finally, in the case of conjoined
verb phrase, there is a preference for every –ing form to either host the a-prefix or not host the prefix.

Subsequent studies examining a-prefixing either found evidence for these constraints just as they were formulated by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976), or largely found evidence for the constraints, such that with slight amendments the constraints can be said to hold. The three constraints are described in turn in the discussion that follows.

2.5.2 Categorial restriction on a-prefixing: a-prefixing permitted only with verbal forms

One syntactic constraint these researchers identify is the restriction of a-prefixed forms to certain verbal –ing forms, in particular progressive verbs and adverbial complements to verbs, such as those in (11), taken from Wolfram (1976):

(11)

a. This man’d catch ’em behind the neck, and they’d just be a-rattlin’.
   b. My cousin had a little brown pony, and we was a-ridin’ it one day.
   c. He just kep’ a-beggin’ and a-cryin’ and a-wantin’ to go out.
   d. You was pretty weak by the tenth day, a-layin’ in there in bed.
   e. Say Chuck would come by and want to spend a hour a-talkin’, I always figure I’m not too busy to stop.
   f. Course a lotta times you can’t, and grow up a-huntin’ with them instead of huntin’ for ’em.

Wolfram (1976) points out that a-prefixed forms are not found in the nominal domain, for example, with gerunds:

(12)

a. *He saw the a-shootin’.
   b. *He watched their a-shootin’.
c. *A-sailin’ is fun.
d. *He likes a-sailin’.

He also notes that adjectival -ing forms do not appear with the a-prefix:

(13)
   a. *The movie was a-shockin’.
   b. *The a-shootin’ hunters didn’t hit the bear.
   c. *The hunters shot the a-runnin’ bear.

There appears, then, to be a categorial restriction on a-prefixing: the prefix is licensed only with those -ing forms that are verbal or adverbial.

Christian et al. (1988) indicate that the restriction on the category of -ing forms described by Wolfram and Christian and Wolfram holds categorically of their data as well. More recently, however, Montgomery (2009) found exceptions to the categorial constraint.

Recall that Montgomery presents a quantitative investigation of a-prefixing in the border region between North Carolina and Tennessee. Using the 400,000-word Corpus of Smoky Mountain English (CSME), Montgomery compares his findings to those of Wolfram (1976).

In his data, Montgomery found several instances of a-prefixation in gerundive constructions, contra Wolfram (15):

   (14) They put him [to] what they call a-scaling the lumber.
Montgomery writes that *a*-prefixing in the CSME is “…overwhelmingly limited to participles having verbal or adverbial functions,” thereby largely corroborating Wolfram’s findings in West Virginia (15).

2.5.3 **Preposition constraint on *a*-prefixing**

Wolfram (1976) also notes that *a*-prefixed forms are not permitted when preceded by a preposition:

(15)  
a. *He got sick from *a*-workin’ so hard.  
b. *He makes money by *a*-buildin’ houses.  
c. *He nearly died from *a*-laughin’ so hard.

_A*-prefixing is licensed in the sentences in (15), however, if the preposition is not present: *He got sick a-workin’ so hard*, etc.

Christian, Wolfram and Dube (1988) note that in coordinate constructions in which the preposition is gapped in the second conjunct, *a*-prefixing is permitted:

(16)  
a. He makes money **by** restorin’ houses and *a*-buildin’ houses.  
b. He got sick **from** workin’ and *a*-tryin’ too hard.

Because the *a*-prefix is permitted following a preposition just in case it is not adjacent to that preposition, these researchers take this to show that the *a*-prefixing prepositional constraint “…operates on a fairly superficial level of language” (56).

Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) and Wolfram (1976) argue that the restriction on _a_-prefixing with prepositions is a result of a constraint banning two adjacent prepositions.
According to these researchers, the \( a \)-prefix is underlyingly the preposition \textit{on} or \textit{at}, which is reduced to \([ə]\) by a phonological rule. It is well established that \( a \)-prefixing in American English is derived, diachronically, from prepositional phrases of the form \textit{on V-ing}, such as \textit{on hunting}, \textit{on fishing}, etc. (Nagucka 1984: 363).

Wolfram and Christian (1975) argue that all verbal –\textit{ing} forms are synchronically derived from underlying locative prepositional phrases, and, when the \( a \)-prefix does not surface (as it fails to do in many dialects of American English) this is the result of a phonological rule of deletion. I point out a problem with this analysis below.

While Wolfram states that there is an invariant constraint barring \( a \)-prefixed forms following overt prepositions, Montgomery finds three instances of an \( a \)-prefixed form following a preposition, presented in (17-19). In (17) and (18) the \( a \)-prefixed form follows a preposition, but is not adjacent to it; thus, these sentences are consistent with Wolfram and Christian’s and Wolfram’s invariant constraint. In (19), however, the \( a \)-prefixed form is adjacent to the preposition after, in apparent violation of the preposition constraint:

(17) We’d make us a little ball by unraveling a yarn sock and \textit{a-winding} it.

(18) [We didn’t have permission to swim there] \textbf{without} asking him, or [without] \textit{going} home and then \textit{a-coming} back.

(19) He fought on the Union side and got a pension, and \textbf{after} \textit{a-drawing} hit he turned over with the enemy.

Montgomery notes that the preposition constraint on \( a \)-prefixation, though not categorical or invariant in his data, is nonetheless a generalization that remains “very strong and useful” (15).
2.5.4 Coordination constraint on a-prefixing

In addition to the invariant syntactic constraints reviewed above, Wolfram and Christian (1976) also discuss a variable syntactic constraint on a-prefixing. They observe that when the a-prefix occurs in any one conjunct in a coordinated VP, the prefix is favored on the other conjuncts:

(20) More likely
The dog was *a*-snarlin’ and *a*-spittin’.

(21) Less likely
The dog was snarlin’ and a-spittin’.

In those cases in which one conjunct is not a-prefixed, Wolfram and Christian report that there is a tendency for the a-prefix to be absent on the first form, but present on subsequent forms:

(22) More likely
I heared her barking and *a*-barkin’ and *a*-barkin’.

(23) Less likely
I heared her *a*-barkin’ and barking and barking.

Wolfram and Christian briefly mention that the preference for a-prefixation in all conjuncts is indicative of an “alliterative effect” (72). Wolfram (1976) also notes this may be an alliterative effect, but alludes to the possibility that it may involve code-specificity, such that code-switching in coordinate structures is avoided (52).

Montgomery compared his findings in the CSME with those of Wolfram’s (1976). While Wolfram found a preference for a-prefixing on all conjuncts, Montgomery reports that only
11.7% of conjoined verb phrases had *a*-prefixing on all verbs in the series. Conjoined verb phrases with the *a*-prefix on the first verb (*a*-jumping and running) made up 38.3% of all conjoined VPs, while conjoined VPs with the *a*-prefix on only the second form (*going home and then a-coming back*) made up 2.1% of the total conjoined VPs. Finally, conjoined VPs in which all verbs in the series failed to host the *a*-prefix (*sitting and watching*) accounted for 47.9% of all conjoined VPs (20). Montgomery notes that the low percentage of forms with all verbs in the series *a*-prefixed, as well as the low percentage of forms with *a*-prefixation only on the second form (versus the relatively high percentage with *a*-prefixation only on the first form) distinguishes the Smoky Mountain data from the West Virginia data.

Two things concerning Montgomery’s findings should be noted. First, Montgomery’s finding that only 11.7% of conjoined verb phrases showed *a*-prefixation on all conjuncts is not inconsistent with Wolfram and Christian’s or Wolfram’s findings. This is because these researchers noted only that a-prefixation is favored on all conjuncts, not that *a*-prefixation is necessary on all conjuncts.

Second, it is important to note that Wolfram and Christian and Wolfram do not count instances of conjoined VPs in which each verb in the series is not *a*-prefixed (e.g., *he come running and jumping and hollering*). As argued in chapter 4, there may be a constraint active in AppE that calls for a kind of agreement on all conjuncts for the *a*-prefix. If this is the case, then a series of verb phrases with either *a*-prefixation of all verbs or *a*-prefixation of none of the verbs would count as agreeing. Summing the forms that agree in one of these two ways would boost Wolfram and Wolfram and Christian’s total number of forms agreeing for the *a*-prefix.

Thus, by the same summation, the relatively low percentage (11.7%) of agreeing forms found in the CSME would be increased considerably: all *a*-prefixed forms, 11.7% (11/94) + all
non-\textit{a}-prefixed forms 47.9\% (45/94) = 59.6\% (56/94) agreeing forms. This relatively large percentage of VPs agreeing for the \textit{a}-prefix would be larger than those forms disagreeing for the \textit{a}-prefix: prefix only on first form, 38.3\% (36/94) + prefix only on second form, 2.1\% (2/94) = 40.4\% (38/94). Furthermore, it is unclear whether or not Montgomery counted as disagreeing those conjoined VPs in which one of the verbs in the series could not be \textit{a}-prefixed due to independent factors (e.g., because the verb in question was lax-vowel-initial). This particular issue is returned to in the analysis of conjoined forms in chapter 4.

\textit{2.6 Phonological factors conditioning \textit{a}-prefixing}

In addition to the syntactic restrictions on \textit{a}-prefixing discussed above, Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) and Wolfram (1976) also point out several phonological restrictions on \textit{a}-prefixing. These researchers posit two invariant rules and one variable rule constraining \textit{a}-prefixing.

The first invariant constraint involves the nature of the verb-initial segment. These researchers report that when the initial segment is a vowel \textit{a}-prefixing never occurs. Thus, forms like those in (24) are not permitted (examples taken from Wolfram and Christian, p. 72):

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(24) a.] \textit{He was really} \textit{a}-\textit{eatin’}.
\item[(24) b.] \textit{He kept} \textit{a}-\textit{askin’} him the question.
\end{enumerate}

Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) and Wolfram (1976) take the absence of forms like those in (24) as evidence for a prohibition against vowel-vowel sequences in AppE.
Wolfram and Christian (1975) note, however, that Feagin’s corpus contains one vowel-initial *a*-prefixed form:

(25) What time I ain’t *a*-sewin’, I’m *a*-ironin’, or somethin’ like that.  
(Flora P. W74) (Feagin 1979: 115)

Acknowledging this datum, they suggest that the avoidance of vowel-vowel sequences “… may be *semi*-categorical for some speakers” (emphasis mine: 275).

Montgomery (2009) also found 3 exceptions to Wolfram’s (1976) rule banning *a*-prefixation with vowel-initial forms (17):

(26) Johnny run down the hill *a*-aiming to go to his uncles.

(27) I went on up and was *a*-aiming to get around above the tree and shoot.

(28) I noticed two older girls *a*-eating something out of a little syrup bucket.

Montgomery observes, however, that the strong tendency in his corpus was for *a*-prefixing to occur before consonants, with a frequency of 36.9% (1,051/2,848) and not before vowels (6.8%, 3/44) (17).

The second invariant rule restricting *a*-prefixing makes reference to the stress pattern of the verbal/adverbial *-ing* form. Wolfram and Christian and Wolfram report that *a*-prefixation is permitted only if a form possesses an initial stressed syllable. Thus *a*-prefixation of a form such as the one in (29) is prohibited (example from Wolfram and Christian, p. 72):
(29) *He was a-discoverin’ a bear in the woods.

Wolfram and Christian hold that the absence of forms like those in (29) is the result of a general avoidance of sequences of unstressed syllables in English (72).

Christian et al.’s (1988) investigation also revealed no instance of the a-prefix on words lacking initial stress. Unlike earlier studies, however, Montgomery found 3 examples (6.8%, 3/44), of a-prefixing before an unstressed syllable (16):

(30) There must be, you know, a reason, I mean for ’em a-believing in the signs [of the zodiac].

(31) I can remember Dad a-relating the fire to me.

(32) They didn’t think they was enough that they could function as a church, so I told ’em they could, got ’em a-believing they could.

Montgomery points out that a-prefixing was largely confined to root words of one syllable (e.g., tell), with a frequency of 36.5% (1,028/2,815), and compound words with two primary stressed syllables (deer-driving, bear-hunting) with a frequency of 69.7% (23/33). Thus, the overall frequency of the a-prefix with forms bearing initial stress is 36.9%, compared to 6.8% of forms bearing non-initial stress.

Aside from the phonological restriction involving vowel-initial verbs and verbs beginning with an unstressed syllable, there is a further phonological restriction on a-prefixing described by Wolfram and Christian (1975) and Wolfram (1976). These researchers note that if the preceding
word ends in a consonant, *a*-prefixing is more likely to occur than if the preceding word ends in a vowel:

(33) More likely
   He was standin’ at the fence *a*-hollerin’.

(34) Less likely
   He was standin’ quietly *a*-hollerin’.

Wolfram and Christian and Wolfram take this to reflect a general phonological tendency to avoid vowel-vowel sequences in English.

Christian et al. (1988) examine their data to determine if the preceding word’s final segment conditions *a*-prefixation. They find no evidence for this variable constraint. That is, they find that the rate of *a*-prefixing was not affected by whether the preceding word ends in a consonant or a vowel.

Christian et al. (1988) point out, however, that the preceding vocalic contexts in their corpus were subject to gliding (words like ‘you’ may be pronounced [juw]), which may have “protected” the *a*-prefix from elision. Despite this observation, these researchers conclude that (at least for the older speakers in their study) there appears to be no effect of the final segment of the preceding word on *a*-prefixing.

Like Christian et al., Montgomery (2009) finds no evidence that the final segment of the preceding word either conditions or fails to condition *a*-prefixing. He found that the *a*-prefix occurred slightly more frequently following a consonant (40.0%, 938/2347) than following a
vowel (35.3%, 72/204) (21). Based on these results, he concludes that the character of the preceding segment has no effect on a-prefixation.

2.7 Difficulties confronting existing studies of a-prefixing

In the preceding sections, several factors involved in conditioning a-prefixing, as presented in the literature, were reviewed. Though the literature presents a richly detailed description of a-prefixing, there are some qualitative aspects of a-prefixing that have been underexplored in this body of work. Additionally, the explanations provided for the various constraints on a-prefixing are faced with a number of challenges.

The remainder of this section discusses both lacunae in the literature and difficulties faced by existing accounts of a-prefixing. In any formal analysis of the phenomenon, these gaps and difficulties, along with the distributional restrictions described in the literature, must be accounted for.

There are two clear lacunae in the literature on AppE a-prefixing. First, missing from the literature is a precise formal account of which -ing forms do and do not license the ‘prefix’. Researchers note that nouns are not generally a-prefixixed. In contrast, the literature shows that verbal and supposed adverbial forms license the prefix. Any formal analysis must have a principled explanation for these facts. In Chapter 5 an analysis is provided that accounts for the distribution of the prefix. Crucially, this analysis draws on the syntactic analyses of ING found in a series of publications by Cowper (1993, 1995 a, b, 1999, 2003a, b) thus providing a principled account of the distribution of the prefix.

Finally, an additional lacuna in the literature is that there are no formal theoretical (i.e., generative) accounts of a-prefixing in the literature. The literature on a-prefixing is chiefly
descriptive. These richly detailed descriptive accounts are intriguing from a formal perspective, however. *A*-prefixing is well-known to show both phonological and syntactic conditioning. As such, investigation of this phenomenon – along with similar morphophonological phenomena, in a wide variety of languages – may help shed light on morphology-phonology interactions.

In addition to the lacunae discussed above, there are also several problems with existing accounts of *a*-prefixing. First, those accounts of *a*-prefixing that assume the prefix serves a pragmatic or discourse-level function have not attempted to lay out, in any precise terms, what this function may or may not be. Based on the existing literature, we do not know, for example, if the prefix functions as a kind of intensifier in narrative speech, or if it instead serves to mark a sentence or the overall discourse as ‘vernacular’. We also do not know what role Feagin’s concept of ‘emotional involvement’ plays in conditioning the prefix.

Of course, none of these possible functions of the *a*-prefix necessarily excludes any of the other functions: it is not uncommon for sociolinguistic variables that serve a stylistic function to mark different features.

There would seem to be a way to test whether *a*-V-*ing* forms function as a vernacular marker, which is sketched below. However, as also discussed below, the results of such a test would ultimately be difficult to interpret.

The *a*-X-*ing* form itself, along with its surrounding context, could be examined in an effort to identify other forms that are recognized to mark vernacular speech. For example, the *a*-X-*ing* forms could be examined to see if */-ŋ/* is reliably produced as [-m]. The process */-ŋ/* $\rightarrow$ [-m] is a reliable indicator of vernacular speech in Appalachia (cf. Hazen 2008).

Also, the surrounding context could provide signals of vernacular speech. Phonological reductions, for example the pronominal forms ‘that’ ‘them’ and ‘him’ produced as [æt], [æm] and
[im], respectively, could be considered vernacular markers. The production of the third person singular neuter pronoun as ‘hit’ [hɪt] is another feature that could be looked for. Also, the context might show existential ‘there’ produced as ‘they’ [ðe], a common feature of AppE vernacular speech.

In addition to looking for phonological modifications that mark AppE speech as vernacular, the context could be examined in an effort to identify grammatical features that are associated with vernacular speech. To give only a few (out of numerous) examples, a search might reveal the following: so-called singular concord, or lack of subject-verb agreement with lexical DP subjects (e.g., *All preachers likes fried chicken*);13 subject contact relatives (i.e., subject relative clauses lacking the complementizer: *I met a man makes a living selling used cars*); personal datives, a construction where, under certain conditions, a pronominal form appears to serve as an anaphor (e.g., *I, bought me, a shirt* ‘I bought myself a shirt’; *He, got ‘im, a big ole cake.* ‘He got himself a big cake’). Finally, it is also possible, in testing the vernacularity hypothesis, to look for lexical items that mark vernacular speech, including the second person pronouns ‘y’all’ and ‘you’uns’ as well as the nonstandard negative copula ‘ain’t’.

Though there seems to be a way of testing the vernacularity hypothesis, there is an intractable problem in interpreting the results of any such test. Should the test reveal that the $a$-prefix does, in fact, occur with other markers considered to be vernacular, we could interpret this as indicating that the $a$-prefix is, itself, a vernacular marker. Of course, saying that it is a vernacular marker only because it co-occurs with other putative markers is potentially circular.

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13 Here, a lexical DP subject includes all non-pronominal forms with a (possibly null) determiner.
That is, characterizing a form as vernacular based only on its co-occurrence with other vernacular markers is problematic unless there is a valid and reliable way of determining that the other markers are themselves vernacular.

In addition to the problem of characterizing ‘vernacular’ speech itself, we are confronted with the problem of how to interpret the function of an a-prefixed form that occurs in a context lacking other would-be markers of vernacular speech. If the prefix were to appear in such a vernacular-poor context, we could easily interpret this result as evidence that a-X-ing marks vernacular. That is, given the absence of other so-called vernacular forms, we could assume the a-prefix is licensed in just this context, and that it is avoided in vernacular-rich contexts in order to avoid a kind of double-marking of vernacularity. Thus, whether the a-prefix either occurs or fails to occur alongside other supposed vernacular markers, the result is ultimately difficult to interpret.

A potentially more promising line of inquiry lies in pursuing a different aspect of Feagin’s proposal. Feagin suggested that the a-prefix might serve to dramatically render either the activity denoted by the verb or the discourse in general. If this is the case, then the a-prefix has a pragmatic function. Interestingly, Montgomery (2009) reports that speakers of AppE intuit a difference between forms with the a-prefix and forms lacking this marker. Accompanying this ‘felt sense’, Montgomery notes, is an inability to verbalize how, precisely, the two forms of the progressive differ (10).

14 Montgomery does not detail how he obtained the native-speaker intuitions concerning the meaning of the a-prefix (i.e., he does not report if speakers spontaneously made these observations or if he questioned speakers about a-prefixing) and he does not detail how many speakers reported their intuitions.
This ineffability could be an important clue in understanding the function of the prefix. Pragmatic meanings are relatively unstable and are therefore difficult for non-linguist speakers to articulate. The a-prefix could be a morphological form that serves a pragmatic function.

In a series of works, Dressler and Barbaresi (1986, 1987, 1994) founded and developed the theory of morphopragmatics. Morphopragmatics is the investigation of the intersection of morphology and pragmatics, the study of the morphological expression of pragmatic meaning. Dressler and Barbaresi noticed an interesting property of certain Italian suffixes-turned-interfixes, when occurring with other affixes. The interfixes, while having lost their stable semantic content, nevertheless preserve some of the pragmatic effects from their time as suffixes.

Barbaresi (2006) notes that the kinds of affixes central to the theory of morphopragmatics “…are characterized by semantic elusiveness, i.e., they exhibit no stable semantic value in terms of either denotations or connotations, and their meaning contributions to the speech event are better described within pragmatics, e.g., in terms of their dependence on speech situations, speech acts, attitudes of interactants” (emphasis mine: 332). The unstable and thus elusive meaning that characterizes pragmatic morphemes sounds remarkably similar to the descriptions of a-prefixing in Feagin and Montgomery.

In chapter 5, it is argued that the Feagin-Montgomery description, when informed by the theoretical perspective of the relatively new field of morphopragmatics, produces an analysis of the a-prefix that allows us to capture the data. The a-prefix is thus treated as the morphological exponent of a pragmatic meaning, one that is dependent on the context of utterance and the attitudinal disposition of the speaker.

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15 I use here Dressler and Barbaresi’s “unstable” and “stable” meaning. These researchers refer to pragmatic meaning as relatively unstable, when compared to lexical or semantic meaning. Semantic meaning (which is derived from an item’s lexical entry) is more predictable than pragmatic meaning (which is derived from the item’s context of use).
A-prefixed -ing forms are analyzed as being restricted to certain pragmatic contexts. That is, it is suggested they are not felicitous in contexts lacking a certain discourse-level meaning. Thus, it is argued there are two forms of the progressive verb, one restricted to certain contexts, and one occurring elsewhere.

Building on the idea that the a-prefix expresses a pragmatic meaning that is colored by utterance context and speaker disposition, Feagin’s notion of ‘emotional involvement’ is shown to play a key role in licensing the prefix. Analyzing the prefix as having a core pragmatic function, of course, does not exclude its use as a marker of vernacularity.

In addition to the problems in the literature involving the function of the a-prefix, there are also problems involving the syntactic distribution of the form that also must be remedied. Recall that Wolfram and colleagues argued that a-prefixing was banned following prepositions in order to avoid a sequence of two prepositions. There is a potential problem with this line of argumentation: AppE very frequently possesses two, three, and sometimes more, prepositions in sequence.

Montgomery and Hall (2004) briefly discuss this phenomenon in the grammar section of their Dictionary of Smoky Mountain English, providing, among many other data, the following: *The old tom cat went up in under the chair; There come one right up in above where he lived over there on Catalooch ‘; It was just where that road comes around, on down in below where that road comes around* (Montgomery and Hall 2004: lx). These sequences of prepositions, a very productive phenomenon in AppE, would appear to invalidate Wolfram and Christian’s claim that a- is banned following a preposition due to a general dialectal ban on the pile-up of prepositions.
Any formal analysis of \(a\)-prefixing must account for not only the putative failure of \(a\)-prefixing following a preposition (what appears to be the effect of an anti-pile-up constraint in one area of the grammar), but also the free stacking of prepositions in AppE (absence of the effect of the anti-pile-up constraint in another area of the grammar).

2.8 Chapter Summary

Descriptive accounts of \(a\)-prefixing have shown that a number of different factors license \(a\)-prefixation, including pragmatic, syntactic, and phonological factors. The literature indicates that the invariant restrictions posited by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) largely hold for data collected in other areas of Appalachia.

Existing accounts of \(a\)-prefixing are chiefly descriptive, and as such have not considered a number of issues that are important from a formal theoretical perspective. Additionally, the accounts of \(a\)-prefixing sketched in the literature face a number of challenges. The chapters that follow are devoted, in part, to addressing gaps in the literature and to providing a principled formal analysis accounting for the distribution of the \(a\)-prefix.

In the next chapter, the data used in the present study are detailed, including a discussion of the method for data collection (e.g., nature of the interviews conducted), demographics of the speakers (e.g., sex distribution, communities studied) nature of the data (e.g., corpus size), and extraction and coding of the data. Also detailed are the hypotheses tested in the present study.
CHAPTER III

3.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the data used in the quantitative and qualitative analyses presented in chapters 4 and 5. First, in section 3.2, details of the time period during which the data for this study were collected, the protocols for the data collection, and the demographics of the speakers who produced the data are provided.

Following a discussion of the data, section 3.3 outlines the method used for data extraction. The particular focus in this section is on the syntactic tests used to isolate all and only those ING forms that meet the syntactic requirements of a possible base. Results from these tests enabled the inclusion of only verbal forms in the subsequent quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Section 3.4 presents the hypotheses tested in this study. Hypotheses were constructed based on i) the findings of previous studies, ii) based on observations made during data collection for the present study or iii) the findings of previous studies informed by observations made during data collection for the present study. Following the presentation of each hypothesis, the method used to code the data for VARBRUL testing of that hypothesis is discussed. This section concludes with a summary of hypotheses tested.

Section 3.5 closes the chapter with a summation of the methodology used in the present study. The tables from chapter 2 comparing existing studies of a-prefixing are reproduced in this section, with an added row for the current study. This allows for comparison of methodologies used and data analyzed in previous studies to the methodologies and data in the present study.
3.2 The data

The data used in this study come from two sources: interviews conducted as part of a Collaborative Research Project (CRP), and interviews collected for the Dante History Project (DHP). Details of the CRP and the DHP are discussed in turn.

3.2.1 Source 1: The CRP corpus

3.2.1.1 Genesis of the corpus

The CRP corpus was created as part of a National Science Foundation study. The NSF grants were awarded to four Principal Investigators for the study of morpho-syntactic features in AppE. The PIs were Judy B. Bernstein, Marcel Den Dikken, Christina Tortora and Raffaella Zanuttini. The fieldwork for this study was conducted by one of the PIs (Bernstein) and three PhD students. The recordings from the fieldwork were transcribed by two of the three graduate students. There are presently 8 recordings transcribed. Permission has been granted to use this corpus for the purpose of studying a-prefixing.

In addition to the 8 recordings from the NSF-funded study, one additional recording and corresponding transcript was used. In 2003, Judy B. Bernstein was awarded an ACLS grant for studying AppE, entitled “A systematic study of the syntax of Appalachian English”. One of the interviews conducted by Bernstein and used for part of the ACLS study is used here. This interview was transcribed by the same two graduate students who transcribed the NSF-funded interviews discussed above. Though the interview as part of the ACLS study was not part of the collaborative project, the CRP corpus includes both the interviews from the collaborative project and the additional interview from the ACLS study.

16 The research referenced was funded with the following grants: #BCS-0617210 (Bernstein), 2006-2008, #BCS-0616573 (Den Dikken), 2006-2010, #BCS-0617197 (Tortora), 2006-2010, #BCS-0617133 (Zanuttini), 2006-2008).
3.2.1.2 Method of data collection

The method of data collection for the CRP corpus is somewhat different than the methodology used for Wolfram and Christian’s (1976) landmark study and quite different from the methodology used for contemporary studies in sociolinguistic variation. Recall, Wolfram and Christian utilized regional non-linguist fieldworkers in their study. Present-day fieldwork in sociolinguistic variation is typically carried out by the investigator him/herself.

In contrast, the fieldwork for the CRP study utilized regional consultants. The regional consultants, one used for each community, were lifelong residents of their respective communities. The speakers who were interviewed, referred to here as informants, were selected by the regional consultants with some guidance from the PIs. Each regional consultant was told to select informants who i) were age 50 or older, ii) were lifelong residents of the community, and iii) possessed nonstandard regional forms in their speech (consultants were given examples of these forms). No effort was made to control for social class; consultants were neither instructed to select speakers from a particular social class, nor were they instructed to avoid selecting speakers from a particular class.

The regional consultants were asked to pick informants whom they were acquainted with, in order to provide the most informal interviews. The consultants typically knew the informants from their respective communities quite well. In several cases in each locale, the regional consultants attended church and/or attended social gatherings with the informants.

For 6 of the 9 interviews, a questionnaire was also presented to the informants. The questionnaire was read aloud by the regional consultants. The questionnaire probed morphosyntactic features of the regional dialect, including singular concord (verbal -s with plural

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17 Appendix A provides the interview protocol used in the CRP interviews.
lexical subjects The girls likes pizza, but not pronouns They like pizza, not *They likes pizza).  

Each set of tokens from the questionnaire was accompanied by some context, which the regional consultant presented before each set.

Speakers were told at the beginning of the questionnaire, and sometimes during the questionnaire, that they were being asked to judge not whether a sentence sounded ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ (something grammar school teachers are interested in), but whether it sounded like something they would say themselves or that they have heard other people in the region say frequently. Speakers judged the sentences saying “OK” “bad” “good” and various permutations of these. Often the ‘good’ informants would say, “Oh, yeah, that’s me. I say stuff like that all the time” or “No, I’d never say that/You don’t hear that kind of thing around here.”

In addition to the forms that are widely considered features of AppE (as documented, for example, by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976)), two other types of forms were presented: forms with features shared by AppE and SAE (e.g., forms lacking singular concord: The men like 

baseball); and forms from other dialects including habitual ‘be’ and inversion in an embedded clause (e.g., I wonder is he coming home tonight?), which are attested in AAVE and Belfast English (Henry 1995), respectively, but are not attested in AppE.

In order to record the acceptability judgments of the informants, a linguist (either one of the PIs, Judy B. Bernstein, or a PhD student) accompanied the regional consultants to all interviews.

Each encounter with the 6 informants who were given the questionnaire would begin with informal talk, move to the questionnaire, and then end with more informal talk.

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18 Appendix B provides an example of a training/“warm-up” questionnaire, which served to prepare informants for the longer questionnaire. Appendix C provides an example of one of the longer questionnaires.
In the late spring of 2007, those interviews containing the most nonstandard features were selected to be transcribed. As noted above, this resulted in the transcription of 9 interviews. The interviews selected to be transcribed not coincidentally happened to be the interviews in which the interactions between the regional consultant and the informant were the most natural and the amount of natural speech generated considerable.

All of the selected interviews took place in the informant’s home. These interviews were quite informal and friendly and often included interchanges between the informant and the regional consultant that were very warm. Aside from those portions of relevant interviews that included the questionnaire, the interviews had the feel of neighbors casually chatting.

Though the regional consultants had been given possible topics of conversation to induce the informants to talk causally (including, for example, local traditions or the “old days” or how the town had changed since the informant was a child), the consultants were also instructed to allow the informants to talk about whatever they wished. Topics typically included local gossip, family, growing up/schooldays and farming.

Six of the nine informants were from Mountain City, a small town in eastern Tennessee. According to the 2010 census, the town of Mountain City has a population of 2,531 (2012). In the past, Mountain City had been primarily an agricultural town; residents grew tobacco and vegetables. Nearly all of the agriculture jobs in Mountain City have now vanished, and residents are able to find employment only in the service sector or the local correctional center.

Two additional informants resided in Rogersville in northeastern Tennessee. The town of Rogersville was recorded as having a population of 4,420 in the 2010 census (2012). Rogersville is primarily an agricultural town, with some additional jobs in the service sector.

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19 One of the speakers observed that Mountain City had once been the “green bean capital of the world”.
One informant, a female who resided in Dante, Virginia, was excluded from the present study. During her interview, this speaker did not produce the *a*-prefix; as such, no comparison could be made between *a*-prefixed and non-*a*-prefixed *-ing* forms.

Setting aside the interview from the speaker who has been excluded from this study, the CRP consists of interviews from 8 informants (7 female, 1 male). The CRP totals 57,683 words.

3.2.2 Source 2: The DHP corpus

In addition to the CRP corpus described above, recordings and transcripts from the Dante History Project (DHP) were also used. The DHP is housed at the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University. The recordings and transcripts are open to the public.

Dante is a small town in southwestern Virginia, close to the Tennessee border. According to the 2010 census, Dante has 126 households and a population of 649 (2012). Though small, Dante was once a booming coal town. The Clinchfield Coal Company had provided all of the essentials of life in the town. Once the company left the town, there were few jobs, and, as a result, the town was quite poor. Though there are some younger residents, most of the people living in Dante are older and are those who grew up in the town. Among these residents, it was primarily men who worked in the coal mines.

The Dante History Project was initiated by local historian and author Kathy Shearer in order to document the history of the town. Forty-two informants were interviewed by Shearer between October 1997 and October 1998. The speakers interviewed all grew up in Dante when it was a thriving coal town. Given that the male speakers all worked in the mines and the female

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20 One speaker noted that the company provided (at a cost) everything, from the doctor who delivered you to the coffin you were buried in.
speakers were married to miners, these speakers are from the lower part of the socioeconomic scale.

The corpus consists of 74 audiocassettes and corresponding transcripts. From the extensive recordings/transcripts in the DHP, I randomly selected the recordings and transcripts of 3 male speakers and 2 female speakers. These interviews total 68,387 words.

3.2.3 The CRP and DHP informants

The CRP (minus the excluded speaker) and DHP, taken together, total 126,070 words. A summary of the informants from the CRP and the portion of the DHP used here are provided in Table 3. Note that all data presented from these speakers are tagged with one of the informant IDs in the first column.

### Table 3. Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant ID</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1FTN</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mountain City, TN</td>
<td>03/2007</td>
<td>CRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2FTN</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mountain City, TN</td>
<td>09/2007</td>
<td>CRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3FTN</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mountain City, TN</td>
<td>03/2008</td>
<td>CRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4FTN</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mountain City, TN</td>
<td>200?</td>
<td>CRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5FTN</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mountain City, TN</td>
<td>12/2007 &amp; 07/2008</td>
<td>CRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6FTN</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Rogersville, TN</td>
<td>07/2008</td>
<td>CRP</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>12/2007</td>
<td>CRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1MVA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dante, VA</td>
<td>08/1998</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2MVA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dante, VA</td>
<td>02/1998</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3MVA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dante, VA</td>
<td>10/1997</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Dante, VA</td>
<td>03/1998</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3 Method of data extraction and analysis

#### 3.3.1 Data extraction

The CRP and DHP transcripts were examined with the purpose of locating all instances of X-\textit{ing}. In each instance in which a form was identified, the sentence containing that form was extracted from the transcript and placed in a word processing file. Once each corpus had been exhaustively searched, the file of extracted forms was examined. Instances of X-\textit{ing} that were clearly nominal were excluded from further analysis; for example, any gerund appearing in a canonical nominal position (i.e., subject of a clause) was not analyzed.\(^{21}\)

The remaining forms included clear instances of the progressive participle (i.e., clearly verbal forms) and those cases in which the category of the -\textit{ing} forms was not immediately apparent.\(^{22}\) The questionable forms were examined carefully in order to rule in -\textit{ing} forms that were participial, and to rule out -\textit{ing} forms that were not.

In order to determine the category status of the less than straightforward cases of -\textit{ing}, syntactic tests were performed. More specifically, NP-hood tests were employed. These tests allow nominal forms to be distinguished from forms of other categories.

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\(^{21}\) Note that all and only clear cases of nominal -\textit{ing} forms were excluded. None of these excluded forms appeared with the \textit{a}-prefix.

\(^{22}\) For a discussion of some of the difficulties inherent in distinguishing certain verbal instances of -\textit{ing} from homophonous nominal forms, see De Smet (2010). Note that De Smet’s analysis of -\textit{ing} forms is different from the analysis followed here.
Following Cowper (1993, 1995a), it is assumed here that there are two -ing morphemes and two distinct sets of morphosyntactic features, one set for each of the morphemes. In the case of the verbal form, the -ing is inflectional (encoding aspect, among other possible features); in the case of the nominal form, the suffix is derivational (changing the category of a verb to a noun). Based on the different abstract properties of the two morphemes, divergent syntactic behavior is predicted: employing the NP-hood tests should result in grammaticality in the case of derivational -ing, and ungrammaticality in the case of inflectional -ing.

Crucially, a number of tests were employed for each questionable form. As is noted in the syntactic literature (cf. Radford 1988: 101-103), no single test – in and of itself – can be used to support an argument for category status or constituency. Instead, multiple tests must be used and the results of these tests must be considered together. In some instances a particular test may provide misleading results; for example, a test might show a form to be verbal, while several other tests indicate the form is nominal. In these cases, it can often be shown the diverging results are due to factors independent of a form’s categorial status. In those cases in which the preponderance of the evidence indicates a form is, say, nominal, there is good motivation for excluding the results of a single test showing the form to be verbal.

3.3.2 Excursus on diagnostics applied to -ing forms

The tests used here have been used in the literature to distinguish verbal and nominal -ing forms (Milsark 1972, 1988; Emonds 1973; Ross 1972; Pullum and Zwicky 1999). The tests include: passivization, clefting (which includes pseudo-clefting and inverted pseudo-clefting), topicalization and tough-movement. These are all movement tests. Because they all involve A-
movement, they are NP-diagnostics: if the result of these tests is grammatical, then the -ingo form in question is nominal.

These five diagnostic tests have been used in the literature cited above to argue that certain -ing forms possess the inflectional morpheme, while others possess the derivational morpheme. In the discussion that follows, each test is demonstrated. The NP diagnostics are applied to two -ing forms with questionable categorial status.

The form in (35), shows an -ing form preceded by a verb of temporal aspect (VTA), keep. In (36) the -ing form is preceded by the verb enjoy.

(35) Burrhus keeps eating all of the food.

(36) Dexter enjoys chasing Winston.

The forms eating and chasing both possess the internal syntax of a clause. Additionally, these forms appear in what superficially seem to be identical syntactic structures. The five NP diagnostics reveal, however, that the external syntax of the forms differ: eating is a verbal form, while chasing is nominal.

The passivization test is used to distinguish nominal forms from forms of a different category. Here, the -ing form is moved to the subject position of the matrix clause, where it receives case. The agent/experiencer NP is expressed in a by-phrase.

(37) Passivization

a. *Eating all the food is kept by Burrhus.
b. *Chasing Winston is enjoyed by Dexter.

In this case, the NP-hood test is not particularly informative. Both the -ing form following keep
and the form following *enjoy* are bad when passivized. Though, as discussed below, the ungrammaticality of (36) and (37) are attributable to different factors.

The next three diagnostics are clefting, pseudo-clefting and inverted pseudo-clefting. These are all constituency tests: if movement of the form results in grammaticality, then the moved phrase is a constituent. To use clefting to test whether the *-ing* word is an NP constituent, the questionable form is fronted and placed in the frame [*It AUX…that…*], while the original matrix subject and verb are expressed in a subordinate clause.

(38) Clefting

a. *It is eating all of the food that Burrhus keeps __.*
b. *It is chasing Winston that Dexter enjoys __.*

In applying clefting to (38a), the result is ungrammaticality. In contrast, the result of applying the same test to (38b) is a grammatical sentence. This test shows that *chasing Winston* is a constituent and as such can be moved without *enjoy.* In contrast, *eating all of the food* is not a constituent. Given that this particular variant of clefting is a test for NP-constituency, these results indicate that the *-ing* form in (38b) is nominal, while the *-ing* form in (38a) is not.

In Pseudo-clefting to test for NPs the *-ing* phrase is copied onto a *wh*-word, which is then fronted. In the resulting structure, the *wh*-form heads a relative clause.

(39) Pseudo-clefting

a. *What Burrhus keeps __ is eating all of the food.*
b. *What Dexter enjoys __ is chasing Winston.*

The results of pseudo-clefting indicate again that *chasing Winston* is an NP constituent, while
eating all of the food is not an NP constituent.

Finally, inverted pseudo-clefting involves copying the -ing phrase onto a wh-form, which heads a relative clause. The -ing phrase itself is then fronted. In this type of clefting construction, a grammatical result indicates that the phrase in question is an NP-constituent.

(40) Inverted pseudo-clefting

   a. *Eating all of the food is what Burrhus keeps.
   b. Chasing Winston is what Dexter enjoys.

In the case of (40b), chasing Winston is copied and then fronted with resulting grammaticality. The same test applied to eating all of the food, on the other hand, results in ungrammaticality. This test indicates that chasing Winston is an NP constituent, while eating all of the food is not an NP constituent.

A further movement test is tough-movement. Here the questionable -ing phrase is fronted and placed in the frame [...is tough/easy for ... to V...]:

(41) Tough-movement

   a. *Eating all of the food is easy for Burrhus to keep.
   b. Chasing Winston is easy for Dexter to enjoy.

The result of applying the tough-movement test to chasing Winston is grammaticality, as shown in (41b). In contrast the result of applying this test to eating all of the food is ungrammaticality. This test indicates that chasing Winston is an NP, while eating all of the food is not.

A final movement test that diagnoses NPs is topicalization. Here the questionable -ing form is fronted to a topic/focus position:
(42) Topicalization

a. *Now, Eating all of the food Burrhus keeps.
b. Now, Chasing Winston Dexter enjoys.

As (42b) shows, topicalization is permitted with *chasing Winston. However, in (42a) *eating all of the food cannot be topicalized. This test thus indicates that *chasing Winston is an NP, while *eating all of the food is not an NP.

In summary, the preponderance of the evidence suggests that in *eating all of the food in (35) *eating is not nominal, but most belong to some other category; however, the tests indicate that in *chasing Winston in (36), *chasing heads an NP-complement of the verb *enjoys. All of the movement tests except passivization point to this conclusion. The negative result with the passivization test is likely attributable to general properties of *enjoy. For example, passivization of *enjoy is ‘better’ when the Experiencer subject demoted to a by-phrase is generic:23

(43) a. John enjoyed the chocolate.
b. *The chocolate was enjoyed by John.

(44) a. Everyone enjoyed the chocolate.
b. The chocolate was enjoyed by everyone.

(45) a. Mary enjoyed the party.
b. *The party was enjoyed by Mary.

(46) a. All (of us) enjoyed the party.
b. The party was enjoyed by all.

Given the alternative explanation for the results of the passivization test, as well as the results from the other tests, it can be concluded that *chasing Winston is an NP, whereas *eating all of the food is not.

23 Note that focus can rescue a sentence like (43b): The chocolate was enjoyed by JOHN at least.
These tests were used in excluding tokens from the corpora for use in VARBRUL analysis. This concludes the excursus on diagnostics used to distinguish verbal -\textit{ing} forms from nominal -\textit{ing} forms.

3.4 Coding of data for VARBRUL analysis

3.4.1 Overview

The instances of -\textit{ing} that were clearly verbal, taken together with those instances of -\textit{ing} shown to be verbal by the NP-diagnostics, constitute the data set. There are a total of 847 -\textit{ing} tokens and 219 of these are \textit{a}-prefixed.\textsuperscript{24} \textit{A}-prefixing occurs in 25.9\% of all verbal -\textit{ing} forms in this sample.

The 847 tokens were entered into a spreadsheet to be coded in preparation for VARBRUL analysis. Each datum was coded for two sociolinguistic or external factors and eleven linguistic or internal factors. Assuming the presence of the \textit{a}-prefix is the dependent variable, each of the external and internal factor groups coded for are the independent variables. Section 3.4.2 discusses the external factor groups coded for. In section 3.4.3, the internal factor groups selected are discussed. Section 3.4.4 summarizes the thirteen independent variables selected for VARBRUL analysis. Finally, section 3.5 concludes the chapter with an overall summary.

3.4.2 External factor groups

Two external factor groups were coded for: speaker sex and speaker residence (Tennessee or Virginia). The null and alternative hypotheses for each of these factor groups, as well as the predictions made with respect to the hypotheses, are discussed in turn.

\textsuperscript{24} The sentences analyzed in this study are provided in Appendix D.
First, speaker sex was coded for as an independent variable. The null and alternative hypotheses are provided below:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 1: SEX**

The sex of the speaker has no effect on $a$-prefixation: Males/females neither favor nor disfavor $a$-prefixation.

**ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 1: SEX**

The sex of the speaker affects $a$-prefixation: males favor $a$-prefixation while females disfavor $a$-prefixation.

The decision to frame the alternative hypothesis with males favoring $a$-prefixation relative to females is based on extensive sociolinguistic literature indicating that male speakers produce more non-standard or vernacular forms than female speakers (see the reviews in Labov 1990, 2001, chapter 8). Based on this literature, it is predicted the null hypothesis will be rejected.

The second external factor group coded for was speaker residence. This independent variable has two levels: Tennessee and Virginia.

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 2: SPEAKER RESIDENCE**

The state in which the speaker resides (TN or VA) has no effect on $a$-prefixation: Speakers living in TN/VA neither favor nor disfavor $a$-prefixation.

**ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 2: SPEAKER RESIDENCE**

The state in which the speaker resides (TN or VA) affects $a$-prefixation: Either i) speakers living in TN favor $a$-prefixing while speakers living in VA disfavor $a$-prefixation OR ii) speakers living in VA favor $a$-prefixing while speakers living in TN disfavor $a$-prefixation.
There is no reason to believe that speakers in eastern Tennessee differ significantly in their use of the \textit{a}-prefix from speakers in proximal southwestern Virginia. It is assumed here that the speakers likely belong to the same speech community, in the sense of Labov (1972a), and therefore will share the same pattern of \textit{a}-prefixing. Thus, it is predicted that there the data will not enable us to reject the null hypothesis.

Sex and speaker residence were the only two external factor groups coded for in this study. Socio-economic status was not coded for, as the speakers from both the CRP and the DHP were homogeneous for socio-economic status: 12 of the speakers were in the lower end of the spectrum (i.e., working class) and 1 of the speakers from the DHP was in the lower middle class (she had been a grade school teacher until retiring).

Also, no effort was made to code for individual speakers. Given the homogeneity of the 13 speakers in this study, it is assumed that the individual speakers do not differ significantly from the group. This decision was based in part on a Guy’s (1980) study of variable \textit{-t/d} deletion in speakers from New York and Philadelphia. Guy showed that, if at least approximately 20 tokens per cell are available, results for individuals are not significantly different from results for the group to which these individuals belong.

3.4.3 \textit{Internal factor groups}

3.4.3.1 \textit{Overview}

In addition to coding for the external factor groups of sex and speaker residence, a number of internal factor groups were also treated as independent variables. In this section, the null and alternative hypotheses for each factor group is discussed.
The motivation for treating many of the factor groups as independent variables is derived from the sociolinguistic literature. Additional factor groups were treated as independent variables either because of a combination of discussion in the literature and observations made in collecting data for the present study, or because of the hypothesis made in this study with respect to function of the a-prefix as a pragmatic marker.

The three hypotheses related to the syntactic structure in which the a-prefix can occur are discussed first, followed by those hypotheses related to the phonological context in which the a-prefix can appear, and, finally, a hypotheses related strictly to the pragmatic function of the a-prefix are treated.

The first syntactic factor group coded for is clause type. This independent variable has two levels: declarative and interrogative. Clause type is treated as an independent variable based on items from a questionnaire administered by Christian et al. (1988). These researchers asked native speakers of AppE to select the ‘best sounding’ sentence in declarative/interrogative sentence pairs (She was a-goin’ to the show./Was she a-goin’ to the show?) (Ex. from Table 4.1, pp. 62-63). Because Christian et al. used a judgment task, and not naturally occurring speech, the hypotheses below are tested in the data from the CRP and the DHP:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 3: CLAUSE TYPE**

Clause type has no effect on a-prefixation: no clause type neither favors nor disfavors a-prefixation.

**ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 3: CLAUSE TYPE**

Clause type affects a-prefixation: declarative clauses favor a-prefixation, while interrogative clauses disfavor a-prefixation.
Christian et al. found that informants showed a preference for declarative $a$-prefixed forms over interrogative prefixed forms; the difference between clause types did not reach statistical significance (at the $p < .05$ level), however. Given that the informants in Christian et al.’s judgment task did not differ significantly in their preference for declarative $a$-prefixed sentences over interrogative $a$-prefixed sentences, it is predicted that we will not be able to reject the null hypothesis.

In addition to clause type, the factor group presence/absence of negation was treated as an independent variable. The decision to treat this as an independent variable is based on Christian et al.’s finding that speakers showed a preference for assertive sentences with $a$-prefixing over negated sentences with $a$-prefixing. This preference was elicited during the questionnaire task referenced above (and treated in more detail in chapter 2). Christian et al. tested had speakers select between sentences such as *John was a-talkin’ so loud my eardrums hurt* and *John wasn’t a-talkin’ loud enough to hear* (Ex. from pp. 62-63, Table 4.1). While speakers exhibited a preference for non-negated sentences over negated sentences, the difference between negated and non-negated contexts did not reach statistical significance.

The following null and alternative hypotheses are tested in coding for presence/absence of negation as an independent variable:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 4: PRESENCE/ABSENCE OF NEGATION**

The presence/absence of negation has no effect on $a$-prefixation: neither the presence nor the absence of negation favors/disfavors $a$-prefixation.

**ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 4: PRESENCE/ABSENCE OF NEGATION**

The presence/absence of negation affects $a$-prefixation: the presence of negation disfavors $a$-prefixation, while the absence of negation favors $a$-prefixation.
Based on the findings of Christian et al. it is predicted that we will not be able to reject the null hypothesis related to the presence/absence of negation. Should we not be able to reject the null hypothesis, this would align the results of the judgment task given by Christian et al. with results from naturally occurring speech data.

In addition to clause type and presence/absence of negation, an additional syntactic factor group was coded as an independent variable: presence absence of a verb of temporal aspect (VTA). Recall from chapter 2 that a verb of temporal aspect is any lexical verb that encodes aspect, including inchoative verbs (e.g., begin, start, go to) and verbs encoding duration (e.g., keep (on), go on, etc.).

The motivation to treat presence/absence of a VTA as an independent variable comes from the sociolinguistic literature. Based on the forced choice task administered by Hackenberg (1972), Wolfram and Christian (1976) and Wolfram (1980) tabulate the frequency with which -ing forms with KEEP are a-prefixed. In both data sets, out of a total of 39 forms with KEEP, there were 16 a-prefixed forms; thus, a-prefixing occurred in 41% of possible environments with KEEP (figures from Wolfram and Christian, p. 75, Table 18; Wolfram p. 123, Table 6.1). The overall rate of a-prefixing in Wolfram and Christian’s data was much lower at 21.3%.

Feagin (1979) also tabulated the number of a-prefixed forms with KEEP. Feagin found that out of an overall total of 247 a-prefixed tokens, 17 tokens possessed KEEP (110). A-prefixation with KEEP forms accounted for 6.9% of total a-prefixed tokens. Note that Feagin did not tabulate non-a-prefixed -ing forms.

Montgomery (2009) also tabulated the number of forms with KEEP. However, unlike previous researchers, Montgomery also considered inchoative verbs (e.g., start, begin, etc.). Montgomery compared KEEP verbs and inchoative verbs with other types of verbs (e.g., verbs
of movement, such as *come* and *go* (p. 19, Table 4). Montgomery found that bases with KEEP were *a*-prefixed in 20 out of 71 possible cases (28.2%), and bases with an inchoative verb were prefixed in 9 out of 66 possible cases (13.6). Montgomery’s findings are discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

While Wolfram and Christian and Feagin did not consider other types of verbs of temporal aspect (VTA), along with KEEP, and while Montgomery separated KEEP from other VTAs and compared rates of *a*-prefixation with these two classes of verbs with rates from other types of verbs, such as verbs of movement, a different approach was taken in the current study.

First, here all VTAs, including KEEP, are coded together. That is, KEEP and other VTAs are not treated as distinct factors. *A priori*, there is no reason to separate KEEP from other VTAs. In fact, there seems to be justification to code KEEP and other VTAs identically: KEEP and other VTAs are treated the same in the syntactic literature (i.e., they are uniformly referred to as VTAs) (cf. Levin 1993). Thus, in this study all VTAs, including KEEP, receive the same code.

Second, in the present study bases occurring with a VTA are not contrasted with bases occurring with, for example, a verb of movement. Instead, bases occurring with a VTA are simply contrasted with bases occurring in the absence of a VTA. In this way, the effect of a VTA is held constant, thereby allowing for examination of this effect and only this effect (as opposed to extraneous effects).

The null and alternative hypotheses tested here are as follows:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 5: PRESENCE/ABSENCE VERB TEMPORAL ASPECT (VTA)**

The presence/absence of a VTA has no effect on *a*-prefixation: neither the Presence nor the absence of a VTA favors or disfavors *a*-prefixation.
ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 5: PRESENCE/ABSENCE VERB TEMPORAL ASPECT (VTA)

The presence/absence of a VTA affects a-prefixation: the presence of a VTA favors a-prefixation, while in comparison the absence of a VTA disfavors a-prefixation.

It is predicted, based on results from Wolfram and Christian (1976) that show a high rate of a-prefixation with KEEP, that the null hypothesis will be rejected.

In addition to the three independent variables discussed above that are related to the syntactic environment in which the a-prefix occurs, one additional independent variable involving syntactic environment was coded for: embedding/lack of embedding under a verb of perception.

Coding for this independent variable was motivated, in part, by Wolfram’s (1980) observation that “A-prefixed forms without an overt form of be are most common with verbs of perception, such as see and hear” (110). Examples of a-prefixed bases embedded under verbs of perception are provided below:

(47) [NP V-ing] complement of perception verb

   a.  I [heared [a baby a-screaming]], and I thought what in the world.  
       (2FTN 09/2007)

   b.  …and I can [see [him right to this day a-leaving]] every morning to go be on the picket line, conditions was so bad with the coal companies at that time.  
       (3MVA 10/1997)

In (47a), the [NP a-V-ing] clause, a baby a-screaming, occurs as a complement of the verb hear.

In (57b), the clause consisting of a subject (an adjunct) and the a-prefixed -ing form, [him…a-leaving], occurs as a complement of the verb see.
Based on Wolfram’s observation concerning *a*-prefixing occurring frequently with verbs of perception, Montgomery (2009) examined *a*-prefixing with verbs of perception. Montgomery found that out of 110 *-ing* tokens embedded under verbs of perception, 47 were *a*-prefixed (42.7%). It should be noted, however, that Montgomery compares *-ing* forms embedded under verbs of perception to i) *-ing* forms with KEEP, ii) *-ing* forms with inchoatives iii) *-ing* forms with causative verbs, iv) *-ing* forms with progressive BE, and v) *-ing* forms with verbs of movement (p. 19, Table 4). Montgomery’s findings are discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

The decision to examine the effect of embedding under a verb of perception is based, in part, on Wolfram’s (1980) observation that *a*-prefixing occurs frequently in such contexts. This decision, however, is also based on the proposal first mentioned in chapter 2 concerning the pragmatic function of the *a*-prefix.

It was briefly noted in this chapter that the *a*-prefix might serve as a morpho-pragmatic marker of something like mirativity. A mirative marker encodes speaker surprise/wonder at a proposition (DeLancey 1997). As DeLancey (2001) notes mirativity possesses a modal component and an evidential component. Modality involves a speaker’s attitude toward a proposition, including certainty concerning the veracity of a proposition. Evidential markers encode a speaker’s source for information. Depending upon the language, markers may encode that a speaker has direct evidence for an assertion, or further specify the nature of that direct evidence (e.g., visual or auditory).

English does not possess grammatical markers of evidentiality; that is, English does not encode the nature of a speaker’s evidence using a unique grammatical marker or morph. Verbs such as *see* and *hear* are lexical items that mark such information, however.

If the *a*-prefix were a kind of mirative marker, we might expect it to be more frequently
used in those cases in which i) the speaker is certain of the truth-value of a proposition and ii) the speaker possesses direct evidence for that proposition. These two cases, speaker certainty and direct evidence, describe the [NP V-ing] clauses that serve as complements of verbs of perception. Thus, if the a-prefix is a kind of marker of mirativity, then we might expect the marker to be favored in those environments in which its base is the complement of a verb of perception (as in I heared a baby a-screaming).

Based, then, on findings from the literature, taken together with observations from the data indicating the a-prefix might be a kind of mirative marker, the null and alternative hypotheses concerning -ing forms that are complements of perception verbs are as follows:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 6: EMBEDDING/NO EMBEDDING UNDER VERB OF PERCEPTION**

Embedding/no embedding under a verb of perception has no effect on a-prefixation: neither embedding under a verb of perception nor the lack of such embedding favors or disfavors a-prefixation.

**ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 6: EMBEDDING/NO EMBEDDING UNDER VERB OF PERCEPTION**

Embedding/no embedding under a verb of perception affects a-prefixation: embedding under a verb of perception favors a-prefixation, while in comparison forms that are not embedded under such a verb disfavor a-prefixation.

It is predicted that the data from the present study will allow us to reject the null hypothesis.

Thus far, four independent variables coded for related to the syntactic context of a-prefixing have been discussed: complement of a perception verb (yes/no), verb of temporal aspect (VTA) (present/absent), negation (present/absent), and clause type (declarative/interrogative).
In addition to these four independent variables, a further independent variable related to the syntactic context of the a-prefix were coded as factor groups: verb type (3 levels: intransitive, transitive, CP-complement). Verb type was coded for based on observations made while examining both the data from the literature and the data from the CRP and the DHP.

In the literature, many of the a-prefixed forms are intransitive verbs, some are transitive and a few were verbs selecting CP-complements.

Intransitive verbs in English include unaccusative verbs (e.g., come, arrive), unergative verbs (e.g., run, talk) and weather verbs (e.g., rain, snow). These verbs do not c-select a noun phrase argument: John came yesterday, but not *John came a book yesterday; John talked to me yesterday but not *John talked Mary to me yesterday. An example of each type of intransitive verb, taken from the CRP and DHP corpora, is provided below:

(48) I had to lead the horse [GOING] but a-coming back, why I stacked up those buckets and I came a-saddling. (2FVA 03/1998)

(49) But she was just a-walking around. (6FTN 07/2008)

(50) If it was a-raining, we went, or if was a-snowing, we went. (5FTN 07/2008)

Transitive verbs include verbs that c-select (subcategorize for) at least one internal argument, a noun phrase (NP) (e.g., see, hear, take, etc.). These verbs have an NP complement that must be expressed: I saw Savanah last night, but not *I saw last night. Examples of transitive verbs found in the CRP and DHP corpora are provided below:

---

25 Note that it is possible for an intransitive verb to take what is referred to as a cognate object. An example of an intransitive verb with a cognate object is as follows: John ran a mile. It is also possible for an intransitive verb to take a pseudo-reflexive object. An example of an intransitive verb with a pseudo-reflexive object is smile in Dorothy smiled that old smile. Neither cognate objects nor pseudo-reflexives are considered complements of intransitive verbs; that is, the presence of a cognate object or a pseudo-reflexive with such verbs does not mean the verbs in question are not intransitive.
(51) I don’t believe, I don’t remember us a-havin’ a radio. (1FVA 10/1997)

(52) I’m still a-carrying it on my husband. (1FVA 10/1997)

(53) Started, I was a-loadin’ coal with a shovel and they cut the shovel loadin’ out and got that machinery and I was timber man and then boss told me he wanted me to learn to run a joy, so I learned to run a joy. (2MVA 02/1998)

Finally, verbs that can c-select a CP-complement are verbs such as try, think, expect and believe. These verbs take as a complement an entire clause, a CP:

(54) I’m goin’ to order you a cane.” (1FVA 10/1997)
(55) I'm hoping my son will come back to retire someday. (2FVA 03/1998)

(56) We was little boys working on the farm a-trying to raise stuff to help feed the family, and my mother would sell milk and butter. (3MVA 10/1997)

Both the data provided in the literature and the data from the CRP and DHP seem to suggest that a-prefixing follows a preference scale something like the following:

Intransitive > transitive > CP-complement, where intransitive verbs favor a-prefixation, CP-complement verbs disfavor a-prefixation and transitive verbs fall somewhere in between. Based on these observations, the following null and alternative hypotheses were tested:

NULL HYPOTHESIS 7: VERB TYPE

Verb type has no effect on a-prefixation: no verb type either favors or disfavors a-prefixation.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 7: VERB TYPE

Verb type has an effect on a-prefixation: intransitive verbs favor a-prefixation, while verbs that select a CP-complement disfavor a-prefixation.
It is predicted that the data from the CRP and DHP will permit us to reject null Hypothesis 7.

In addition to the five independent variables related to syntactic context, four independent variables were selected that are related to the phonological context in which the a-prefix occurs. Three of these involve the nature of the -ing base itself: the character of the word-initial segment of the base, the stress pattern of the base, and the syllable count of the base. The fourth independent variable concerns the preceding phonological context of the -ing base, specifically the word preceding the -ing form. Each of these independent variables, the rationale for coding for them, and null and alternative hypotheses corresponding to them, is discussed in turn.

First, the character of the word-initial segment of the base was treated as an independent variable. Recall from chapter 2 that Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976), Wolfram (1980) (who also checks Hackenberg’s (1972) and Feagin’s (1979) corpora) and Christian et al. (1988) suggest that a-prefixing cannot occur with bases that are vowel-initial. Wolfram (1980) notes that only Feagin’s corpus contains one vowel-initial word that is a-prefixed: a-ironin’.

Montgomery (2009) reports finding 3 instances of vowel-initial bases that are a-prefixed out of a total of 44 vowel-initial bases (6.8%) (p. 20, Table 6). Montgomery suggests that the categorical or invariant constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) is likely better conceived of as a variable constraint, with vowel-initial forms disfavoring a-prefixation relative to consonant-initial forms.

In order to see if the nature of the word-initial segment of -ing tokens variably conditions a-prefixing, each token was coded for whether the initial segment was a consonant or a vowel. Following are the null and alternative hypotheses for this independent variable:
NULL HYPOTHESIS 8: WORD-INITIAL SEGMENT

The nature of the word-initial segment (C or V) of a potential base has no effect on $a$-prefixation: consonants/vowels neither favor nor disfavor $a$-prefixation.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 8: WORD-INITIAL SEGMENT

The nature of the word-initial segment (C or V) of a potential base affects $a$-prefixation: C-initial bases favor $a$-prefixation, while V-initial bases disfavor $a$-prefixation.

Based on descriptions provided by Wolfram and Christian, it is predicted the data will enable us to reject the null hypothesis.

The second independent variable related to the phonological form of the base involves the stress pattern of the base. The stress pattern of the base was selected as an independent variable based on descriptions in the literature indicating $a$-prefixation is either banned or strongly disfavored with bases possessing non-initial stress.

Wolfram and Christian (1976), Wolfram (1980) and Christian et al. (1988) indicate that $a$-prefixation is prohibited with bases possessing non-initial stress (e.g., *a-discoverin’). In examining his 400,000-word corpus, Montgomery (2009) identified 3/44 (6.8%) instances of $a$-prefixation with bases possessing non-initial stress. Montgomery notes that $a$-prefixation is not altogether banned with bases of this kind, but is certainly disfavored.

Based on these findings in the literature, the stress pattern of the base was selected as an independent variable. This independent variable had two levels: initial and non-initial. The null and alternative hypotheses corresponding to this independent variable are as follows:

NULL HYPOTHESIS 9: INITIAL/NON-INITIAL STRESS

The location of stress for a potential base has no effect on $a$-prefixation: initial/non-initial stress neither favors nor disfavors $a$-prefixation.
ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 9: INITIAL/NON-INITIAL STRESS

The location of stress for a potential base affects $a$-prefixation: initial stress favors $a$-prefixation, while non-initial stress disfavors $a$-prefixation.

Based, again, on the literature, it is predicted the CRP and DHP data will permit us to reject the null hypothesis concerning to the stress pattern of the base.

A final independent variable related to the phonology of the -ing form was coded for: the syllable count of the base. It was observed, both in examining data available in the literature and in collecting and extracting data from the CRP and DHP, that most $a$-prefixed forms consisted of a base that was monosyllabic (e.g., a-tell-ing). To determine whether syllable count affects $a$-prefixation, the number of syllables of each -ing token was coded for. Because -ing forms in the corpora were monosyllabic, disyllabic, or trisyllabic, this independent variable had 3 levels.

Based on observations of data from the literature as well as data from the CRP and the DHP, then, the following null and alternative hypotheses were developed:

NULL HYPOTHESIS 10: SYLLABLE COUNT

Syllable count has no effect on $a$-prefixation: monosyllabic/disyllabic/polysyllabic bases neither favor nor disfavor $a$-prefixation.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 10: SYLLABLE COUNT

Syllable count affects $a$-prefixation: monosyllabic bases favor $a$-prefixation, while disyllabic and trisyllabic bases disfavor $a$-prefixation.

It is predicted that the data from the CRP and the DHP will allow us to reject the null hypothesis: syllable count is predicted to affect $a$-prefixation.

A final phonological independent variable was selected. This independent variable involves not the phonology of the base, but the phonology of the word preceding the base.
Specifically, each word preceding each -ing token was examined and coded for whether the word-final segment was a consonant or a vowel.

The phonology of the preceding word was selected as an independent variable based on Wolfram’s (1980) finding that a-prefixation is less likely to occur following a vowel-final word, relative to words ending in a consonant (p. 127, Table 6.2). Subsequent studies, including Christian et al. (1988) and Montgomery (2009), found no evidence for this variable constraint on a-prefixing. Christian et al. report that the following age groups of speakers show a-prefixation at higher rates in those contexts in which the preceding word ends in a consonant: under age 25, aged 25-50, and aged 51-70 (pp. 72-73, Table 4.4). However, with speakers over 70, Christian et al. found more a-prefixation in those instances in which the preceding word ends in a vowel, not a consonant. Based on the finding for speakers over 70, Christian et al. question whether there is a variable constraint in the grammars of speakers of this age group.

Montgomery (2009) also calls into question Wolfram’s finding of a variable phonological constraint on a-prefixing. Montgomery reports that the character of the preceding word’s final segment appears to have no effect on a-prefixing: when the preceding word ends in a consonant a-prefixing occurs in 938 of 2347 possible cases (40.0%). When the preceding word ends in a vowel, a-prefixing occurs in 72 of 204 possible cases, or a frequency of 35.3%, a rate not strikingly different from an environment in which the preceding word ends in a consonant.

Despite Montgomery’s findings of little difference in the frequency of a-prefixation after words ending in a vowel relative to words ending in a consonant, there could still that be a restriction on a-prefixing following words ending in a vowel. It is interesting to note that Christian et al. (1988) observe that most of the vowel-final words preceding a-prefixation are segments that, adjacent to the a-prefix, allow for glide formation; that is, the vowels are tense,
not lax. While there is no discussion in Montgomery of the nature of the vowel in the words preceding the \textit{a}-prefix, it is plausible that the relevant restriction on the preceding word is that it end in either a consonant or a tense vowel, but not a lax vowel.

Given Wolfram’s (1980) original suggestion of a constraint on the character of the preceding word’s final segment, and given Christian et al.’s observation that most of the word-final vowels preceding the \textit{a}-prefix were tense vowels, the independent variable coded for has three levels: consonant, tense vowel, lax vowel.

The null and alternative hypotheses for this independent variable are as follows:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 11: FINAL SEGMENT OF PRECEDING WORD**

The nature of the preceding word’s final segment (C, tense V, lax V) has no effect on \textit{a}-prefixation: among C-final, tense-V-final and lax-V-final segments in a preceding word, no segment type either favors or disfavors \textit{a}-prefixation.

**ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 11: FINAL SEGMENT OF PRECEDING WORD**

The nature of the preceding word’s final segment (C, tense V, lax V) affects \textit{a}-prefixation: C-final and tense-V-final segments preceding potential bases favor \textit{a}-prefixation, while lax-V-final segments preceding potential bases disfavor \textit{a}-prefixation.

Based on Christian et al.’s observation, it is predicted that the CRP and DHP data will allow us to reject the null hypothesis: consonants and tense vowels are predicted to favor \textit{a}-prefixation, while lax vowels are predicted to disfavor \textit{a}-prefixation.

Thus far, four independent variables related to the phonological context of \textit{-ing} bases and five independent variables related to the syntactic context of \textit{-ing} bases have been discussed. In addition to these nine independent variables that make reference to internal or linguistic factors, two further independent variables remain. Both of these independent variables were selected in
order to provide evidence for the argument that the *$a$*-prefix serves as a morpho-pragmatic marker of a kind of mirativity.

First, each token was coded for the presence/absence of a necessity modal (*must*, *should*, *would*, etc.). It was noted in collecting and extracting the data for the present study that when a necessity modal preceded the -*ing* base the base was frequently *$a$*-prefixed. The most common modal preceding the tokens extracted from the CRP and DHP corpora was a necessity modal, such as *must, should, will/would*.

Simplifying greatly, a necessity modal encodes that at a particular time (e.g., at the time of speaking), according to i) knowledge the speaker possesses, ii) a set of rules or laws, or iii) desires possessed by the speaker or addressee, iv) a given set of circumstances or goals the v) a given set of expectations, the proposition uttered by the speaker is true. Consider the sentence below:

(57) Mary must be coming.

If a speaker produces (57), then, it is typically understood that at the time of utterance and according to what the speaker knows, there is some relation between the proposition expressed and a possible world, such that the proposition is true in that world (see Portner 2009, especially chapters 2 and 3, for discussion of the semantics of the epistemic necessity modal and other necessity modals).

In short, the epistemic necessity modal, *must*, expresses a speaker’s certainty concerning the truth of a proposition. Other necessity modals include *should* and *will/would*. These modals
also express a high degree of certainty on the part of the speaker that the proposition expressed is veridical.

Mirative markers have been described as having a modal component (DeLancey 2001): if a speaker expresses wonder/surprise at some proposition, the speaker is certain of the truth-value of that proposition.

If the a-prefix were a kind of marker of mirativity, we might expect it to be favored in the context of a necessity modal, as both mark, to some degree, speaker certainty. At the very least, we would not expect the a-prefix to be disfavored in such contexts. Mirativity and modality express distinct meanings (mirativity expresses pragmatic meaning (surprise), while modality encodes semantic meaning (degree of certainty). As such, we do not expect there to be an effect from the avoidance of double marking (i.e., *MODAL-MODAL: sequences of modals in the same clause are prohibited).\(^{26}\)

Thus, if the a-prefix were favored in contexts with a necessity modal (must, should, would), this would be consistent with the position that the a-prefix encodes a kind of mirativity.\(^{27}\) This, taken together with other evidence, then, can aid us in probing for the pragmatic meaning expressed by the a-prefix.

The null and alternative hypotheses for modality are as follows:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 12: PRESENCE/ABSENCE MODAL**

The presence/absence of a necessity modal has no effect on a-prefixation: neither the presence nor the absence of a modal favors or

\(^{26}\) Note that double modals (‘He might could do it if you ask him.’) are quite common in AppE (as well as in Southern English, in general).

\(^{27}\) Of course, such a result would also be consistent with other positions as well. For example, if the a-prefix were an intensifier used in dramatic discourse, à la Feagin (1979), we might expect it to co-occur with a form like must, assuming that must is also frequent in such discourse contexts (e.g., in hyperbolic contexts: He must have been coming around that curve at a hundred miles an hour).
disfavors a-prefixation.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 12: PRESENCE/ABSENCE MODAL

The presence/absence of a necessity modal affects a-prefixation: the presence of a modal favors a-prefixation, while in comparison the absence of a modal disfavors a-prefixation.

It is predicted that the data from the CRP and the DHP will allow us to reject the null hypothesis above.

A final independent variable was selected, also related to the assertion that the a-prefix is a marker of mirativity. Recall that mirative markers possess an evidential component and a modal component. Thus, these markers are used in those instances in which i) the speaker has a particular kind of evidence for a proposition (e.g., direct sensory evidence), and ii) the speaker is committed to veracity of the proposition.

Thus, if the a-prefix were a kind of marker of mirativity, we might expect it to be disfavored in those contexts in which i) the speaker lacks a particular kind of evidence for the proposition and/or ii) the speaker is not certain of the veridicality of the proposition. The first context would be marked, for example, by clauses such as ‘I didn’t/couldn’t see/here… ’ Clauses such as ‘I’m not sure../I forgot/don’t remember if/whether…’ would mark contexts of the second type. If the a-prefix were disfavored in such contexts, this would be consistent with the idea that the prefix is a kind of mirative marker.

The null and alternative hypotheses associated with contexts disfavoring mirativity are as follows:

NULL HYPOTHESIS 13: ANTI-MIRATIVE ELEMENTS

The presence/absence of explicit markers of inadequate evidence for a proposition and/or the presence/absence of markers of doubt concerning
the veracity of a proposition have no effect on a-prefixing; the presence/absence of markers of inadequate evidence and/or doubt neither favor nor disfavor a-prefixing.

**ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 13: ANTI-MIRATIVE ELEMENTS**

The presence/absence of explicit markers of inadequate evidence for a proposition and/or the presence absence of markers of doubt concerning the veridicality of a proposition affect a-prefixing: the presence of explicit markers of inadequate evidence and/or doubt disfavor a-prefixing, while the absence of such markers favors realization of the a-prefix.

It is predicted that the data from the CRP and DHP will permit us to reject null hypothesis 13.

**3.4.4 Summary of independent variables**

This section has detailed the thirteen independent variables selected for VARBRUL analysis, two external variables and eleven internal variables. Also presented were the null and alternative hypotheses for each of these variables as well as predictions made with respect to these hypotheses. The table below summarizes the thirteen independent variables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Prediction: Reject null hypothesis?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Sex</td>
<td>2 (m,f)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Residence</td>
<td>2 (TN, VA)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Clause type</td>
<td>2 (decl, interr)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Negation</td>
<td>2 (present, absent)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – VTA</td>
<td>2 (present, absent)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - Complement of perception verb</td>
<td>2 (yes, no)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - Verb type</td>
<td>3 (intrans, trans, CP-complement)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the next chapter, which discusses the results of the VARBRUL analysis, each of these thirteen variables coded as well as their corresponding hypotheses and predictions are treated.

3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has detailed the method of collecting the data, the method of extracting the data, and the independent variables tested using the statistical modeling of VARBRUL.

The table summarizing the methodologies of previous studies on *a*-prefixing, first presented in chapter 2, is reproduced below, with an added row for the present study:

Table 5. Summary of data/speakers/region in studies of *a*-prefixing (present study included)
The data extracted for the present study was also detailed in this chapter. These details are presented in the table below, alongside details of the data used in previous studies of a-prefixing:

Table 6. Summary of data used for studies of a-prefixing (present study included)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th># speakers</th>
<th># tokens -ing</th>
<th># tokens a-prefixed</th>
<th>% a-prefixed tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hackenberg (1972)</td>
<td>Interview/Questionnaire</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfram &amp; Christian (1976)</td>
<td>Interview/Questionnaire</td>
<td>13 (9m, 4f)</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feagin (1979)</td>
<td>Interview/Questionnaire</td>
<td>30 (interview)</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, the independent variables selected for VARBRUL analysis were detailed, along with corresponding null and alternative hypotheses and predictions. It should be noted that not all factor groups discussed here are independent and orthogonal: not all factors in every factor group can co-occur with all of the factors in every other factor group. For example, in the case of initial versus non-initial stress and syllable count, the factor non-initial stress in the stress factor group cannot co-occur with the factor monosyllabic in the syllable-count factor group.

Despite the non-orthogonality of some of the independent variables, all factor groups and factors coded for can be submitted to VARBRUL analysis: there are methodologically sound means of dealing with such interactions that are discussed in the literature on quantitative sociolinguistics. Such methods were followed in the present study. The interactions found among factors from different factor groups are discussed in detail in the next chapter. Also discussed are the methods used to either eliminate such interactions or to appropriately deal with those interactions in cases in which they were not eliminable.
CHAPTER IV

4.1 Introduction and overview of results

In the previous chapter, the independent variables selected for investigation, along with the null and alternative hypotheses corresponding to each variable, were presented. In this chapter, the frequency distribution of each level of the 13 independent variables is discussed. Following this discussion, the results of the VARBRUL analysis are presented.

In the distributional results, it is seen that two of the binary independent variables (word-initial segment of base and stress pattern of base) must be excluded from the VARBRUL analysis because one level in each group showed categorical non-application (vowel and non-initial stress, respectively).

The 11 remaining independent variables were submitted to VARBRUL analysis. The VARBRUL results show that 5 of the 11 independent variables or factor groups condition the variable realization of the a-prefix: sex, complement of perception verb (yes, no), presence of a necessity modal (yes, no), presence of anti-mirative element(s) (yes, no), and verb type (intransitive/transitive, CP-complement).

Based on these results, it seems that pragmatic, syntactic and social factors all contribute to the realization of the a-prefix. That a set of quite diverse factors affects this variable phenomenon illustrates what Young and Bayley (1996) refer to as the principle of multiple causes (254). Young and Bayley invoke this principle in discussing the role of multiple contextual factors in conditioning interlanguage variation. They note that in accounting for variable phenomena, the analyst cannot hope to adequately model variation by examining only
one particular factor; instead, the analyst must examine a diverse set of contextual factors to produce a reliable model for the variation.

This chapter discusses in detail those diverse contextual factors that were found to condition the realization of the $a$-prefix. The presentation of results begins in section 4.2 with a discussion of the overall rate of $a$-prefixing in the CRP and DHP corpora. In this section the overall distribution of the $a$-prefix in the corpora is compared to distributions reported for other studies. Section 4.3 is devoted to the presenting the distribution of the $a$-prefix with respect to the levels of each of the 13 independent variables. First, the distributions of the $a$-prefix by sex and speaker residence are discussed. Second, the distributional pattern of $a$-prefixing for each of the syntactic independent variables is presented. Third, the distribution results for the phonological factor groups are discussed. Finally, the distribution of the $a$-prefix for the pragmatic independent variables is presented.

In the sections presenting the distributional results, patterns in the production of the $a$-prefix are identified. Those independent variables that must be excluded from VARBRUL analysis (due to ‘knockouts’) are also discussed.

Following an interim summary of the distribution results in section 4.4, the results of the VARBRUL analysis are presented in section 4.5. Because of cases of total non-application, some recoding of the independent variables was necessary. After a brief discussion of the rationale for recoding choices, the VARBRUL results are presented for the external factors of sex and speaker residence. Of these two independent variables, only sex was found to affect $a$-prefixing.

Next, the results of the VARBRUL analysis for each of the syntactic factors investigated are presented. Of the 5 factors, 2 were selected by VARBRUL as contributing significantly to
the variable realization of the \textit{a}-prefix: whether the base was the complement of a perception verb, and the verb type of the base.

Following a discussion of the syntactic factors, the results from the VARBRUL analysis for the phonological factors are presented. Out of the 4 factors, none was selected as contributing to variation in the production of the \textit{a}-prefix.

Finally, the results of the VARBRUL analysis of pragmatic factors are treated. Both of the pragmatic factors, presence/absence of a necessity modal and presence/absence of an anti-mirative marker, were selected by VARBRUL as contributing significantly to the variable production of the \textit{a}-prefix.

In each subsection of section 4.5, the results for each independent variable is discussed with reference to the corresponding null and alternative hypotheses that were presented in chapter 3. Those 5 cases in which the VARBRUL results allow for the rejection of the null hypothesis are discussed. In 6 instances the results do not allow for the rejection of the null hypothesis. These cases are likewise discussed and, in some instances, directions for further research are suggested.

Finally, section 4.8 concludes with a summary of the findings presented in this chapter. In this section, the VARBRUL results are referenced for the purposes of outlining the essential characteristics of any adequate formal analysis of \textit{a}-prefixing.

\textit{4.2 Overall rate of \textit{a}-prefixing}

In the CRP and DHP corpora, there were a total of 847 verbal -\textit{ing} forms. Out of these forms, 219 (25.9\%) were \textit{a}-prefixed. This is the overall rate of \textit{a}-prefixing in the data.
The overall rate of \textit{a}-prefixing in the CRP and DHP corpora is comparable to rates of prefixation found in other small studies, as can be seen in the table below. Note particularly Wolfram and Christian’s (1976) study, which also examined \textit{a}-prefixing in 13 informants, and which had a similar number of \textit{-ing} tokens (860 tokens compared to the present study’s 847 tokens). The small difference in rate of \textit{a}-prefixation between Wolfram and Christian’s study and the present study could possibly be attributed to Wolfram and Christian’s inclusion of nominal \textit{–ing} forms in the count of total \textit{-ing} tokens.\footnote{Recall that the \textit{a}-prefix is categorically banned with nominal \textit{-ing} forms.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location(s)</th>
<th>Speakers (N)</th>
<th># tokens \textit{-ing}</th>
<th># tokens \textit{a}-prefixed</th>
<th>% \textit{a}-prefixed tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hackenberg (1972)</td>
<td>Nicholas county, WV 12</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfram &amp; Christian (1976)</td>
<td>Monroe &amp; Mercer counties, WV 13 (9m, 4f)</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feagin (1979)</td>
<td>Anniston, AL 30 (interview) (12m, 18f) 6 (observation)</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfram (1980)</td>
<td>Monroe &amp; Mercer counties, WV 49</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>300+</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery (2009)</td>
<td>Tennessee/ North Carolina</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>2892</td>
<td>1053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present study</td>
<td>Mountain City/ Rogersville TN, &amp; Dante VA 13 (4m, 9f)</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\footnote{Recall that the \textit{a}-prefix is categorically banned with nominal \textit{-ing} forms.}
While this section has briefly discussed the overall rate of $a$-prefixing in the corpora, the sections to follow discuss how $a$-prefixing is affected by the different levels of each of the independent variables selected for investigation. In examining the frequency distribution of the $a$-prefix we can see patterns emerge in the use of the variable form. Certain environments seem to favor use of the prefix, while others seem to disfavor prefixation.

The categorical failure of the $a$-prefix to occur with several factors, as well as the consequences of this categorical behavior for VARBRUL analysis, is discussed. Following the presentation of frequency distributions for the $a$-prefix, results from the VARBRUL analysis are presented.

4.3 Effect of independent variables on the rate of $a$-prefixing

4.3.1 Overview

The aim of this section is to present the frequency distribution of the $a$-prefix with respect to each level of the 13 independent variables selected for investigation. These independent variables are summarized in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable (factor group)</th>
<th>Levels (factors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Male, female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Tennessee, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause type</td>
<td>Declarative, interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation</td>
<td>Present, absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb of temporal aspect (VTA)</td>
<td>Present, absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complement of perception verb</td>
<td>Yes, no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb type</td>
<td>Intransitive, transitive, CP-complement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base-initial segment</td>
<td>C, V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress pattern of base</td>
<td>Initial, non-initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllable count</td>
<td>Monosyllabic, polysyllabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final segment preceding word</td>
<td>C, tense-V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessity modal</td>
<td>Present, absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-mirative element(s)</td>
<td>Present, absent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the distributional data presented in this section we can see two things: first, for two of the independent variables (base-initial segment and stress pattern), a-prefixation exhibits categorical non-application for one of the levels (vowel-initial and non-initial stress, respectively). Second, for the remaining 11 independent variables that show some application for each level or factor, patterns of usage emerge.

In the case of the two independent variables for which one of the levels or factors shows categorical non-application, these factors (and hence, the factor groups themselves) must be excluded from VARBRUL analysis. The motivation for excluding the independent variables involves the nature of VARBRUL itself: VARBRUL models variation, not categoricity.

The results of submitting the remaining 11 independent variables to VARBRUL analysis are presented in section 4.4. In this section each of the null and alternative hypotheses for the independent variables are reviewed in light of the VARBRUL results.

4.3.2 Rate of a-prefixing: external factors
Recall from chapter 3 that two independent variables involving external factors were selected for the purposes of this study: sex and speaker residence. The distributional results for each of these independent variables are presented in turn.

4.3.2.1 Sex

First, as seen in the table below, female speakers produce more instances of the *a*-prefix than do male speakers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th><em>a</em>-prefix N(%)</th>
<th>No <em>a</em>-prefix N(%)</th>
<th>Total N (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>131 (30.8)</td>
<td>294 (69.2)</td>
<td>425 (50.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>88 (20.9)</td>
<td>334 (79.1)</td>
<td>422 (49.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female speakers produce the prefix on 30.8% of verbal *-ing* bases, while male speakers produce the prefix at a lower rate of 20.9%. Recall from the discussion of the null and alternative hypotheses for speaker sex (chapter 2) that it was predicted the null hypothesis would be rejected, where the null hypothesis indicates there is no effect of sex on *a*-prefixation. However, in this chapter it was predicted that male speakers, not female speakers, would evidence more *a*-prefixation.

To foreshadow the presentation of VARBRUL results in section 4.5, the independent variable of speaker sex does variably condition the production of the *a*-prefix: female speakers
favor a-prefixation relative to male speakers. This finding allows us to reject the null hypothesis (no effect of sex on a-prefixation), as well as the original alternative hypothesis (male sex favors a-prefixation). These results are discussed in greater detail in section 4.5.3. In this section, the finding that women produce the vernacular a-prefix more frequently than men is discussed with reference to the sociolinguistic literature on sex and linguistic variation.

4.3.2.2 Speaker residence

Recall from chapter 3 that, in addition to being coded for speaker sex, each -ing token was also coded for speaker residence (Tennessee or Virginia). The frequency distribution of a-prefixing for speaker residence is presented in the table below:

Table 10. Distribution of a-prefix by speaker residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>a-prefix N(%)</th>
<th>No a-prefix N(%)</th>
<th>Total N (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>76 (29.1)</td>
<td>185 (70.9)</td>
<td>261 (30.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>143 (24.4)</td>
<td>443 (75.6)</td>
<td>586 (69.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As discussed in chapter 3, there was no reason to believe that speakers in eastern Tennessee would differ significantly in their use of the a-prefix from speakers in proximal southwestern Virginia.

It is assumed here that the speakers from the two locales belong to the same speech community, in the sense of Labov (1972a). Thus, it was predicted in chapter 3 that the speakers would share the same pattern of a-prefixing.
4.3.3 Rate of a-prefixing: Syntactic factors

In section 4.3.3, the rates of a-prefixing for each of the internal factors (syntactic, phonological, pragmatic) are presented.

4.3.3 Effect of syntactic factors on rate of a-prefixing

Recall from chapter 3 that five syntactic independent variables were examined for the present study: clause type (2 levels: declarative, interrogative), negation (2 levels: present, absent), verb of temporal aspect (VTA) (2 levels: present, absent), complement of perception verb (2 levels: yes, no), and verb type (3 levels: intransitive, transitive, CP-complement). The effects of each of these syntactic factors on the distribution of the a-prefix are discussed in the following sections.

4.3.3.1 Clause type

The first syntactic independent variable examined was clause type. Each -ing form in the CRP and DHP corpora was coded according to whether it appeared in a declarative or an interrogative clause. Note that -ing forms coded as interrogative included i) *wh*-questions (‘Where is Lily?’), yes-no questions (‘Is that Sam?’), and indirect questions (‘I wonder if Savanah is at the library.’)

The distribution of the a-prefix according to clause type is presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause type</th>
<th>a-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>No a-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>Total (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declarative</td>
<td>204 (26.0)</td>
<td>580 (74.0)</td>
<td>784 (92.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen, -ing forms occurring in declarative clauses (26.0%) show a-prefixation at only a slightly higher rate than do -ing forms found in interrogative clauses (23.8%).

It was predicted in chapter 3 that the CRP and DHP data would not allow us to reject the null hypothesis, which posits no effect of clause type on the production of the a-prefix. To anticipate the discussion in section 4.5, this prediction is confirmed: the results of the VARBRUL analysis do not allow us to reject the model of independence. In section 4.5 this finding is discussed, with reference to Christian et al.’s similar findings from a forced-choice task administered to speakers of the dialect.

### 4.3.3.2 Negation

The second syntactic independent variable investigated was presence/absence of negation. The table below summarizes the distribution of the a-prefix according to the two factors in this factor group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negation</th>
<th>a-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>No a-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>Total N (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>15 (23.8)</td>
<td>48 (76.2)</td>
<td>63 (7.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. Distribution of a-prefix by presence/absence of negation
As can be seen from the table above, the independent variable presence/absence of negation seems to have little effect on the realization of the a-prefix: a-prefixing occurs at a rate of 26.0% in sentences with negation, compared to 25.8% a-prefixing in sentences lacking negation.

This independent variable is discussed again in section 4.5. Not surprisingly given the small difference in the frequency distribution for negated and non-negated clauses, the VARBRUL results show this factor group does not condition the variable realization of the a-prefix. The distributional results provided above are briefly returned to in this section in order to compare these results with Christian et al.’s forced-choice test results.

4.3.3.3 Verb of temporal aspect (VTA)

In addition to clause type and presence/absence of negation, a third syntactic factor group was coded as an independent variable: presence absence of a verb of temporal aspect (VTA). Recall from chapter 3 that a VTA is any lexical verb that encodes aspect, including inchoative verbs (e.g., begin, start, go to) and verbs expressing iteration or duration (e.g., keep (on), go on, etc.).

The distribution of the a-prefix for the two levels of this independent variable is summarized in the table below:

Table 13. Distribution of a-prefix by presence/absence verb of temporal aspect (VTA)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>212 (26.2)</td>
<td>7 (18.4)</td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>597 (73.8)</td>
<td>31 (81.6)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>809 (95.5)</td>
<td>38 (4.5)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the table, -ing forms that occur in the absence of a VTA evidence more a-prefixing than -ing forms that co-occur with a VTA. Verbal forms occurring independent of a VTA exhibit a-prefixation in 26.2% of forms, showing a slightly higher rate of a-prefixation than the overall rate of prefixation at 25.9%. In contrast, verbal -ing forms that co-occur with a VTA exhibit a-prefixation rate of 18.4%, slightly lower than the overall rate of 25.9%.

In section 4.5, the VARBRUL results for this independent variable are presented. These results show that presence/absence of a VTA does not variably condition a-prefixation. This finding is discussed with reference to findings from previous studies, especially Montgomery (2009).

4.3.3.4 Complement of perception verb

An additional independent variable involving the syntactic environment of the base was coded for: -ing form is a complement of a verb of perception (yes, no). Verbs of perception include see and hear. An example of an -ing form occurring as the complement of a perception verb is provided below:

(58) I [heared [a baby a-screaming]], and I thought what in the world.  
(2FTN 09/2007)  
Wolfram (1980) originally made the observation that participial -ing forms in [NP V-ing] constructions most often occur as complements of perception verbs (110). The selection of this independent variable was also motivated by the theory, first discussed in chapter 2, that the a-
prefix serves a kind of mirative function. Because the mirative has a quasi-evidential component, it was predicted in chapter 2 that -ing forms that are complements of perception verbs (themselves markers of evidence) would favor a-prefixation.

The table below summarizes the distribution of the a-prefix for the two levels of this independent variable.

Table 14. Distribution of a-prefix by whether base is complement of perception verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complement of Perception verb</th>
<th>a-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>No a-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>Total N (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16 (57.1)</td>
<td>12 (42.9)</td>
<td>28 (3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>203 (24.8)</td>
<td>616 (75.2)</td>
<td>819 (96.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>219 (25.9)</strong></td>
<td><strong>628 (74.1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>847</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, the a-prefix occurs more frequently with -ing forms that are complements of perception verbs (57.1%), as compared to -ing forms that are not complements of verbs of perception (24.8%). The rate of a-prefixation with -ing forms that are complements of a perception verb is also noticeably higher than the overall rate of a-prefixing in the corpora (25.9%).

To foreshadow the discussion of the VARBRUL results in section 4.5, this independent variable was shown to condition the variable realization of the a-prefix in the CRP and DHP data.

4.3.3.5 Verb type
In addition to the four syntactic independent variables discussed above, a final independent variable related to the syntactic context of the *a*-prefix was selected for investigation: verb type (3 levels: intransitive, transitive, CP-complement).

Intransitive verbs in English include verbs such as *arrive, come, run, rain,* and *talk.* Transitive verbs include *bake, fix, hear, make* and *take.* Verbs that can have a CP-complement include *try, hope, want* and the expression *be going to.* Examples of the three types of verbs are provided below:

(59) INTRANSITIVE (no NP in object position)

If it was *a*-raining, we went, or if was a-snowing, we went.
(5FTN 07/2008)

(60) TRANSITIVE (NP object)

I’m still *a*-carrying it on my husband. (1FVA 10/1997)

(61) CP-COMPLEMENT (clausal complement)

I’m *goin’* to order you a cane.” (1FVA 10/1997)

The distribution of the *a*-prefix according to the verb type of the base is summarized in the table below:

Table 15. Distribution of *a*-prefix by verb type of base
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb type</th>
<th>a-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>No a-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>Total (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intransitive</td>
<td>125 (30.3)</td>
<td>287 (69.7)</td>
<td>412 (48.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitive</td>
<td>84 (25.1)</td>
<td>251 (74.9)</td>
<td>335 (39.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP-complement</td>
<td>10 (10.0)</td>
<td>90 (90.0)</td>
<td>100 (11.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, intransitive verbs, which evidence *a*-prefixation at a rate of 30.3%, show the highest rate of *a*-prefixing among the three verb types. The next most frequently *a*-prefixed verb type is transitive verbs, which show prefixation at a rate of 25.1%. Finally, verbs possessing a CP-complement show a lower rate of *a*-prefixation (10.0%) relative to intransitive and transitive verbs.

To anticipate the discussion in section 4.5, results of the VARBRUL analysis show that verb type affects the variable realization of the *a*-prefix. In this section it is argued that this result is not likely attributable to the nature of the verbs in question (i.e., the different argument structures of the verb types); rather, it is likely a type of frequency effect.

### 4.3.4 Phonological factors

In addition to the five independent variables related to syntactic context, four independent variables were selected that are related to the phonological context in which the *a*-prefix occurs. Three of these involve the nature of the *-ing* base itself: the character of the word-initial segment of the base, the stress pattern of the base, and the syllable count of the base. The fourth independent variable concerns the phonological context preceding the *-ing* base, specifically, the
final segment of the word preceding the base.

The distribution of the $a$-prefix with respect to the levels of each of these independent variables is discussed below. In the case of two of these independent variables, word-initial segment of base and stress pattern of base, one level for each variable showed categorical non-application of $a$-prefixing. For the word-initial segment of the base, there were no instances of $a$-prefixation with vowel-initial words. For the stress pattern of the base, the $a$-prefix did not occur with bases possessing non-initial stress.

The findings of non-application with vowel-initial bases and bases possessing non-initial stress are consistent with results presented in Wolfram and Christian (1976), Wolfram (1980) and Christian et al. (1988).

The categoricity found in the cases of vowel-initial bases and bases with non-initial stress does not permit a VARBRUL analysis of these independent variables: VARBRUL models variability, not categoricity. This is discussed in more detail below.

The final phonological independent variable selected for investigation was syllable count (3 levels: monosyllabic, disyllabic, trisyllabic). One of the levels of this variable, trisyllabic, exhibited total non-application. This necessitated recoding for VARBRUL analysis, as discussed below.

4.3.4.1 Word-initial segment of base

The first of the three phonological independent variables considered the character of the word-initial segment of the base (2 levels: C, V). The distribution of the $a$-prefix for the two levels of this independent variable is presented in the table below:
Table 16. Distribution of $a$-prefix by initial segment of base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word-initial segment</th>
<th>$a$-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>No $a$-prefix (%)</th>
<th>Total N (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>219 (26.3)</td>
<td>613 (73.7)</td>
<td>832 (98.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>15 (100)</td>
<td>15 (1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the table above, $a$-prefixation does not occur with vowel-initial bases in the CRP and DHP corpora. The categorical non-application of $a$-prefixation with vowel-initial bases is consistent with Wolfram and Christian’s (1975, 1976) findings.

This finding is also consistent with Wolfram’s (1980) examination of more than 300 instances of $a$-prefixation collected as part of Wolfram and Christian’s original study. In his study, Wolfram also examined the corpora of Hackenberg (1972) and Feagin (1979). Wolfram found no instance of $a$-prefixation with a vowel-initial form in Hackenberg’s corpus and only one instance of the $a$-prefix with such a form ($a$-ironin’ in Feagin’s corpus.

Like Wolfram and Christian, Christian et al. (1988) report the data examined in their study show no example of $a$-prefixation with a vowel-initial -ing form.

Unlike the earlier studies of Wolfram and Christian, Wolfram and Christian et al., Montgomery (2009) finds three instances of $a$-prefixation with vowel-initial -ing forms (eating, aiming (2)).

The failure of the $a$-prefix to occur with vowel-initial forms in the CRP and DHP corpora is consistent with findings from early studies of $a$-prefixing in Appalachia. In chapter 5 an analysis of $a$-prefixing is offered that accounts for both i) the failure of the $a$-prefix to occur with
certain vowel-initial bases and ii) the appearance of the a-prefix with certain other vowel-initial bases (as in the single token in Feagin’s study and the three tokens reported by Montgomery). Thus, an account is offered that captures all of the data available from the published literature as well as the data from the CRP and DHP corpora.

Given that one level of this independent variable (vowel-initial) shows categorical non-application of a-prefixing, this independent variable is not suitable for VARBRUL analysis. As mentioned above, VARBRUL is designed to model the effect of independent variables or factor groups that show variable realization of the form under investigation. As such, independent variables that evidence categorical realization or non-realization violate a fundamental requirement of the statistical tool.

Recall from chapter 3 that it was predicted the data from the CRP and DHP corpora would allow us to reject the null hypothesis for this independent variable. The null hypothesis holds the character of the word-initial segment (C or V) has no effect on the realization of the a-prefix: C/V-initial bases neither favor nor disfavor a-prefixation. The data indicate, however, that a-prefixation does not occur with V-initial bases. This finding neither allows us to reject nor accept the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis assumes a vowel will neither favor nor disfavor a-prefixation; that is, it assumes no effect at all for the base-initial segment. The data show a categorical effect, however, and the null hypothesis does not take into consideration categorical effects.

4.3.4.2 Stress pattern of base

The second independent variable related to the phonological form of the base considered the stress pattern of the base. The stress pattern of the base was selected as an independent
variable based on descriptions in the literature indicating a-prefixation is either banned or strongly disfavored with bases possessing non-initial stress.

The distribution of the *a*-prefix according the stress pattern of the base is presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress</th>
<th><em>a</em>-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>No <em>a</em>-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>Total N (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>219 (26.3)</td>
<td>614 (73.7)</td>
<td>833 (98.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-initial</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>14 (100)</td>
<td>14 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, the *a*-prefix does not occur with bases possessing non-initial stress. The non-occurrence of the prefix with such bases is consistent with the findings of Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976), Feagin (1979) Wolfram (1980) and Christian et al. (1988), who all report no instances of *a*-prefixing with *-ing* forms possessing non-initial stress.

Montgomery (2009) reports finding three *a*-prefixed forms with non-initial stress (*believing* (2) and *relating*). In chapter 5, it is suggested a possible alternative explanation is available for the *a*-prefixation of these forms possessing putative non-initial stress. In this discussion, it is posited that the initial unstressed syllables in these forms could have undergone schwa elision, thus rendering the forms suitable bases for *a*-prefixation. Thus, the availability of an alternative explanation for the occurrence of the *a*-prefix with these kinds of bases suggests we may not want to abandon the descriptive generalization related to the stress pattern of the base set forth by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976).
Because one of the two levels of this independent variable shows complete non-application (the factor for non-initial stress), the independent variable itself cannot be included for VARBRUL analysis. If one of the two levels of the independent variable is removed, this leaves only a single level for this factor group, a singleton, in VARBRUL terms. Singletons violate an assumption of the statistical model and must be eliminated, either through recoding or exclusion of the relevant factor group.

Recall from chapter 3 that it was predicted the data would not allow us to reject the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis posited that the stress pattern of the base would neither favor nor disfavor \(a\)-prefixing; that is, stress would have no effect on prefixation. The CRP and DHP data show, however, that stress has a categorical effect on the realization of the \(a\)-prefix: when the base possesses non-initial stress, \(a\)-prefixing does not apply. The null hypothesis posits no effect of stress on \(a\)-prefixing; that is, it predicts the \(a\)-prefix should be as likely to occur on bases possessing non-initial stress as on bases possessing initial stress. Given that the null hypothesis makes no prediction concerning categorical effects, but only variable effects, we cannot reject (or accept) the hypothesis.

4.3.4.3 Syllable count of base

A final independent variable related to the phonological context of the \(-ing\) form was selected for investigation: the syllable count of the base. Each of the \(-ing\) forms in the corpus was monosyllabic, disyllabic or trisyllabic. The distribution of the \(a\)-prefix according to the syllable count of the base is presented in the table below:
Table 18. Distribution of *a*-prefix by syllable count of base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllable count</th>
<th><em>a</em>-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>No <em>a</em>-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>Total N (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disyllabic</td>
<td>17 (35.4)</td>
<td>31 (64.6)</td>
<td>48 (5.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monosyllabic</td>
<td>202 (25.5)</td>
<td>591 (74.5)</td>
<td>793 (93.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trisyllabic</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>6 (100)</td>
<td>6 (0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, trisyllabic bases do not evidence *a*-prefixation in the CRP and DHP data. Monosyllabic bases (25.5%) are *a*-prefixed at roughly the same rate as the overall rate of *a*-prefixation at 25.9%. Finally, disyllabic bases, which make up a small proportion of the total *-ing* tokens (5.7%), are *a*-prefixed more often than monosyllabic bases, which make up a much larger proportion of all *-ing* bases (93.6%).

Because trisyllabic bases categorically fail to host the *a*-prefix, this level/factor of the independent variable/factor group was recoded for the purpose of VARBRUL analysis. This recoding is discussed in greater detail in section 4.5.

To anticipate the discussion of the VARBRUL analysis, presented in section 4.5, the independent variable of syllable count was not selected by VARBRUL as contributing significantly to the variable realization of the *a*-prefix.

4.3.4.4 Final segment of preceding word

The final phonological independent variable selected for investigation involves not the phonology of the base, but the phonology of the preceding word. Recall from chapter 3 that each word preceding each *-ing* token was examined and coded for whether the word-final
segment was a consonant, a tense vowel or a lax vowel. The distribution of the \( a \)-prefix with respect to the final segment of the preceding word is presented in the table below:

Table 19. Distribution of \( a \)-prefix by final segment of preceding word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final segment of Preceding word</th>
<th>( a )-prefix N(%)</th>
<th>No ( a )-prefix N(%)</th>
<th>Total N (% TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tense-V</td>
<td>34 (32.4)</td>
<td>71 (67.6)</td>
<td>105 (12.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>185 (25.1)</td>
<td>553 (74.9)</td>
<td>738 (87.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lax-V</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>4 (100)</td>
<td>4 (0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>219 (25.9)</strong></td>
<td><strong>628 (74.1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>847</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above, we can see that the \( a \)-prefix does not occur where the preceding environment contains a lax vowel. In those cases in which a consonant precedes the -\( ing \) base, the \( a \)-prefix occurs at a rate of 25.1\%, roughly the overall rate of \( a \)-prefixing in the corpora (25.9\%). When a tense-vowel immediately precedes the -\( ing \) form, the prefix occurs at a rate slightly higher than the overall rate, at 32.4\%.

Given that the prefix does not occur where the preceding environment is a lax vowel, recoding for this factor is necessary. The particular choice made in recoding for this factor is discussed in section 4.5.

Foreshadowing the VARBRUL results presented in section 4.5, the independent variable for preceding phonological environment was not selected by VARBRUL as significantly contributing to the variable realization of the \( a \)-prefix.
4.3.4.5 Summary of distribution of a-prefix for phonological independent variables

In this section, the distribution of the a-prefix with respect to each of the four phonological independent variables selected for investigation was presented. In the case of two of the binary independent variables, one of the levels or factors showed categorical non-application of a-prefixing: base word-initial segment (C, V) and base stress pattern (initial, non-initial). As found in Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) and Christian et al. (1988), in the CRP and DHP corpora a-prefixation did not occur with either vowel-initial bases or with bases possessing non-initials stress.

For the remaining two phonological independent variables, syllable count of base and final segment of preceding word, one of the 3 levels of each independent variable (trisyllabic and lax vowel, respectively) showed categorical non-application of a-prefixing. Each of these levels or factors was recoded. The choices made in recoding these factors are discussed in section 4.5.

4.3.5 Pragmatic factors

4.3.5.1 Overview

Recall from chapter 3 that in addition to the independent variables related to social factors, syntactic factors and phonological factors, two independent variables related to pragmatic factors were also selected for investigation: necessity modal (present, absent) and anti-mirative marker(s) (present, absent). The distribution of the a-prefix with respect to each of these independent variables is discussed in turn below.

4.3.5.2 Necessity Modal

In collecting and extracting data from the CRP and DHP corpora, necessity modals (must, would, should) were observed to co-occur with the a-prefix. As noted in chapter 3, the
presence/absence of a necessity modal was selected as an independent variable for the present study based on the semantics of necessity modals as it relates to the theory (first presented in chapter 2) that the α-prefix serves a kind of mirative function.

As discussed in chapter 3, should the α-prefix serve a mirative-like function, we might expect it to be favored in those environments with a necessity modal. Recall from chapter 2 that cross-linguistic markers of mirative possess a quasi-modal component: if a speaker is surprised by the proposition expressed, the speaker is necessarily certain of the veracity of that proposition. Given that necessity modals encode speaker certainty, we might expect the α-prefix, if it were a kind of mirative marker, to be favored in the presence of such modals.

Notice that if the α-prefix should be a kind of mirative marker, we do not expect there to be an avoidance of the prefix in the context of necessity modals. That is, because mirative markers do not possess the semantics of a modal, but only possess a quasi-modal component that is pragmatic, we expect no avoidance of double-marking (*MODAL-MODAL: do not have adjacent instances of identical modality in the same clause).²⁹

The distribution of the α-prefix in the CRP and DHP corpora with respect to the presence/absence of a necessity modal is presented in the table below:

---

²⁹ As noted in the previous footnote, there seems to be no general avoidance of double modals in AppE. This does not rule out, however, the avoidance of double modals in an isolated corner of the grammar.
Table 20. Distribution of $a$-prefix by presence/absence necessity modal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modal present</th>
<th>$a$-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>No $a$-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>Total N (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24 (36.4)</td>
<td>42 (63.6)</td>
<td>66 (7.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>195 (25.0)</td>
<td>586 (75.0)</td>
<td>781 (92.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that $a$-prefixation occurs with 25.0% of -ing forms that occur in a clause lacking a necessity modal. This is roughly the same rate of occurrence in the overall sample (25.9%). In contrast, the $a$-prefix occurs more frequently in the presence of a necessity modal (36.4%).

The VARBRUL results, discussed in detail in section 4.5, show the presence/absence of a necessity modal to significantly affect variability in $a$-prefixing. The presence of such a modal favors $a$-prefixation, while, comparatively speaking, the absence of such a modal disfavors use of the $a$-prefix.

4.3.5.3 Anti-mirative elements

Finally, the second independent variable related to the pragmatic environment of the -ing forms was the presence/absence of so-called anti-mirative markers. Recall from chapter 3 that, should the $a$-prefix serve a kind of mirative function, we might expect it to be disfavored in those pragmatic contexts in which the speaker i) lacks direct evidence for a proposition and/or ii) doubts the veracity of the proposition expressed. An example of explicit reference to lack of evidence would include a phrase such as: [I never saw] them baking the bread. An explicit reference to doubt would include a phrase such as: [I don’t know] if he’s telling the truth.
The distribution of the $a$-prefix with respect to this independent variable is presented in the table below:

Table 21. Distribution of $a$-prefix by anti-mirative element presence/absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anti-mirative</th>
<th>$a$-prefix N(%)</th>
<th>No $a$-prefix N(%)</th>
<th>Total N (% of total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>217 (26.4)</td>
<td>604 (73.6)</td>
<td>821 (96.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (7.7)</td>
<td>24 (92.3)</td>
<td>26 (3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>219 (25.9)</td>
<td>628 (74.1)</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the table above, it can be seen that the $a$-prefix occurs less frequently with overt anti-mirative markers (7.7%) than it does in clauses lacking an explicit anti-mirative element (26.4%).

The VARBRUL analysis, presented in detail in section 3.5, shows that the presence/absence of an anti-mirative element(s) affects the variable realization of the $a$-prefix. The presence of an anti-mirative element(s) disfavors $a$-prefixation, while the absence of such an element, relatively speaking, favors $a$-prefixation.

4.4 Interim summary

With respect to the frequency distribution of the $a$-prefix presented for the independent variables involving external or social factors and internal or linguistic factors, two characterizing statements can be made. First, for some of the levels or factors of some of the independent variables, categorical non-application of $a$-prefixing is evident: the $a$-prefix fails to attach to bases that are vowel-initial or that possess non-initial stress.
Second, in the case of those independent variables for which a-prefixation occurs with at least two factors, patterns in the usage of the a-prefix emerge: the a-prefix occurs more often with intransitive verbs than with verbs selecting a CP-complement; the a-prefix is more likely to occur in the presence of a necessity modal and is less likely to occur in the presence of explicit anti-mirative markers.

The categorical behavior of the a-prefix in certain phonological environments clearly suggests a-prefixation is not random, but is, instead, principled. That is, given that the phonological distribution of the a-prefix lends itself to phonologically natural explanations (the avoidance of adjacent vowel-vowel sequences or the avoidance of adjacent unstressed syllables), it seems we can predict with what bases the a-prefix can occur and with what bases it cannot occur.

The distribution of the a-prefix relative to certain syntactic and pragmatic environments suggests that the variability of prefixation may be principled as well.

The next section, which presents results of a VARBRUL analysis, provides support for the assertion that the variable realization of the a-prefix is not random. The VARBRUL analysis allows us ascertain whether the independent variables selected for investigation provide a good model of variability in a-prefixing. The results show that 4 of the independent variables (social: sex (male, female); syntactic: complement of verb of perception (yes, no) and verb type (intransitive, transitive, CP-complement); and pragmatic: modal (present, absent) and anti-mirative marker (present, absent)) affect the variable realization of the a-prefix.
4.5 VARBRUL results

4.5.1 Overview

In this section the results of a VARBRUL analysis of $a$-prefixing in the CRP and DHP corpora are presented. Before presenting these results, the procedure for running this analysis is discussed. Decisions made concerning re-coding are justified. Following details of the procedure for running VARBRUL, the results of the analysis are detailed.

VARBRUL selected five factor groups as significant in conditioning the variable realization of the $a$-prefix: speaker sex, complement of a perception verb (yes/no), verb type (intransitive, transitive, CP-complement), necessity modal (present/absent), and anti-mirative element(s) (present, absent).

Female sex favored use of the $a$-prefix. Verbal -ing forms that served as complements of perception verbs favored $a$-prefixation (relative to forms that were not complements to such verbs). Intransitive verbs favored $a$-prefixation, while verbs selecting a CP-complement disfavored prefixation. The presence of a necessity modal favored realization of the prefix. Finally, the presence of an anti-mirative element(s) disfavored prefixation.

4.5.2 Procedure for running VARBRUL and VARBRUL results

4.5.2.1 Initial recodings/procedure

Recall from section 4.3 a number of factors or levels resulted in so-called knockouts: total non-application of $a$-prefixing. In the case of knockouts involving a factor in a binary factor group (e.g., consonant- vs. vowel-initial bases), the factor group must be eliminated. For every factor group or independent variable, VARBRUL requires at least 2 factors or levels. In some cases, factor groups can be combined to eliminate a group with only one factor (a
‘singleton’ in VARBRUL terms). In those cases in which there is no linguistic or social motivation to combine factor groups, however, the group itself must be eliminated.

For those factor groups with more than 2 factors or levels that possessed one knockout factor or level, it is possible to recode to either exclude the knockout factor or combine the knockout factor with another factor in the group. As noted above, however, factors should only be combined in those cases in which the combination is justifiable on linguistic or social grounds.

In the present study, the 2 binary factor groups in which one factor exhibited total non-application (initial segment of base (C, V) and stress pattern (initial, non-initial), the factor groups were excluded from subsequent analysis. For the 2 three-level factor groups in which one factor or level resulted in a knockout (syllable count (monosyllabic, disyllabic, trisyllabic) and final segment of preceding word (C, tense-V, lax-V)), the knockout factor in each group was combined with another factor.

For syllable count, trisyllabic bases (the knockout factor) were combined with disyllabic bases, resulting in a factor group with 2 factors (monosyllabic, polysyllabic). For the final segment of the word preceding the base, the factor lax-vowel was combined with tense-vowel, producing a factor group with only an opposition between consonants and vowels.

After recoding to i) exclude those binary factor groups with total non-application for one factor, ii) eliminate the knockout factor trisyllabic for the factor group syllable count, and iii) remove the knockout factor lax vowel for the factor group involving the final segment of the preceding word, 11 factor groups or independent variables remained. These independent variables are summarized in the table below:
Table 22. VARBRUL analysis: Independent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable (factor group)</th>
<th>Levels (factors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Male, female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Tennessee, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause type</td>
<td>Declarative, interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation</td>
<td>Present, absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb of temporal aspect (VTA)</td>
<td>Present, absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complement of perception verb</td>
<td>Yes, no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb type</td>
<td>Intransitive, transitive, CP-complement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllable count</td>
<td>Monosyllabic, polysyllabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final segment preceding word</td>
<td>C, V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessity modal</td>
<td>Present, absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-mirative element(s)</td>
<td>Present, absent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.2.2 Further recoding and overview of VARBRUL results

After the first VARBRUL run after recoding, the following factor groups were selected as significantly contributing to the variable production of the $a$-prefix: sex, complement of a perception verb, verb type, necessity modal and anti-mirative element(s).

Two additional re-codes were performed, the first to eliminate the non-significant factor groups, and the second to combine transitive and intransitive verbs for the factor group verb type. The results of the recode for verb type revealed no significant difference between the original coding distinguishing intransitive and transitive verbs (3 levels: intransitive, transitive, CP-complement) and a recode in which intransitive and transitive verbs were combined (2 levels: intransitive/transitive, CP-complement).
The model that makes the distinction between intransitive and transitive verbs was selected as the best model of the data. The goal of modeling linguistic variation using VARBRUL is to select the most parsimonious model that best fits the data. Because distinguishing between intransitive and transitive verb results in a model that better fits the data this distinction was preserved.

The results from the VARBRUL analysis using the model that separates intransitive and transitive verbs are reported below. Here the row labeled input refers to the base rate at which a-prefixing applies or the overall likelihood that the a-prefix will be selected (Young and Bayley 1996: 270). From examining the table below, the base rate for a-prefixing is 24%. This is close to the overall distribution of the a-prefix presented in section 4.3.

The next rows include three ‘goodness of fit’ measures for the model. The first is the log likelihood value. This value is always a negative number. The closer this value is to 0, which represents certainty, the better the fit of the model to the data (Paolillo 2002: 83). As Tagliamonte (2006) notes, the more factor groups in the model, the higher the log likelihood (226). Tagliamonte observes that models with 2 or 3 factor groups might routinely have a log likelihood value of -456.24 (226).

The second measure of the goodness of fit for the model is the total Chi-square. The total Chi-square is a measure of the degree of interaction among the levels of different independent variables (Young and Bayley 1996: 272). This measure of the degree of interaction is interpreted as follows: i) calculate the degrees of freedom for the model, ii) locate the total Chi-square value produced by VARBRUL in a Chi-square table, iii) ensure that the value output by VARBRUL is less than the Chi-square value at the acceptable probability level (typically p < .05) (Young and Bayley 1996: 273).
The table below provides the total Chi-square value of 15.3875 for the model of *a*-prefixing. The degrees of freedom for a VARBRUL model are calculated as follows: (number of factors – number of factor groups). The model of *a*-prefixing has 10 factors and 5 factor groups, yielding 5 degrees of freedom. The Chi-square value for 5 degrees of freedom at the desired level of significance (p < .05) is 11.070. The Chi-square value of 15.3875 is greater than 11.070, indicating some interaction among factors from different factor groups.

In the next sections, it is explained why we should tolerate this interaction and thus accept this analysis. It is argued that the interaction is not principled (i.e., it isn’t a result of a complete lack of independence of orthogonality between the two factor groups). Other runs of the data are presented that show each of the two interacting factor groups (modal and antimirative element(s)), when considered alone, both contribute significantly to the variability and result in a better Chi-square value. The best model of the data, it is argued, is the model presented in the table below, as long as we keep in mind the interactions between the two relevant factor groups.

The final metric showing the goodness of fit for the model is the Chi-square per cell. This value is calculated by dividing the total Chi-square by the number of cells of data. The Chi-square per cell gives a measure of the interactions among factors (Young and Bayley 1996: 273). Young and Bayley (1996) note that the lower the Chi-square per cell, the less likely it is that there is an interaction among factors (273). Bayley (2002) notes that a Chi-square per cell of 1.5 or less is desirable (128).

The table below, in addition to providing the total number of tokens, and the number of tokens and the rate of *a*-prefixing (both broken down by levels of each of the independent
variables), provides the factor weights for each of the factors or independent variables. A factor weight can range from 1 to 0.

Factor weights closer to 1 favor application of *a*-prefixing, while factor weights closer to 0 disfavor *a*-prefixing. Tagliamonte (2006) notes that the variationist literature often treats weights exceeding .50 as ‘favoring’ a variant, while treating weights less than .50 as ‘disfavoring’ a variant (see, for example, Bayley 2002: 118).

Tagliamonte points out that no factor weight should be considered in isolation as favoring or disfavoring a variable, however; rather, it is the relative position of each factor weight with respect to the other factor weight(s) in a group that should be used in interpreting the VARBRUL results (145).

One additional figure is important to notice in the table of VARBRUL results below: the range of the factor weights. For each group, the range of factor weights is the difference between the highest factor weight and the lowest factor weight. According to Tagliamonte (2006), the strength of an independent variable or factor group in conditioning a variable form is determined by the factor weight range of that factor group with respect to the factor weight range of other factor groups selected by VARBRUL as significant (242).

Examining the table below, the factor group anti-mirative is the factor group with the largest range, followed by the factor group for complements of a verb of perception, and then verb type and so on. Looking only at the range values for each factor group, then, we can say that the factor group anti-mirative has a greater effect on the variable realization of the *a*-prefix than, say, speaker sex.

In the remainder of this section, these VARBRUL results are discussed in greater detail. Each of the null hypotheses offered in chapter 3 is referenced in this discussion.
Table 23. Multivariate analysis of contribution of internal and external factors selected as significant to the probability of the realization of the a-prefix [ə-] with verbal -ing in Appalachian English [first VARBRUL run with non-significant factor groups removed]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-458.864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Chi-square</td>
<td>23.834</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square per cell</td>
<td>1.083</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>847</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Anti-mirative present | | |
| No | .51 | 96.9 | 821 |
| Yes | .20 | 3.1 | 26 |
| Range | 31 |

| Complement of perception verb | | |
| Yes | .79 | 3.3 | 28 |
| No | .49 | 96.7 | 819 |
| Range | 30 |

| Verb Type | | |
| Intransitive | .56 | 48.6 | 412 |
| Transitive | .50 | 39.6 | 335 |
| CP-complement | .26 | 11.8 | 100 |
| Range | 30 |

| Modal Present | | |
| Yes | .64 | 7.8 | 66 |
| No | .49 | 92.9 | 781 |
| Range | 15 |

| Sex | | |
| Female | .56 | 50.2 | 425 |
| Male | .44 | 49.8 | 422 |
| Range | 12 |

4.5.3 External factors

4.5.3.1 Overview

The two external independent variables selected for this study were sex (male, female) and speaker residence (Tennessee, Virginia). This section presents the VARBRUL results for
these two factor groups. The VARBRUL analysis revealed that only one of these two groups, speaker sex, affects the variable realization of the *a*-prefix.

It was predicted in chapter 3 that the null hypothesis related to speaker sex would be rejected. While the results confirmed this prediction, the effects of male versus female sex were incorrectly predicted: it is not the case that male speakers favor the *a*-prefix and females disfavor prefixation. Instead, female speakers favor *a*-prefixation, and male speakers disfavor realization of the prefix. This finding is discussed below, in relation to both i) Feagin’s (1979) observations of the effect of sex on *a*-prefixation in Anniston, Alabama, and ii) the findings of variationists studying the effect of sex in communities of nonurban speakers.

### 4.5.3.2 Sex

Results of a VARBRUL analysis indicate that speaker sex significantly contributes to the variation in *a*-prefixing: female speakers favor *a*-prefixation, while male speakers, relatively speaking, disfavor the prefix. The results for speaker sex are presented below:

Table 24. Multivariate analysis of contribution of sex to the probability of the realization of the *a*-prefix [ə] with verbal -*ing* in Appalachian English [first VARBRUL run with non-significant factor groups removed]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>.24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-458.864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Chi-square</td>
<td>23.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square per cell</td>
<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>.56</th>
<th>50.2</th>
<th>425</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range
The strength of the effect for the factor group of sex is relatively small: the range is 12, compared with the larger ranges of some of the other factor groups considered (for example, the factor group involving complements of verbs of perception, which has a range of 30).

The small strength of the effect for sex (and the small strength of the effect other factor groups as well) is possibly attributable to running the VARBRUL analysis with a rather large of independent variables (10 for the initial VARBRUL run) and levels or factors (21 total factors for the same run) and a relatively small set of tokens (total –ing tokens: 847).

Generally, when variationists test for the effects of a relatively large number of independent variables, they submit a large number of tokens to VARBRUL analysis. For example, in his study of final –t,d deletion in Tejano/Chicano English, Bayley (1994) investigated the effects of eleven independent variables or factor groups with 34 separate factors. Yet, unlike the current study, which worked with fewer than 1,000 tokens, Bayley had nearly 5,000 tokens.

It is quite possible, then, that with a much larger number of tokens, the strength of the effects selected by VARBRUL as significant would be greater. However, though the strength of the effects might be expected to increase, we would expect the patterning of factors to remain the same: for example, more data could show a more robust effect for speaker sex, but we would still expect female speakers to favor the a-prefix and male speakers to disfavor prefixation.

Recall from chapter 3 the following null and alternative hypotheses that were to be tested using VARBRUL:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 1: SEX**

The sex of the speaker has no effect on a-prefixation: Males/females neither favor nor disfavor a-prefixation.
ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 1: SEX

The sex of the speaker affects $a$-prefixation: males favor $a$-prefixation while females disfavor $a$-prefixation.

As noted in chapter 3, the decision to frame the alternative hypothesis in these terms (i.e., with males favoring $a$-prefixation relative to females) was based on extensive sociolinguistic literature indicating that male speakers produce more non-standard or vernacular forms than female speakers (see the reviews in Labov 1990, 2001, chapter 8).

Given the results of the VARBRUL analysis, the null hypothesis can be rejected. However, the alternative hypothesis must also be rejected: it is not men who favor $a$-prefixation, but women.

The finding that women favor the vernacular $a$-prefix relative to men, contrasts with Labov’s (1990) Principle I:

(59) Principle I: “In stable sociolinguistic stratification, men use a higher frequency of nonstandard forms than women” (205).

As Labov (1990) observes, the evidence for Principle I is robust. For instance, variationists have found that that in the production of the English morpheme -ing, in a wide variety of dialects men favor use of the more colloquial variant [in], relative to females (e.g., Fischer 1958 for New England school-age children; Labov 1966 for New York City; Wolfram 1969 for Detroit; Trudgill 1974 for Norwich, England; Horvath 1985 for Sydney, Australia). (Labov 1990: 211).

However, both Labov (1966) and Wolfram (1969) found that sex strongly intersects with social class. As Labov (1990) details, the tendency among women to avoid more vernacular forms and to use instead the so-called prestige variants is most readily apparent for women of the
lower middle class (221). Labov indicates that this effect is less apparent for women of the lower class (and upper middle class) (221).

In contrast to the urban studies cited above, in which men favored more vernacular forms than women, studies in rural or nonurban communities have documented the opposite effect: women, rather than men, produce more instances of non-standard variants. Nichols (1976, 1983) studied the speech of black women living in mainland South Carolina and women living on a nearby island. Nichols found that women and men evidenced different patterns of usage of nonstandard and creole forms relative to Standard English.

The usage patterns identified by Nichols show the effects of not just sex, but age also. In the island community, younger- and middle-aged women used more prestige forms when compared to younger- and middle-aged men. However, Nichols found that older women of the lower class who lived on the mainland used twice as many nonstandard and creole features as their age-matched male counterparts.

Nichols finds that the occupational roles available to younger- and middle-aged women living called for the use of Standard English. The two younger groups of women found jobs away from the island in the service sector. In these jobs, the women interacted primarily with tourists, who used Standard English. Thus, these women had more need for Standard English than either their age-matched male counterparts (who worked on the island in non-service sector jobs) or the older women living on the mainland (who were confined to the local community and had few interactions with tourists).

Nichols indicates that the tendency for one sex to use more vernacular features than the other, whether it is women or men using more of the relevant features, is dependent in part upon the social subcommunity to which the speakers belong. The use of more features of
vernacularity (or more features of a prestige dialect, as the case may be) can also depend upon men and women having access to different economic opportunities that carry with them different sociolinguistic norms.

To return to *a*-prefixing in AppE, the older women Nichols found on the South Carolina mainland are not entirely unlike the older women who produced the data examined. Like the older mainland women, the women in the present study had less interaction with non-dialect speakers than did their male counterparts. Older women living in the region spent their time rearing their children and keeping a home for the family. Thus, they spent their time locally, having little access beyond a small subcommunity of speakers, much like the mainland women.

The older men from Tennessee and Virginia, on the other hand, encountered non-dialect speakers as a result of their employment. For example, the company that owned the coal mines in Dante, VA had recruiters for the mines approach newly disembarked immigrants at Ellis Island (Shearer, 2006 personal communication). The immigrants who accepted the offer of employment were from a variety of different countries and possessed no features of the dialect (and sometimes did not even speak English). Also, the men who ran the local operations in Dante were from various parts of the United States, making them non-dialect speakers as well.

Thus, the older men and women in the present study likely faced different sets of sociolinguistic norms. It is plausible that the men and women of Tennessee and Virginia, like the older men and women from Nichols’ study, show different patterns in the usage of vernacular features because they too belonged to different linguistic subcommunities.

Relevant, too are the findings from the studies of Labov (1966) and Wolfram (1969) indicating that the tendency of for women to use more standard features than men is dependent on social class, with the tendency weakened for the lower class. The women from the present
study are primarily (if not exclusively) from the lower class. Thus, given that i) women of a lower class often fail to show a preference for standard variants, and ii) women who belong to a subcommunity that provides different sociolinguistic opportunities can exhibit a tendency to be more vernacular, the finding that women use the a-prefix more than men is not entirely unexpected.

This is the first study (to my knowledge) to present a VARBRUL analysis of the effect of sex on a-prefixing. One early study of a-prefixing, however, does informally discuss the effect of sex on the morphophonological process. Feagin (1979) reported that the a-prefix was most frequent among the older women in her study (this held of both rural and urban women) (101). Out of 222 tokens of a-prefixing from Feagin’s interviews (considering only the 30 informants who produced any instance of the a-prefix) 183 tokens were produced by females (180 by women aged 60 and over) (82.4%) (Figures from Feagin’s table 5.1, p. 103). Only 39 a-prefixed tokens were produced by male speakers (17.6%) (Table 5.1, p. 103).

Feagin was the first researcher to note the effect of a-prefixing, and it seems she was the only researcher to do so. Wolfram and Christian do not address the effect of sex on the rate of a-prefixing. In examining their presentation of rates of a-prefixing, it can be seen that of the 13 speakers the researchers tabulate data for 9 are male 4 are female. The male speakers produced a total of 604 -ing tokens, 133 a-prefixed tokens (22.0%). The female speakers produced 256 total -ing tokens. Of these, 50 were a-prefixed (19.5%) (Figures from Table 18, p. 75).

Christian et al. (1988) provide details of a-prefixation for the 11 male and 11 female speakers in their study. The 11 male speakers produced 681 -ing tokens, of which were a-prefixed (18.9%). The 11 female speakers produced a total of 715 -ing tokens. Of these forms, 138 were a-prefixed (19.3%) (Figures from table 4.3, p. 69).
Wolfram and Christian and Christian et al. do not compare older female speakers to older male speakers; in fact, they make no claims concerning an effect for sex. Also, both for Wolfram and Christian and Christian et al. a subsample of the speakers in the studies are selected for a closer examination of a-prefixing rates. For example, Wolfram and Christian take from their larger sample of speakers, 13 speakers who produce the a-prefix. It is this subset of speakers for which the researchers tabulate rates of a-prefixing.

It is not clear from Wolfram and Christian’s report whether other speakers from the larger set also produced the a-prefix (but weren’t selected for the closer examination), or if the 13 speakers in question were the only speakers in the larger sample to produce the form.

What is clear from both Wolfram and Christian’s study and Christian et al.’s study is that a-prefixing was one of several foci of investigation: both researchers also examined other features of the dialect in their samples of speakers (e.g., non-standard subject-verb agreement and the use of double modals). Both researchers also note that interviews selected to be included in the studies involved those speakers who produced speech rich with the non-standard features of interest. Thus, it is possible that speakers who produced sufficient numbers of a-prefixing but insufficient numbers of other features of the dialect were excluded from the sample selected by these researchers.

In contrast, the only (linguistic) criterion for inclusion of speakers in the present study was that the speakers produce both -ing tokens and a-prefixed -ing tokens. It is possible that Wolfram and Christian’s and Christian et al.’s more general requirement (i.e., that speakers produce a variety of non-standard features) resulted in a sample with fewer instances of a-prefixing than the sample in the present study.
We simply do not know the relationship of a-prefixing with other features of the dialect, nor do we know if sex has a different effect for different features of the dialect (e.g., if women who use other nonstandard features more use fewer instances of the a-prefix, or if men who use more instances of the a-prefix also use more instances of the a-prefix). Thus, it is possible that the women selected for the sample were ‘low’ a-prefixers among women and men selected were ‘high’ a-prefixers among men.

Returning to the VARBRUL results reported here, the finding that older women produce more tokens of the vernacular a-prefix than older men, is consistent with Feagin’s description of a sex effect for a-prefixing. Furthermore, given that Wolfram and Christian and Christian et al. selected a less random sample than Feagin and possessed more inclusion criteria than the present study, it may be that it is inappropriate to compare both this study and Feagin’s study to that of Wolfram and Christian and Christian et al.

Finally, the VARBRUL results, which show a significant effect for sex in conditioning the variable realization of the a-prefix, allow us to reject the null hypothesis which posits the model of independence. The alternative hypothesis advanced in chapter 2 and repeated above is also rejected. This hypothesis indicates a sex effect, but predicts the wrong favoring/disfavoring relations.

4.5.3.3. Speaker residence

In chapter 3 the following null hypothesis was formulated for the factor group of speaker residence:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 2: SPEAKER RESIDENCE**

The state in which the speaker resides (TN or VA) has no effect on a-prefixation: Speakers living in TN/VA neither favor nor disfavor a-prefixation.
It was predicted that the data from the CRP and DHP would not permit us to reject this null hypothesis. As predicted, the VARBRUL analysis did not find the factor group speaker residence to be significant in conditioning a-prefixation. Based on these results, we cannot reject the null hypothesis.

4.5.3.4 Summary of results for external factors

A VARBRUL analysis of two social factors, sex and speaker residence, has shown that only sex affects the variable realization of the a-prefix. Female speakers favor the a-prefix while, relatively speaking, male speakers disfavor the prefix.

4.5.4 Syntactic factors

4.5.4.1 Overview

Five syntactic factor groups were submitted to VARBRUL analysis: clause type (2 levels: declarative, interrogative), negation (2 levels: present, absent), verb of temporal aspect (VTA) (2 levels: present, absent), complement of a verb of perception (2 levels: present, absent) and verb type (3 levels: intransitive, transitive, CP-complement).

Of these five factor groups, two were selected in a VARBRUL analysis as contributing significantly to variation in a-prefixing: complement of a verb of perception and verb type. A closer examination of the factor group for verb type revealed that a factor group with 3 levels (the original factors: transitive, intransitive, CP-complement) is preferable to a factor group that fuses two of the factors into one (the recoded factors: transitive/intransitive, CP-complement).
These results are discussed below with reference to the corresponding null and alternative hypotheses presented in chapter 3.

### 4.5.4.2 Clause type

The factor group clause type (declarative, interrogative) was not selected by VARBRUL as contributing significantly to variability in \(a\)-prefixing. In the stepping-up of the two-level binomial analysis, VARBRUL did not select this factor group as significant, and in the stepping-down of the same analysis, VARBRUL excluded this factor group.

Based on this result, the null hypothesis for clause type, repeated below, cannot be rejected.

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 3: CLAUSE TYPE**

Clause type has no effect on \(a\)-prefixation: no clause type neither favors nor disfavors \(a\)-prefixation.

Recall from chapter 3 that this factor group was selected for investigation based on results from a forced-choice judgment task administered by Christian et al. (1988). These researchers found no statistically significant difference between speakers’ preference for \(a\)-prefixed forms in declarative sentences and such forms in interrogative sentences. The results of the VARBRUL analysis, which use naturally occurring language data, thus support Christian et al.’s findings from the judgment task.
4.5.4.3 Negation

The following null hypothesis, also related to the syntactic environment in which the -\textit{ing} tokens appear, was also considered for investigation:

\textbf{NULL HYPOTHESIS 4: PRESENCE/ABSENCE OF NEGATION}

The presence/absence of negation has no effect on $a$-prefixation: neither the presence nor the absence of negation favors/disfavors $a$-prefixation.

The results of a VARBRUL analysis show no effect of clausal negation on the variable realization of the $a$-prefix. In the stepping-up run of the VARBRUL two-level binomial analysis, the factor group negation was not selected; in the stepping-down run of the same analysis the factor group was excluded. Given these results, we cannot reject the null hypothesis for negation.

These results are consistent with Christian et al.’s findings from a forced-choice judgment task. Christian et al. found no statistically significant difference in speakers’ preference for $a$-prefixed forms occurring in non-negated sentences and $a$-prefixed forms in negated sentences. Thus, the VARBRUL analysis of naturally occurring speech support the judgment task findings of Christian et al.

4.5.4.5 \textit{Verb of temporal aspect (VTA)}

The factor group for -\textit{ing} forms co-occurring in the presence/absence of a verb of temporal aspect (VTA) was not selected in the VARBRUL analysis as significantly conditioning variability in $a$-prefixing. The stepping-up run in the two-level binomial analysis failed to select
this factor group. The stepping-down run in two-level binomial analysis excluded the factor group.

Recall from chapter 3 that the null hypothesis corresponding to VTA posits no relationship between this independent variable and the realization of the a-prefix:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 5: PRESENCE/ABSENCE VERB TEMPORAL ASPECT (VTA)**

The presence/absence of a VTA has no effect on a-prefixation: neither the Presence nor the absence of a VTA favors or disfavors a-prefixation.

Based on the VARBRUL analysis discussed above, we cannot reject the null hypothesis.

Recall from chapter 3 that presence/absence of VTA was selected as an independent variable based on the examination of a-prefixing with VTAs by Wolfram and Christian (1976), Feagin (1979) and Wolfram (1980). Both Wolfram and Christian and Wolfram report that out of 39 total -ing tokens occurring with the VTA *keep* 16 (41%) are a-prefixed (figures from Wolfram and Christian (1976), table 18, p. 75; Wolfram (1980), table 6.1, p. 123). Feagin does not report how many total -ing tokens occur with *keep*; instead, it is reported that out of a total of 247 -ing tokens, 17 (6.9%) are a-prefixed tokens (110).

The three studies discussed immediately above examine -ing tokens with *keep* based on Hackenberg’s (1972) findings from a forced-choice test administered to speakers of AppE living in Nicholas County, WV. Hackenberg reports the native dialect speakers prefer a-prefixing with -ing forms that occur in the absence of the lexical item KEEP. Hackenberg treats this as a kind of avoidance of double marking: because the a-prefix expresses “duration” (which presumably means the iteration of an event), the prefix is avoided with KEEP, which itself lexically encodes “duration”.

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The present study not only considered *a*-prefixing with the lexical item KEEP, but with all VTAs, which include verbs of starting and stopping (e.g., *begin* and *quit*, respectively). All VTAs were considered, in part, because Hackenberg provided no motivation for treating the lexical item KEEP differently from other VTAs. Wolfram and Christian found that speakers show no dispreference for *a*-prefixing with KEEP, contra Hackenberg. Wolfram and Christian also argue against Hackenberg’s analysis of the semantics of *a*-prefixing. Wolfram and Christian point out that it is the semantics of the verbal -*ing* morph that expresses “duration”. Thus, the *a*-prefix does not itself encode “duration”.

Based on Wolfram and Christian’s report that there is no dispreference for *a*-prefixing with KEEP, and base on these researchers’ cogent argument that the -*ing* morph, not the *a*-prefix, encodes “duration”, all VTAs, not just the lexical item KEEP, were considered in the present study. It is also worth noting that in formal syntax VTAs are considered to form a class referred to also as aspectual verbs (cf. Levin 1993: 274-275).

Montgomery (2009) reports the results of a VARBRUL analysis of KEEP. Montgomery, however, codes the lexical item KEEP separate from other VTAs (including inchoative verbs like *start, begin*, etc.). Additionally, Montgomery codes for the following factors in the same factor group with KEEP and other VTAs: causative verbs, verbs of perception, progressive verb *be*, and verbs of movement (19). An example of each of these verb types provided by Montgomery is found below:

(62) Causative verb

Get you a sourwood switch and **have** it *a*-standing up at the door.
(63) Verb of perception

We **heard** the dogs *a*-barking when I left him.

(64) Progressive verb be

The dog **was** just *a*-grabbing at them.

(65) Verb of movement

Him and his brother-in-law one night back years ago, about forty [years ago], **went out** *a*-bear-hunting, *a*-possum-hunting.

Montgomery provides results from a VARBRUL analysis of the various verb types:

Table 25. Montgomery (2009): *A*-prefixing by VP type in AppE (Smoky Mountains)\(^{30}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Phrase Types</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb Phrase Types</td>
<td>Factor weight</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causative verbs</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbs of perception</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive be</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>1571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbs of movement</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEEP</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inchoative verbs</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here the lexical verb KEEP and the inchoative verbs both disfavor *a*-prefixation, relative to other verb phrase types. The factor for inchoative verbs disfavors the *a*-prefix more strongly than the factor for KEEP verbs.

In the present study, all VTAs were coded the same; that is, no distinction was made between KEEP and inchoatives. Additionally, verbs of perception were not compared to VTAs.

\(^{30}\) Montgomery does not provide measures for goodness of fit (i.e., total Chi-square, Chi-square per cell, log likelihood).
Instead, the factor groups for VTA and verbs of perception each had two levels or factors (presence/absence of a VTA or a verb of perception, respectively).

The motivation for coding uniformly for VTAs was detailed above. Briefly, there is no motivation, either derived from the sociolinguistic literature or from the syntactic literature, for treating KEEP differently than other VTAs. That is, there is nothing in either body of literature that suggests KEEP either does or should behave in a way that distinguishes this verb from other VTAs. Given the desideratum of developing the most parsimonious model of variation, all VTAs were coded identically.

The decision to code presence/absence of a VTA as a distinct independent variable from presence/absence of a verb of perception was made on both empirical and methodological grounds. In the syntactic literature, -ing complements of perception verbs are analyzed as a type of small clause, consisting of a subject and a non-finite verbal form [NP V-ing] (cf. Cinque 1992, Felser 1998, 1999, Rafel 2001, inter alia). In the literature, however, -ing verbs with KEEP and other VTAs are not considered as either syntactically equivalent to or syntactically opposed to [NP -ing] sequences that serve as the complement to a verb of perception.

While the syntactic literature finds no relationship between -ing forms co-occurring with VTAs and [NP -ing] sequences that are complements to verbs of perception, the VARBRUL analysis run in Montgomery does (at least) implicitly posit a relationship between the two types of forms. In creating a single factor group with factors for -ing forms co-occurring with a VTA and [NP -ing] complements to a verb of perception, Montgomery assumes that the two distinct syntactic environments are equal yet opposing syntactic environments. The assumption is that they are equal, in the sense of possessing the same syntax, and they are opposite, in the sense of possessing either the lexical item KEEP or a verb of perception.
As mentioned above, however, there is no motivation for treating these distinct occurrences of -ing as possessing the same syntax. In fact, there is motivation in the syntactic literature for treating the two occurrences as distinct types of forms. Additionally, to assume an opposition between -ing forms with KEEP (or other VTAs) on the one hand, and [NP -ing] complements to verbs of perception on the other, is to create a opposition that is not empirically motivated and is thus not valid.

In addition to the invalid assumptions for [KEEP -ing] sequences relative to [NP -ing] complements of perception verbs, the comparison of both of these types of sequences to other verb phrase types (-ing forms with be, verbs of movement, and causative verbs), is to create a comparison and opposition that is supported neither empirically nor in the formal literature.

Thus, it is suggested Montgomery’s assumption of these kinds of oppositions is methodologically unsound. Understanding that these different occurrences of -ing involve distinct types of syntactic structure, it is best to treat, for example, -ing forms co-occurring with VTAs as a separate factor group from [NP -ing] sequences that occur as complements to verbs of perception.

The separation of these two types of structures into two distinct factor groups allows us to hold constant for each of the two distinct structures, testing for the effect of the presence/absence of either a VTA or a perception verb.

4.5.4.6 Complement of perception verb

Wolfram (1980) first reported that a-prefixed -ing forms occurring in the absence of the auxiliary verb be frequently co-occur with verbs of perception (e.g., see, hear). An example of such an a-prefixed -ing form is provided below:
(66) [NP -ing] as complement of perception verb

…and I can [see [him right to this day a-leaving]] every morning to go be on the picket line, conditions was so bad with the coal companies at that time. (3MVA 10/1997)

Recall from section 4.2 that the distributional results for the present study found that -ing forms that are complements of a verb of perception more frequently select the a-prefix than -ing forms that are not complements of a perception verb. The VARBRUL analysis showed that the presence/absence of a verb of perception significantly contributes to the variation seen in a-prefixing:

Table 26. Multivariate analysis: contribution of perception verb to realization of the a-prefix [ə-] with verbal -ing in Appalachian English [first VARBRUL run with non-significant factor groups removed]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>.24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-458.864</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Chi-square</td>
<td>23.834</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complement of perception verb</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>.79</th>
<th>3.3</th>
<th>28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>819</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The strength of this effect, as determined by the range, is much greater than the effect for sex (range = 12).

The null and alternative hypotheses concerning verbs of perception and a-prefixing, first presented in chapter 3, are repeated below:
NULL HYPOTHESIS 6: COMPLEMENT OF PERCEPTION VERB

Embedding/no embedding under a verb of perception has no effect on $a$-prefixation: neither embedding under a verb of perception nor the lack of such embedding favors or disfavors $a$-prefixation.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 6: COMPLEMENT OF PERCEPTION VERB

Embedding/no embedding under a verb of perception affects $a$-prefixation: embedding under a verb of perception favors $a$-prefixation, while in comparison forms that are not embedded under such a verb disfavor $a$-prefixation.

In chapter 3 it was predicted that the data from the CRP and DHP corpora would allow us to reject the null hypothesis. The VARBRUL results do, in fact, allow us to reject the null hypothesis.

Wolfram (1980), in observing that the $a$-prefix is frequently found with -ing forms co-occurring with a verb of perception, does not suggest a possible explanation for this effect. In chapter 3, it was indicated that this independent variable, should it prove to significantly contribute to variation in $a$-prefixing in the predicted direction, could provide us with one way of getting at the pragmatic meaning of the $a$-prefix.

If the $a$-prefix were a kind of marker of mirativity, we might expect it to occur more frequently in those contexts in which a speaker has direct evidence for an assertion. This is because mirative markers possess a quasi-evidential component: something that causes surprise/wonder involves evidence of a particular quality (with direct evidence constituting the strongest form of evidence). Sensory evidence constitutes direct evidence. Thus, if the $a$-prefix were a kind of mirative marker, we might expect it to occur with markers of direct evidence, such as verbs of perception.
The VARBRUL results showing verbs of perception affect the variable realization of the a-prefix indirectly supports the contention that the a-prefix serves a kind of mirative function. However, the VARBRUL results for perception verbs alone do not tell us enough about the possible function of the a-prefix.

In section 4.5.7 the results for the independent variables involving necessity modal (present/absent) and anti-mirative element(s) (present/absent), which also provide us with an indirect way of getting at the function of the a-prefix, are reported. It is suggested that the results for both of these independent variables, taken along with the results for perception verbs, provide stronger evidence for the argument that the a-prefix functions as a kind of marker of mirativity.

4.5.4.7 Verb type

A final syntactic independent variable in the VARBRUL analysis was verb type (3 levels: intransitive, transitive, CP-complement). The following factor weights were output in the best stepping-up and stepping-down runs:

Table 27. Multivariate analysis of contribution of verb type [3 levels] to the probability of the realization of the a-prefix [a-] with verbal -ing in Appalachian English [first VARBRUL run with non-significant factor groups removed: intransitive and transitive verbs distinguished]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Type</th>
<th>847</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intransitive</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitive</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP-complement</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Input             | .24 |
| Log likelihood    | -458.864 |
| Total Chi-square  | 23.834 |
| Chi-square per cell | 1.083 |
Here intransitive and transitive verbs are distinguished. The distinction in the independent variable for these two types of verbs results in factor weights that are very close together (.50 for transitive verbs and .56 for intransitive verbs). The factor weight for transitive verbs suggests the verb type favors *a*-prefixation. The factor weight for intransitive verbs, which hovers near .50 at .56, suggests this verb type favors *a*-prefixation only slightly more than transitive verbs.

Given that the factor weights for intransitive and transitive verbs are quite close together, we might ask if the difference between intransitive and transitive verbs is contributing significantly to variation in *a*-prefixing. There is a way to test for whether there is a significant difference between a model that separates intransitive and transitive verbs and a model that combines the two verb types: the log likelihood ratio.

Young and Bayley (1996) and Paolillo (2002) both discuss the use of the log likelihood ratio in model comparison and provide the following formulæ:

\[
\chi_{\text{va}} = -2 (\text{log likelihood}_1 - \text{log likelihood}_2)
\]

\[
G^2 = 2 [L_{\text{model B}} - L_{\text{model A}}]
\]

In Young and Bayley’s formula, the log likelihood of the less complex model (i.e., the model with combined or excluded factors) is subtracted from the log likelihood of the more complex model (the model with separated or non-excluded factors). The resulting value is then multiplied by -2. In Paolillo’s formula, the log likelihood of the more complex model is subtracted from the
log likelihood of the less complex model, and this number is multiplied by 2. The difference
between the two means of calculating the log likelihood ratio is strictly attributable to different
methods of obtaining a positive number for use in checking the Chi-square distribution.

In order to determine if combining the intransitive and transitive factors was significantly
different from treating the two verb types separately, VARBRUL analysis was re-run. With the
exception of collapsing the distinction between intransitive and transitive verbs, all factor groups
and factors remained the same. The best stepping-up/stepping-down run is reported below:

Table 28. Multivariate analysis of contribution of verb type to probability of the realization of the
a-prefix [əә -] with verbal -ing in Appalachian English [second VARBRUL run with non-
significant factor groups removed: intransitive and transitive factors combined]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>.24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-459.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Chi-square</td>
<td>15.3875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square per cell</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Type</th>
<th>.53</th>
<th>88.2</th>
<th>747</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intransitive/transitive</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP-complement</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We now have two log likelihood values: -458.864 for the more complex model (model A) and
-459.769 for the less complex model (model B). It is somewhat unexpected that the more
complex model (model A) has a lower log likelihood than the less complex model (model B):
the log likelihood typically increases in its distance from 0 when factors are added, not when
factors are combined/taken away. This indicates a slightly poorer fit of the data with the factor
transitive grouped with intransitive.
Generally, the more complex model is rejected in favor of the less complex model when the log likelihood ratio (see formulae above) is not significant at the desired probability level. It must be noted, however, that rejecting the more complex model in such a case assumes not only statistical non-significance of the log likelihood ratio, but also assumes the more complex model possesses a higher log likelihood value than the less complex model. Both the formula presented in Young and Bayley (1996) and the formula in Paolillo (2001) make the assumption that it is the more complex model that has the greater log likelihood.

In the case at hand, one of these assumptions is violated: the more complex model (with 3 levels of verb type: intransitive, transitive, CP-complement) results in a lower, not a higher log likelihood value than the less complex model (2 levels: intransitive/transitive and CP-complement). This violation is crucial: we cannot calculate a log likelihood ratio without manipulating the formula provided above.

That the more complex model has a lower log likelihood than the less complex model suggests that the more complex model – the model that better fits the data – should be preferred.

Having settled on the preferred VARBRUL model, we might ask what the results of the model mean: why would the type of verb (intransitive, transitive, CP-complement) matter for the purposes of a-prefixing? It seems unlikely that the a-prefix preferentially selects intransitive verbs just because they are intransitive, or that the a-prefix disprefers verbs that e-select a CP just because they select a clausal complement. That is, while affixes place a categorial restriction on the bases they attach to, they do not generally refer to the argument structure of bases.
What in a superficial way seems like a preference or dispreference for a type of verb may instead be a preference or dispreference related to the frequency of that type of verb. Repeated below is the distribution of the $a$-prefix according to the verb type of its base:

Table 29. Distribution of $a$-prefix by verb type of base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb type</th>
<th>$a$-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>No $a$-prefix N (%)</th>
<th>Total (% of TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intransitive</td>
<td>125 (30.3)</td>
<td>287 (69.7)</td>
<td>412 (48.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitive</td>
<td>84 (25.1)</td>
<td>251 (74.9)</td>
<td>335 (39.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP-complement</td>
<td>10 (10.0)</td>
<td>90 (90.0)</td>
<td>100 (11.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>219 (25.9)</strong></td>
<td><strong>628 (74.1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>847</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this case the frequency of the verb types appears to follow the same scale as the factor weights generated by VARBRUL. If we conceive of element to the left of a scale as more frequent/favoring $a$-prefixation and elements to the right of such a scale as less frequent/disfavoring $a$-prefixation, we need only one scale:

(69) intransitive $>$ transitive $>$ CP-complement

VARBRUL is designed to handle natural language data. This includes, especially, handling the kind of unbalanced data that are the result of naturally-occurring speech. Thus, VARBRUL is able to test for the effect of some factor without undue influence from that factor’s frequency of occurrence.
The effect for verb type identified by VARBRUL is real, then. However, that the effect corresponds to the frequency of the verb type, and that this need not be the case (see the results for complements of perception verbs, modals and anti-mirative element(s), for instance), indicates that the \textit{a}-prefix may be preferentially selecting \textit{-ing} forms that have a higher usage frequency relative to other forms. This line of reasoning is pursued in more detail in the next chapter, where the formal analysis of \textit{a}-prefixing is presented.

Relatively speaking, verb type exhibits a strong effect in conditioning the variable realization of the \textit{a}-prefix: the factor weights have a range of 30 (compare this to the range for sex, which is 12). Recall that the null hypothesis, repeated below along with the alternative hypothesis, posits no effect for verb type on \textit{a}-prefixing:

**NULL HYPOTHESIS 7: VERB TYPE**

Verb type has no effect on \textit{a}-prefixation: no verb type either favors or disfavors \textit{a}-prefixation.

**ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS 7: VERB TYPE**

Verb type has an effect on \textit{a}-prefixation: intransitive verbs favor \textit{a}-prefixation, while verbs that select a CP-complement disfavor \textit{a}-prefixation.

Given the VARBRUL results for verb type, we can reject the null hypothesis for this independent variable. The alternative hypothesis, however, is consistent with the results reported here.

4.5.5 *Summary of syntactic factors*

In this section the results for 5 independent variables related to the syntactic context in which the \textit{a}-prefix occurs were presented: clause type, negation, verb of temporal aspect (VTA),
complement of perception verb, and verb type. Of these 5 factor groups, 2 showed a significant effect in conditioning the variable realization of the $a$-prefix: complement of a perception verb and verb type. Both of these independent variables show relatively strong effects in the data.

4.5.6 Phonological factors

4.5.6.1 Overview

A total of 4 phonological independent variables were investigated in the CRP and DHP corpora: word-initial segment of the base (C, V), stress pattern of the base (initial, non-initial), final segment of the preceding word (C, V), and syllable count (monosyllabic, polysyllabic). As noted in the discussion on the distribution of the $a$-prefix according to phonological context, two of these independent variables had to be excluded from VARBRUL analysis due to total non-application of $a$-prefixing for one of the levels: word-initial segment of base (no V-initial $a$-prefixed forms) and stress pattern of the base (no forms possessing non-initial stress that are $a$-prefixed).

The remaining 2 phonological factor groups (syllable count and final segment of preceding word) were not selected by VARBRUL as significantly contributing to the variable production of the $a$-prefix. These two factor groups are discussed in this section with reference to the corresponding null hypotheses first presented in chapter 3.

4.5.6.2 Syllable count

Syllable count (monosyllabic, polysyllabic) was not selected in a VARBRUL analysis as contributing significantly to variation in $a$-prefixing. The null hypothesis associated with this factor group is repeated below:
NULL HYPOTHESIS 10: SYLLABLE COUNT

Syllable count has no effect on a-prefixation: monosyllabic/disyllabic/polysyllabic bases neither favor nor disfavor a-prefixation.

It was predicted in chapter 3 that the data from the CRP and the DHP would allow us to reject the null hypothesis. Results of the VARBRUL analysis, however, do not permit us to reject the null hypothesis: syllable count does not affect the variable realization of the a-prefix.

4.5.6.3 Final segment of preceding word

The final of the 3 phonological factor groups submitted to VARBRUL analysis involved the environment preceding an -ing form. Each -ing token was coded for the character of the immediately preceding segment (i.e., consonant, vowel).

Recall from chapter 3 that the final segment of the preceding word was treated as an independent variable based on Wolfram’s (1980) finding that a-prefixation occurs less frequently following a vowel-final word, relative environments in which the preceding word ends in a consonant. As noted, subsequent researchers were unable to confirm this finding (Christian et al. 1988, Montgomery 2009).

In chapter 3, an observation by Christian et al. (1988) was highlighted in formulating the null and alternative hypotheses for this independent variable. Christian et al. observe that the vowels that preceded a-prefixed forms in their study were mostly vowels that allowed for glide formation; that is, most were tense vowels. The null and alternative hypotheses were thus formulated to consider the tense-lax vowel distinction. The null hypothesis is repeated below:
NULL HYPOTHESIS 11: FINAL SEGMENT OF PRECEDING WORD

The nature of the preceding word’s final segment (C, tense V, lax V) has no effect on $a$-prefixation: among C-final, tense-V-final and lax-V-final segments in a preceding word, no segment type either favors or disfavors $a$-prefixation.

As discussed in the presentation of the distribution of the $a$-prefix, there was no $a$-prefixing found in the context of a preceding lax vowel. This factor (which had only 4 tokens) was thus combined with tense vowels. In the VARBRUL analysis, the distinction between contexts with a preceding consonant and contexts with a preceding vowel was not selected as contributing significantly to the variable realization of the $a$-prefix. Thus, results from the CRP and DHP corpora do not allow for the rejection of the null hypothesis related to preceding phonological context.

However, Christian et al.’s interesting observation concerning the distinction between preceding tense vs. preceding lax vowels holds in these data. The tense-lax vowel distinction is discussed more in chapter 5 when the formal analysis of the data is presented.

4.5.6.4 Summary of phonological factors

Of the two phonological factor groups submitted to VARBRUL analysis, neither syllable count nor the final segment of the preceding word significantly exerts a significant effect on variable $a$-prefixing.
4.5.7 Pragmatic factor groups

4.5.7.1 Overview

Two pragmatic factor groups were selected for VARBRUL analysis: presence/absence of a necessity modal and presence/absence of an anti-mirative element(s). The VARBRUL analysis selected both of these pragmatic factor groups as significantly affecting the variable realization of the a-prefix. The strength of the effect for the factor group anti-mirative was greater than that for the factor group modal.

4.5.7.2 Necessity modal

The factor group presence/absence of a necessity modal was selected by VARBRUL in the best stepping-up/stepping-down run as contributing the variable production of the a-prefix. The factor weights output by VARBRUL are summarized below:

Table 30. Multivariate analysis: contribution of modal in conditioning the a-prefix [ə]- with verbal -ing in Appalachian English [first VARBRUL run with non-significant factor groups removed]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>.24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-458.864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Chi-square</td>
<td>23.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square per cell</td>
<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal Present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>781</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results suggest that sentences with a necessity modal, favor a-prefixation. Relative to sentences with a necessity modal, sentences that lack this modal disfavor realizing the a-prefix.
The strength of the effect is quite small (range = 15) compared to other factor groups with a range of 30 or 31. It is comparable to the strength of the effect seen with sex (range =12).

The null hypothesis for the factor group modal is repeated below:

NULL HYPOTHESIS 12: PRESENCE/ABSENCE MODAL

The presence/absence of a necessity modal has no effect on a-prefixation: neither the presence nor the absence of a modal favors or disfavors a-prefixation.

Based on the results reported above, the data from the CRP and DHP corpora allow us to reject this null hypothesis.

It was predicted in chapter 3 that the presence of a necessity modal (such as must) would favor a-prefixation, while, relatively speaking, the absence of this kind of modal would disfavor a-prefixing. The results reported here are consistent with this prediction.

This null hypothesis was tested as one way of getting at the pragmatic meaning of the a-prefix. If the a-prefix serves a kind of mirative function, then we would expect the prefix to co-occur with forms that mark certainty. A necessity modal marks the speaker’s stance toward an assertion, in particular the speaker’s conviction that the assertion is true. Thus, if the a-prefix is a marker of something like mirativity, then we might expect the prefix to co-occur with necessity modal, such as must, should, would.

The rejection of the null hypothesis above provides indirect support for the theory that the prefix serves a kind of mirative function. As mentioned in section 4.5.4.6, in order to pursue the idea that the a-prefix is a marker of mirativity, multiple lines of evidence are needed. In the next section the results for the factor group involving anti-mirative element(s) are presented. The
results of this presentation, taken together with the results for necessity modals and results for complements of perception verbs, are discussed as providing indirect support for the theory that the \(a\)-prefix is a kind of mirative marker.

4.5.7.3 *Anti-mirative elements*

Results of the VARBRUL analysis indicate that the factor group for presence/absence of an anti-mirative element(s) contributes significantly to the variable realization of the \(a\)-prefix. Results for this factor group are presented below:

Table 31. Multivariate analysis: contribution of anti-mirative in conditioning the \(a\)-prefix [ə-] with verbal -*ing* in Appalachian English [first VARBRUL run with non-significant factor groups removed]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>.24</th>
<th>.24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-458.864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Chi-square</td>
<td>23.834</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square per cell</td>
<td>1.083</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>847</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Anti-mirative present       | .51  | 96.9 | 821  |
| No                         | .20  | 3.1  | 26   |
| Yes                        | .31  |      |      |

The results indicate that sentences containing an anti-mirative element disfavor \(a\)-prefixation when compared to sentences lacking such an element.

The strength of the effect for this factor group is, relatively speaking, large (range = 31).

That is, the range value for this factor group is the largest among the independent variables investigated in this study.

The null hypothesis associated with contexts disfavoring mirativity is repeated below:
NULL HYPOTHESIS 13: ANTI-MIRATIVE ELEMENTS

The presence/absence of explicit markers of inadequate evidence for a proposition and/or the presence/absence of markers of doubt concerning the veracity of a proposition have no effect on $a$-prefixing: the presence/absence of markers of inadequate evidence and/or doubt neither favor nor disfavor $a$-prefixing.

The results reported above permit us to reject the null hypothesis related anti-mirative elements. In chapter 3 it was predicted the presence of an anti-mirative element would disfavor $a$-prefixation. The findings reported above are consistent with this prediction.

In section 4.5.2.2, in the overview of the VARBRUL results, the total Chi-square value was noted to indicate interaction among factors from different factor groups. There it was also noted that the two interacting groups were modal and anti-mirative element(s). The interaction of the two groups was examined using the cross-tabulation function in VARBRUL. This allows for the comparison of the raw numbers and percentages of application and non-application of a variable process for any two factor groups. Cells that show total non-application for some intersection of factors among groups indicate interaction.

Some types of interactions are principled: the independent variables are not independent and orthogonal because one factor is incompatible with a factor in another group. Other types of interactions result from the interaction of factors between factor groups that should be independent and orthogonal but aren’t in the data set for less predictable reasons.

Interactions of the less predictable type are likely the cause of the interaction between modal and anti-mirative. While nothing in principle prohibits the co-occurrence of a necessity modal and an anti-mirative element(s), the co-occurrence of the two is likely found only under unique circumstances. Because the two factor groups are in principle independent and
orthogonal, the Chi-square value is tolerated here. As mentioned in section 3.5.4.6 and in the previous section, this factor group, considered along with the factor groups for necessity modal and the complement of perception verbs, can provide indirect support for the theory that the a-prefix serves a kind of mirative function. A necessity modal, which marks speaker conviction or certainty, was found to affect the realization of the a-prefix. The independent variable involving whether or not an -ing form was the complement of a perception verb, which is related to the evidential component of the feature mirative, was also found to condition variation in a-prefixing.

Given that the three independent variables in question affected a-prefixing as predicted, we have three threads of indirect evidence supporting the theory that the a-prefix serves a kind of mirative function. In the formal analysis presented in the next section, it is tentatively assumed that the a-prefix serves this kind of function. It is important to keep in mind, however, the three forms of evidence presented in this chapter provide only indirect support to idea that the a-prefix functions as a mirative marker.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the distribution of the a-prefix according to each of the 13 independent variables investigated was presented. A-prefixing shows categorical non-application with vowel-initial bases and bases possessing non-initial stress. The binary factor groups containing these factors were excluded from analysis because VARBRUL requires all factor groups to be minimally binary (no singletons, in VARBRUL terms).

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31 It should be noted that two additional runs of VARBRUL were also undertaken, one excluding the factor group for modal, the other excluding the factor group for anti-mirative element(s). Both resulted in lower Chi-square values, though some interactions remained for transitive and CP-complement verb types and anti-mirative element(s) in the first run.
The VARBRUL analysis run on the remaining 11 factor groups selected 5 factor groups as contributing significantly to variation in a-prefixing: speaker sex, complement of a verb of perception (yes/no), verb type (intransitive, transitive, CP-complement), necessity modal (present/absent) and anti-mirative element(s) (present/absent).

It was suggested that the factor group verb type only superficially involves the argument structure of the base verb. It is the usage frequency that likely affects the effect of this factor group on variation in a-prefixing. In the next chapter, this is discussed in more detail. There literature on the relationship between usage frequency and affixation are addressed. This literature indicates that relatively infrequent affixes often target bases depending, in part, on their type frequency.
Chapter V

5.1 Introduction/overview

In the previous chapter, results of a VARBRUL analysis of a-prefixing in the CRP and DHP corpora were presented. In addition to the effect of speaker sex, two pragmatic factors were selected as contributing significantly to variation in a-prefixing: necessity modal (present, absent); anti-mirative element(s) (present, absent). Also, what appear to be two syntactic factors affected the variable realization of the a-prefix in the corpora: complement of perception verb (yes, no); and verb type (intransitive, transitive, CP-complement).

So far, the a-prefix has been viewed only as a sociolinguistic variable. We have examined its quantitative distribution relative to a set of independent variables that are comprised of both social and linguistic factors. In this chapter, the a-prefix is still viewed as a sociolinguistic variable (i.e., a form equivalent in meaning to X-ing forms, constrained by social and linguistic factors), but the focus here is on the a-prefix as an object of the grammar.

In particular, this chapter is devoted to presenting a formal analysis of a-prefixing as a phenomenon at the interface of morphology and phonology. We examine the nature of the lexical entry for the a-prefixed forms, and the relationship of a-X-ing forms to X-ing forms. In previous chapters these two types of forms were implicitly analyzed as equivalent (i.e., as a valid sociolinguistic variable). In this section this equivalence is made explicit.

The equivalence between a-X-ing and X-ing is also qualified. It is argued that there are two progressive morphs in AppE: non-mirative progressive morphs and mirative progressive morphs. Three of the factor groups selected by VARBRUL as significant are used to motivate the argument that the a-prefix occurs only in mirative contexts, and that the prefix is itself an
overt exponent of the morpho-pragmatic feature mirative. Based on results for these three factor groups, it is argued the form \(a-X-ing\) is the progressive mirative form, which alternates with the mirative progressive form \(X-ing\).

The three factor groups related to the mirative function of the \(a\)-prefix are presence/absence of a perception verb; presence/absence of \textit{must}; presence/absence of anti-mirative element(s). It is suggested that the nature of the variation in \(a\)-prefixation with respect to each of these three factors indicates the prefix is a kind of mirative marker. Mirative markers indicate the affective state of the speaker. Specifically, such markers express speaker surprise or wonder.

The results from the VARBRUL analysis presented in chapter 4 suggest \(a-X-ing\) variably occurs in mirative contexts only, where it alternates with \(X-ing\). That is, the form \(a-X-ing\) does not appear in contexts in which the mirative is not appropriate. The selection of a mirative form vs. a non-mirative form of the progressive is a matter of pragmatic choice.

In this chapter, only mirative contexts are considered; that is only those contexts in which \(a-X-ing\) is a possible form are analyzed. The mirative form \(a-X-ing\) is suggested to instantiate circumfixation or simultaneous prefixation and suffixation. The mirative circumfixed \(a-X-ing\) is suggested to be an allomorph. Under this analysis, the two types of mirative forms, /ə-/X/-η/ and X/-η/, are both listed in the lexicon. These two forms offer distinct ways of spelling out a set of lexically listed features. In order for the mirative circumfixed form /ə-/X/-η/ to be spelled out, possible bases must satisfy at least three requirements.

First, the circumfix /ə-/X/-η/ requires that its base be verbal. That is, nouns cannot take the form /ə-/X/-η/. Thus, the circumfix inspects the category of each form, (variably) selecting otherwise suitable base forms that are verbs, but rejecting homophonous nominal forms.
The circumfix /ɑ-/X/-ɪŋ/ also requires possible bases to possess two phonological characteristics. Possible bases must i) be consonant- or tense-vowel initial and ii) possess initial stress. These are categorical (i.e., invariable) restrictions imposed by the circumfix.

Unlike the form with the circumfix, the general mirative form X/-ɪŋ/ imposes no such selectional restrictions on possible bases. The form X/-ɪŋ/, unlike its allomorph /ɑ-/X/-ɪŋ/, can attach to bases with any phonological shape. In addition to appearing with consonant- and tense-vowel-initial bases (like /ɑ-/X/-ɪŋ/), the form X/-ɪŋ/ also occurs with lax-vowel initial forms (unlike /ɑ-/X/-ɪŋ/). The form X/-ɪŋ/ attaches to bases possessing initial stress (like /ɑ-/X/-ɪŋ/ forms) as well as forms possessing non-initial stress (unlike /ɑ-/X/-ɪŋ/).

The circumfixed mirative /ɑ-/X/-ɪŋ/ cannot be selected from the lexicon unless the category restriction and the two phonological restrictions are satisfied. For those bases that satisfy these selectional restrictions, the circumfixed form is variably inserted. As assumed in the quantitative analysis of the two forms, there is a tension between the standard variant X/-ɪŋ/ and the non-standard or vernacular variant /ɑ-/X/-ɪŋ/. Resolution of this tension is determined by social factors, including speaker sex as well as other discourse-dependent factors that are presently not well-understood (e.g., formal/informal nature of discourse, status of interactants as dialect/non-dialect speakers, etc.).

The treatment of the circumfix as a kind of mirative marker plays an important role in the analysis of /ɑ-/X/-ɪŋ/ and X/-ɪŋ/ as allomorphs. Allomorphy, broadly speaking, refers to having more than one pronunciation for a single abstract morpheme. In some cases, the distribution of the allomorphs can be characterized in phonological terms and can be analyzed using general markedness constraints (e.g., syllabic markedness constraints such as ONSET or NOCODA). In these cases, the distribution of the allomorphs results in relative unmarkedness, for example
choosing one morph to avoid onsetless syllables while choosing another morph to avoid the creation of a coda.

In other instances, the distribution of allomorphs can still be characterized in phonological terms; however, that distribution cannot be captured by appealing to general markedness constraints like those mentioned above. That is, the distributions of the morphs do not result in relative unmarkedness; in fact, in some cases one of the morphs can result in a net increase in markedness. For example, one allomorph might consist of a highly marked segment, such as a velar nasal.

The introduction of relatively marked material prompts the following question: why insert the more marked morph in the first place, when the less marked morph could be used in all contexts? The answer seems to be that there is some kind of arbitrary preference for the more marked morph, such that the grammar treats that morph in a special way (i.e., preferentially). This kind of allomorphy system is referred to as arbitrary preference allomorphy.

In section 5.4, it is argued that mirative circumfixation is an instance of arbitrary preference allomorphy. In this section, allomorphy systems and arbitrary preference allomorphy, in particular, are discussed in greater detail. In the analysis of mirative circumfixation as arbitrary preference allomorphy, the mirative function of the circumfix is highlighted. It is argued that the circumfix offers an overt exponent for mirativity; thus, the form [ə-]X[-i]n spells out one more feature than the form X[-i]. It is the faithful mapping of this additional feature that constitutes the ‘arbitrary preference’ for circumfixed forms. That is, the circumfix is treated as special by the grammar because it spells out more morpho-syntactic/morpho-pragmatic features than its non-circumfix mirative allomorph.
Thus, it is argued that the grammar preferentially selects circumfixal [ə-]X[-ɪn] forms in those cases in which all of the selectional restrictions of the circumfix form are satisfied. These selectional restrictions are analyzed in sections 5.3 – 5.5. In section 5.3, the category restriction on mirative circumfixation is examined. It is argued that the circumfix inspects the featural content of bases, only selecting those bases that possess the correct morpho-syntactic features. Following the feature-based analysis of verbal and nominal ING forms by Cowper (1993, 1995 a, b 1999, 2003a, b), it is argued that the circumfix attaches to preferentially those ING forms possessing the feature [INTERVAL]. This is a feature of verbal ING forms, but not homophonous nominal ING forms.

Thus, the category restriction is formulated as a selectional restriction based on the feature content of ING forms. This selectional restriction imposed by the circumfix rules out affixation with nominal bases, while (variably) permitting affixation with bases satisfying all other selectional restrictions (i.e., phonological restrictions).

This feature-based analysis of the category restriction on mirative circumfixation provides us with a formal analysis of the category constraint first posited by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976). Additionally, this featural analysis of verbal vs. nominal ING forms allows us to correctly characterize as verbal the putative case of a circumfixed nominal ING form presented in Montgomery (2009).

In section 5.4.2, the morpho-syntactic and morpho-pragmatic pieces comprising circumfixed and non-circumfixed forms are considered together. Mirative forms lacking the circumfix (possessing just a suffix) X[-ɪn] offer an overt exponent for the feature [INTERVAL], though not the feature [MIRATIVE]. Forms that are circumfixed [ə-]X[-ɪn] faithfully express both [INTERVAL] and [MIRATIVE].
Section 5.4.4 argues that mirative circumfixation is an exemplar of arbitrary preference allomorphy. This section builds on section 5.4.2 by suggesting that circumfixed forms are treated preferentially by the grammar because they more faithfully express the feature content of underlying forms. That is, circumfixed forms, but not X[-ɪn] forms, express both the morpho-syntactic feature [INTERVAL] and the morpho-pragmatic feature [MIRATIVE]. It is precisely because circumfixed forms are more faithful that these forms are (variably) preferred by the grammar.

In section 5.4.5, the formalism used in analyzing mirative circumfixation as arbitrary preference allomorphy is presented. Optimal Interleaving (OI: Wolf 2008) is a derivational theory of the morphology-phonology interface. Due to its derivational component, and due also to the assumption that morphological spell-out of abstract morpho-syntactic/morpho-pragmatic features like [MIRATIVE] occurs in the phonological grammar, OI predicts interleaving of morphology and phonology. This interleaving becomes important in treating the categorical (invariable) phonological restrictions on the mirative circumfix.

The presentation of OI in section 5.4.5 provides the theoretical background that will allow us to account for mirative circumfixation as an instance of arbitrary preference allomorphy. Section 5.5 examines the categorical (invariable) phonological restrictions on circumfixation. In this section, the two phonological constraints on mirative circumfixing are analyzed in an OI framework.

First, the constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) restricting the form to consonant-initial bases is reformulated. Other researchers (Feagin 1979, Montgomery 2009) have found that the circumfix can occur with tense-vowel-initial bases. There are, however, no instances of the circumfix with lax-vowel-initial bases. It is pointed out that the circumfix
contains a prefix that consists of a lax vowel. As such, the restriction posited by Wolfram and Christian is recast as an anti-identity constraint banning adjacent lax-vowel sequence.

Also in section 5.5, the stress constraint formulated by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) is examined. Based on the data from the CRP and DHP corpora, as well as all data available in the literature, it is suggested Wolfram and Christian’s original formulation of the stress constraint is empirically valid. It is shown that putative counterexamples to the stress constraint found by Montgomery (2009) are not conclusive since they involve bases that are likely targets for schwa elision and so may constitute tokens with initial stress. It is shown that the data found by Montgomery can be handled if we assume schwa elision has occurred prior to circumfixation, thereby rendering the bases in question stress-initial.

In the case of these data, then, it appears that the morphology and phonology are interleaved. Optimal Interleaving (OI) is, in this case, an ideal formalism to account for mirative circumfixing. OI predicts this kind of interleaving of morphology and phonology should be attested.

Because we do not have access to Montgomery’s data, we cannot be certain that the putative forms with non-initial stress have undergone schwa elision before circumfixation. The section thus concludes with a sketch of an experimental design that could test for just these kinds of interactions of morphology and phonology.

Also, in section 5.5 we return once more to the VARBRUL results. In addition to the three pragmatic factor groups selected by VARBRUL, a fourth internal factor group was selected as contributing significantly to variation in mirative circumfixation: verb type (intransitive, transitive, CP-complement). Recall from chapter 3 that it was suggested the form is likely not
sensitive to the argument structure of the different types of verbs, *per se*, but is instead sensitive to the frequencies of each verb type.

In this section, this possible frequency effect is discussed with reference to the literature on usage frequency and affixation. It is argued that the circumfix, being a relatively infrequently occurring affix, attaches preferentially to bases with a high type frequency.

Intransitive verbs are most frequent in both corpora. These verbs are also most frequently circumfixed. CP-complement verbs, on the other hand, are least frequent in the corpora, and are also least frequently circumfixed. Thus there appears to be a relationship between usage frequency and likelihood of circumfixation: more frequent verb types (intransitive verbs) favor circumfixation, while less frequent verb types (CP-complement verbs) disfavor circumfixation.

In section 5.6, the allomorphy analysis advocated throughout this chapter is compared to a morpheme-specific analysis of circumfixation. This type of analysis would posit just one lexical entry for mirative verbal ING forms: /ə-/X/-m/. The prefix /ə-/ in the circumfix would be obligatorily deleted in some cases (e.g., lax-vowel-initial stems) and variably deleted elsewhere (e.g., consonant-initial stems). This deletion would be derived either by positing morpheme-specific constraints or morpheme-specific constraint rankings.

In the case of morpheme-specific constraints, a markedness constraint prohibiting adjacent lax-vowel sequences would be duplicated in the constraint inventory, with one of the anti-identity constraints indexed specifically to the circumfix. The indexed constraint would be ranked high in the grammar, deriving the generalization that circumfixing does not occur with lax-V-initial bases. The general (or non-indexed) constraint would rank below faithfulness constraints, thereby generally allowing lax-V sequences in output forms.
A morpheme-specific constraint ranking account of circumfixing would posit multiple grammars (so-called cophonologies) for AppE. One of the grammars for AppE would have a general (i.e., non-morpheme-specific) ranking. This grammar would rank an anti-identity constraint lower than corresponding faithfulness constraints, allowing lax-V sequences to surface in general. A second grammar for the dialect would be indexed specifically to the circumfix. This grammar would have a ranking in which the anti-identity constraint dominated relevant faithfulness constraints, thereby deriving obligatory deletion of the prefixal segment of the circumfix before lax-V-initial bases.

These two types of morpheme-specific accounts both predict that mirative circumfixation should be decided locally not globally (cf. Kimper 2011 for discussion of local vs. global phonological variation). That is, they predict that circumfixing is decided on a locus-by-locus basis (i.e., with reference to one conjunct at a time), and would not necessarily be expected to occur on a global basis (i.e., with reference to both/all conjuncts at the same time). This prediction that variation should be local, not global, becomes relevant when we consider conjoined mirative progressive VPs (/əә-ASK-ɪŋ/ AND /əә-BEG-ɪŋ/).

In those cases in which one base is lax-V-initial but the other base is not (and is otherwise a suitable base for circumfixation), as in /ə-ASK-ɪŋ/ AND /ə-BEG-ɪŋ/, a morpheme-specific phonology approach predicts [æsk-m AND ə-bɛɡ-ɪŋ], with deletion targeting the prefixal segment in only the first conjunct, should occur as frequently as [æsk-m AND bɛɡ-ɪŋ], in which deletion targets both conjuncts.

In section 5.6, data from conjoined VPs in the CRP and DHP corpora are presented. Conjoined VPs are shown to agree for circumfixation (i.e., to co-vary, all hosting the circumfix or all failing to host the circumfix) more often that they disagree for circumfixation.
Furthermore, a form is discussed which shows global variation of the kind not predicted by a morpheme-specific phonology approach (i.e., something like [æsk-ɪn AND bɛɡ-ɪn] is found, but no form like [æsk-ɪn AND ə-bɛɡ-ɪn] is attested).

Though there is only one form of the relevant kind, this form, when taken together with the relatively large number of forms that also agree for circumfixation, suggest that the decision of whether to circumfix or not is decided globally, not locally. Global variation of this kind is predicted by an allomorphy treatment of circumfixing like the one argued for in this chapter.

Following a discussion of global variation in circumfixation in conjoined VPs, section 5.7 turns to the overall variation seen in mirative circumfixation. This section examines how a formalism like Optimal Interleaving (OI) would handle variability in circumfixing. It is suggested the attested variation that is constrained by social factors could be modeled using the Gradual Learning Algorithm (GLA) of Boersma and Hayes (2001).

The GLA assumes a continuous ranking scale and probabilistic candidate evaluation. Under this model of variation, constraints that are proximally ranked on the continuous scale shift in their rankings with respect to one another at the moment of evaluation. The different rankings of the constraints at the time of evaluation produce different variants of a particular form. It is indicated in this section that an approach to variation like the GLA could successfully model the variability seen in mirative circumfixing.

Finally, section 5.8 concludes the chapter. This section brings together the different types of analyses presented in this chapter – morpho-pragmatic analysis, morpho-syntactic analysis, and phonological analysis. The goal of this short section is to summarize each of the components and to show how each component fits into the overall claim that mirative circumfixing is an instance of arbitrary preference allomorphy.
5.2 Pragmatic function of the a-prefix

5.2.1 Overview

In this section results from the VARBRUL analysis presented in chapter 4 are brought to bear on the pragmatic function of the a-prefix. First, the morpho-pragmatic feature of mirativity is introduced. Subsequent sub-sections then detail how each of the following factor groups provides evidence for the argument that the so-called a-prefix i) appears only in mirative contexts, and ii) is itself a kind of mirative marker: complement of a perception verb (yes/no), a necessity modal, such as must, should, would (present/absent) and anti-mirative element(s) (present/absent).

5.2.2 Mirativity: a marker of speaker surprise

Mirativity is the marking of information as unexpected, surprising or wondrous. Mirative markers are speaker-oriented markers, in the sense that they are used to convey the affective state of the speaker. In languages that possess mirative markers, some element of a sentence (typically the verb) is marked to convey the affective state of surprise.

DeLancey (1997) presents a survey of properties shared by mirativity in several unrelated languages. For example, the survey includes less commonly studied languages, such as Lhasa Tibetan (from the Bodic branch of Tibeto-Burman languages) and Hare (a dialect of Slave, which is an Athabaskan language spoken in the Mackenzie River valley of Canada), as well as the more familiar languages Turkish and Korean. Examples of mirative markers in each of these languages are briefly treated here, following the discussion in DeLancey (1997).

First, in Lhasa Tibetan, there is a distinction between the marker ‘yod’ and the marker ‘’dug’. ‘Yod’ signals information the speaker has based on prior knowledge. The marker ‘’dug’
signals newly acquired, unexpected information. The latter marker is a mirative form. In the sentences below, (70) is the unmarked form, occurring in non-mirative contexts. Only the sentence in (71) marks the information expressed as unexpected. The sentence in (71), with ‘’dug’ could be uttered after the speaker reaches into his/her pocket and finds money there, much to his/her surprise. The sentence in (70) would not be appropriate in such a context, however.

(70) The unmarked (non-mirative), with yod (Lhasa Tibetan)
    nga-r dngul tog=tsam yod
    I-LOC money some exist
    ‘I have some money.’ (e.g., I brought some with me)

(71) Mirative ’dug
    nga-r dngul tog=tsam ’dug
    I-LOC money some exist
    ‘I have some money!’ (quite to my surprise)

In Hare, the sentence-final particle ‘lõ’ conveys speaker surprise. DeLancey reports the second person forms receive an imperative interpretation, with no marking for imperative. In (73), the mirative marker ‘lõ’ signals the speaker finds it surprising that the addressee is drinking. This sentence would be appropriate, for example, if a speaker smells alcohol on an interlocutor’s breath.

(72) The (imperative) 2nd person form (Hare)
    īdō
    drink.2
    ‘Drink!’
    ??‘You’re drinking!’

(73) Mirative ‘lõ’
    īdō lõ
    ‘You’re drinking!’
In addition to the less commonly studied languages discussed above, two languages that have received more attention in the literature possess mirative markers: Turkish and Korean. DeLancey refers to descriptions of the Turkish perfect constructions in Slobin and Aksu (1982). In these constructions, the marker -miş possesses a core mirative meaning (with peripheral evidential meanings). The sentence in (75) with -miş could be used, for example, if the speaker hears someone at the door and upon opening the door discovers Kemal, who was not expected to visit:

(74) Perfect construction: non-mirative -di
     Kemal gel-di
     Kemal come-PAST
     ‘Kemal came.’

(75) Perfect construction: mirative -miş
     Kemal gel-miş
     Kemal come-MIRATIVE
     ‘Kemal came.’

Finally, Korean also has a marker that has a mirative use. The marker -kun signals new knowledge, something the speaker has just acquired and that is unexpected. This mirative marker alternates with -ci, which signals integrated knowledge. DeLancey presents the following naturally-occurring data, which he takes from Lee (1985, 1993). The sentence with the known-knowledge marker -ci could be uttered when the speaker arrives home to see that Cheolsu has left, as expected. In contrast, -kun is felicitous if the speaker arrives home to see that Cheolsu has left and this is surprising or unexpected (e.g., because the speaker expected Cheolsu to be home).

(76) -ci marks information as known
     cholsu   naka-ss-na-po-ci
     Cheolsu go.out-PRES-INFERENTIAL-ci
In the survey of mirative markers, DeLancey suggests that miratives possess quasi-modal and quasi-evidential components. That is, in addition to their central function of marking information as surprising or unexpected, miratives also provide cues to i) the speaker’s epistemic stance toward a statement, and ii) the quality of a speaker’s source of information for that statement.

Because mirative markers function to express speaker surprise toward a proposition, these markers possess an implicit element of modality. Modal forms can convey a speaker’s attitude toward a proposition. Specifically, modals can encode how (un)certain a speaker is concerning the veridicality of a proposition. If a speaker marks a proposition as surprising, implicit in this marking is the speaker’s attitude toward the truth-value of the proposition. Specifically, in marking a proposition as surprising, the speaker is expressing commitment toward the truth-value of that proposition.

Related to their implicit expression of modality, mirative markers also implicitly convey information about the kind of evidence a speaker has for an assertion. The expression of surprise implicitly indicates that the speaker possesses a certain kind of evidence for an assertion. For example, suppose a speaker uses a mirative form to mark a sentence meaning ‘The cat jumped-MIR out of the box.’ In using a mirative marker, the speaker is implicitly claiming to have a particular quality of evidence for a cat-jumping-out-of-box event. The speaker, for example, might have direct sensory evidence for this event, or the reliable word of a trusted friend.
The dual components of modality and evidentiality in the mirative derive from its primary function of marking a proposition as wondrous or surprising. So, while the mirative is quasi-modal, in the sense that it conveys the speaker’s stance toward the proposition, the form is not itself modal. That is, its lexical meaning is not modal, and it does not uniquely encode the speaker’s epistemic stance toward a proposition.

Similarly, while the mirative indicates that a speaker must have a certain kind of evidence for his/her assertion, the mirative is not an evidential marker. Evidential markers uniquely specify the speaker’s source of information. That is, the function of evidential markers is to convey what type of evidence a speaker has for an assertion. The primary function of a mirative marker, however, is to convey speaker surprise.

Also, evidential markers serve to specify a speaker’s source of information. In languages with rich evidential systems, markers may specify a source as direct (sensory evidence, sometimes marked according to sense), indirect (reported, sometimes marked according to degree of trust in source), or other (for discussion of types of evidentiality see Chafe and Nichol’s 1986 edited volume, also Faller 2002, *inter alia*). Unlike evidential markers, however, mirative markers do not encode particular information about a speaker’s source of information. That is, while mirative markers convey a particular quality of evidence, mirative markers do not specify the type of evidence.

In section 5.2.3, the modal and evidential components of mirativity are discussed with reference to the VARBRUL analysis of so-called *a*-prefixing in AppE. In this section, these results are connected to i) the pragmatic contexts in which the prefix is licensed, and ii) the pragmatic function of the prefix itself.
It is suggested that the prefixed form is licensed only in mirative contexts and that this form is a marker of mirativity. It is argued that there are two forms of the progressive verb in AppE: those that appear in non-mirative contexts, and those that appear in mirative contexts.

The focus in this chapter is only on those forms of the progressive verb that appear in mirative contexts. The prefixed form appears only in such contexts; that is, it is not licensed in those contexts in which a mirative meaning is not appropriate. This form alternates with the non-prefixed mirative form -ing. Both of these forms are mirative, only the non-prefixed form does not possess an overt exponent of mirativity.

5.2.3 VARBRUL results as related to the components of mirativity

5.2.3.1 Overview

In this section, three of the factor groups selected by VARBRUL as contributing significantly to variation in a-prefixing are discussed: complement of perception verb (yes, no); necessity modal (present, absent); and anti-mirative element(s) (present, absent). Each of these factor groups is discussed with reference to the two components of mirativity discussed in the previous section: nature of evidence for an assertion and speaker attitude toward that assertion.

In the sociolinguistic literature, -ing forms that serve as complements of perception verbs (see, hear) have been treated as constituting a syntactic factor group or independent variable. It is suggested here that this independent variable is better construed as involving pragmatics, not syntax. Specifically, perception verbs are taken to indicate the quality of evidence the speaker has for an assertion. That is, it is suggested that an [NP –ing] clause serving as a complement to a perception verb is asserted in relation to a particular quality of evidence: direct sensory
evidence. It is suggested that the presence of a perception verb favors a-prefixing because the a-prefix is a mirative marker that requires a certain quality of evidence to be felicitous.

The two additional factor groups selected by VARBRUL, necessity modal (must, should, would) (present, absent) and anti-mirative elements(s) (present, absent) are also discussed with reference to the components of mirativity. A necessity modal like the epistemic must expresses a high degree of speaker certainty. Such forms are discussed in relation to the modal component of mirativity.

Finally, the factor group for presence/absence of anti-mirative element(s) is discussed. Anti-mirative element(s) involve the expression of the speaker’s i) lack of direct evidence for a proposition, ii) doubt concerning the veracity of a proposition, or iii) lack of direct evidence and doubt, both.

These two components of anti-mirative elements are discussed with reference to the evidential and modal components of mirativity. It is suggested that both a speaker’s expression of lack of evidence for an assertion and a speaker’s expression of doubt concerning a proposition are less compatible with the a-prefix because the prefix itself expresses something like mirativity.

It is argued that there are two forms of the progressive verb: non-mirative and mirative progressive verbs. Setting aside non-mirative instances of the progressive, we focus on mirative progressive verbs, which are licensed in mirative contexts only. The so-called a-prefixed forms are argued to be mirative progressive verb forms. These forms are licensed in those instances in which a mirative meaning is appropriate. The non-a-prefixed mirative progressive form -ing alternates with the a-prefixed mirative progressive.
5.2.3.2 Preference for a-prefix for [NP -ing] complements of perception verb: relationship to mirativity

As discussed in chapter 3, results from a VARBRUL analysis show that verbal -ing forms serving as complements to a perception verb favor a-prefixation with a factor weight of .79, relative to -ing forms that are not complements to a verb of perception (factor weight .49; range = 30).

As discussed in the previous section, mirative markers possess an evidential component, conveying a particular quality of evidence for an assertion. Verbs of perception (see, hear) specify a type of sensory evidence. Among types of evidence, sensory evidence constitutes high-quality (i.e., reliable) evidence. Examples of -ing forms serving as complements to verbs of perception are provided below:

(78) a. And they was a picket line come up and I’d seen him a-sitting on the porch. (2MVA 02/1998)

b. It was just everywhere you seen, somebody a-hauling coal or sawdust. (2MVA 02/1998)

c. You see that hook a-hanging on that old coal house yonder? (1MVA 08/1998)

(79) a. …I can remember it well if it’s [ = IT WAS] yesterday, because you would hear them a-talking about the, what a hard time we was having… (3MVA 10/1997)

b. I heared a baby a-screaming, and I thought what in the world. (2FTN 09/2007)

Forms that do not serve as a complement to a perception verb are less likely to be prefixed. Examples of such forms are provided below. The example in (80) shows an -ing form with the
progressive auxiliary be. In (81) the -ing form is complement to the psych verb remember. In (82), the -ing form is the non-finite verb in a reduced relative clause: 32

(80) He was braking on a motor for Marion <name omitted> and when we got down to where they was at, Marion was down on his knees. (3MVA 10/1997)

(81) …and I remember Dad saying to him, he said “Lee, y'all fired me. Y'all don't want me, I'm for the Union.” and he said, “Rufe, we fired the best man we had.” (3MVA 10/1997)

(82) Just like the companies mining coal, and they's an old abandoned mines behind it. (3MVA 10/1997)

The finding that the a-prefix is favored in environments specifying sensory evidence is at least consistent with an analysis of the prefix as a mirative marker. The use of a mirative marker implies a certain quality of evidence. The increased frequency of the a-prefix with sensory verbs (which indicate the most reliable evidence) suggests that i) the a-prefix occurs in contexts in which direct evidence is specified and ii) the pragmatic function of the prefix possesses a component that exhibits an affinity to expressions of direct evidence.

5.2.3.3 Preference for a-prefix with necessity modals: relationship to mirativity

As noted in chapter 3, modals encode information about the speaker’s assessment of what is possible or necessary. Epistemic modals, for example, involve assessments of possibility or necessity grounded in what a speaker knows at a particular time (usually the time of utterance). In English, the epistemic necessity modal must expresses speaker certainty concerning some situation or state of affairs, with the degree of conviction based on the speaker’s knowledge.

32 A reduced relative clause is a relative clause that lacks the relative marker (who/that) as well as the finite auxiliary (was/were).
Modal *should* can also function as an epistemic necessity modal. Consider the sentence *John should be home by now*. If the speaker knows that John gets home every night at 9PM, and the at the time of speaking, it is 9:30PM, the speaker means roughly, ‘Based on what I know about John’s schedule, John is home right now.’

Deontic modals involve assessments of possibility or necessity grounded in a set of rules or laws the speaker knows to apply. In English, examples of deontic necessity modals are *should* and *must*. Consider the sentence *You must be home before dinner*. If a parent says this to a child, it means roughly, ‘Based on the rules of this house, you must be home by dinner.’

Modal *will/would* and *can/could* are also necessity modals. They can express that some state of affairs is true based on things like disposition or ability. For example, in saying the sentence *Gloria would love what we’re having for dinner*, a speaker could mean roughly, ‘Based on the kinds of dinners Gloria generally likes, Gloria would like this dinner.’

Consider the modal *could* in the following sentence: *Mary could help us study*. Here the speaker may mean roughly, ‘Based on Mary’s ability (i.e., Mary knows this subject well/has taken this class before, etc.) Mary can help us study’.

Recall from section 5.2.2 that DeLancey (1997) characterizes mirativity as having a modal component. In particular, the expression of surprise at some situation or occurrence indicates that the speaker endorses the veridicality of that situation/occurrence.

As reported in chapter 4, a VARBRUL analysis selected the presence/absence of necessity modals, including the epistemic necessity modal *must*, as significantly contributing to variation in *a*-prefixing: presence of a necessity modal favors prefixation (factor weight: .64), while relatively speaking forms that do not co-occur with such a modal disfavor prefixation (factor 49; range = 15). Examples of forms with a necessity modal are provided below:
(83) Threwed his hat over in the pond and left it. ‘cause he known everybody [WOULD] be a-looking for us. (1FTN 03/2007)

(84) That’s when Terry an’ Gary was little. He got out one day and his grandma supposed to be a-keeping him and they called me and said that Gary was gone. (1FTN 03/2007)

(85) Which you don’t have to watch, you can just be a-walking through and you can look out and see ‘em. (2FTN 09/2007)

Given that necessity modals encode speaker certainty, which is a component of mirativity, the VARBRUL results are consistent with an analysis which posits i) the a-prefix occurs in mirative contexts, and ii) the a-prefix is itself a kind of mirative marker. That is, we would expect mirative markers to be favored in those environments in which speakers possess a high degree of certainty concerning the veridicality of a proposition. Environments with a high degree of certainty are mirative environments. Necessity modals, such as must, should, can/could, express a high degree of certainty. The VARBRUL results, which show the a-prefix is favored with modal must, are therefore consistent with an analysis that takes the prefix to occur in mirative contexts, and that also takes the prefix to be a marker of mirativity.

5.2.3.4 Dispreference for a-prefix with anti-mirative element(s): relationship to mirativity

The VARBRUL results show the a-prefix to be favored in contexts with necessity modals as well as contexts with a verb of perception, while the a-prefix is disfavored in contexts involving an anti-mirative element(s) (factor weight: .20) relative to contexts that lack an anti-mirative element(s) (factor weight: .51; range = 31).

In chapter 3, the following contexts were taken to be anti-mirative: i) contexts in which the speaker explicitly indicated doubt concerning the veridicality of his/her assertion (e.g., I’m
not sure..., I don’t know if..., and similar statements) and/or ii) contexts in which the speaker claims to lack sensory evidence for an assertion (e.g., I didn’t/couldn’t see/hear...). Examples of -ing forms occurring in these anti-mirative contexts are provided below:

(86)  a. I don’t know whether he’s still living or not... (2MVA 02/1998)
      b. I don’t know if she’s still working up there or not. (1FTN 03/2007)
      c. I don’t know when he’s coming back home. (5FTN 07/2008)

(87)  Cox was a-running on the Democrat ticket, and I forget who was running on the Republican ticket. (1FVA 10/1997)

(88)  No, I didn’t see them baking the bread. (3MVA 10/1997)

As the label anti-mirative suggests, contexts involving doubt are taken to contradict one or both of the components of mirativity. Explicit indication of speaker doubt is taken to contradict the modal component of mirativity. Contexts in which a speaker claims to lack the most reliable type of evidence (i.e., sensory evidence) are taken to contradict the evidential component of mirativity.

The VARBRUL results showing the a-prefix to be disfavored in anti-mirative contexts suggests that the prefix occurs in a context that is inconsistent with both i) speaker uncertainty concerning the truth of a proposition, as well as ii) an absence of reliable evidence for a proposition. Thus, the VARBRUL results for anti-mirative element(s) are consistent with an analysis in which the a-prefix is taken to be a type of mirative marker which is only felicitous in mirative contexts.
5.2.4 Tentative proposal

In sections 5.2.3.2 – 5.2.3.4, it was suggested that the VARBRUL results provide indirect support for an analysis in which the a-prefix is analyzed as a form of the progressive that only occurs in mirative contexts. It was further suggested that the prefixed form be treated as a type of mirative marker.

When taken together, the compatibility of the a-prefixed progressive with necessity modals and with verbs of perception, and the incompatibility of the a-prefix with anti-mirative element(s), suggest that the prefix occurs in contexts with both a modal and an evidential component. The co-existence of these components is consistent with the a-prefix occurring only in mirative contexts and functioning itself as a marker of speaker surprise or wonder.

Based on these results, it is tentatively proposed that the a-prefix is an overt exponent of something like mirativity. That is, the prefix is taken to spell out the morpho-pragmatic feature [MIRATIVE]. It is further proposed that this form, which spells out [MIRATIVE] is licensed only in progressive contexts.

There are, then, two forms of the progressive verb in AppE: the non-mirative form and the mirative form. The a-prefixed progressive is taken to be the mirative form of the progressive. This form varies with the non-prefixed mirative form X-ing. Though this form lacks the prefix, it occurs in mirative contexts like the prefixed form.

The mirative progressive occurs only in mirative contexts; this form does not appear in environments in which a mirative meaning is not appropriate. In such environments, the non-mirative form of the progressive is selected. The focus in the remainder of this chapter is on presenting an analysis of the mirative progressive.
It is worth noting that the analysis of a vernacular feature as i) occurring only in affective environments and ii) expressing an affective state, is not without precedent. Labov et al. (1968) and Labov (1972b), for example, propose that a morpho-syntactic feature of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), negative inversion, conveys the affective state of the speaker.

Klima (1964) originally posited the feature \{Affect\} as a grammatico-semantic feature in his seminal paper on negation in English. In this paper, he cogently argued that the diverse set of environments in which negative polarity items (NPIs) are licensed can be conceptually unified by positing that in all of these environments a certain feature, \{Affect\}, is present. This feature is both necessary and sufficient for the licensing of NPIs.

Labov et al. (1968) and Labov (1972b) build on Klima’s analysis of NPIs, arguing that the feature \{Affect\} serves as a trigger for negative inversion, a syntactic phenomenon attested AAVE (and also other dialects of English, including AppE). In negative inversion a contracted negative modal or auxiliary (e.g., ain’t, don’t, won’t, couldn’t etc.) appears in a higher syntactic position than in non-inverted contexts (or in position higher than permitted in Standard English).

Typically, a modal or auxiliary element is below the subject of the sentence (No one can say Lily isn’t nice), in T or Infl. In negative inversion, the negated auxiliary/modal is higher than the subject of the sentence, however: Can’t nobody beat ‘em. (AAVE: Labov et al. 1968, ex. 367). Given the higher position of the modal/auxiliary in these contexts, the negated modal/auxiliary is taken to have raised from its normal (lower) position to a higher position.

Labov et al. observe that all cases of negative inversion in their data could be characterized as “emphatic, excited, and strongly affective” (285). Building on Klima’s proposal that a feature Affect(ive) licenses NPIs, Labov et al. propose that the feature [Affect] licenses negative inversion in non-standard dialects of English.
Labov et al.’s finding that negative inversion contexts were “strongly affective” is parallel to Feagin’s (1979) observation that the a-prefix adds to the discourse “…a sense of immediacy and dramatic vividness” (108). The a-prefix, Feagin notes, is found in those contexts in which speakers are intensely emotional about the content of their speech (for example, speakers use the prefix when telling dramatic stories or when endeavoring to re-enact some event that was emotionally charged). As such, Feagin analyzes the prefix as a pragmatic marker that lends a sense of vividness to the sentence (or even discourse) in which it occurs.

Thus, Feagin characterized those contexts in which the a-prefix appeared as involving strong emotion. Klima, in analyzing Standard English, intended the feature {Affect} to indicate those contexts where a sense of emotion (hence, affect) was involved. The feature {Affect} was argued by Labov et al. (1968) and Labov (1972b) to license a vernacular morpho-syntactic phenomenon in non-standard dialects of English.

Labov et al.’s and Labov’s proposal that {Affect} licenses a variable process in non-standard varieties of English suggests that other variable processes might also be licensed by {Affect} or similar features. Mirativity is a feature that expresses the affective state of the speaker. Surprise or amazement is a relatively strong affective state. Feagin notes that the a-prefix is most frequently used in contexts in which the speaker is excited or is attempting to dramatize an event.

Based on i) work of Labov et al. and Labov on vernacular features, ii) the observations of Feagin for a-prefixing in AppE, and iii) the results of a VARBRUL analysis of a-prefixing, the a-prefix is suggested to occur only in mirative contexts, in which it functions as a kind of mirative marker. The pragmatic meaning of surprise/amazement expressed by the prefix plays a role in the analysis of a-prefixing presented in the sections to follow.
5.2.5 Mirative function of the a-prefix: role in the analysis

In the formal analysis presented below, a-prefixing is taken to be an instance of arbitrary preference allomorphy. Briefly, arbitrary preference allomorphy is a system of allomorphy in which the distribution of two (or more) morphs can be described in phonological terms, but cannot be analyzed using non-ad-hoc markedness constraint. That is, because the insertion of one of the morphs in such a system results in a net increase in markedness (e.g., the creation of an onsetless syllable), the presence of that morph cannot be explained using a general markedness constraint (e.g., ONSET).

Because the markedness-increasing morph in such a system resists a markedness-based analysis, this morph is taken to be preferentially treated by the grammar. That is, such a morph is assumed to be preferentially inserted over a competing allomorph(s). Different approaches to the morphology-phonology interface formulate this preference in different ways. The formalism presented below, Optimal Interleaving (OI: Wolf 2008), assumes the features encoded by the preferred (marked) morph to be a proper superset of those features encoded by its competing allomorph. As such, the preferred morph is preferentially inserted because it is more faithful to the features expressed by the sentence in which it occurs.

In the OI analysis to follow, it is argued that in a-prefixing, the morph [ə-]X[-ɪn] expresses a proper superset of the features expressed by its allomorph X[-ɪn]). Under this analysis, the preferred mirative morph [ə-]X[-ɪn] is preferentially inserted (where phonologically permissible) because it more fully expresses the abstract features of the sentence than its allomorph X[-ɪn].

Specifically, the preferred morph [ə-]X[-ɪn] is suggested to map one feature that is not mapped by its allomorph X[-ɪn]: [MIRATIVE]. In the analysis to be presented, the failure of
the a-prefix to appear in mirative contexts is due to certain phonological constraints either categorically or variably outranking the constraint that requires the feature [MIRATIVE] to be morphologically expressed.

5.2.6 Summary

In this section, three of the factor groups selected by VARBRUL as contributing to variation in a-prefixing were discussed: complement of perception verbs, presence/absence of a necessity modal (must, should, can/could, will/would) and presence/absence of an anti-mirative element(s). Given the collective VARBRUL results, these three independent variables were suggested to provide indirect support for the argument that i) the a-prefix occurs only in mirative contexts, and ii) the a-prefix is itself a kind of mirative marker.

It was suggested that there are two progressive morphemes in AppE: non-mirative progressive morphemes and mirative progressive morphemes. The non-mirative progressive is represented by -ing. This progressive form occurs in those contexts in which the mirative is not appropriate. The non-mirative progressive is set aside in this chapter.

The mirative progressive, which is the focus of this chapter, is represented by the variable form a-X-ing. This form is licensed only in mirative contexts. The form is variably realized, alternating with the mirative progressive form -ing. A formal analysis of the distribution of the mirative forms a-X-ing and X-ing is presented in the rest of this chapter.

In section 5.4, the mirative-like function of the a-prefix is discussed again. There the morpho-pragmatic function of the prefix is considered along with the morpho-syntactic features of the mirative progressive morpheme, -ing. The abstract components of mirative [ə-X[-m]] and X[-m] forms, as well as the overt expression of these abstract components are discussed in greater detail. Additionally, in section 5.4, the so-called a-prefix is argued to be better analyzed
as involving circumfixation, or simultaneous prefixation and suffixation. Evidence for such an analysis is presented.

First, in the next section, the morpho-syntactic feature of the mirative verbal -ing is discussed. This feature is encoded by both mirative forms, [ə-]-X[-ɪn] and X[-ɪn].

5.3 Syntactic constraints on a-prefixing

5.3.1 Overview

In this section an analysis of the category constraint on a-prefixing is presented. Recall from chapter 2 that Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) found that the a-prefix attaches to verbal bases, but not homophonous nominal bases. This category constraint is formulated here in terms of the feature-based analyses of verbal –ing forms in Cowper (1993, 1995 a, b, 1999, 2003a, b). It is suggested that the a-prefix attaches only to bases possessing the feature [INTERVAL]. Verbal -ing forms, but not homophonous nominal forms, possess this feature.

Possible counterexamples to the category constraint are discussed. It is argued that in one instance a putative nominal a-prefixed form is in fact verbal. In three other instances, the forms in question appear to be nominal. This indicates variable violation of the category constraint.

This section on the feature content of verbal –ing forms is an important piece of the analysis of a-prefixing presented in section 4.4. It is suggested that both a-prefixed and non-a-prefixed –ing mirative forms possess the feature [INTERVAL], which is encoded by the progressive morph [-ɪ]. In addition to [INTERVAL], a-prefixed forms encode the feature [MIRATIVE]. Non-a-prefixed mirative forms do not provide an overt exponent for this feature.
The analysis of a-prefixing as allomorphy presented in section 4.4 suggests that it is the mapping of the additional feature [MIRATIVE] in a-prefixed forms that causes the grammar to treat these forms preferentially. It is argued that the grammar (variably) ’prefers’ a-prefixed forms because they more faithfully map the underlying features of the morpheme.

5.3.2 Formulating the category constraint: the a-prefix only attaches to -ing forms with verbal feature [INTERVAL]

Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) reported that a-prefixing occurs with verbal –ing forms, but not nominal forms of the same shape. In this section, the category constraint on a-prefixing is formulated in terms of the feature content of verbal vs. nominal ING forms.

Cowper (1995a) posits the following features for verbal and nominal ING forms. Nominal ING possesses only features associated with nouns: the form is nominal (+N), not verbal (-V), and is marked with the nominal feature [-plural]. In contrast, verbal ING possesses a tense feature (present), a property of verbs. Also, verbal ING is marked as verbal [+V]. (The feature [+N] for this form is related to Cowper’s argument that verbal ING forms require an external theta-role, which must be assigned by the verbal base. This particular feature of Cowper’s analysis is not relevant to the present discussion.) The feature [ _interval] is assumed to impose a selectional restriction on the verbal –ing form, requiring that the event specified by the base verb involve an event that unfolds over time (as opposed to a punctual event).
Cowper (2003 a, b) sets aside the feature content of nominal ING to focus on verbal ING forms. Cowper analyzes inflectional heads as involving the following maximal feature structure:

(90) Features of English Infl (Cowper 2003 a, b):

\[
\text{Infl} \quad \text{Proposition} \quad \text{Precedence} \quad \text{Event}
\]

\[
\text{Finite/Deixis} \quad \text{Interval}
\]

The relevant feature for the present discussion is [INTERVAL], a dependent of Event. Cowper takes [INTERVAL] to be present in all progressive sentences. The structures below, based on Cowper (2003a), show the representations of [INTERVAL] in two sentences with the
progressive morpheme. The sentence in (91) shows a progressive verb with a form of BE, and the sentence in (92) illustrates an -ing verb functioning as the complement of a perception verb.

In the structure in (91) an EventP serves as the complement to Infl. Infl contains the tensed progressive auxiliary. EventP, headed by the progressive morpheme –ing, takes a vP complement. The feature [INTERVAL] ensures that the chasing event is interpreted as extending over a period of time (as opposed to being punctual).

(91) Dexter was chasing the squirrel.

In the sentence in (92), an [NP -ing] clause serves as the complement to a perception verb (see). Here the progressive morpheme -ing heads Infl, as there is no tensed auxiliary (as there was in (91)). As in (91), the morpheme imposes an interval reading on its complement vP.
(92) We saw Dexter chasing the squirrel.

![Diagram of a tree structure representing the sentence structure.

In the analysis presented in the sections to follow, it is assumed all instances of verbal mirative ING possess the morpho-syntactic feature [INTERVAL]. Thus, both mirative a-prefixed verbal forms as well as mirative non-a-prefixed verbal forms are taken to map this inflectional feature. Nominal instances of ING (e.g., gerunds: *Running is fun*), on the other hand, are taken to lack this inflectional feature.

5.3.3 Re-formulating Wolfram and Christian’s (1975, 1976) category constraint in featural terms

In the present study, no instance of a-prefixing with a nominal ING form was discovered.
This finding is consistent with Wolfram and Christian’s (1975, 1976) fieldwork in West Virginia.

The absence of nominal a-prefixed forms suggests that the a-prefix places a selectional restriction on the category of possible bases. Specifically, the prefix requires a possible base to be verbal. As such, prefixation is licensed with verbal ING forms, but is not licensed with homophonous nominal forms.

Based on the work of Cowper (1993, 1995a, b, 1999, 2003a,b), as discussed above, it is assumed here that verbal and nominal ING forms differ in terms of their feature-content: verbal ING forms possess (and map) the feature [INTERVAL], while nominal forms do not. Given this featural analysis of verbal vs. nominal ING forms, and given that the a-prefix selects only verbal forms for possible bases, it is suggested that the prefix requires that its bases possess the feature [INTERVAL]. Thus, the a-prefix (variably) selects bases with this morpho-syntactic feature (i.e., verbal forms), but rejects those forms lacking it (i.e., nominal forms).

5.3.5 Recasting Wolfram and Christian’s (1975, 1976) preposition constraint

As discussed in chapter 2, Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) and Christian et al. (1988) report a preposition constraint on a-prefixing: when an X-ing form immediately follows a preposition, the a-prefix does not appear. That is the form is always X-ing, not *a-X-ing. These researchers note that the a-prefix is historically derived from the preposition at/on. They analyze the absence of a-prefixing following prepositions as evidence for a constraint banning adjacent prepositions in AppE.

Here is it argued that the preposition constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) and Christian et al. (1988) must be reformulated. It is shown that a-prefixing is not
banned following all prepositions. That is, there are [P a-X-ing] sequences in AppE. As such there seems to be no preposition constraint per se. It is shown that the a-prefix cannot appear following some prepositions, but this is not due to the presence of the preposition, but is due to the category of the X-ing form in question. It is suggested X-ing forms that serve as complements to a preposition cannot be a-prefixed because they are nominal forms and thus lack the feature [INTERVAL]. The a-prefix selects as possible bases only those ING forms possessing the feature [INTERVAL] feature.

As shown below in the data from the CRP and DHP corpora, the a-prefix can occur immediately following some prepositions, as when following prepositions that are part of a preceding phrasal verb:

(93) P + a-X-ing

a. And so... so, uh, they took off a-flying. (3FTN 03/2008)

b. And Mother looked through the winder and seen that girl and she screamed, and me and Ralph, we took right out after her and she ran in and grabbed Catherine up like that and oh, she burnt her, and that man who was down there was, had his hat off a-fanning her. (2MVA 02/1998)

c. I called him Abraham all the time, and he come up A-kickin’ them gravels and I said hey, what are you doing Abraham? (2MVA 02/1998)

However, the a-prefix is not found in other post-preposition contexts:

(94) P + (*a)-X-ing

a. Well, you know, sometimes I might get in a big way of talking and say it. (3FTN 03/2008)

b. They go up there to stop the people from going in, or try to. (2MVA 02/1998)

c. He said, we got you for trespassing on this railroad. (2MVA 02/1998)
d. Pick him a gallon for taking us. (2MVA 02/1998)

e. She had that disease that she's crippled and can't even turn over or raise up without pushin' a button and I've got a boy that's in construction work. (2MVA 02/1998)

In the forms in (94), the preposition is not part of a phrasal verb. The preposition takes the following X-ing form as its NP complement. The difference between the X-ing forms in (93) and (94) is that the former are verbal, while the latter are nominal. Thus, the forms in (93) possess the feature [INTERVAL], while the forms in (94) lack this feature. Because the a-prefix requires that bases have this feature, the forms in (94) are excluded as possible bases.

5.3.6 Counterexamples to the category constraint on a-prefixing

As evidence for the putative constraint against adjacent P + a-X-ing sequences, Christian et al. (1988) provide the constructed sentences in (95). These researchers report that the sentences were judged acceptable by speakers of the dialect:

(95) a. He makes money by restorin’ houses and a-buildin’ houses.
b. He got sick from workin’ and a-tryin’ too hard.

Christian et al. analyze these sentences as involving a gapped preposition (by and from, respectively) in the second conjunct. Because speakers accepted these sentences, Christian et al. suggest the a-prefix can occur following a preposition, but only if the prefix is not adjacent to the preposition.

Montgomery (2009) finds 3 naturally-occurring examples of a-prefixation in which the a-prefixed form appears to be the complement of a preposition (i.e., appear to be a nominal form):
(96) We’d make us a little ball by unraveling a yarn sock and a-winding it.

(97) [We didn’t have permission to swim there] without asking him, or [without] going home and then a-coming back.

(98) He fought on the Union side and got a pension, and after a-drawing hit he turned over with the enemy.

The forms in (96) and (97) show a-prefixed forms that appear to be complements of prepositions that are not adjacent to those prepositions. These sentences are consistent with Christian et al.’s formulation of the preposition constraint. The sentence in (98), however, shows an a-prefixed form immediately following a preposition, a violation of the preposition constraint.

The a-prefixed forms from Christian et al.’s judgment task, as well as the forms found by Montgomery violate Wolfram and Christian’s preposition constraint as well as the category constraint. Given that we reduced the preposition constraint to the category constraint in the previous section, we will have to accept the forms in (96) - (98) as rare exceptions to the category constraint.

Note also that the first conjuncts in (95a) and (96), restoring and unraveling, respectively, are possibly excluded from a-prefixation for phonological reasons: both forms lack an initial stressed syllable, and unraveling is vowel-initial. Recall from chapter 4 that neither vowel-initial nor non-stress-initial X-ing forms was a-prefixed. Section 5.5 presents an analysis of these phonological constraints on a-prefixing.

The foregoing discussion has accepted three naturally-occurring examples of a-prefixation with a nominal ING form. There is no evidence for a preposition constraint on a-prefixing. The a-prefix can occur adjacent to a preposition. The correct generalization appears to
be that a-prefixing is largely restricted to verbal ING forms. Given that the absence of a preposition constraint in AppE, there is no evidence for Wolfram and Christian’s (1976) and Christian et al.’s (1988) claim that the a-prefix is analyzed by present-day speakers of AppE as a preposition.

A final a-prefixed -ing form that at first appears to be a violation of the category constraint on a-prefixing remains to be discussed. This form, reported in Montgomery (2009), is presented below. The -ing form here is taken by Montgomery to be a complement to the verb call:

\begin{equation}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{(99) They put him [to] what they call } \textit{A-SCALING} \text{ the lumber.}
\end{array}
\end{equation}

This –ing form, however, is not nominal; rather, it is verbal. The sentence above involves wh-movement out of a small clause, an [NP -ing] clause in which -ing is a non-finite verb. The wh-form has replaced the NP in the [NP -ing] clause and it has raised out of that clause to form a relative clause. The lower clause above is derived as follows:

\begin{itemize}
\item a. they call that scaling the lumber [before wh-movement]
\item b. they call what scaling the lumber [replacement of that by wh-form]
\item c. what they call what scaling the lumber [movement of wh-form, deletion of copy]
\item d. what they call scaling the lumber [PF ]
\end{itemize}

Thus, while the form ‘a-scaling’ may seem to be a complement of call (and thus an NP), it is in fact a non-finite verbal form in an [NP -ing] clause from which the NP has been extracted.
In this section, the preposition constraint was reduced to a category constraint. Three instances of the a-prefix with nominal forms presented in the literature suggest the category constraint on a-prefixing to be variable. In an additional form, an a-prefixed -ing form superficially seemed to serve as a complement to a verb. This form was shown to function as the non-finite verb in an [NP –ing] clause, where the NP has been wh-extracted.

5.3.7 Summary

In this section, Cowper’s (1993, 1995a, b, 1999, 2003a, b) analysis of verbal -ing forms was presented. In this analysis, in which verbal -ing forms (but not homophonous nominal forms) possess the feature [INTERVAL]. It has been argued that the a-prefix selects bases that have this feature; as such, a-prefixation is predicted to occur with primarily with verbal forms. Three cases of a-prefixation with nominal forms indicate that the category constraint on a-prefixing is variable. Despite the existence of these forms, their small number indicates the category constraint largely holds.

5.4 Theoretical framework for analysis of a-X-ing

5.4.1 Overview

In section 5.2, the feature content of the a-prefix was explored. It was argued that prefixal [ə-] is an exponent of the feature [MIRATIVE]. In section 5.3, the feature content of the progressive morpheme -ing was discussed. Following Cowper (2003a,b) verbal -ing is taken to express the feature [INTERVAL].

In this section the pieces of an a-prefixed form, the morpho-pragmatic prefix [ə-] and the morpho-syntactic suffix [-ɪn], are considered together ([ə-]X[-ɪn]) in order to present a formal
analysis of a-prefixing. In this section, the so-called a-prefix is argued to be better analyzed as a case of circumfixation. Circumfixation involves simultaneous prefixation and suffixation to a base (Spencer 1998). In the case of the mirative verbal morph, the prefix [ə-] and the suffix [-ɪn] form a single unit [ə-] … [-ɪn], which attaches to bases possessing the correct morpho-syntactic feature ([INTERVAL]). Thus, the circumfix alternates with the simple suffixed form of the mirative progressive, [-ɪn].

Mirative circumfixation is analyzed as a type of allomorphy. Both mirative progressives, /ə-/X/-ɪn/ and X/-ɪn/, are taken to be listed in the lexicon. The choice between these variants is determined by a number of factors, including social, lexico-syntactic and phonological factors.

This section lays the groundwork for an analysis of the interaction of the selection between the two allomorphs and the phonology (i.e., morphology-phonology interaction). The analysis presented makes use of Wolf’s (2008) derivational theory of the morphology-phonology interface, Optimal Interleaving.

In this section, types of allomorphy systems are discussed. Mirative circumfixation is argued to be an instance of so-called arbitrary preference allomorphy. By way of introducing OI, an analysis of circumfixing with a consonant-initial, stress-initial form is presented. Recall that so-called α-prefixing variably occurs with consonant-initial forms that are stress-initial. Thus, the phonology plays relatively little role in determining the output with such forms (i.e., there are no constraints in the grammar targeted at consonant-initial stress-initial forms, as these forms are relatively unmarked). Relatively more marked bases (e.g., lax-vowel-initial forms) are saved for section 5.5.
5.4.2 Putting the morpho-pragmatic and morpho-syntactic pieces together: the features of a-X-ing, analyzed as a circumfix

This section has two purposes: to advance the argument that a-prefixed -ing forms are better treated as involving circumfixation (and not simple prefixation) and to compare the features spelled out by a-X-ing and X-ing outputs. Each of these purposes is pursued in turn.

A-X-ing forms have been assumed in the literature to involve cases of prefixation to an -ing form. However, there is reason to think that so-called a-prefixation is better understood as circumfixation. Ruszkiewicz (2002/2003) defines a circumfix as follows (160):

(101) A circumfix is a discontinuous affix X … Y such that XZY is a complete word formed by affixing X … Y to some Z belonging to a specified category, and neither XZ nor ZY are words.

Here X is a prefix, and Y a suffix. Thus, circumfixation involves simultaneous prefixation and suffixation (Spencer 1998, see also Drijkoningen 1995, 1999, Marušić 2003). The definition also indicates that neither the prefix nor the suffix can appear with a base on its own (i.e., without the suffix or without the prefix, respectively).

In the case of so-called a-prefixation, the discontinuous morpheme a- … -ing would attach to a base with the correct (verbal) features. The appearance of -ing independent of a- in mirative contexts is not counterevidence to the claim that a- … -ing is a single morpheme: from its first description in the literature, the so-called prefix has been treated as variable, alternating with non-a-prefixed -ing forms. Thus, given that the so-called a-prefix variably appears, the presence of -ing without a- does not suggest independence of the two forms.
Note also that though there are \textit{a-} forms that are not also \textit{-ing} forms (e.g., the adverb \textit{a-way}), the occurrence of such forms does not constitute evidence against a circumfixation analysis of \textit{a-} \textit{… -ing} forms. There are reasons to think, first of all, that so-called \textit{a-}prefixed verbal \textit{-ing} forms should be treated differently than other \textit{a-}prefixed forms (such as prepositions and past participial verb forms).

One reason to treat \textit{a-}prefixed \textit{-ing} forms as distinct from other types of \textit{a-}prefixed forms has to do with the frequencies of occurrence of the two types of forms. \textit{A-}prefixed \textit{-ing} forms occur relatively frequently in AppE (about 26\% of all possible \textit{-ing} bases are \textit{a-}prefixed). In contrast, the other types of \textit{a-}prefixed forms are relatively infrequent. In my corpora, for example, I found 1 example of an \textit{a-}prefixed adjective (\textit{a-way}). Practically speaking, these different frequencies of occurrence explain why \textit{a-}prefixed \textit{-ing} forms have received so much attention in the literature and why the other forms have received little to no attention: there just aren’t enough of non-\textit{ing} forms to study.

A second reason to think \textit{a-}prefixed \textit{-ing} forms are different from other \textit{a-}prefixed forms is related to the diachronic development of the \textit{a-}prefixed verbal \textit{-ing} forms. We can see a very clear historical development for these forms: they derived from preposition + \textit{-ing} sequences, as in ‘on/at hunting’ (\textit{Oxford English Dictionary} 2008/2012a). The prepositions then became phonologically reduced. Some dialects (Standard dialects of English) lost the \textit{a-}prefix altogether, while other dialects (including but not limited to AppE) preserved them.

In contrast for other types of \textit{a-}prefixed forms, we do not see this development from the prepositions ‘on/at’. For past participial \textit{a-}prefixed forms (‘a-opened’, ‘a-stopped’), the \textit{a-}prefix is treated by the \textit{Oxford English Dictionary} as having a different source than that of the prefix in
*a-X-ing* forms. While *a-X-ing* forms are traced to \[P + -ing\] collocations (‘on hunting’), participial *-ed* forms are treated as involving a different form of *a*- altogether.

The *a*-prefix in past participial forms is derived from the Old Germanic prefix *ga-* (OED 2008/2012b). The prefix in Old English was *ge-*, and the prefix as we know it in non-Standard dialects of English today is considered to be a variant of the prefix *y-* (OED 2008/2012c). Thus, *a*-prefixed *-ing* forms and other types of *a*-prefixed forms do not involve the same prefixed form: the *a*-prefix with *-ing* forms is derived from a preposition which became phonologically reduced, while the *a*-prefix with other forms is derived from an actual prefix form.

This suggests that instances of the *a*-prefix occurring in the absence of verbal *-ing* do not constitute counterevidence to the claim that *a*-prefixed *-ing* forms really involve circumfixation, and not prefixation. That is, because there are no instances of the relevant *a*-prefix that stand apart from *-ing*, we can say that the prefix cannot appear independent of *-ing*. That the *a*-prefix cannot appear independently of *-ing* exemplifies the defining characteristic of a circumfix: lack of independence.

Assuming *a*-prefixed *-ing* forms are circumfixes, these forms represent the only productive case of circumfixation in English. Ruszkiewicz (2002/2003) indicates that there is no circumfixation in English. Burzio (2005) treats *en-light-en* as the only English circumfix. The discontinuous morpheme *en…en* is restricted to the one lexical item.

In the following analyses of so-called a-prefixation in this chapter, it is assumed this process involves simultaneous prefixation and suffixation of the discontinuous morpheme *a- … -ing* to a base.

Next, the morpho-syntactic and morpho-pragmatic features expressed in circumfixed forms (*a-X-ing*) are compared to those features expressed in non-circumfixed forms *X-ing*.
In the formalism introduced in section 5.4.5, morphological and phonological processes take place in the same component of the grammar. In this theory of morphology-phonology interactions, Optimality-Theoretic (Prince and Smolensky 1993) faithfulness constraints can reference the underlying structure of morphemes, including the abstract features of these morphemes.

The abstract features of the a-prefix and the features of the progressive suffix –ing were discussed in sections 5.2 and 5.3, respectively. In this section we will see faithfulness to these features plays a role in the analysis of the circumfix a-X-ing relative to suffixed X-ing.

A circumfixed form [ə-X]-ɪ-

provides an overt exponent for, minimally (and maximally, for present purposes), two features: the morpho-pragmatic feature, [MIRATIVE]; and the morpho-syntactic feature [INTERVAL]. Forms that are only suffixed X[-ɪ-

provide an overt exponent for, minimally (and maximally), one feature, [INTERVAL]. Non-circumfixed verbal ING forms do not provide an exponent for the feature [MIRATIVE]. Thus, the features of the circumfixed form [ə-X][-ɪ-

constitute a proper superset of the features of non-circumfixed X[-ɪ-

In the next section, terms relevant to the mapping from an underlying structure to an output form are discussed.

5.4.3 Morphemes, morphs and feature structures

In this section some terminology necessary for an understanding of Optimal Interleaving (OI: Wolf 2008) is presented. Discussion of the terms presented follows Wolf (2008: chapter 2). The three relevant terms (morphemes, morphs and feature structures) are important in the analysis of the phonological constraints on mirative circumfixation presented in section 4.5.
The first term, morphemes, refers to abstract representations composed of feature-structures (FS), where FSes may or may not consist of dependency trees (i.e., hierarchically organized relationships between/among individual features). A somewhat analogous but more familiar construct is that of the phonological segment, which is construed as a root node that is composed of phonological features. Phonological features can be arranged a feature geometric fashion.

In OI terms, feature structures (FSes) are like the phonological representation of the segment, constituting the root node. Attached to the root node (i.e., the FSes), either directly or by means of a feature geometric arrangement, are morphological features. Just as in Optimality Theory, a phonological segment stands in Correspondence with some output form (i.e., a pronunciation) (McCarthy and Prince 1995), so in OI a morpheme (FS) stands in Correspondence with an output form. In this case, the output form is a morpho-syntactic meaning that will ultimately receive a pronunciation. That is, a morph is the ordered pairing of a morpho-syntactic meaning (a morpheme or FS) and a phonological underlying representation (UR). So, for example, the FS (or morpheme) of the English present tense, 3rd person singular verbal morpheme would be something like <-PST 3rd -PL>, and the FS-plus-phonological-form pairing (or morph) would be the underlying phonological representation plus the FS, something like the following: <-PST 3rd –PL, -s/>.

To return to our analogy, in Optimality Theory not only a segment, but also a phonological feature or arrangement of features is understood to stand in Correspondence with a possible output exponent (i.e., a pronunciation). This is the familiar input-output Correspondence. Given this Correspondence, there are anti-deletion and anti-epenthesis

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33 This realizational theory of morphology is found in Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993, 1994)
constraints that reference both segments and phonological features. An unfaithful mapping of either a segment or a phonological feature is blocked when the relevant input-output constraint is ranked higher than the markedness constraints that would otherwise force an unfaithful mapping.

Similarly, in OI morphemes (FSes) as well as individual morphological features stand in Correspondence with a possible morph (i.e., a morpheme + phonological UR), so-called morpheme-morph Correspondence. There are, likewise, anti-deletion and anti-epenthesis constraints that reference both morphemes (FSes) and morphological features. Under this approach, then, deletion/epenthesis of a morpheme (FS) or a morphological feature is ruled out when the relevant morpheme-morph constraint dominates markedness constraints that would otherwise compel the unfaithful mapping.

In OI, morpheme insertion occurs in the phonological component. As such, (phonological) input-output constraints and (morphological) morpheme-morph constraints interact with markedness constraints in the grammar. Markedness constraints, for instance, can condition or block the insertion of a morph. In phonologically conditioned allomorphy, phonological markedness constraints have precisely these kinds of effects. In the next section it is suggested that a-prefixing is an instance of a type of phonologically conditioned allomorphy.

5.4.4 Mirative a- … -ing and -ing analyzed as arbitrary preference allomorphy

5.4.4.1 Overview

In this section it is argued that mirative circumfixation is best understood as so-called arbitrary preference allomorphy. First, different types of allomorphy systems are discussed, with the greatest focus on arbitrary preference allomorphy. Following this discussion, it is suggested that circumfixing is arbitrary preference allomorphy. Here the morpho-pragmatic and morpho-
syntactic features of /a/-/ɪn/ and X/-ɪn/ forms presented in section 5.4.2 are featured in a discussion of what morpheme-morph correspondence looks like for circumfixing.

5.4.4.2 Allomorphy systems

In its broadest sense allomorphy refers to any instance in which there is more than one way to realize a morpheme (whether the term morpheme is meant as a primitive, or whether the term instead indicates one or more abstract features). Wolf (2008) notes that there are allomorphy systems which are purely morphological, those that are purely phonological, and those that are a hybridization of the two.

An example of the first type of allomorphy system, Wolf notes, is the English irregular verb which is pronounced [gow] in its present tense form, but [went] in its past tense form. The grammar chooses between these forms based on their morpho-syntactic features. That is, the choice of one or the other form is determined entirely by the morphology.

In the second type of allomorphy system, the choice between two (morpho-syntactically equivalent) forms is dependent upon the phonological context. An example of this type of allomorphy system is indefinite determiner allomorphy in English. ‘A’ and ‘an’ encode the same features, and choice between the two forms depends on whether the following noun is consonant- or vowel-initial (‘a cat’ vs. ‘an apple’). In this system, both ‘a’ and ‘an’ are listed in the lexicon. The grammar determines which form to insert based on the phonological environment. In this system, general markedness constraints, such as ONSET and NOCODA, can be recruited to capture the different distributions of the forms. Following Paster (2006) (and also Wolf 2008), this type of allomorphy system is referred to as phonologically conditioned suppletive allomorphy.
In the third type of system, some combination of morphological and phonological factors determines the choice between forms. Unlike the case of ‘a/an’ allomorphy, however, the different phonological distributions of the forms cannot be accounted for using a non-ad-hoc markedness constraint.


(102) DISYLLABIC STEM:
    jaŋa-ŋku ‘man-ERG’

(103) LONGER STEM:
    a. jamani-ku ‘rainbow-ERG’
    b. palakara-ku ‘they-ERG’

As Wolf (2008) notes, the distribution of the Dyirbal ergative cannot be analyzed by appealing to a general markedness constraint. Wolf points out that it would be quite difficult (and arguably problematic in terms of adhering to a key desideratum in formulating markedness constraints: constraints should be grounded in some aspect of articulation, perception or both) to argue for a markedness constraint that would favor [-ŋku] over its allomorph [-ku]. This is because [-ŋku] adds the relatively marked velar nasal, over the morpheme [-ku], which is shorter and does not contain the more marked sound.
Thus, in order to account for the realization of [-ŋku] in the relevant contexts, it is necessary to posit an arbitrary preference. This preference will select between the two allomorphs, correctly choosing the relatively more marked member of the pair when the relevant special condition is met (here, affixation to a disyllabic stem, or more accurately, the head of a prosodic word (cf. Bonet 2004, p. 61, fn. 13)).

5.4.4.3 A-prefixing as arbitrary preference allomorphy

It seems reasonable to treat mirative circumfixation as an instance of arbitrary preference allomorphy. First, circumfixation requires reference to morpho-pragmatic and morpho-syntactic features; that is, it requires reference to morphology. Second, in order to derive the correct distribution of the circumfix, reference to markedness constraints are necessary. That is, the categorical non-occurrence of the circumfix with lax-V-initial bases and with bases possessing non-initial stress indicates that some reference to phonology is needed. These two facts suggest that mirative circumfixation is a phenomenon involving the morphology-phonology interface.

In systems of allomorphy that are partly phonologically conditioned and partly morphologically conditioned (i.e., arbitrary preference allomorphy), allomorphs are seen as phonologically similar; however, they are not viewed as amenable to an approach in which a single underlying form is posited (which is one of the allomorphs), and then the other allomorph derived by means of a phonological ‘rule’.

Consider why mirative circumfixation, as a case of arbitrary preference allomorphy, is not amenable to an account which appeals to a phonological rule relating a would-be input form to two possible outputs (what I am calling the allomorphs in the analysis I adopt). In the case of

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34 The equivalence of a disyllabic form and the prosodic word is dependent upon the Dyribal stress system. Stress in Dyribal is left-to-right trochaic, with initial main stress.
mirative circumfixation, we could say that the circumfix is listed in the lexicon a- … -ing, and is inserted in all mirative contexts. The prefixal segment would then get deleted when markedness constraints do not permit the form to surface as a circumfix.

Mirative circumfixation occurs at a rate of roughly 26% in the CRP and DHP data. Environments in which the circumfix is absolutely banned (lax-V-initial bases, bases with non-initial stress) make up a small number of environments in the corpora (fewer than 20 instances out of 847 –ing tokens). Thus, setting aside environments in which the circumfix is absolutely prohibited (which are handled in the grammar by markedness constraints), circumfixation occurs with a frequency of 24-25%. This means the prefixal segment of the circumfix gets deleted at a rate of approximately 75%.

Under the allomorphy approach advocated here, however, there is no phonological rule relating the prefixal segment of the circumfix to the form of the mirative involving only the suffixal -ing; that is, the prefixal segment of the circumfix doesn’t have to be deleted. Instead, both the circumfix /ə-/X/-ɪn/ and the non-circumfixed X/-ɪn/ forms are listed in the lexicon. Phonological markedness constraints still prevent the prefixal segment of the circumfix from surfacing with certain kinds of bases (e.g., lax-V-initial bases). However, under an allomorphy analysis, the prefix doesn’t have to be deleted; rather, it is never inserted in the first place. The grammar simply selects the allomorph of the circumfix, suffixed -ing.

Assuming a simpler grammar is to be preferred, a comparison of the phonological ‘rule’ grammar and an allomorphy grammar seems to favor the allomorphy grammar. A form would be selected from the lexicon every time and deleted 75% of the time in the ‘rule’ approach. In contrast, in an allomorphy approach, the right form is inserted every time, and there is no need for deletion.
Treating mirative circumfixation as a case of allomorphy, we can see that there is no general markedness constraint that will favor the circumfixed form α-/X/-m/ over the non-circumfixed form X/-m/. The circumfixal form actually results in a net increase in markedness: it both adds structure (in violation of something akin to *STRUC) and introduces an onsetless syllable (in violation of ONSET).\textsuperscript{35}

Given that there is no available (non-ad-hoc) markedness constraint to favor the circumfix over its non-circumfixed allomorph, mirative circumfixation is analyzed here as an instance of arbitrary preference allomorphy. It is assumed the grammar (variably) preferentially selects the circumfixed form when that form is not absolutely prohibited (i.e., when the base is not lax-V-initial or non-stress-initial).

5.4.5 Using Optimal Interleaving (OI: Wolf 2008) in accounting for mirative circumfixation as arbitrary preference allomorphy

Optimal Interleaving (OI), as noted in section 4.4.3, is a derivational model of the morphology-phonology interface. OI is an amendment to Optimality Theory with Candidate Chains (OT-CC: McCarthy 2007). OT-CC is a modification of standard OT. Standard OT conceives of candidates as stand-alone forms; that is, there is no derivational component to Standard OT. In standard OT changes made to an input form are all-at-once, not gradual. OT-CC, however, posits that all candidates generated by \textsc{gen} and evaluated by \textsc{eval} consist of chains. That is, rather than a single form that may show a number of changes, candidates may be

\textsuperscript{35} The markedness constraint *STRUC refers to a broad family of constraints that prohibit any structure whatsoever. According to McCarthy (2002), this markedness constraint is first introduced in Prince and Smolensky (1993: Chapter 3, n.13, citing personal communication from Cheryl Zoll) (p. 47, fn. 33).
comprised of a chain which shows change-by-change how the derivation of the output form proceeded.

In section 5.5.3, the derivational component of OT-CC and OI, which adopts this derivational component, becomes relevant. For ease of exposition, a discussion of derivations in OT-CC and OI is postponed until then. What is important to know about OI, at this juncture, is that this formalism allows morph insertion to occur in the phonology.

In section 5.4.3, terminology used in Optimal Interleaving (OI) was introduced. In addition to input-output Correspondence, we saw that OI permits Correspondence relations between morphemes (abstract feature structures (FSes)) and morphs (FS + phonological UR), so-called morpheme-morph Correspondence.

To schematically illustrate an instance of morpheme-morph Correspondence, consider the root + suffix combination ‘running’. In OI it is assumed that features present at the morpheme (FS) level are in a Correspondence relation (in the sense of McCarthy and Prince 1995, 1999) with exponents of those features at the morph level, as in (81):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
V_{[\text{Interval}]} \\
\sqrt{\text{RUN}}_V \\
/\text{ran}/ \\
/\eta/ \\
\end{array}
\]
There are faithfulness constraints which prohibit a lack of Correspondence between the morpheme and morph levels. For example, DEP-M prohibits the insertion of features or feature structures at the morph level that are not present at the morpheme level. The anti-deletion morpheme-morph constraint MAX-M prohibits the deletion of features or feature structure in the mapping from morphemes to morphs.

Presented below is the general format of morpheme-morph anti-deletion constraints, taken from Wolf (2008, chapter 2). These constraints prohibit the deletion of features or feature structures (FSes) in the mapping from morphemes to morphs. In the analysis of circumfixation to follow, MAX-M constraints for the features [MIRATIVE] and [INTERVAL] play a key role. (The DEP-M constraints prohibiting the insertion of features and FSes are not relevant to the analysis of mirative circumfixation, and so are not provided below (see Wolf 2008, p. 70, where these constraints are presented).

(105) Morpheme-morph anti-deletion constraints

MAX-M(F): For every instance φ of the feature F at the morpheme level, assign a violation-mark if there is not an instance of φ’ of F at the morph level, such that φ R φ’. (In the morpheme-morph mapping, do not delete features)

MAX-M(FS): For every FS φ at the morpheme level, assign a violation-mark if there is not an FS φ’ at the morph level, such that φ R φ’. (In the morpheme-morph mapping, do not delete FSes)

In order to illustrate morpheme-morph Correspondence in OI, an analysis is presented of English indefinite determiner allomorphy ‘a/an’. Recall from the discussion of allomorphy systems (section 5.4.4.2) that indefinite determiner allomorphy in English is an instance of phonologically conditioned suppletive allomorphy.

The following two constraints are used in the analysis of ‘a/an’: 

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(106) Faithfulness constraints for ‘a/an’ allomorphy

MAX-ROOT: Do not delete roots. (informal)

MAX-M[DET]: For every instance φ of the feature DETERMINER at the morpheme level, assign a violation-mark if there is not an instance of φ’ of DETERMINER at the morph level, such that φ R φ’.
(In the morpheme-morph mapping, do not delete DETERMINER)

The constraint MAX-ROOT requires a root to be realized. The morpheme-morph constraint MAX-M[DET] requires mapping of the determiner. Because this is a case of non-arbitrary phonologically conditioned allomorphy, the familiar markedness constraints NO-CODA and ONSET can be used to derive the distribution of morphs.

The tableau illustrates the selection of ‘a’ with a consonant initial root. Candidate (a) maps both the determiner and the root. In selecting the morph ‘a’, this candidate avoids a violation of NO-CODA. Candidate (b) selects the morph ‘an’, violating NO-CODA twice, the second time fatally. The candidates in (c) and (d) fail to provide a form for the determiner and the root, respectively. These candidates thereby incur fatal violations of the relevant morpheme-morph Correspondence constraints.

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36 Note that I use here the weak forms of ‘a/an’ (əә) not the strong forms (əɪ/æn) (Ladefoged 2001: 91-93).
37 I use the comparative tableaux format (Prince 2002, 2003). W indicates a constraint favors the winner, while L indicates a constraint favors a particular loser over the winner. Integers indicate the number of violations incurred by a candidate for a given constraint.
(107) ‘a cat’ selected as optimal over *‘an cat’; failure to parse ruled out by faithfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input:</th>
<th>MAX-ROOT</th>
<th>MAX-M[DET]</th>
<th>NO-CODA</th>
<th>ONSET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[sg. -def. det.] [CAT]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. → {sg. -def. det.} ‘cat’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>əә kʰæt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. {sg. -def. det.} ‘cat’</td>
<td></td>
<td>W2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>əә n kʰæt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. {sg. -def. det.} ‘cat’</td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʰæt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. {sg. -def. det.} [CAT]</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tableau that follows shows a grammar that selects ‘an’ for a vowel-initial noun. The attested output selects the morph ‘an’, incurring one violation of NO-CODA and one of ONSET. Candidate (b) selects the morph ‘a’, gaining one more violation of ONSET that candidate (a).

Because candidates (a) and (b) tie in violations for NO-CODA (a) wins this competition. Once again, candidates that fail to map either the determiner or the root cannot be selected as optimal.

(108) ‘an apple’ selected as optimal over *‘a apple’; failure to parse ruled out by faithfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input:</th>
<th>MAX-ROOT</th>
<th>MAX-M[DET]</th>
<th>NO-CODA</th>
<th>ONSET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[sg. -def. det.] [APPLE]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. → {sg. -def. det.} ‘apple’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an æpəɫ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. {sg. -def. det.} ‘apple’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>W2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>əә æpəɫ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. {sg. -def. det.} ‘apple’</td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æpəɫ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. {sg. -def. det.} [APPLE]</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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We assume circumfixed forms /ə- …-ɪn/ and non-circumfixed forms to be allomorphs (and thus to possess the same underlying FS). Circumfixed forms contain exponents for both the features [MIRATIVE] and [INTERVAL]; non-circumfixed forms contain an exponent for only the feature [INTERVAL]. Thus, non-a-circumfixed forms fail to map the feature [MIRATIVE]. These forms thereby incur a violation of a morpheme-morph constraint. The following constraints requiring morpheme-morph Correspondence in the mapping from FS to FS + phonological UR are posited:

(109) Morpheme-morph constraint for [INTERVAL]

\[\text{MAX-M[INTERVAL]: For every instance } \varphi \text{ of the feature INTERVAL at the morpheme (morpho-syntactic) level, assign a violation mark if there is not an instance of INTERVAL } \varphi' \text{ at the morph (phonological) level, such that } \varphi R \varphi'. \] (In the morpheme-morph mapping, do not delete INTERVAL.)

(110) Morpheme-morph constraint for [MIRATIVE]

\[\text{MAX-M[MIRATIVE]: For every instance } \varphi \text{ of the feature MIRATIVE at the morpheme (morpho-pragmatic) level, assign a violation mark if there is not an instance of MIRATIVE } \varphi' \text{ at the morph (phonological) level, such that } \varphi R \varphi'. \] (In the morpheme-morph mapping, do not delete MIRATIVE.)

In addition to these morpheme-morph constraints, a constraint requiring that a root form be parsed is assumed (MAX-ROOT).

To see the activity of the morpheme-morph faithfulness constraints in the grammar, an analysis of the form ‘a-jump-ing’ is provided in the tableau below. Here the constraint P is assumed to be a cover constraint for the phonological constraints prohibiting lax-V sequences and circumfixation with non-stress-initial forms. These constraints are formalized in section 4.5. Of course, the circumfixed ‘a-jump-ing’ violates neither of these phonological constraints.

The input is the root of ‘jump’, plus the features [MIRATIVE] and [INTERVAL]. The winning candidate in (a) violates none of the constraints in the hierarchy, as it faithfully parses
the root, and provides exponents for the features [MIRATIVE] and [INTERVAL]. The candidate in (b) fails to parse the feature [MIRATIVE], thereby incurring a violation of MAX-M{MIR}. Candidate (c) does not parse the root, fatally violating MAX-ROOT. The candidate in (d), which fails to provide an exponent for [INTERVAL] fatally violates the morpheme-morph constraint requiring faithfulness for this feature.

(111) Morpheme-morph faithfulness selects ‘a-jump-ing’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUT:</th>
<th>MAX-ROOT</th>
<th>MAX-M{INT}</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>MAX-M{MIR}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[JUMP] – [MIR, INT]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{MIR} ‘jump’ {INT}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. ǝʤʌmp ɪn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘jump’ {INT}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ʤʌmp ɪn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[JUMP] – [MIR] {INT}</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. [JUMP] - ɪn</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘jump’ [MIR, INT]</td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. ʤʌmp</td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the winning candidate will not always be the form ‘a-jump-ing’, as circumfixation is variable. Some additional constraint is necessary to derive the output ‘jump-ing’. Variation is addressed in section 5.7.
5.4.6 Summary

In this section we looked at features of [ǝ- …-ɪn] and [ɪn] forms. Circumfixed forms ([ǝ- … -ɪn]) were suggested to map a proper superset of those features mapped by non-circumfixed forms. Mirative circumfixation was suggested to be an exemplar of arbitrary preference allomorphy. A model of the morphology-phonology interface, Optimal Interleaving (OI), was adopted to analyze mirative circumfixation. We looked at how OI morpheme-morph constraints in the grammar can derive circumfixation with C-initial and stress-initial forms.

In the next section, we add phonological markedness constraints are added to the OI grammar. In OI morph spell-out occurs in the same component in which phonological markedness effects are seen. The addition of the markedness constraints derives the failure of mirative circumfixation with lax-V-initial and non-stress-initial bases.

5.5 Phonological constraints on mirative circumfixation

5.5.1 Overview

In this section the two categorical constraints on mirative circumfixation are analyzed using OI. First the generalization that circumfixation does not occur with lax-V-initial bases is discussed. A markedness constraint prohibiting circumfixation with such bases is used to capture the descriptive generalization.

Also, an analysis of the absence of circumfixation with non-stress-initial bases is presented. An alignment constraint is posited which requires the prefixal segment of the circumfix to align with the right edge of a stressed syllable.

Apparent cases of circumfixation with non-stress-initial bases are reviewed. It is suggested a possible alternative analysis of these forms is available. Specifically, it is reasoned
that a variable phonological process (schwa elision) could have applied prior to circumfixation.
Should this hold true, the application of a prior phonological rule satisfied the selectional restrictions of the circumfix, and these forms do not exemplify counterevidence to Wolfram and Christian’s (1975, 1976) stress constraint.

5.5.2 Circumfixation and vowel-initial bases

5.5.2.1 Overview

In this section, the absence of circumfixation with vowel-initial bases in the CRP and DHP corpora is analyzed. The initial analysis presented must be modified to accommodate findings in the literature reporting circumfixation with tense-vowel-initial bases. An anti-identity constraint prohibiting lax-vowel sequences is posited. This constraint, which outranks morpheme-morph Correspondence for the feature [MIRATIVE] yields circumfixation with consonant- and tense-vowel-initial bases, but categorically blocks circumfixation just in case the base is lax-vowel-initial.

5.5.2.2 Absence of mirative circumfixation with vowel-initial bases in the CRP and DHP corpora: a formal account

Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) report their data show no vowel-initial a-prefixed forms. Based on the absence of such forms in their corpus, these researchers posit a vowel-initial constraint on so-called a-prefixing.

As reported in chapter 4, no instance of circumfixation with vowel-initial bases was found in the CRP and DHP corpora. In these corpora there are 15 instances of verbal bases that are vowel-initial. Of these, 7 forms have unstressed initial syllables (expecting (2), unloading
(2), unpacking (2), arriving), potentially excluding these words as possible sites of circumfixation (see chapter 2 and below). The remaining 8 forms have stressed initial syllables (adding (2), aggravating, asking (3), eating (2)).

In the CRP and DHP corpora, then, Wolfram and Christian’s vowel-initial constraint is upheld. Based on Wolfram and Christian’s findings as well the findings in the CRP and DHP corpora, we can tentatively formulate a constraint militating against circumfixation with vowel-initial forms. This is presented below as an Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP: Leben 1973) constraint, assuming that the circumfix is blocked in vowel-initial contexts because the prefixal segment of the circumfix is itself a vowel:

(112)  OCP-V (first formulation)

Adjacent vowel-vowel sequences are prohibited.

In the tableau below, we see that the Max-M{MIR} constraint, which requires a faithful mapping of the feature [MIRATIVE], is violated by the winner. Candidate (b), with circumfixation, however, fatally violates OCP-V. Thus, the candidate which avoids a violation of the markedness constraint by failing to map [MIRATIVE] is selected as optimal.
(113) Markedness selects non-circumfixed V-initial candidate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUT:</th>
<th></th>
<th>OCP-V</th>
<th>MAX-M{MIR}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[EAT] – [MIR, INT]</td>
<td>‘eat’ {INT}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. →</td>
<td>i:t m</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{MIR} ‘eat’ {INT}</td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ·</td>
<td>i:t m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.3 Problematic data

While the anti-identity constraint used to account for the failure of circumfixation with vowel-initial forms works well for the data in the CRP and DHP corpora (as well as Wolfram and Christian’s data), this constraint is violated by 3 forms reported in the literature. In this section, the OCP constraint posited in the previous section is reformulated to account for these 3 forms.

As discussed in chapter 2, Feagin (1979), in her study of a speech community in Anniston, Alabama, encountered one exception to the invariant phonological constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) and Wolfram (1976):

(114) What time I ain’t a-sewin’, I’m a-ironin’, or somethin’ like that.
(Feagin 1979: 115, ex. (49))
The form in (1), prompts Christian et al. (1988) to modify Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) and Wolfram’s (1976) constraint against vowel-vowel sequences in AppE; rather than treating the constraint as invariant, Christian et al. (1988) recast it as exerting a strong dispreference for so-called \(a\)-prefixation with vowel-initial forms (57).

Recall from also from chapter 2 that Montgomery (2009) found the following 3 vowel-initial circumfixed forms:

(115) Johnny run down the hill \textit{a-aiming} to go to his uncles.

(116) I went on up and was \textit{a-aiming} to get around above the tree and shoot.

(117) I noticed two older girls \textit{a-eating} something out of a little syrup bucket.

Montgomery (2009) takes the 3 instances of circumfixation found in his extensive corpus (as well as the example Feagin discovered), together with the existence of NPs in which the indefinite determiner \textit{a} occurs with vowel-initial nouns (e.g., \textit{a apple}), as evidence that so-called \textit{a}-prefixation “…before a vowel…can be seen as natural and predictable” (22).

Thus, Feagin (1979) and Christian et al. (1988) suggest that there is a (softish) constraint banning adjacent vowels in AppE, while Montgomery (2009) contends that there is no evidence for – and, in fact, there is evidence against – a constraint prohibiting vowel-vowel sequences in the dialect.

It is argued below that the handful of vowel-initial forms bearing the circumfix constitute evidence against the particular formulation of the constraint found in Wolfram and Christian, as well as the OCP constraint posited in the previous section. These forms do not, however,
constitute evidence against any constraint militating against circumfixation with vowel-initial bases. The relevant constraint is suggested to be an anti-identity constraint against lax-vowels.

The widespread presence of vowel-initial nouns occurring with the indefinite article a indicates that activity of the aforementioned constraint only in the case of a-prefixing is an example of the emergence of the unmarked (TETU) effect (McCarthy and Prince 1994).

Based on the character of the word-initial vowels in the three circumfixed forms, there is evidence for a constraint militating against circumfixation just in case the base begins with a certain kind of vowel. Notice the relevant forms, a-aiming (2 occurrences: ə-ˈeɪmɪn), a-eating (ə-ˈiːtn) and a-ironin’ (ə-ˈəːnɪn) all begin with a tense vowel.39 There are no examples of circumfixed forms in which the base possesses a word-initial lax vowel (e.g., ‘ask’ \(\rightarrow\) *[ə-ˈæskɪn]; ‘itch’ \(\rightarrow\) *[ə-ˈiʃɪn]; ‘utter’ \(\rightarrow\) *[ə-ˈʌtərn]).40

Given that the prefixal segment of the circumfix, produced as [ə-], is a lax vowel, and given that circumfixation appears to occur with vowel-initial bases only if the relevant vowel is tense, it is plausible that the relevant constraint at work in AppE is one that makes reference to the tense/lax distinction in vowels. That is, the Optimality-Theoretic constraint is something like OCP-V[LAX], prohibiting adjacent lax vowels, and not simply *HIATUS, which would incorrectly rule out circumfixation on bases with a word-initial tense vowel.

Possibly related to the idea that there is a constraint against lax-V sequences at work in circumfixation, is the finding by Christian et al. (1988) concerning words ending in tense-

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39 As Hall (1942: 44) notes in his detailed phonetic description of Smoky Mountain English (referring to Appalachian English as spoken in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, North Carolina and Tennessee) the pronunciation of ironing differs from pronunciations in SAE as well as other dialects of English. Hall transcribes the form produced by his speakers as [ˈɔːnɪn] (44). The form today is more accurately transcribed [ˈɔːnɪn], as provided above, but the presence of the initial vocalic sound as the tense [ɔ] is unchanged.

40 In my data one speaker produces ‘asking’ as [ˈæksɪŋ]. Hall (1942: 23) also encountered this pronunciation in his fieldwork.
vowels. In an effort to test Wolfram’s (1980) finding that the final segment of a preceding word conditions so-called a-prefixing, Christian et al. examined this context in their data. They report no effect for the final segment of the preceding word: a-prefixing is found when preceded by both consonants and vowels. They observe, however, that most of the vowels in question were those that allowed for glide formation (i.e., tense vowels).

In the CRP and DHP corpora, no instance of circumfixation was found in the 4 post-lax-vowel environments:

(118) Elsie and Stella [ˈstɛlə] being teachers, we got interested in it and I was really interested in it (ML, 03/1998).

Christian et al.’s observation, taken together with this tentative finding from the CRP and DHP corpora, suggests circumfixation may be less likely to occur following a lax vowel.

Formulating the restriction on circumfixation with vowel-initial bases as more properly involving an avoidance of lax-vowel sequences allows us to capture both the occurrence of the circumfix with tense vowels as well as the failure of the circumfix to occur with bases possessing a word-initial lax vowel. The revised OCP constraint is presented below:

(119) Constraint banning lax-vowel sequences (final formulation of OCP constraint)

OCP-V[LAX]: Adjacent lax-vowels are prohibited.

The tableau below illustrates the activity of OCP-V[LAX] in the grammar. The candidate which fails to map the circumfix with a lax-vowel-initial bases is selected as optimal by the grammar.
Still to be dealt with, however, is Montgomery’s (2009) assertion that, because the indefinite article *a* occurs with vowel-initial nouns, any argument for a restriction on vowel-vowel sequences in AppE “cannot be sustained” (22).

Montgomery is correct in pointing out that the indefinite determiner allomorph *a* occurs with vowel-initial nouns. This allomorph, which alternates with *an*, is found with both tense and lax vowel-initial nouns in the DHP and the CRP. I focus here primarily on nouns with a word-initial lax vowel, as these forms would, under Montgomery’s analysis, serve as counterexamples to my claim that there is a restriction on circumfixation before bases with a word-initial lax vowel.

As can be seen from the examples below, the determiner *a* allomorph occurs freely before nouns with a word-initial lax vowel:

(121)…)these days, lord, they wouldn’t sit down long enough to peel a apple [ˈæpəl]. (2FTN 09/2007)
(122) Well, we chopped them off mostly with a ax [æks] . . . Yes, with an ax [æks]. (1MVA 08/1998)

(123) Then you had to run a airline [ɔ:lɪn] and this woman said, what are you a-doing and I said, well I’m going to run me a airline [ɔ:lɪn]. (2MVA 02/1998)

(124) …he bought it and give her a extra [ˈɛkstə] eight-hundred. (1FTN 03/2007)

(125) We had a undertaker [,ʌndərˈteikə] over here. (1MVA 08/1998)

(126) But it was kindly funny, but, but, that’s how that they’d do when they’d go to a election [ɪˈlekJən]. (4FTN 200?)

(127) All of them are classified gassy anymore, but you know, to, to have enough to have an explosion you got to have something like five percent to have a explosion [ɛk′ sploʒən]. (3MVA, 10/1997)

(128) See, one time, uh, me and T and Mom, we took Mom to the doctor. And I believe T had a appointment [əˈpɔɪmtmənt], too. (3FTN 03/2008)

If we pursue the line of reasoning in Montgomery (2009), then the data in (121-128), which show the determiner a allomorph appearing with lax-vowel-initial nouns, serve as strong evidence against an analysis in which lax vowel sequences are prohibited in AppE.

The occurrence of the indefinite determiner allomorph ‘a’ with lax-vowel-initial nouns does not constitute counterevidence to the analysis sketched above, however. Considered from an Optimality-Theoretic perspective, the distribution of the determiner ‘a’ allomorph in (121 - 128) demonstrates that vowel-vowel sequences, including V[lax]-V[lax] sequences, are generally tolerated in the grammar of AppE. This suggests the following constraint ranking for determiner allomorphy: MAX-M[DETERMINER] >> OCP-V[LAX].

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41 An additional constraint is needed in AppE to (variably) prefer the allomorph ‘a’ with vowel-initial forms (over the allomorph ‘an’). Recall from the discussion of indefinite determiner allomorphy in section 5.4.5, consonant-initial forms like ‘cat’ select the form ‘a’ due to the ranking NOCODA >> ONSET. This ranking obtains in AppE as
However, given that there are no data to suggest otherwise, it appears lax-vowel sequences are not tolerated in the case of circumfixation. Thus, relatively more marked structures (here, V[lax]-V[lax] sequences), while permitted generally, are avoided in circumfixation (through the selection of non-circumfixed -ing), suggesting the following analysis: Ocp-V[LAX] >> Max-M[MIRATIVE].

In implementing a TETU analysis of the avoidance of a-prefixation before lax-vowel-initial bases, the otherwise unexplained failure of the circumfix to occur before lax vowels – particularly when considered alongside the licensing of the homophonous indefinite determiner a in identical environments – can be accounted for. The following total ranking obtains:

Additionally, a TETU analysis of mirative allomorphy aligns this phenomenon with similar analyses posited for allomorph distribution in other languages (see, inter alia, Mester 1994, Kager 1996, Mascaró 1996, Tranel 1996a, b, Wolf to appear). Thus, while for Montgomery (2009) forms such as ‘a apple’ appear to be counterevidence to any constraint on vowel-vowel sequences, OT predicts that a sequence tolerated in one corner of the grammar could very well be banned in another corner.

[Note: There was an error in the original text. It should have been: 'There are no forms like *an cat'.]

To derive selection of ‘a’ with vowel-initial forms in AppE, an additional constraint could be interpolated between NOCODA and ONSET, which could prefer ‘a’ over ‘an’.
5.5.4 Circumfixation and bases with an initial unstressed syllable

5.5.4.1 Overview

The distributional results presented in chapter 4 revealed that only verbal –ing forms possessing initial stress are a-prefixed in the CRP and DHP corpora; that is, no base with non-initial stress hosts the circumfix. This finding is consistent with results from a number of previous studies of so-called a-prefixing (Wolfram and Christian 1975, 1976; Wolfram 1976, 1980; Feagin 1979; Christian et al. 1988).

In this section, an analysis of circumfixation is presented that formalizes the stress-initial restriction the morph places upon possible bases. This analysis straightforwardly captures the data from early studies of the circumfix, as well as the data from the CRP and DHP corpora.

As briefly discussed in chapter 2, however, Montgomery (2009) found three circumfixed forms in which the base possesses non-initial stress. These forms seem to present a problem for an analysis which claims the circumfix attaches only to bases with initial stress. In this section, it is suggested that there is another available explanation for the putative counterexamples to the stress constraint: the bases in question could have undergone a variable phonological process (schwa deletion) prior to circumfixation. The application of this variable process renders the bases suitable for subsequent circumfixing.

This alternative explanation for cases of circumfixing with bases possessing non-initial stress cannot be directly tested, as access to Montgomery’s (2009) corpus was not granted. Given a lack of access to the relevant data (and given the absence of these kinds of data in other corpora), a possible experimental method is sketched. The method would allow us to test for whether forms like ‘a-believing’ actually involve circumfixation with an initial stressless syllable or whether, instead, such forms involve schwa deletion followed by circumfixation. While
implementation of this experimental task is beyond the scope of the dissertation, the outlines of the experiment presented here point the possible way for future investigation of circumfixing.

5.5.4.2 Review of findings from the CRP and DHP corpora

An examination of the data from the CRP and DHP revealed no instance of circumfixation with a base possessing non-initial stress. Setting aside those forms that are lax-vowel-initial (as these may not be possible sites for circumfixation for independent reasons, as discussed above), there are 5 disyllabic (out of 41) and 2 trisyllabic (out of 5) bases with unstressed initial syllables. These forms are provided in (129) and (130):

(129) Trisyllabic bases (non-initial stress)

a. … and my dad sent somebody over there and got the horses and took ‘em back, and he had a contract delivering coal. (2MVA 02/1998)

b. And they had a barber shop down there and a filling station and they was remodelin’ it and they took the siding, the weather board off…(2MVA 02/1998)

(130) Disyllabic bases (non-initial stress)

a. So the boss got in there a lot of mornings and run up and say, well what are y’all deciding on today? (2MVA 02/1998)

b. Buddy and them brought him in and he came in at the dining room table and set down an’ Rodney’d set up a camera an’ all this bit… an’ was recording it. (6FTN, 07/2008)

c. George, it come time for the election and George had let it slip, and it got back to Lee Long that he was supporting the nominee against that, that Lee was supporting. (3MVA 10/1997)

d. If they’d a started that back when they started these coal companies when they was just depleting our assets down here and have put it in a fund, we wouldn't have to ask. (3MVA 10/1997)
The failure to find circumfixation with bases possessing non-initial stress is consistent with the findings of Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976).

5.5.4.3 Formalizing Wolfram and Christian’s (1975, 1976) stress constraint

Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) posit a metrical constraint on so-called a-prefixing: a-prefixation is licensed only with -ing forms having a stressed initial syllable. That is, the circumfix cannot occur with bases possessing non-initial stress, like those below, (examples from Christian et al. (1988) p. 57, ex. 16a, b):

(131)  a. *She was a-discoverin’ a bear in the woods.
     b. *She was a-returnin’ from her house.

Based on the failure of the so-called a-prefix to occur with forms like ‘discovering’ [dəˈskɪvərɪŋ] and ‘returning’ [rəˈtɜrnɪŋ], Wolfram and Christian argue that a-prefixation must be restricted to those forms with word-initial stress. Wolfram (1976) and Christian et al. (1988) confirm this constraint to hold categorically in their data. Christian et al. note that the putative restriction is “…no doubt, related to the general English restriction on successive unstressed syllables initially” (57).

Wolfram (1991) further reports that the relevant restriction holds categorically of both the data examined from Hackenberg’s study in Nicholas County, West Virginia (which is north of Mercer and Monroe counties, the foci of Wolfram and Christian’s (1975, 1976) studies), as well as the data from Feagin’s (1979) study of AppE, as spoken in Anniston, Alabama.
Based on the non-occurrence of the circumfix with bases possessing non-initial stress in the CRP and DHP corpora, and based on reports from Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976), Wolfram (1980), Christian et al. (1988) and Wolfram (1991), the following constraint on circumfixation is posited: 42

\[(132) \quad \text{ALIGN-}[\vartheta-]_{\text{MIR}}, R, \sigma, L \]

The right edge of the prefixal \([\vartheta-]_{\text{MIR}}\) portion of the mirative circumfix is adjacent to a stressed syllable.

Assign a violation mark if there is a syllable between the right edge of \(-[\vartheta-]_{\text{MIR}}\) and the left edge of the stressed syllable.

This constraint requires that the circumfix be inserted only with bases possessing initial stress. Note that it is not unusual for affixes to require alignment with stressed syllables (recall from above the discussion of Dyirbal ergative allomorphy, in which the preferred morph could only attach to the head of the prosodic word; also cf. McCarthy (1982) for an analysis of expletive infixation in English, and Gouskova (2012) for alignment constraint indexed to the Russian diminutive \([-\text{ik}]\)).

The tableau below shows the activity of the alignment constraint in the grammar. Here the morpheme-morph faithfulness constraint for the feature [MIRATIVE] is violated by the winning candidate in order to satisfy \text{ALIGN-}[\vartheta-]_{\text{MIR}}.

---

42 Note that we could also derive Wolfram and Christian’s (1975, 1976) descriptive generalization by appealing to the constraint *LAPSE, which militates against adjacent stressless syllables (cf. Green and Kenstowicz 1995).
(133) Alignment constraint selects non-circumfixed form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUT:</th>
<th>ALIGN-[ə]-MIR</th>
<th>MAX-M{MIR}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[SUPPORT] – [MIR, INT]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘support’ {INT}</td>
<td>ə ˈpɔrt in</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{MIR} ‘support’ {INT}</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next section, possible problematic data showing circumfixation with non-stress-initial forms are discussed.

5.5.5. Accounting for problematic data

5.5.5.1 Problematic data and possible alternative explanations

While earlier studies found no occurrences of the circumfix with bases having an unstressed initial syllable, Montgomery (2009) found what he considers to be 3 exceptions to the stress constraint:

(134) There must be, you know, a reason, I mean for ’em a-believing in the signs [of the zodiac].

(135) They didn’t think they was enough that they could function as a church,
so I told ’em they could, got ’em a-believing they could.

(136) I can remember Dad a-relating the fire to me.

According to Montgomery, these forms (which comprise 6.8% (3/44) of participial forms with non-initial stress) indicate that the invariant constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) must be amended. Montgomery suggests the constraint be formulated instead as a dispreference for the so-called prefix with forms lacking word-initial stress.

To support this formulation of the constraint, he notes that the indefinite determiner ’a’ can occur with nouns possessing an unstressed initial syllable, as in ‘a address’ (22). Based on the forms presented above, alongside NPs like ‘a address’, Montgomery concludes the following: “That the prefix occurs before … unstressed syllables is very unlikely to be anything but a predictable, if not so common, occurrence” (22).

Montgomery observes that previous researchers failed to find an example like ‘a-believing’ because those researchers lacked a corpus of sufficient size. Referring to the 400,000-word Corpus of Smoky Mountain English (CSME), Montgomery notes that a corpus of such size “…may reveal patterns that are disfavored and recessive but that are not in principle impermissible” (22).

In Montgomery’s extensive corpus there are only 44 -ing forms that possess an unstressed initial syllable. It seems quite plausible that much smaller corpora would simply fail to have enough possible bases of the relevant type, such that detection of a even a single token of circumfixation (a variable process) with that base type is unlikely.

There is another available explanation for the absence of circumfixing with bases of the relevant type, one tied to the particular character of these exceptions to the stress constraint.
Montgomery found 2 forms that violate Wolfram and Christian’s constraint: ‘believing’ (2 occurrences) and ‘relating’, which are discussed in turn.

The base ‘believe’ can be produced as [bəˈlɪv], with an initial unstressed syllable. However, a pre-tonic schwa can be elided in casual speech. Experimental results reported in Davidson (2006) are relevant here. Davidson presents the results of an acoustic investigation of pre-tonic schwa elision. In order to test the hypothesis that schwa elision is due to greater gestural overlap, Davidson had speakers read from passages containing /#CəC-/ sequences. The speakers were instructed first to read each passage at their normal reading rate, and then to read as fast as they possibly could without making errors. Among those /#CəC-/ sequences investigated was /#bəl-/.

The reading passages contained a total of 3 clusters of each type. Nine speakers produced a total of 54 tokens of /#bəl-/ (9 speakers X 2 rates X 3 tokens).

Davidson predicted that /#Cəl-/ clusters would show greater elision than other clusters (including would-be voiced and voiceless stop-stop clusters) because /l/, an approximant, is a better segment for an obstruent to release into (84). Overall deletion patterns confirmed Davidson’s prediction: /#Cəl-/ sequences showed significantly higher elision rates.

Interestingly, elision rates were unaffected by the legality of the resulting cluster (i.e., /#bəl-/ → [#bəl] and /#məl-/ → [#ml] were not significantly different). Finally, /#bəl-/ clusters, like other liquid-second clusters, showed no effect for speaking rate: elision was no different for slow speaking rates than for fast ones.

Not only is schwa elision well documented in Standard American English, but it has also been documented in early studies of AppE. Hall (1942) reports that pre-tonic schwa in ‘believe’ is most often “extremely reduced” (53).
Unfortunately, I do not have access to Montgomery’s CSME. Based on examples provided in Montgomery (2009), as well as a webpage linking to samples from 16 transcripts that are part of the CSME, however, I see no evidence suggesting that the forms in the CSME have been phonetically transcribed (Montgomery 2012a, Transcripts: Southern Appalachian English, accessed 23 May 2012).

For those features of AppE that are well documented and/or that are considered to be particularly characteristic of the dialect, the orthography in the available transcripts indicates the pronunciation (e.g., -ing produced as [-in] or ‘against’ produced without the final fricative-stop cluster). Beyond these conventions, however, I see no evidence for phonetic rendering. Furthermore, Montgomery and Hall’s (2004) Dictionary of Smoky Mountain English, which is derived from the CSME, contains no phonetic or phonetic-like transcriptions.

All evidence suggests that forms such as ‘believe’ produced as [ˈbliv] would not have been transcribed as such – orthographically or otherwise – in the CSME. It is quite possible then that the 2 instances of ‘a-believing’ found in the CSME may not, in fact, constitute counterevidence for Wolfram and Christian’s (1976) metrical constraint. The 2 forms very well could have been produced as [ə-ˈblivin], in which case the circumfix occurs with a base consisting of a single stressed syllable. The next section shows how the interaction of schwa elision and circumfixation could be handled using Optimal Interleaving.

5.5.5.2 The interaction of allomorph selection and schwa elision: a formal account

In order to account for forms that show a possible interaction between schwa elision and circumfixation, two pieces of theoretical background are needed. First, the serial component of OI needs to be introduced. This necessitates an excursus on Optimality Theory with Candidate
Chains (OT-CC: McCarthy 2007). Second, a constraint deriving schwa elision in a form like [ə-bliv-in] must be formulated. These two pieces of background are presented in turn.

Wolf builds on the serial component of OT-CC in accounting for phenomena at the morphology-phonology interface. McCarthy’s (2007) modification of classic OT, OT-CC, assumes that candidates produced by GEN and considered by EVAL consist not of a single stand-alone form, but rather consist of a string or chain of forms (2). Each chain is comprised minimally of a single link, and the chain always begins with the most harmonic fully-faithful syllabification of the input (McCarthy 2007).

There are two requirements that must be met by every candidate chain: gradualism and harmonic improvement. First, each chain must be gradual, which means each link in a given chain may alter the input in at most one way. Second, each link in the chain must be harmonically improving, meaning each successive link in a given chain must represent a reduction in markedness from the previous link.

Consider the candidate chains in (137), taken from McCarthy’s (2006) (3) and (4). Chains (a), (b) and (c) are licit chains, respecting gradualism and harmonic improvement. Chain (a) contains a faithful mapping of the input. Candidate (b) alters the faithful form by epenthesizing a vowel word-finally. Chain (c) shows two changes to the faithful form: epenthesis in its second link and a voicing change to the intervocalic consonant in the third link.

Unlike chains (a), (b) and (c), chains (d) and (e) are not possible chains in OT-CC.\textsuperscript{43} Chain (d) violates gradualism, as it makes two changes to the input in one step (epenthesis and intervocalic voicing). Chain (e) violates harmonic improvement. The second link in this chain

\textsuperscript{43} Following the convention in McCarthy (2007), impossible chains are indicated with a double asterisk.
makes voicing change, which does not result in a reduction of markedness, as there is still a coda consonant, the source of markedness in the input.\textsuperscript{44}

(137) Input: /pap/
   a. <pap>
   b. <pap, papə>
   c. <pap, papə, pabə>
   d. **<pap, pabə>
   e. **<pap, pab>

While each link in an OT-CC chain is subject to the dual requirements of gradualism and harmonic improvement, it is only the final link in a candidate’s chain that is evaluated by markedness constraints when different chains are compared to decide the winner. Continuing with the example of the input <pap>, the tableau below illustrates a ranking of markedness and faithfulness constraints whereby the candidate chain in (a) is selected as optimal.

The fully faithful candidate in (c) violates high-ranking NO CODA. Candidate (b), with only epenthesis, fatally violates the markedness constraint against voiceless intervocalic consonants. It is candidate (a), then, with violations of only lower-ranking DEP-IO and IDENT-VOICE, that emerges as the winner.

\textsuperscript{44}Not as relevant to the forthcoming discussion is the chain < pap, pa>. This is also a licit chain, removing the NOCODA violation in its second link via deletion.
(138) Candidate chains in OT-CC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input:</th>
<th>NO CODA</th>
<th>*VC[-voi]V</th>
<th>DEP-IO</th>
<th>IDENT-VOICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;pap&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ a.  &lt; pap, papə, pabə&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.    &lt; pap, papə&gt;</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.    &lt;pap&gt;</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In OI, just as in OT-CC, candidates are made up of chains. The same dual requirements of chains in OT-CC, gradualism and harmonic improvement, apply to OI chains. OI differs from OT-CC, however, in a crucial respect: OI assumes morph insertion counts as a possible link in a chain. That is, while in OT-CC a possible link in a chain includes any phonological change (that results in a well-formed chain), in OI a possible link in a chain can be such a phonological change or it can include the insertion of a morph.

The addition of morph insertion as a possible link in a chain predicts interleaving of morphology and phonology in the grammar. As will be seen below, a possible interaction of morphology (insertion of [ə…-ɪn]) and phonology (deletion of an unstressed vowel/syllable) in AppE is neatly handled by OI.

As noted, a markedness constraint prohibiting an unstressed vowel in a pre-tonic syllable is needed to account for schwa deletion in a form such as ‘believe’. The constraint used here is simply *[C#C]. This constraint, while appearing ad hoc, is perceptually grounded. The constraint is based on Flemming’s (2008) analysis of epenthesis and deletion in TR and TəR sequences, respectively. Flemming argues that a TR/TəR contrast is neutralized in some
languages because this contrast is, relatively speaking, indistinct. Using the particular formulation of constraints found in Flemming requires details of that analysis that need not concern us here. As such, I use *[#CəC]* for the sake of maximal clarity and ease of exposition, referring the reader to Flemming’s work to see the grounding for this constraint.

The tableau below illustrates that a form that does not delete schwa cannot show circumfixation. Candidate (a), which preserves pre-tonic schwa, violates the markedness constraint *[#CəC]*, as well as the morpheme-morph constraint for the feature [MIRATIVE]. The candidate in (b) fails to map not only [MIRATIVE] but the root ‘believe’. Candidate (c) provides no exponent for the feature [INTERVAL] as well as [MIRATIVE]. Under this constraint ranking, candidate (a) is selected as optimal.

Notice that a candidate that inserts the circumfix without deleting the pre-tonic schwa does not appear in the tableau:

(139) **<[BELIEVE] – [MIR, INTERVAL], bəˈliv-{MIR, INT},
       bəˈliv-in-{MIR}, ə-bəˈliv-in>

This is not a valid chain: it is not harmonically improving to insert the a-prefix without first deleting schwa. That is, in this chain the fourth link, with both the prefix and suffix of the circumfix is less harmonic than the third link, due to the ranking ALIGN-MIR >> MAX-M-{MIR}.  

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(140) Input-output faithfulness blocks schwa deletion, no circumfixation

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. ( \rightarrow )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. (&lt;[BELIEVE] – [MIR, INT], bəˈliv-{MIR, INT}, bəˈliv-in-{MIR}&gt;)</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. (&lt;[BELIEVE] – [MIR, INT], bəˈliv-{MIR, INT}&gt;)</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tableau below shows a reversed ranking for the constraint deriving schwa deletion (*[#CəC]) and the constraint requiring input-output faithfulness (MAX-IO). This ranking generates schwa deletion, followed by insertion of the circumfix. (Candidates that fail to parse the root or [INTERVAL] are omitted.)

Candidate (a) deletes schwa and then inserts the circumfix. The candidate that fails to delete schwa violates the markedness constraint *[#CəC]. Candidate (c) deletes schwa but does not insert the circumfix, violating the morpheme-morph constraint for the feature [MIRATIVE]. Under this constraint ranking, candidate (a) is selected as optimal.
In addition to the 2 instances of ‘believe’ that are circumfixed, there is the single instance of ‘a-relating’ that must be accounted for. It is entirely possible that ‘relating’ also evidences schwa deletion (recall Davidson (2006) found that the legality of the resulting consonant cluster does not significantly affect elision rate). Hall’s (1942) comment concerning the “extremely reduced” quality of pre-tonic schwa was made not just with reference to forms beginning with orthographic ‘be-’, but also with forms beginning with ‘re-’ (53).

In the case of ‘relate’, however, there are additional alternative explanations for why this form appears with the circumfix in the CSME. Hall (1942) notes that forms beginning with ‘re-’ have at least two additional realizations (in addition to the familiar [ɹəә-], as well, for our

45 The comment by Hall (1942) concerning the “extremely reduced” vowels that frequently appear in forms beginning with orthographic ‘be-’ was also made with reference to words beginning with ‘re-’. 232
purposes, as the realization in which schwa is deleted). First, such forms may be realized with full vowels (either [i] or [ɪ]) and with partial stress on the initial syllable (52-53).

Alternatively, Hall observes that the initial syllable may be deleted altogether. I provide in (142) and (143), respectively, transcriptions of examples in which the schwa is realized with a full vowel and examples in which the initial syllable is deleted. These transcriptions were either taken directly from Hall or were transcribed based on the detailed descriptions of Hall:46

(142) [ə] realized as [i]/[ɪ], initial syllable partially stressed
   a. ‘recollect’        [ˌɪıkəˈlɛkt] (Hall p. 53)
   b. ‘relations’        [ˌɪiˈleʃənz] (based on Hall ibid)

(143) /#ɪ-/ elided
   a. ‘recall’           [kɔl] (Hall p. 53)
   b. ‘religion’         [ˈlɪʤən] (based on Hall ibid)

Based on the forms in the examples above, Hall’s speakers – and by extension the later speakers of Hall and Montgomery – would have produced the following additional variants of ‘relating’:

(144) [ə] realized as [i]/[ɪ] in ‘relating’, partial stress on initial syllable
   a. [,iˈletn]
   b. [,iˈletn]

---

46 The productions provided above came from Hall’s fieldwork in the Smoky Mountains in 1937 and 1939-1940. In the fieldwork from 1939-1940, 59 speakers were interviewed and recorded (Speakers: Southern Appalachian English, last accessed 23 May 2012). Subsequent to the original interviews, both Hall and Montgomery interviewed additional speakers. The later interviews, combined with Hall’s, make up the 136 interviews of the CSME (Montgomery 2009: 13-14). Hall’s study focused on the phonetics of speech in the Smokies. His phonetic transcriptions were of forms characteristic of the region.
If ‘relating’ were produced with partial stress on the initial syllable, as in (144), a-prefixation with this form would not violate Wolfram and Christian’s (1976) stress-constraint. Similarly, if the initial syllable were deleted, leaving the form in (145), this production would be consistent with the constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian.

In summary, plausible explanations have been proposed for circumfixation with ‘believe’ and ‘relating’. In the case of ‘believe’, schwa deletion could have occurred, resulting in a base with a stressed initial syllable.

Relevant to this analysis are finding reported in Fleischhacker (2002) and Flemming (2008). Fleischhacker (2002) presents evidence from an experimental judgment task showing that speakers possess knowledge of the relative similarity of and confusability of TRV and TəRV sequences. Fleischhacker notes that speakers of English exploit the confusability of such sequences in casual emphatic speech, for example, the production of ‘creamy’ as [kəɹimi].

Flemming (2008) shows English speakers exploit the similarity of such sequences in limericks. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that speakers are ‘aware’ of the similarity/confusability of [bəliv] and [bliv] and therefore permit circumfixation just in case the schwa deletion has occurred.

As in the case with ‘believe’ there is an alternative account of circumfixation with ‘relating’. This form is variably produced, and among the variants is one in which the initial syllable receives partial stress and another in which the initial syllable is deleted. In either of
these cases, if circumfixation were to occur it would not violate the stress-constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian.

Given the availability of these plausible alternative explanations for Montgomery’s findings, we should not dismiss outright the stress constraint. More data may show – and the available data cannot disprove – that only in those cases in which an initial unstressed syllable is modified, such that either i) it is no longer unstressed, or ii) it is no longer pronounced, will circumfixation occur.

Despite this line of reasoning, we are in need of more data to determine if forms like ‘a-believing’ involve schwa deletion. Obtaining this kind of data from naturally occurring speech may be quite difficult, given that forms with non-initial stress occur relatively infrequently in the corpora (and given also that schwa deletion and mirative circumfixation are both variable).

It would be possible however to obtain native speaker judgments for forms presented aurally. For example, a dialect speaker with even informal linguistic training could be asked to produce two circumfixed versions of forms such as ‘believing’. In one version, the speaker could realize the circumfix but not delete schwa. In the second version, the speaker could both circumfix the form and delete schwa. Multiple tokens of each type could be recorded and placed within the context of natural-sounding sentences.

Native dialect speakers could be asked to listen to the sentences with the two types of tokens and rate whether the circumfixed forms are ‘good’ examples of a-prefixing. Assuming that circumfixation is banned with non-stress-initial bases, circumfixed bases without schwa deletion should receive a poor rating. Relatively speaking, circumfixed bases that have undergone schwa deletion should be more favorably rated.
5.5.6 Frequency effects in mirative circumfixation

In chapter 4, results from a VARBRUL analysis were reported that showed verb type (intransitive, transitive, CP-complement) to have a significant effect on circumfixation. Specifically, intransitive verbs were shown to favor circumfixation (factor weight .56), while verbs selecting a CP-complement were shown to disfavor circumfixing (factor weight .26; range = 30). The factor weight for transitive verbs hovered at .50. Thus, the following preference scale was provided, where elements to the left favor circumfixation, while elements to the right disfavor circumfixation:

\[(146) \text{ intransitive} > \text{transitive} > \text{CP-complement}\]

It was reported that this preference scale corresponded to the frequencies of the different verb types: intransitive verbs were most frequent in the corpus, CP-complement verbs the least frequent, with transitive verbs falling in between these two extremes. It was suggested that this correspondence between frequency and rate of circumfixation was not accidental but a result of the circumfix targeting the more frequently occurring verb type.

A relationship between affix productivity and base frequency was first reported in Aronoff (1982). Aronoff examined the relationship between the productivity of a word formation process and the frequencies of the bases targeted in that process. Aronoff reports that less productive affixes target more frequently occurring bases.

Relatively speaking, the circumfix is not a productive affix. It is instructive to compare the circumfix to the verbal suffix -ing. Bybee (1988), for example, notes that verbal -ing is “extremely productive and general,” relative to other types of morphological processes in
English (123). The productivity of a morphological (or morphophonemic) process refers to how readily the process is extended to new forms. Bybee notes that processes that extend most readily to new forms typically place no (or very few) restrictions on what a possible base may look like. In the case of the verbal morph -ing, there are no phonological restrictions on possible bases.

In contrast, in the case of the a- … -ing circumfix, there are restrictions on what constitutes a possible base (e.g., bases must begin with a consonant or tense vowel). Based on Bybee’s discussion of so-called ‘minor rules’ (i.e., processes that are idiosyncratic, applying only to a small number of lexical items), circumfixation would not be considered a productive process. Bybee notes that affixes involving ‘minor rules’ do not, in general, easily extend to new items (123).

Thus, assuming circumfixation to be rather non-productive, the finding that the process targets high frequency bases is consistent with Aronoff’s findings concerning the relationship between productivity of a process and frequency of bases targeted by that process.

Interestingly, Bybee discusses why idiosyncratic processes may be preserved despite leveling or neutralizing pressures from other forms. Bybee notes that there is a correlation between irregularity and usage frequency. Highly idiosyncratic forms (e.g., irregular forms and forms involving suppletion) may be maintained because they have a high usage frequency. While the circumfix itself is not frequent, it is possible that in targeting bases with a high type frequency the prefix has protected itself from the pressure to neutralize. This would explain why a relatively infrequent variable form has endured.
5.5.7 Interim summary of phonological analyses of circumfixation

In this section, a formal analysis of two phonological constraints on mirative circumfixation has been presented. To capture the descriptive generalization that circumfixing only occurs with consonant- or tense-vowel-initial bases, an anti-identity constraint prohibiting adjacent lax vowels (OCP-V[LAX]) was posited.

AppE avoids lax-vowel sequences just in the case of mirative circumfixation, while generally tolerating such sequences otherwise (e.g., ‘a apple’). This pattern of specific avoidance but general tolerance was suggested to warrant a TETU analysis. Less marked structures are preferred just in the case of circumfixing, due to the constraint ranking OCP-V[LAX] >> MAX-M[MIRATIVE]. More marked structures are generally possible, however, due to the ranking MAX-M[DETERMINER] >> OCP-V[LAX].

The stress restriction on circumfixing originally posited by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976), was formalized as an alignment constraint. This constraint requires the right edge of the prefixal portion of the circumfix to be aligned with the left edge of a stressed syllable.

Counterexamples to Wolfram and Christian’s stress constraint were shown not to be conclusive. Possible alternative explanations for the circumfixation of ‘believe’ and ‘relate’ were provided. It was argued that the former could have undergone schwa deletion, and the latter deletion of the unstressed syllable. Subsequent to such variable phonological processes, the selectional restrictions of the circumfix are satisfied, as the base is stress initial.

Finally, frequency effects in mirative circumfixation were discussed. It was suggested that the circumfix targets high-frequency bases because it is a relatively non-productive affix. It thus receives a boost in lexical strength by attaching to forms with a high type frequency. This
potential boost effect could explain why the circumfix has been preserved in AppE despite leveling pressures.

5.6 *Mirative circumfixation as arbitrary preference allomorphy, not morpheme-specific phonology*

An alternative approach to treating mirative circumfixation as involving two lexically-listed morphs (i.e., allomorphy) is to consider it a phonological alternation that is conditioned by morphology or morpheme-specific phonology.

Under this kind of approach to mirative circumfixation, only one form would be listed in the lexicon, and the other form would be derived by means of a phonological ‘rule’. For example, the circumfixed /ə-/…/-ɪŋ/ would be listed in the lexicon, and this morph would exceptionally undergo deletion of the prefixal segment. In this approach, then, the morphology and phonology are separate, with the output of the morphology serving as the input to the phonology, which alters forms based on morphological affiliation (for example, categorial information).

In order to have deletion of the prefixal segment in the circumfix form /ə-/…/-ɪŋ/, and in order to also avoid deletion elsewhere in the grammar (e.g., with the indefinite determiner ‘a’), we need some way to have the grammar treat the form /ə-/…/-ɪŋ/ differently from other forms. We can do this either with a morpheme-specific constraint (similar to Pater 2007, 2010) or a morpheme-specific constraint ranking (as in Anttila 2002). Either way, we can achieve the effect of having the grammar treat the circumfixal form /ə-/…/-ɪŋ/ as exceptionally undergoing deletion in certain environments (e.g., before a lax-V-initial base).
It is beyond the scope of the dissertation to detail the differences between these approaches to exceptional alternations. What is important for present purposes is that both the approaches make the same prediction with respect to coordination of VPs. Recall from chapter 2 that Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) indicated that in cases of conjoined VPs (X-ing AND X-ing), the circumfix tended to appear on all conjuncts (a-X-ing AND a-X-ing, but not as likely X-ing AND a-Xing).

Assuming a preference for agreement for a-prefixing on all conjuncts, we can look at cases of coordinated VPs in which one conjunct is a suitable base for circumfixation (i.e., the base is stress-initial and consonant-initial) and one conjunct is not a suitable base (i.e., the base is lax-V-initial and/or possesses non-initial stress). In such coordinated structures, if both the form that is a suitable base and the form that is not a suitable base fail to show the circumfix, this could indicate that circumfixation involves morph insertion (i.e., allomorphy) and not phonological deletion (i.e., morpheme-specific phonology).

Under an allomorphy approach, the issue is not whether to delete the prefixal segment of the circumfix; the issue is whether or not to insert the circumfix at all. Assuming the agreement preference to be morpho-syntactic (and not phonological), the constraint could be satisfied in the OI grammar when both conjuncts (the otherwise immaculate base and the unsuitable base) select the non-circumfix mirative allomorph -ing.

Under a morpheme-specific approach, we expect the prefixal segment of the circumfix to be deleted with the base that is lax-V-initial or otherwise unacceptable for circumfixation. However, we don’t necessarily expect the prefixal segment of a circumfix to be deleted with an otherwise immaculate base. A morpho-syntactic constraint requiring agreement for the circumfixation could be satisfied in the morpho-syntactic component (all conjuncts have the
circumfix in the morpho-syntax). Then in the case of the unsuitable base, the prefixal segment of the circumfix could be deleted in the phonology.

Thus, an allomorphy approach to circumfixation would predict variation to be global (i.e., for those forms that are suitable bases to co-vary with forms that are not suitable bases, with all conjuncts failing to have the circumfix inserted). In contrast, a morpheme-specific approach would more naturally predict circumfixation to be decided on a locus-by-locus basis.

In the data from the CRP and DHP there does appear to be evidence of a kind of agreement constraint on circumfixation. That is, conjoined VPs tend to agree, either all hosting the circumfixal allomorph or all failing to host this allomorph. Examples of agreement on all conjuncts of conjoined VPs are provided below:

(147) All forms circumfixed (Agreement: all a-….ing)

a. But there would come about a hundred men down out of Bearwallow and came through there a-marching and a-singing and a-hollowing and I was up on the railroad track. (2FVA, 03/1998)

b. Everybody was a-hugging and a-kissing and a-saying we glad to see you and all this bit, but Carol and them said something about the Horner eyes, which is my mother’s maiden name, ‘cause he was a Horner, you know his mother was a Horner. (6FTN, 07/2008)

c. Yeah, now I was a-standin’ in chairs and a-bakin’ cakes when I was just about six years old. (1FVA, 10/1997)

d. Well, I seen him a-coming and a-carrying a carbide light in his hand. (1MVA, 08/1998)

(148) No conjunct circumfixed (Agreement: all -ing)

a. We’d done joined the Union and was slipping and paying our dues. (2MVA, 02/1998)
b. We had carpet down ‘n I got so I was coughing and sneezing and everything and I thought, “Well, I’m gonna take that stuff up.” (3FTN, 03/2008)

c. And now, my job was cleaning them lamp chimleys and filling the lamps up. (1FVA, 10/1997)

d. I was working here and boarding up here on Pigeon Hill with my cousin and they started a revival up there and I got going to church and I got converted up there. (2MVA, 2/1998)

The table below shows rates of agreement for circumfixation in conjoined VPs:

Table 32. Agreement for circumfixation: [VP & VP]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGREE a- … -ing</th>
<th>AGREE -ing</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 (25%)</td>
<td>11 (55%)</td>
<td>4 (20%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen a total of 16 (16/20 80%) sentences with conjoined VPs show agreement (either all circumfixed or none circumfixed). Though there are a small number of sentences with conjoined VPs in the corpus, the data seem to show a preference for agreement in circumfixation.

Assuming the preference to be genuine, we can posit something like the following constraint requiring agreement for circumfixation on all conjuncts

(149) Agreement constraint for circumfixation

AGREE-[a- … -m]: In conjoined XPs, all conjuncts must match for selection of circumfix.

Assign one violation mark for every instance in which conjuncts
in [XP & XP] fail to match for circumfix.  
(All conjuncts should be either [ǝ… -ɪn] or [-ɪn])

The following tableau illustrates the activity of this constraint in the form from one of the sentences above, “a-coming and a-carrying”. Here the form in (a) violates no constraint. Candidate (b), which shows disagreement for the circumfix (i.e., circumfixation in the first conjunct but not in the second) violates the agreement constraint as well as incurring one violation of the morpheme-morph constraint. The candidate in (c) fails to insert the circumfix on either conjunct, violating the morpheme-morph constraint twice.

(150) Agreement: both conjuncts circumfixed

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.  ( \rightarrow [ǝ-k^{h}<em>{Am}-ɪn] &amp; [ǝ-k^{h}</em>{ɛɹi}-ɪn] )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.  [ǝ-k^{h}<em>{Am}-ɪn] &amp; [k^{h}</em>{ɛɹi}-ɪn]</td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>W1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.  [k^{h}<em>{Am}-ɪn] &amp; [k^{h}</em>{ɛɹi}-ɪn]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 16 sentences with conjoined VPs, only one sentence possesses one conjunct with a base that is not suitable for circumfixation and one conjunct with a base that is otherwise suitable for circumfixation:

(151)  I can well remember ’em going to the bean market and unloading the truck and listening to the auctioneer go up and down and auctioneer the beans off…
(1MTN, 12/2007)
Here the form ‘going’ satisfies the selectional restrictions of the circumfix (it is consonant-initial and stress-initial). The form ‘unloading’ violates both the OCP constraint militating against lax-V sequences, as well as the stress constraint. While there is only one sentence of this type, it is interesting that the sentence agrees for circumfix, failing to circumfix either conjunct. This is predicted under an allomorphy approach, but is not straightforwardly predicted under a morpheme-specific approach.

A tableau showing the interaction of the agreement constraint and the phonological constraint is provided below. The attested output avoids violations of both the phonological constraint and the agreement constraint by failing to map the feature [MIRATIVE] on both conjuncts. Candidate (b) fatally violates the agreement constraint by circumfixing only the consonant-initial, stress-initial form. The candidate in (c) inserts the circumfix on both conjuncts, fatally violating the markedness constraint.47

47 Note that candidate (c) would not be a possible candidate, and is inserted here for illustration purposes. A chain for candidate (c) could be: ** < [UNLOAD] – [MIR, INT], \[\text{anlod-MIR, INT}\] \[\text{anlod-MIR}\], \text{a-anlod-in} >. This candidate is illicit because inserting the a-prefix can never be harmonically improving under the constraint ranking that obtains.
(152) Agreement: no conjunct circumfixed

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.  ( \rightarrow [gɔː-m] &amp; [ʌnlod-m] )</td>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.  ( [ɔ-gɔː-m] &amp; [ʌnlod-m] )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.  ( [ɔ-gɔː-m] &amp; [ɔ-ʌnlod-m] )</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, there does appear to be a preference for agreement in circumfixing. For conjoined VPs, 80% of the conjuncts in the data agree for circumfix selection (either all selecting or all failing to select the circumfix). While there is only one example of [VP & VP] conjunction in the corpora in which a suitable base for circumfixation is conjoined with a base that is not suitable for circumfixation, this datum shows agreement for circumfixation, with both conjuncts failing to insert the circumfixal morph.\(^48\)

An allomorphy approach to circumfixation predicts global variation. That is, this treatment of circumfixing can account for the failure of circumfixation with otherwise immaculate base in case that base is conjoined with a base that cannot host the circumfix. A morpheme-specific approach to circumfixing, on the other hand, would not necessarily predict global variation. Instead, under such an approach, we expect local variation, in which a base is

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\(^48\) It is important to keep in mind that circumfixation occurs with less than 50% of all suitable bases. As such, the absence of the circumfix in both conjuncts in the [VP & VP] sentence in which one base is suitable for circumfixation and one base is not is merely suggestive.
circumfixed as long as it satisfies the selectional restrictions of the circumfix. That is, we don’t expect an otherwise immaculate base in one conjunct to ‘care’ about whether a clausemate can (or does) host the circumfixal morph.

5.7 Accommodating variation in mirative circumfixation in an Optimality-Theoretic grammar

Until this point the analysis of mirative circumfixation has only considered how to derive categorical effects in the phonological grammar. We have dealt with those cases in which the circumfix is categorically prohibited (bases that are lax-V-initial, bases with non-initial stress). We have examined one variable constraint on mirative circumfixation, agreement for the circumfix on all conjuncts in [VP & VP] coordination. However, in the analysis presented we only pursued one form of agreement, with all of the conjuncts selecting the circumfix.

Because mirative circumfixation is a variable process, however, the circumfix variably fails to be selected in environments in which is licensed (e.g., with consonant-initial, stress-initial bases). Thus, some comment on how to accommodate variation within the grammar is necessary. First, basic issues related to the constraint inventory are addressed. Then the question of how we might model the quantitative patterns seen in mirative allomorph selection is discussed.

In the OI analysis offered in this chapter, a morpheme-morph constraint for the feature [MIRATIVE] enabled us to derive circumfixation with consonant-initial, stress-initial bases, such as ‘a-jump-ing’:
In order to derive the form ‘jump-ing’ rather than ‘a-jump-ing’, we need a constraint that would favor not realizing the circumfixal morph. This could be any number of constraints: *STRUC, which broadly disfavors overt phonological structure; a constraint penalizing reduced vowels word-initially, *#ə, and so on. It is not clear that the data allow us to determine precisely how to formulate the constraint. So, for clarity of exposition, the ad hoc markedness constraint *[ə⋯ -m]MIR will be used.

This markedness constraint could fluctuate in its ranking with MAX-M{MIR}, so that if it is ranked below MAX-M{MIR} its effects will not be seen. In such a case the output would be ‘a-jump-ing.’ If *[ə⋯ -m]MIR dominates MAX-M{MIR}, however, the circumfixal morph will not be selected. In the tableau below the effect of the ranking *[ə⋯ -m]MIR >> MAX-M{MIR} can be seen. Candidate (a) does not select the circumfixal mirative allomorph, instead selecting the allomorph […]-m. This candidate fails to map [MIRATIVE], avoiding a violation of the high-ranked markedness constraint. Candidate (b) selects the circumfixal allomorph. While
providing an exponent for [MIRATIVE], this candidate fatally violates the markedness constraint. Under this constraint ranking, non-circumfixal ‘jump-ing’ is selected as optimal.

(154) Markedness selects ‘jump-ing’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUT:</th>
<th>*[ə- … -m]_{MIR}</th>
<th>MAX-M{MIR}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[JUMP] – [MIR, INT]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘jump’ {INT}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. → ʤʌmp ɪn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{MIR} ‘jump’ {INT}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ə ʤʌmp ɪn</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowing what kind of constraint is needed to derive variation is important. However, knowing the constraint is little help if the quantitative patterns cannot be successfully modeled. A potential Optimality-Theoretic approach to modeling variation in the phonological grammar is the Gradual Learning Algorithm (GLA: Boersma and Hayes 2001). The GLA would likely be able to model the quantitative patterns of mirative allomorph selection detailed in the literature and in this dissertation.

In the GLA, there is a continuous ranking scale, accompanied by stochastic candidate evaluation. The continuous ranking scale involves a scale of constraints along which higher values indicate higher ranked constraints. The stochastic candidate evaluation involves random noise (i.e., a random positive or negative value) added to the evaluation temporarily. At
evaluation time, this random noise perturbs the ranking of the constraints in the grammar, potentially causing lower-ranked constraints to become active as their selection points are driven above the selection points of higher-ranked constraints.

Crucially, for this to happen, the lower-ranked constraints must be ranked within a certain proximity to the higher-ranked constraints so that overlap is permitted. Thus, it’s the case that most constraints will not overlap and so will not show any adjusted ranking with the perturbation of the constraint rankings.

In the case of mirative allomorphy in AppE, some constraints appear to be categorical. For example, there is no circumfixation with lax-vowel-initial bases. In order to derive categorical failure of the circumfix to be selected in these cases, the relevant markedness constraint \( \text{OCP-V}[\text{LAX}] \) would outrank the corresponding faithfulness constraint \( \text{MAX-M}[\text{MIR}] \), just as discussed earlier in this chapter: \( \text{OCP-V}[\text{LAX}] \gg \text{MAX-M}[\text{MIR}] \).

Additionally, given the stochastic element of the GLA, the constraints would be construed as being sufficiently distanced on the continuous ranking scale, such that the perturbation resulting from evaluation noise cannot result in the unattested constraint ranking:

\[ \text{** MAX-M}[\text{MIR}] \gg \text{OCP-V}[\text{LAX}] \]

Constraints on circumfixation that are variably violated, including the agreement constraint on circumfixation (\( \text{AGREE-}[\sigma\ldots-\text{m}] \), discussed in the previous section) would be closer on the continuous ranking scale to those constraints that could obscure their effects. At evaluation time, these proximal constraints can shift their rankings with respect to one another, so that failure to agree for the circumfix is produced.

The difference between categorical rankings (like the ranking deriving the non-circumfixed allomorph with lax-vowel-initial bases) and variable rankings (the ranking deriving
agreement on all conjuncts for the mirative allomorph) is not a difference in the type of ranking; rather, it is a difference in the distance of ranking. Constraints are ranked with respect to one another at every evaluation, but constraints that are sufficiently close together on the continuous scale can be re-ranked with respect to one another at different evaluation times.

Thus, should additional data reveal the categorical constraint rankings described here (like \( \text{OCP-V[LAX]} \gg \text{MAX-M[MIR]} \)) to be variable (evidencing the ranking \( \text{MAX-M[MIR]} \gg \text{OCP-V[LAX]} \)), this variability could be easily accommodated in the GLA. The two constraints could be viewed as more proximal on the continuous ranking scale, with a very small amount of overlap in their ranges, such that a circumfixed lax-vowel-initial base could be produced in a minority of evaluations (similar to what we see with tense-vowel-initial bases in the literature).

Other constraint rankings that show more variability (i.e., result in more variation in allomorph selection) would have ranges that overlap to a greater degree. For example, the general markedness constraint militating against circumfixation \( *[ə-\ldots-ɪn]_{\text{MIR}} \) and the constraint requiring realization of the mirative morph \( \text{MAX-M[MIR]} \) would be more frequently re-ranked with respect to one another, allowing more instances of circumfixation with consonant-initial bases than with vowel-initial bases.

Thus, the GLA could be quite good at modeling the kind of variation seen in mirative allomorphy in AppE. The task, then, is to determine how to incorporate the sociolinguistic factors that condition allomorph selection into the model. These factors include extra-phonological factors such as speaker sex, type frequency of the base, as well as other factors that are not at this time well-understood (discourse context factors, including formal vs. informal speech, dialect vs. non-dialect status of interactants, etc.). Each of these factors would need to affect the numerical ranges of constraint rankings.

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Female sex, for example could result in greater overlap of a general constraint prohibiting circumfixation and the constraint requiring mapping of the feature [MIRATIVE], such that re-ranking more frequently occurs for female speakers than for male speakers, modeling greater overall production of the circumfixal allomorph for the female speakers.

This section has only offered a sketch of how sociolinguistic and other factors conditioning variability in allomorph selection could be modeled in an Optimality-Theoretic grammar. Modeling sociolinguistic variation using a stochastic model of variation like the GLA seems quite promising.

5.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter a formal analysis of so-called a-prefixing was presented. A-prefixing was argued to be better understood as circumfixation, the simultaneous prefixation and suffixation of the form [ə-…-ɪn]. The morpho-pragmatic features of circumfixed forms were explored. It was argued that there are two progressive morphemes in AppE: mirative progressives and non-mirative progressives. The circumfixal morph [ə-…-ɪn] was argued to be a mirative progressive form. This form was suggested to alternate with the mirative non-circumfixal morph [-ɪn].

The morpho-syntactic and morpho-syntactic features of circumfixal and non-circumfixal forms were discussed. It was suggested that circumfixation is restricted to verbal forms, and that the circumfix selects only those bases possessing the feature [INTERVAL]. This chapter argued that the circumfixed morph provides an overt exponent of the morpho-pragmatic feature [MIRATIVE].
Mirative circumfixation was analyzed as an instance of arbitrary preference allomorphy. Wolf’s (2008) theory of the morphology-phonology interface, Optimal Interleaving (OI) was used to capture the phonological distribution of the circumfix.

Morpheme-morph Correspondence in OI provided us with a way of accounting for why the grammar arbitrary prefers the \textit{a-}…\textit{-ing} over \textit{-ing}: the circumfixal morph more faithfully maps the features of the underlying morpheme. Specifically, the circumfixal morph expresses a proper superset of the features mapped by non-circumfixal forms. Non-circumfixed forms map the feature \texttt{[INTERVAL]}. Circumfixed forms also map this feature. Such forms map an additional feature, however, one not mapped by \textit{-ing} forms, \texttt{[MIRATIVE]}

The phonological distribution of the morphs was explained by appealing to a relatively general markedness constraint (\texttt{OCP-V[LAX]}) and an alignment constraint that requires the prefixal segment of the circumfix to be aligned with a stressed syllable. The anti-identity constraint \texttt{OCP-V[LAX]} accounts for all of the available data. This constraint, ranked sufficiently high in the grammar, derives circumfixation with consonant-initial and tense-vowel-initial bases, but blocks the circumfix with lax-vowel-initial bases.

The alignment constraint, which dominates the constraint requiring faithful mapping of the morpho-pragmatic feature \texttt{[MIRATIVE]}, permits circumfixation with stress-initial bases, but blocks the circumfix with bases possessing non-initial stress. Putative cases of circumfixation that violate the stress constraint were shown to have a possible alternative explanation. It was suggested that the bases in question have potentially undergone a variable phonological process, schwa deletion. Subsequent to schwa deletion, the bases in question satisfy the selectional restrictions of the circumfix (i.e., circumfixation with these bases no longer violates the
alignment constraint). A possible experimental method for testing this alternative explanation for violations of the stress constraint was sketched.

Frequency effects in allomorph selection were discussed. It was suggested that the circumfix targets high frequency bases. The preservation of circumfixation in the dialect, despite leveling pressures, was suggested to be related to the type frequency of the bases targeted by the circumfix.

It was suggested that the GLA, an Optimality-Theoretic stochastic model of variation, could accommodate the sociolinguistic variation we see in mirative allomorph selection in AppE.
This dissertation has presented the results of a quantitative and qualitative study of the variable process of so-called a-prefixing in AppE. VARBRUL analysis revealed five factor groups variably condition a-prefixing: speaker sex, presence/absence of a perception verb, presence/absence of a necessity modal (must, should, can/could) presence/absence of an anti-mirative element(s), and verb type.

First speaker sex was shown to condition the variable realization of the prefix. Female speakers favored use of the a-prefix, while, relatively speaking, male speakers disfavored a-prefixation. While this result runs counter to much research on sex and sociolinguistic variation (cf. reviews in Labov 1990, 2001), it is consistent with other investigations of local speech communities in non-urban locales (cf. Nichols 1976, 1983).

It was suggested the results showing female speakers use the prefix more than male speakers is likely a result of the different types of opportunities older female speakers have had relative to their male counterparts. The older women primarily spent their time taking care of the home and family, and socialized almost exclusively with other speakers of the dialect. In contrast, the men had to pursue economic opportunities that required them to interact with non-dialect speakers. These different opportunities could have produced the effect of speaker sex.

Three of the linguistic factor groups selected by VARBRUL were argued to be related to the pragmatic context in which the prefix may appear as well as the function of the prefix itself: presence/absence of a perception verb, presence/absence of a necessity modal and presence/absence of an anti-mirative element(s). The presence of a perception verb, the presence of a necessity modal and the absence of anti-mirative elements all favor realization of the a-
prefix. These results were taken as evidence for the existence of two progressive morphemes in AppE: a non-mirative progressive and a mirative progressive. It was also argued that the a-prefix functions as a marker of mirativity.

A final factor group selected by VARBRUL was verb type. The results showed that intransitive verbs favored a-prefixation, while verbs selecting a CP-complement disfavored a-prefixation. This effect was shown to correspond to the frequencies of the different verb types: intransitive verbs were most frequent in the data, CP-complement verbs the least frequent. It was suggested that a-prefixation targets high frequency bases. Because the a-prefix is not a productive affix, attaching preferentially to bases with a high type frequency has the effect of strengthening the lexical representation of the prefix. This strengthening makes the variable prefix more resistant to leveling effects than we might otherwise expect.

A formal analysis of the mirative progressive, informed by the VARBRUL results, was presented. The so-called a-prefix was argued to be better understood as a circumfix, involving simultaneous prefixation and suffixation.

The category constraint governing the distribution of the circumfix was reformulated. By appealing to Cowper’s (1993, 1995 a, b, 1999, 2003a, b) feature-based analysis of verbal ING, the syntactic distribution of the circumfix was accounted for. It was argued that the circumfix may attach to only those -ing forms possessing the morpho-syntactic feature [INTERVAL]. Homophonous nominal -ing forms lack this feature and so fail to exhibit circumfixation.

The quantitative study revealed that a number of invariant or categorical constraints originally posited by Wolfram and Christian (1976) largely hold in the data collected in Southwestern Virginia and Eastern Tennessee. The vowel-initial constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian (1975, 1976) holds of the data examined here. Additional data from the literature
suggest this constraint must be modified, however: the circumfix may appear before consonant-initial and tense-vowel-initial stems, but is prohibited before lax-vowel-initial stems. An anti-identity constraint prohibiting lax-vowel sequences was used in capturing this descriptive generalization.

The descriptive literature has indicated that the use of the indefinite determiner allomorph ‘a’ before vowel-initial nouns demonstrates there is no restriction on vowel-vowel sequences in AppE. Indeed, the indefinite determiner allomorphy was shown to be neutralized in favor of ‘a’ in the CRP and DHP corpora. However, in Optimality-Theoretic analyses such a discrepancy is predicted. The effects of a markedness constraint can be witnessed in one corner of the phonology while its effects are obscured in another corner. That is, the seeming inactivity of a constraint in indefinite article allomorphy does not mean this constraint cannot be active in circumfixing.

The stress constraint posited by Wolfram and Christian holds categorically in the CRP and DHP corpora. An alignment constraint requiring that the prefixal morph of the circumfix be adjacent to a stressed syllable was posited. Putative counterexamples to the stress constraint presented in the literature were argued to have a possible alternative explanation.

It was argued that these bases for the circumfix potentially underwent general phonological processes that rendered them suitable bases for circumfixation. In two cases, schwa deletion occurred, removing the unstressed syllable. The circumfix was then inserted. These data could suggest that mirative allomorph insertion and the phonological grammar interact directly. A sketch of a possible experiment to test for such interactive effects was presented.

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In the phonological analysis, circumfixation was argued to be a case of arbitrary preference allomorphy. Under this account the circumfix *a-...-ing* alternates with its allomorph *-ing* with the grammar preferentially (variably) inserting the circumfix when all selectional restrictions of the morph are satisfied. It was argued that the circumfix encodes a proper superset of those features encoded by a non-circumfixed mirative progressive form: a circumfixed form maps both [INTERVAL] and [MIRATIVE], while a non-circumfixed form maps only [INTERVAL]. It was suggested that the circumfix is preferentially inserted because it more faithfully expresses the feature structure of the underlying morpheme.

The analysis of the data was formalized using Optimal Interleaving (Wolf 2008). This model is able to capture all of the data. The preference for the circumfixal morph is achieved via a faithfulness constraint which requires identity in the morpheme-morph mapping for the feature [MIRATIVE]. The restriction of the circumfix before lax-vowel sequences, when viewed along with the general tolerance for lax-vowel sequences in AppE, recommended a TETU analysis.

The stress constraint on circumfixing was also accounted for. Because OI is a derivational model that predicts direct interaction of morphology and phonology, allomorph choice can occur at any point in the derivation. A general phonological process like schwa deletion can remove an initial unstressed syllable, thereby rendering a base suitable for circumfixation. Data such as these suggest some interleaving of morphology and phonology.

Finally, a discussion of how we might accommodate sociolinguistic variation in an Optimality-Theoretic grammar was offered. It was suggested that a stochastic model of variation, the Gradual Learning Algorithm, could accurately model the kind of sociolinguistic variation seen in mirative allomorph selection in AppE.
Montgomery (2009) claims that the Smoky Mountain data, when compared to the West Virginia data of Wolfram and Christian, indicate that “… ‘Appalachian English’ is somewhat more heterogeneous than previously thought” (23). The data here considered alongside data from previous studies (including Montgomery’s) suggests, however, that AppE is not as heterogeneous as it might seem. The descriptive generalizations provided in Wolfram and Christian were valid and hold of present-day AppE. The geography and culture of Appalachia are richly variegated. The formal features of the dialect -- as shown in a number of studies from different parts of Appalachia across different time periods -- are strikingly uniform, however.
APPENDIX A


A. Background questions

1. Please state your name, age, and place of birth. Do you still live in ____________? [THIS INFORMATION MAY NOT BE TAPE UNLESS “ARCHIVES” CONSENT FORM IS SIGNED.]

2. Background on town/county
   a. Tell me a bit about what it was like growing up in ____________.
   b. Do you have friends who have moved away from the area? Do you notice that when they come back (to visit) they “sound” different?

3. Subjects’ observations about properties of and changes in language
   a. Do people from ____________ speak differently from people from other towns in the region? Can you identify someone from ____________ just by the way they talk?
   b. Can you tell me about some special expressions or constructions that local folks use?
   c. Have you noticed that your generation speaks differently from you parents’ generation? Your grandparents’ generation? If so, why do you think that is?
   d. Can you think of anything that older folks say that sounds “unusual” or “different” to you?
   e. Can you think of anything that kids and teenagers say that sounds “unusual” or “different” to you?
   f. What is it about a person’s speech that tells you they’re not from the local community?

Transition:

“We’re interested in studying language diversity across varieties of American English. Instead of comparing speech in, for example, New York and Tennessee, where the differences are going to be vast, it makes more sense to investigate variation within a fairly confined geographic area. The expectation is that differences between local language varieties will be less extreme, and so more manageable to study. For that reason, we are interested in comparing, as a first step, the way people use language in the various counties of east Tennessee. In the future, we’ll compare these results with those from people in southwest Virginia and western North Carolina.”

4. Grammaticality Judgments
“We want to ask your opinion about a bunch of sentences. What we want to know is whether they sound good or bad to you. In other words, can you imagine saying these sentences? There are no right or wrong answers. Whether or not a particular sentence sounds good is completely up to you. Your opinions may differ from those of other people we talk with. That’s the whole idea: to learn about the variation between speakers.

Keep in mind that we’re not interested in what a school teacher might say about the sentences. We want to know whether or not they sound “ok” or “natural” to you. Once we get opinions from lots of people in a certain community or area, we can start to figure out what the rules are for that particular language variety.

Let’s try a few practice sentences so you can see what we have in mind.”

A. Practice sentences

Let’s say you’re telling me about some relatives of yours who are coming to Tennessee next summer. Is it ok to say:

1. Come they year next Tennessee to summer in the.

[“That’s completely nonsensical, right? You can’t even figure out what it means. Let’s try a few more.”]

Let’s say I want to suggest that Ned help you with vacation plans. Can I say:

2. Ned might could help you with vacation plans.

Let’s say you want to ask me if Ned can help you with vacation plans. Can you ask:

3. Might could Ned help me with vacation plans?

Let’s say you want to ask about the weather. Can you ask:

4. Ain’t it snowin’ a lot today?

Let’s say you want to tell Ned that you’ll try to come to his party. Is it ok to say:

5. I’ll come iffenn I can.

Let’s say you want to tell Ned that his price for milk is too high. Is it ok to say:

6. I think ninety-five cent is a lot to pay for a quart of milk.
Transition:

“You get the idea, right? There’s no particular pattern to the questions or your answers. We’re only interested in your opinion, whether a sentence sounds good or bad to you. As we mentioned before, not everyone will have the same opinions about what sounds good and bad. But that’s what we want to learn about: the differences in acceptability among speakers.”

B. Actual sentences to judge

Let’s say we’re talkin’ about some really fast cars … Is it ok to say:

I think…
1. them cars goes fast.
2. them cars am fast.
3. them cars is fast.

What if I want to ask you about them fast cars. Is it ok to ask:

Tell me…
4. does them cars goes fast?
5. is them cars fast?
6. does them cars go fast?

Let’s say we’re talking about some American students who can speak Italian pretty well. Is it ok to say:

I believe…
7. they speaks Italian pretty well.
8. they sure can speak Italian pretty well.

[Ask #9 only if #7 is rejected.]
9. they speak Italian pretty well.

You want to tell me about the students’ plans after high school. Is it ok to say:

I know…
10. they’s going to ETSU.
11. they is going to ETSU.
12. they goes to ETSU.

[Ask #13 only if #12 is rejected.]
13. they go to ETSU

Let’s say I want to tell Judy that she can speak Italian pretty well. Is it ok to say:
14. Judy, I think you speaks Italian pretty well.
15. Judy, I think you sure can speak Italian pretty well.
16. Judy, I think you speak Italian pretty well.

Let’s say I want to tell Judy that she’s American (and not Italian!). Is it ok to say:

17. Judy, I think you is definitely American!
18. Judy, I think you are definitely American!

What if I want to ask you about how the American students speak Italian. Is it ok to ask:

Tell me…

19. does they speak Italian pretty well?
20. does they speaks Italian pretty well?

[Ask #21 only if #19 is rejected.]
21. do they speak Italian pretty well?

What if I want to know your nationality. Is it ok to ask:

Tell me…

22. is you American?
23. ain’t you American?
24. are you American?

Tell me…

25. does you come from the United States?
26. do you come from the United States?

What if I want to know Ned and Jane’s nationality. Is it ok to ask:

Tell me…

27. is they American?
28. ain’t they American?

[Ask #29 only if #27 is rejected.]
29. are they American?

30. does they come from the United States?

[Ask #31 only if #30 is rejected.]
31. do they come from the United States?
Suppose I’ve got some cows that gave a lot of milk. Is it ok to say:

32. I know the cows was (a-)givin’ a lot of milk.

If I want to find out about the milk yield of the cows, can I ask:

Say…

33. was the cows (a-)givin’ a lot of milk?
34. was the cows they (a-)givin’ a lot of milk?
35. was they (a-)givin’ a lot of milk?

If I want to find out about you milkin’ the cows this morning, can I ask:

Say…

36. was you milkin’ this morning?

Suppose you’re talkin’ on the phone to a friend, describing your new house. Is it ok to say:

37. They’s two bedrooms, a living room, and a kitchen in the new house.

Suppose your friend wants to ask some extra questions about the house. Is it ok for him to ask:

Tell me…

38. is they a basement in the house?
39. ain’t they 2 bathrooms in the house?
40. is they 2 bathrooms in the house?
Appendix B

Training and “warm-up” questionnaire, used in June 2009 fieldwork in Rogersville, Tennessee. Principle investigators: Judy B. Bernstein, Marcel den Dikken, Christina Tortora, Raffaella Zanuttini.

Transition (after spontaneous chit-chat):

Goldie Ann: “Now I want to ask your opinion about a bunch of sentences. What I want to know is whether they sound good or bad or so-so to you. In other words, can you imagine saying these sentences? If a sentence doesn’t sound good to you, I’ll be interested in learning how you would say the sentence instead.

“Remember that whether a particular sentence sounds good is completely up to you. Your opinions may differ from those of other people I talk with. That’s the whole idea: to learn about the differences between speakers.

“Keep in mind that I’m not interested in what a school teacher might say about the sentences. I want to know whether or not they sound good to YOU.

“Let’s try some practice sentences so you can see what I have in mind. If you want me to repeat any sentences, just ask.”

(N.B. Avoid saying the sentence numbers aloud. You can introduce a new sentence with “How about…?” or “What do you think about (this)…?”)

-------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. Grandparents my have three cats.

[Comment to add after #1 if participant accepts: “Now that’s not possible, right? You wouldn’t say it that way, right? Maybe you can understand the sentence, but the words are all mixed up.” Assuming participant (eventually) rejects #1, follow up with: “So, how would you say this sentence?” If necessary, help participant to produce: “My grandparents have three cats.”]

(N.B. With the contexts removed, a participant may reject based on truth conditions, so #1 may be rejected because a participant’s grandparents are no longer alive. You will have to explain that you want to know whether the sentence is one they can imagine saying, independent of its content, etc.)

2. They don’t know anybody here.

3. Ned could might help you with vacation plans.
4. We normally eat supper at 6 PM.

5. My sisters don’t like nothing on television.

[If a participant rejects #5, and provides a “corrected” version with anything, engage in a brief discussion about whether nothing (in this grammatical context) can be used in informal speech, etc. And then ask the judgment again, hopefully eliciting “good.”]

6. Sue Ellen might could see you at the meeting.

7. We be doing the chores on Saturday.

8. Might could Norma buy me some bananas at the store?

Goldie Ann:“You get the idea, right? There’s no particular pattern. I’m only interested in your opinion, whether a sentence sounds good or bad or so-so to you. As I mentioned before, not everyone will have the same opinions about what sounds good, bad, or so-so. But that’s what I want to learn about: people’s different opinions.”

[Transition to the Questionnaire]
APPENDIX C

Subject-verb questionnaire used in June 2009 fieldwork in Rogersville, Tennessee. Principle investigators: Judy B. Bernstein, Marcel den Dikken, Christina Tortora, Raffaella Zanuttini.

Procedure: Remind participants that you will be asking their opinions about a bunch of sentences and that you want to know if a sentence sounds “good” or “bad” or “so-so.” If a participant judges a sentence to be “bad” (or even “so-so”), ask how s/he would say it. Remind participants to feel free to ask that a sentence be repeated. And remember to pronounce clearly (nominal and verbal) word-final -s! (N.B. If at all possible, convince participants to judge you’uns sentences. Otherwise, substitute y’all.)

1) Does you’uns like ice cream with your cobbler?

2) They is awful good to their friends.

3) Them/those folks goes all the way to Nashville for the bluegrass festival.

4) Does this girl favor her mother?

5) Is we going to the early service on Sunday?

6) You’uns rushes around too much.

7) Is that boy getting into mischief?

8) Does you think Fred will come to dinner?

9) One cat looks out the window all the time.

10) Does the women like chocolate?

11) Is the judge at that competition fair?

12) Some fathers teaches their sons to hunt.

13) Is they feeling better today?

14) You’uns bakes a lot of light bread.

15) Does the children like iced tea?

16) Them/those women is happy.

17) Is the men coming for supper?
18) That preacher **preaches** a good sermon.
19) You’uns **is** drinking a lot of water.
20) The boy **is** eating that whole pie.
21) Is you’uns going to get your groceries?
22) We **lock** our doors at night now.
23) Is one dog waiting to be fed?
24) You’uns **is** always laughing at his jokes.
25) Is them/those folks from around here?
26) This girl **chases** those chickens around the yard.
27) The children **is** watching cartoons.
28) You **mixes** him up with his brother all the time.
29) Does you’uns eat dessert only on Sunday?
30) Is they raising a garden next year?
31) All mothers **dresses** their children warm in the wintertime.
32) Does you’uns have any sugar I can borrow?
33) Is we likely to have a bad winter this year?
34) You’uns **catches** right many fish.
35) Does these kids get excited about Christmas?
36) Is you’uns taking the children with you?
37) A girl **is playing** the fiddle over there.
38) Does the woman drink coffee?
39) We **is** proud of our church.
APPENDIX D

Data from CRP and DHP corpora used in VARBRUL analysis and qualitative analysis.

One of my school teacher’s still living, Russel Potter, do you know him? (1FTN 03/2007)

Yeah. But now they’re not moving as good as the girls. (1FTN 03/2007)

They were truckloads, my lord, oh they’d be falling off the tops of trucks when they’d load ’em up. (1FTN 03/2007)

And uh his sister told me, she called me ‘bout three year ago and said he was coming home and he wanted me to come up to the park where he was at. (1FTN 03/2007)

Yeah, Jennifer’s, she’s going to the Bahamas for Spring Break. (1FTN 03/2007)

That poor little fellow was sitting there. (1FTN 03/2007)


And they said now that she had uh was going…he was… they’re living together. (1FTN 03/2007)

Oh, you do, yeah, sitting around in the winter time you get bored and just sit there and dry up. (1FTN 03/2007)

But I, somebody looks around and there come Gary walking. (1FTN 03/2007)

But the guard, they uh he tried I guess he tried to fight ’em off you know going, getting out when they got out and they just knocked his front teeth out and took him in there and held a knife around his throat for six hours. (1FTN 03/2007)

Used to be the road full of people, girls and boys a-going to church. (1FTN 03/2007)

I’ve got one aunt living up there now where I was raised. (1FTN 03/2007)

Yeah, when I was five he was working out in Wes…Charleston, West Virginia. (1FTN 03/2007)

I called her today, she’s, she’s still getting around but not too good. (1FTN 03/2007)

She’s doing good. (1FTN 03/2007)
We walked up and down the road like we was courting. (1FTN 03/2007)

Bunch of people from the oil plant when we was working went with us. (1FTN 03/2007)

And she got him off the internet and he come in here, and he was working up the school with her with them young’uns. (1FTN 03/2007)

And he’s up there working around them young’uns. (1FTN 03/2007)

I don’t know if she’s still working up there or not. (1FTN 03/2007)

Is Mark still working up building supply? (1FTN 03/2007)

Throwed his hat over in the pond and left it. ‘cause he known everybody be a-looking for us. (1FTN 03/2007)

That woman worked down there was talking about that holding that hostage the other day. (1FTN 03/2007)

But uh, I worked there, and they was a wheel and you sit like this and run the big wheel and it just kept run and running and you stick one mushroom in each groove and hit cut it off and hit’d take it around in uh…baths of water, hot water. (1FTN 03/2007)

And he come up Pine Grove about 3 year ago, a-visiting and he didn’t know me, and I told him, and he said “yeah, I remember you now.” (1FTN 03/2007)

But the guard, they uh he tried I guess [he tried to fight ’em off] you know going, getting out when they got out and they just knocked his front teeth out and took him in there and held a knife around his throat for six hours. (1FTN 03/2007)

We go up in West Virginia a lot a-train-riding and stuff. (1FTN 03/2007)

Yeah… I love to be out working in the yard and stuff. (1FTN 03/2007)

While he was playing, I’d go to the store and get a big ole bag of candy for three eggs. (1FTN 03/2007)

My uh sister was going with this guy and he uh they’d want to go out with theirself, and we’d follow ’em. (1FTN 03/2007)

That’s when Terry an’ Gary was little. He got out one day and his grandma supposed to be a-keeping him and they called me and said that Gary was gone. (1FTN 03/2007)

He’s still preaching. (1FTN 03/2007)
There was two girls, I’m telling you what, they fit every day. (1FTN 03/2007)

Gosh, she’s a-making good money up there now, I mean. (1FTN 03/2007)

Gosh. They don’t know what they’re getting into, do they? (1FTN 03/2007)

And she got him off the internet and he come here and now she’s keeping him up. (1FTN 03/2007)

You still going to school up in Boone? (1FTN 03/2007)

She was substituting. (1FTN 03/2007)

A Chevrolet, it’s not a Cavalier, they quit making them. (1FTN 03/2007)

She done looking into it and they give her numbers to call. (1FTN 03/2007)

Did I tell you the other time about my dad getting killed in West Virginia. (1FTN 03/2007)

Got killed cutting timber. (1FTN 03/2007)

I don’t remember just that one time seeing him up there in the hospital. (1FTN 03/2007)

But people…you couldn’t find a parking place, everybody parked, just on Saturday night, taking families up there on Saturday night. (1FTN 03/2007)

And that year Jessica started. So, she went ’ere and signed up and every day after the first year of the spring, she got every day’s work substituting ‘cause people wanted spring cleaning and wanted vacate. (1FTN 03/2007)

How in the world he ever get in without them a-knowing it…to start with. (1FTN 03/2007)

They musta passed it awhile back I heard ’em talking something about it. (1FTN 03/2007)

Yeah, It’s supposed to be next week starting every day being up in the 60’s and stuff. (1FTN 03/2007)

Yeah, she said it was five guards quit said it wasn’t worth their life being taken to work there. (1FTN 03/2007)

She’s learning how to pay her bills and stuff. (1FTN 03/2007)

She’s learning how to take care of her money. (1FTN 03/2007)
They’ll be a lotta stores and stuff closed down because, uh, the way hit’s a-going, hit’s gon’ get worser it ain’t gon’ get better. (2FTN, 09/2007)

See that’s how I find out what’s a-going on out there, by that scanner. (2FTN, 09/2007)

Yeah, they’ve got it fixed where over there where they don’t know they’re coming, I don’t think. (2FTN, 09/2007)

We kept our milk in, uh, like a spring house, in water, you know, it was a-running. (2FTN, 09/2007)

Well, uh, when I was a-growing up, you know, we raised everything we eat. (2FTN, 09/2007)

And hit changed a whole lot since I’s growing up. (2FTN, 09/2007)

But hit’s changed a whole lot since I’s growing up. (2FTN, 09/2007)

Now we never had that much dope when I’s growing up. (2FTN, 09/2007)

I don’t guess they’s even any dope around at that time, and you never heared stuff that goes on now…when I was a-growing up. (2FTN, 09/2007)

And that’s changed, too, ‘cause it’s got worser in, uh, Mountain City since the time I was a-growing up and now, it’s got a lot worser. (2FTN, 09/2007)

I got up and looked out the window and this girl was coming up out through the yard here with a baby and hit was screaming, and she said, “He ain’t gonna get by hitting you with a hammer”. (2FTN, 09/2007)

And we had fun, growing up together, you know. (2FTN, 09/2007)

You see ’em coming in here every evening…on something…and they usually do it after everybody goes home, after five, they usually do it. (2FTN, 09/2007)

I don’t know what he had a-hanging on the side. (2FTN, 09/2007)

Meal tax is going up, they said. (2FTN, 09/2007)

You just sneezing. (2FTN, 09/2007)

I got up and looked out the window and this girl was coming up out through the yard here with a baby and hit was screaming, and she said, “He ain’t gonna get by hitting you with a hammer”. (2FTN, 09/2007)

I don’t who it was, never did find out, you know, but hit was screaming, it. (2FTN, 09/2007)
Which you don’t have to watch, you can just be a-walking through and you can look out and see ‘em. (2FTN, 09/2007)

The, the other night I heared a baby a-screaming, it’s about eleven thirty. (2FTN, 09/2007)

I heared a baby a-screaming, and I thought what in the world. (2FTN, 09/2007)

But now when they a-fighting over there and they get young’un to crying then you hear, you know, but the rest of it, you don’t hear it. (2FTN, 09/2007)

And that was fun to us kids, sitting there breaking beans, and taking the needle and going through them bri, they called them… (2FTN, 09/2007)

And so we enjoyed that, doing that when we was ki, now, uh, we worked you know on helping break beans, gather taters, uh, just anything, you know. (2FTN, 09/2007)

I got up and looked out the window and this girl was coming up out through the yard here with a baby and hit was screaming, and she said, “He ain’t gonna get by hitting you with a hammer”. (2FTN, 09/2007)

And between the sheriff department and the, the county here, they a-busting the county, I mean, they, you know, with, uh, money problems and stuff, they, they axing for money for everything. (2FTN, 09/2007)

And I can’t use it on account I’m taking shots a week for my eyes and, uh, they’d swell plumb up, you know and…that’s why I can’t use my air conditioner. (2FTN, 09/2007)

I been patching and a-fixing where, and Roxy’s picked the carpet up, you know, when she was a pup she’d scratch in it. (2FTN, 09/2007)

Why, I’s a-cooking at 12 years old, when I was a kid. (2FTN, 09/2007)

Yeah, we heared it and we know the people we seeing we aggravating. (2FTN, 09/2007)

You can hear ’em over there. I say, “Oh, God, it’s starting, David.” (2FTN, 09/2007)

Now, well, when you on dope you don’t know, I don’t guess you know what you’re doing, really, if you on it bad. (2FTN, 09/2007)

But now when they a-fighting over there and they get young’un to crying then you hear, you know, but the rest of it, you don’t hear it. (2FTN, 09/2007)

So, I’m trying to get hit straightened out. (2FTN, 09/2007)
And it’s going, hit’s going be rough later on, for poor people, you know. (2FTN, 09/2007)

It’s getting pretty peaceful over there, but so, so many apartments over there. (2FTN, 09/2007)

We even grind the cornmeal. We’d take hit and grind it and make our meal and stuff and really we didn’t buy nothing outta store hardly, like they do now, ‘cause we had our own growing. (2FTN, 09/2007)

Yeah, they’ll keep calling till I answer, the girls, but I don’t, I, they know I go to flea markets, like up there at, uh, what is that, the name of that? (2FTN, 09/2007)

And he said, “I’m setting up in the tower with a rifle and a pistol.” (3FTN, 03/2008)

And I’d go, and if he’s there I’d say, “All right, you get your car and get in front of me, you’re going home.” (3FTN, 03/2008)

He’d come up here an’ s, one evening one Sunday evening me an’ Bessie’d been a-walking and we come back down… (3FTN, 03/2008)

But I’m going next week now, and get me a . . . a little electric heater. (3FTN, 03/2008)

Because they can’t afford to put, uh, well, uh, this one guy’s, uh, guy on the television the other day, I was setting here watching, uh, Montel or something, and he said he filled up his gas, his tank on the day before and it cost him over seven hundred dollars. (3FTN, 03/2008)

He said, “Since I’ve been a-walking, seems like my back’s a lot better.” (3FTN, 03/2008)

I just come through the house, but they evidently knowed that. . . they surely heared me a-coming through the house, ‘cause I know my way through here in the dark, it don’t bother me. (3FTN, 03/2008)

And so . . . so, uh, they took off a-flying. (3FTN, 03/2008)

An’ uh, so the next morning I got up an’ we’d moved all the furniture back whenever they got it, it was dry and everything, and I saw something a-laying right there, and I had the fan on it’s so hot in here, and I saw something a-laying there… (3FTN, 03/2008)

We had carpet down ’n I got so I was coughing and sneezing and everything and I thought, “Well, I’m gonna take that stuff up.” (3FTN, 03/2008)

And uh, I said, you know, they all kinda got, sss, when, a lot of ’em got nipped up whenever we got rid of Karl, but young’uns he was a-dollaring us to death, and, and, that’s all he talked about, money, money, money. (3FTN, 03/2008)
Uh, I remember I worked with this guy up at, up at Levi, and he, and the plant was going down. (3FTN, 03/2008)

I mean, you know, they’s had laid off and laid off and it was really going down, and one of these guys said to me, he says, uh, “Well, I just don’t know what I’ll do whenever Levi goes out.” He said, “How’re we gonna to live?” (3FTN, 03/2008)

See, uh, Terry, uh, got his back hurt whenever he was working at Maymead. (3FTN, 03/2008)

And him! Aah, and him through school and everything and was working and . . . (3FTN, 03/2008)

Well, if I was talking to somebody that, maybe from Ohio or something that came by, I could say that to them. (3FTN, 03/2008)

That was after all my boys got grown and, ‘course, and got married and got away because if I’da had one when they was out here running around I guess I’da went crazy. (3FTN, 03/2008)

He’d walk up here, stand out there, I’d be in the garden a-working and he’d stand out there and talk and talk. (3FTN, 03/2008)

He worked in, when they had that, uh, business, down there in the prison, and they’s working just prisoners, and he was over 35, a-working there, but he said they’s some of ’em was, he said “They’s murderers and everything,” but he said, “You know,” he said, “They’s real nice to me.” (3FTN, 03/2008)

You’re not kidding, they did. (3FTN, 03/2008)

Because every Sunday morning he’d come through the church house and he’d be a-singing, just the happiest thing ever was. (3FTN, 03/2008)

Yeah, if I asked somebody, if I was asking questions, I would ask them. (3FTN, 03/2008)

And I asked him, I said “What’re you doing now?” (3FTN, 03/2008)

And oh, poor old thing for the last little while since Sue’s been so sick, you know she was back in the hospital and they wadn’t even expecting her to live two weeks ago. (3FTN, 03/2008)

See, that’s what happened to her, uh, she couldn’t breathe, and uh, and she was uh, the oxygen wadn’t doing her no good. (3FTN, 03/2008)

And it wadn’t doing her no good, and she got real excited and she takes panic attacks when she gets real excited, and uh, so she just went all to pieces and didn’t know nobody nor nothing. (3FTN, 03/2008)
She was taking in too much. . .and it. . . (3FTN, 03/2008)

We went down to the garden and got two big five gallon buckets of stuff they was fixing to, they had it ready to go. (3FTN, 03/2008)

That when, I knowed that some boys trying to scare me, some of them young’uns trying to scare me. (3FTN, 03/2008)

Because I’da been a-thinking, well, now they’ve had a wreck. (3FTN, 03/2008)

And then I went back and got, uh, another hundred gallons ‘cause I thought that would do me but I found out, I don’t know if it’s a-going to or not but it’s okay if it don’t, I’m not gonna put no more in it this year, anyway, but, uh, it was, uh, three dollars and forty cents a gallon when I got the last. (3FTN, 03/2008)

Yeah, it’s, it’s really doing good now. (3FTN, 03/2008)

So. . . she’s doing good now. (3FTN, 03/2008)

So, uh, but now, they, he’s been down there now for, well, since back in the early fall, and uh, he’s doing real good. (3FTN, 03/2008)

Well I’ll tell you, I’ve enjoyed it. It’s, you know, it’s something, but uh, you know, you get to hearing all these questions and things, and you can hear yourself. (3FTN, 03/2008)

Well, we’d get out on Sunday evening and, and go to Pogey and, and get out an’ ride that old truck and it’d be full, it was a log truck and we’d have the cab full of people, just having a big time. (3FTN, 03/2008)

Oh, he’s, he was a mess, I’ll tell you. He’d come in church a-singing. (3FTN, 03/2008)

Because they can’t afford to put, uh, well, uh, this one guy’s, uh, guy on the television the other day, I was setting here watching, uh, Montel or something, and he said he filled up his gas, his tank on the day before and it cost him over seven hundred dollars. (3FTN, 03/2008)

When I was a-growing up <unintelligible> most of the people around here, uh, wadn’t ever too much out of the county. (4FTN, 200?)

…and they’d come from all around, and they wadn’t no room for nobody to, to sit, and when, uh, uh, or be, and they’d stay till the Grand Ole Opry went off about 1 o’clock before they’d leave, and us children would be a-laying around somewhere maybe on the floor, asleep, whenever they’d all leave, ‘cause we wadn’t able to get to the bed, to go to bed! (4FTN, 200?)

And I know they had, over here, on the Mount’s place, uh, not too far from here, it’s on what they call Wrong Creek Road going up through there, where, uh, the Mounts live? (4FTN, 200?)
...women didn’t wear pants there for so long, they had to wear dresses, and my coattail would drag in the snow a-going up the hill, and I couldn’t walk in the road, it wadn’t gravel or anything, it was just scrape-down… (4FTN, 200?)

(129) And, uh, the water was, and it warshed out a lot of the bridges, and, you couldn’t even get across the hill over here, at the foot of the hill, where that, uh, creek come down through there, why, you couldn’t even, uh, it washed that bridge out, and there’s a little old house a-setting there, it’s where the Brown boy lives now, Tony? (4FTN, 200?)

And back over here towards, a-going towards, uh, 421, towards, Shouns, going through here on this road, why they wasn’t, uh, uh, no way you could get out through there, it was, uh, had warshed everything out… (4FTN, 200?)

…and they finally got it up till you got 50 cents a bushel, a-picking ’em, but uh, we all picked them beans and tickled to death to get 10 cents a bushel for ’em, we thought we was getting rich off of that. (4FTN, 200?)

…he knew just as well as a person when he was getting ready to go to that uh, uh, fair. And he’d stand there and Daddy would scrub him and clean him up, and oh he just looked so pretty, and he knowed just like he was a-getting ready for that… (4FTN, 200?)

…they tried to get ’em a horse if nothing else so they could have somewhere to, to ride when they went a-courting and stuff. I don’t know now. . . that was back before my day and time. (4FTN, 200?)

And I don’t try to raise it anymore being as old I am, why, it ain’t no use for me to try to, to raise it. (4FTN, 200?)

But, uh, then we had two or three people that had died and they had to wait before they could get them buried on account of, of water being so bad. But that’s the worst flood that I can remember. (4FTN, 200?)

You didn’t hear tell of people a-getting killed, or robbed, or things back in them days like that they do now. (4FTN, 200?)

I always just lease it to a man over here, that, uh, a neighbor been, he’s been leasing it for several years now. (4FTN, 200?)

And they’d have to change that, and the same thing whenever they was uh, grinding the, uh, meal, and they had a, a, what they call a, a, machine that they ground the meal on, uh, uh, for corn meal. (4FTN, 200?)

They had, whenever they had stuff to do, they had to put off if they’s getting married, they didn’t get married that day, they had to put it off for another day. (4FTN, 200?)
And, but, uh, everybody mostly knowed where they was at and they didn’t turn ’em in, and I reckon they was getting them a little bit to drink, too. (4FTN, 200?)

And I guess most of us was just trying to jerk off beans. (4FTN, 200?)

…and he knew just as well as a person when he was getting ready to go to that uh, uh, fair. And he’d stand there and Daddy would scrub him and clean him up, and oh he just looked so pretty, and he knowed just like he was a-getting ready for that… (4FTN, 200?)

I don’t remember. . . just a-hearing ’em tell things that had happened. (4FTN, 200?)

(124A, B) They raised more green beans up here than anywhere else in the United States, and people worked in, in the bean field a-picking beans, and they got, uh, well 10 cents a bushel… (4FTN, 200?)

…and they finally got it up till you got 50 cents a bushel, a-picking ’em, but uh, we all picked them beans and tickled to death to get 10 cents a bushel for ’em, we thought we was getting rich off of that. (4FTN, 200?)

And…I know it was in July they had the Fourth of July, at, we found that the real Joe was coming to town. (6FTN, 07/2008)

My dad, though, when my dad was, when I was growing up, he had the ambulance service, plus the funeral home service. (6FTN, 07/2008)

They got, um, I was on the telephone, anyway Joe was arriving… (6FTN, 07/2008)

And, all of the talk or whatever was going on, I just picked up the honey and went out the door with it, like I was gonna throw it in the garbage. (6FTN, 07/2008)

We were going to Nashville. (6FTN, 07/2008)

And Larry’s on the industrial board, so, Jim and me and Pam and Larry and Doug and Phyllis were going to Nashville to the Governor’s Conference, for the industrial. (6FTN, 07/2008)

Anyway, Bill Jenkins was to tell Rodney that be sitting in there with us in another booth at the time and say that, there was this camper. (6FTN, 07/2008)

So then the, he was sitting with the real Joe. (6FTN, 07/2008)

One day we were there sitting round the table and my uncle Coy, my mother’s brother-in-law, said, “June said you just oughta throw that honey away,” said, “It’s rotten”. (6FTN, 07/2008)

Anyway, it was just sitting there. (6FTN, 07/2008)
But she was just a-walking around. (6FTN, 07/2008)

And she has Alzheimer’s, and we met her walking, so we went back one day, one day he called an’, um, she was down in Wal-Mart parking lot… (6FTN, 07/2008)

An’ he’d go in say, he was talking ‘bout the real Joe, he said, “You seen the real Joe?” (6FTN, 07/2008)

He said, an’ his wife would fuss about cleaning that out and getting in there and finding what that was a-rattling. (6FTN, 07/2008)

Well, all this time, said, Rodney was just beside himself, laughing, he was just down on the floor, bending over just horse laughing. (6FTN, 07/2008)

He’s playing this little game now and last time they checked him he, um, loud noises…and…sudden loud noises like… (6FTN, 07/2008)

An’, he plays too long, then he’ll forget what he’s talking about, and he’ll start, “Mumsy, what was you saying?” (6FTN, 07/2008)

So just drying ‘bout five minutes, he thought maybe he better dry ’em… (6FTN, 07/2008)

And David called up here and talked to Jim, said they had taken away her keys but she wadn’t liking it. (6FTN, 07/2008)

She was carrying her purse but Jim let me off and was gonna go back and offer to take her somewhere. (6FTN, 07/2008)

Buddy and them brought him in and he came in at the dining room table and set down an’ Rodney’d set up a camera an’ all this bit… an’ was recording it. (6FTN, 07/2008)

Everybody was a-hugging and a-kissing and a-saying we glad to see you and all this bit, but Carol and them said something about the Horner eyes, which is my mother’s maiden name, ‘cause he was a Horner, you know his mother was a Horner. (6FTN, 07/2008)

He, um, I don’t know, Buddy and them, Buddy and Rodney was on one side of him, and each of ’em on I side I guess they were prompting him, whatever. (6FTN, 07/2008)

Well, she said the lights went off, she just knew it was the honey, he was bringing her the honey. (6FTN, 07/2008)

And when my mother died we were down in, cleaning out her house, an’ I was up in the upstairs attic, an’ I screamed and squealed… (6FTN, 07/2008)
You know, I probably go with the name, you know, they’re playing out there, it’s a bluegrass festival. (6FTN, 07/2008)

Oh, we have a book, too, that we didn’t start, we kinda gone back, we’re trying to do it regularly now, but, we just go back and write excerpts of things we remember, that, how it’s been given. (6FTN, 07/2008)

He’s nine going on six, I guess, or seven, he’s ‘bout a year and a half, two years behind. (6FTN, 07/2008)

I know it’s a-going out and a-going out fast but I never even stopped and explained to him what tobacco was and what they was a-doing till he asked me. (1MTN, 12/2007)

But he said the generation coming on now, they’s not enough of it raised to know or understand about it. (1MTN, 12/2007)

It’s something you took for granted growing up all your life and now you just stop and look and amazed that they’s not many of them people left… (1MTN, 12/2007)

I can well remember ’em going to the bean market and unloading the truck and listening to the auctioneer go up and down and auctioneer the beans off… (1MTN, 12/2007)

The way things are going … You go to town and you see an old guy in in bibbed overalls, I I mean I don’t know how to explain it. (1MTN, 12/2007)

I can well remember ’em going to the bean market and unloading the truck and listening to the auctioneer go up and down and auctioneer the beans off… (1MTN, 12/2007)

…and now, like these grandkids, when you buy them something, five minutes the new’s wore off of it and they’re done with it, and they’re wanting something else. (1MTN, 12/2007)

I worked with a feller the other day and he said uh his boy is six years old he said “Daddy, what are they a-doing?” (1MTN, 12/2007)

I can well remember ’em going to the bean market and unloading the truck and listening to the auctioneer go up and down and auctioneer the beans off… (1MTN, 12/2007)

They’ll be a-laying there asleep. (5FTN, 07/2008)

And I’ve got a little old radio, I never, it’s setting back on the table I never do hardly ever turn that radio on, either, and I don’t hardly ever turn that television on. (5FTN, 07/2008)

And when Dwight’s at home he’s a-running back and forth you know a whole lot. (5FTN, 07/2008)
I’m a-going better, and I go on Sunday morning, don’t hardly ever miss a Sunday morning. (5FTN, 07/2008)

That’s the way it was, back in, in our early days, when we was a-growing up. (5FTN, 07/2008)

I’ve got some from over in North Carolina that’s coming next week, about the middle of the week. (5FTN, 07/2008)

I don’t know when he’s coming back home. (5FTN, 07/2008)

He said “I’m going up there and get me a job up there” and then he said “I can pay in more Social Security and be better off when I retire.” (5FTN, 07/2008)

But any, anytime that you can come back, call me and let me know that you’uns is coming. (5FTN, 07/2008)

But now I have, I hate to say this, but it come to the place that I’m so staggering about walking and getting around… (5FTN, 07/2008)

He always seemed like such a good kind of a feller a-growing up. (5FTN, 07/2008)

And they got that house down there and moved down there and I, she learned me, I reckon a-going to church, you know, just when she first come over here, and she learned that I was by myself I reckon, and sh, me and her just took up together from the very beginning. (5FTN, 07/2008)

I’m just not afraid. I never think of anybody a-coming in on me or anything, I’ve got it where I’ve got my doors locked. (5FTN, 07/2008)

It would strike, and I kept it setting up there where that flower’s at. (5FTN, 07/2008)

But I have quit going…I’ve not went this winter, but I said the other day that it don’t get dark early now that I should try to start back of a night till it… But it won’t be long till it’ll be a-getting dark early, will it? (5FTN, 07/2008)

If it was a-raining, we went, or if was a-snowing, we went. (5FTN, 07/2008)

…I’ve just not noticed that, but they call me from down there, and they’ll ask me if that’s a-working all right… (5FTN, 07/2008)

She’s uh, uh, bleeding a lot from her kidneys now, and sh, they had to call the rescue squad this morning and take her to the hospital about 5 o’clock this morning. (5FTN, 07/2008)

You don’t know what we’re talking about, I don’t guess. (5FTN, 07/2008)
They say they’re doing a lotta work. (5FTN, 07/2008)

And it looks like, and he’s always still preaching, ’cause <unintelligible> has the door open, and, and it comes out in the hall, and we have to pass right by it, and it looks like he has a pretty good crowd in there. (5FTN, 07/2008)

And daddy would walk right close to us, as we would come home, for the boys would be shooting farcrackers around Christmas. (5FTN, 07/2008)

He’s a-drawing uh… is it SSI, you draw? (5FTN, 07/2008)

And, you know, they was for several weeks that he brought his clothes down here and dried them, and I’m telling you, I’d always take them outta the, he’d have, he had a big box and he put plastic on the inside of the box, and put his clothes down in there then. (5FTN, 07/2008)

I can rea- I’ve got glasses, but I don’t wear them, only when I need to. Now if I’m a-reading a whole lot, now if I read just a little bit, I don’t get them and put them on, but if I read a whole lot, I put my glasses on… (5FTN, 07/2008)

But I have quit going…I’ve not went this winter, but I said the other day that it don’t get dark early now that it should try to start back of a night till it… But it won’t be long till it’ll be a-getting dark early, will it? (5FTN, 07/2008)

I’s trying to think how old he is. He’s not able to work. (5FTN, 07/2008)

She, she would come to Judith’s, well they’re thinking might, pretty quick now. (5FTN, 07/2008)

He warshes, now, and I ’clare, he, he does a good job a-warshing. (5FTN, 07/2008)

Yeah. Course, I realize that this would be a easy place, if somebody took a notion to break in, being out away from… a lot of the houses, you know. (5FTN, 07/2008)

And I knowed they wadn’t no use in me a-quitting cooking, and just eating and grabbing a bite of anything. (5FTN, 07/2008)

And I knowed they wadn’t no use in me just a-quitting a lotta things. (5FTN, 07/2008)

Yeah, she’s been awful sick, but she is some better now, and I don’t know when but I think they’re planning on letting her come home, maybe, or she’ll come to Judith’s, she can’t go home and stay by herself. (5FTN, 07/2008)

And after they started, when they put that shoe plant up, up yonder, he said “I’m a-going to change work if I can get a job.” (5FTN, 12/2007)
Well, it was somebody a-saying I had winned a bed. (5FTN, 12/2007)

You do. If you if you quit in a short time you have a job a-getting it cleaned up. (5FTN, 12/2007)

But not a-having no transportation, now that has been one of the worst handicaps that I have had in any way. (5FTN, 12/2007)

We’re planning one but we can’t figure out no day to go on account of, uh, before school, everything else is…they’re going to the zoo the ninth. (7FTN, 07/2008)

And, uh, and well Tammy’s youngest daughter her class is having, going Putt-Putting on Saturday, this first Saturday then they’re going up to their house for a cookout and devotion. So we just gonna have to pick us a date…through the week. (7FTN, 07/2008)

Angie said Randy said next year if they go, “I’m not going unless you do.” Angie didn’t go. (7FTN, 07/2008)

She still hadn’t got any curtains up, and they’s a bunch of stuff in this corner, couple tables still setting full. (7FTN, 07/2008)

She’d been working days I’d say three, uh, maybe a month. (7FTN, 07/2008)

Was Connie working good today? (7FTN, 07/2008)

Uh-hu h. Connie said, well, her and Tammy was talking, “At least we know where they’re at.” (7FTN, 07/2008)

She said, watch them stick me with eleven, she can’t stand guys a-working that, eleven, well, on account of the girls. (7FTN, 07/2008)

They’re not out on the streets a-getting in trouble. (7FTN, 07/2008)

See she worked down at Cooper’s but she was being off for three weeks at a time. (7FTN, 07/2008)

They go everywhere, but they’re, uh, since everything’s so expensive, they’re not having as much work. (7FTN, 07/2008)

We’re planning one but we can’t figure out no day to go on account of, uh, before school, everything else is…they’re going to the zoo the ninth. (7FTN, 07/2008)

And, uh, and well Tammy’s youngest daughter her class is having, going Putt-Putting on Saturday, this first Saturday then they’re going up to their house for a cookout and devotion. So we just gonna have to pick us a date…through the week. (7FTN, 07/2008)
Some of ’em’s are like texting, whatever it is. (7FTN, 07/2008)

The corn’s just now fixing to come in. (7FTN, 07/2008)

She was trying to move the ladder and she forgot she had a hammer on top of it. (7FTN, 07/2008)

He’s been trying to get on down ’ere and he’s never made it. (7FTN, 07/2008)

Uh, now, some of ’em’s having to work fast food. (7FTN, 07/2008)

I said, bless her heart, she’s been having to come in an’ try to work an’ half the time she, part the time she don’t feel good. (7FTN, 07/2008)

Uh-huh, yeah, and, uh, they say it’s cheaper than a-calling. (7FTN, 07/2008)

They wanted, like if they had had some weight in the mines....in other words, the mountain was, you know, a-coming down. (1MVA, 08/1998)

She was standing up on a box, a-washing the dishes. (1MVA, 08/1998)

You’ve seen a picture of it, and you would come out of their living room and through a hall and step down one step and went into the kitchen, and me and her was a-sitting in the hall, but they was a big wide hall and they had a bed in it. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Me and her was sitting on the edge of the bed, a day or two before Christmas. (1MVA, 08/1998)

He walked up pretty close to us, and he said, where’re you little devils a-going? (1MVA, 08/1998)

And you had to know going around the curve how to make that horse go, you know, like cutting a car, you’ve got to know how to do it to keep the wagon from going over the hill or getting out of the road. (1MVA, 08/1998)

That big tree a-standing yonder, that’s a white oak. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Well, they would use that when, like I said, when they was weight coming down. (1MVA, 08/1998)

And there was a railroad going up into Wilder. (1MVA, 08/1998)

(THEY WASN’T) Or anybody getting in a fight or getting hurt or anything. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Well, I seen him a-coming and a-carrying a carbide light in his hand. (1MVA, 08/1998)
Duty had got so dangerous, everybody getting hurt and backs broke, and people killed, and I went to the company, and told them. I said “I’m through.” (1MVA, 08/1998)

You see that hook a-hanging on that old coal house yonder? (1MVA, 08/1998)

I had a bench sitting out there by that big oak tree where the morning glories was at. (1MVA, 08/1998)

And he was working on this diamond drill when he met my mother. (1MVA, 08/1998)

At that time, Number Three had shut down, and we was working over here on this side. (1MVA, 08/1998)

I was working up at Number Two when they closed down. (1MVA, 08/1998)

I got, they put me in what they call a transfer from DNC mines, and I was working where the coal was [being] transferred off of one belt to another, and it would be so dusty sometimes that I couldn’t even see my buddy, and that’s where I got the most of my dust. (1MVA, 08/1998)

I was working at the mines at that time, and I built this house myself, every bit of it. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Yeah, well, I was in full time when I was working. (1MVA, 08/1998)

And I was working most of the time at Duty. (1MVA, 08/1998)

The working places where we were working was close to the outside. (1MVA, 08/1998)

I had to be, I had to learn to be that I learned to be strong from a child, working hard. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Yeah. And I just don’t know how many families, but there’s a lot of people working at that time on Chaney Creek. (1MVA, 08/1998)

I hate to say it - not bragging - but I had a big audience. (1MVA, 08/1998)

They was drilling holes for gas and checking for coal, different things. (1MVA, 08/1998)

While it was drilling, they was drilling with a diamond bit, and that bit came off, and they fished and done ever way in the world to try to get it out. (1MVA, 08/1998)

While they was drilling, they drilled through a stream of water, and that water came up as an artesian well. (1MVA, 08/1998)

They was drilling probably for coal, gas. (1MVA, 08/1998)
No, he was building on the company’s. (1MVA, 08/1998)

I even rode a horse on where they was a-using AP three horses on a wagon. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Because they were cutting timber for the band mill to saw lumber. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Yeah, they had, what they was doing, they was cutting virgin timber, and what we was doing, we was cutting the smaller stuff after the virgin timber had been cut out. (1MVA, 08/1998)

And they would spear these logs and push them up against this conveyor and that conveyor would pick ‘em up and take ‘em up into the mill where the band saw was sawing them. (1MVA, 08/1998)

They was stacking lumber sometimes high as them trees yonder. (1MVA, 08/1998)

That was, that was Ritters, and they were cutting the virgin timber. (1MVA, 08/1998)

They built several what they called “logging shacks” for the loggers on Chaney Creek that was cutting the big timber. (1MVA, 08/1998)

No, we was a-renting from the company. Me and Pauline, let’s see, thirty four. I guess thirty eight, nineteen thirty eight, we moved to Dante, me and her both. (1MVA, 08/1998)

She was standing up on a box, a-washing the dishes. (1MVA, 08/1998)

And I found a rock, we was a-digging a grave, and I was in the grave a-digging. (1MVA, 08/1998)

They was chipping, making those arrowheads. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Well, the fellow Morgan was running the Dante store. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Well, a fellow was running a big time store in Kingsport, and Mister Morgan told him about that rock. So, he came up here. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Well, I’d been preaching. (1MVA, 08/1998)

I mean when I was doing so much preaching, and I’d come in of the evening and I didn’t hardly have time to wash the black off of me until I’d have to hit the road. (1MVA, 08/1998)

They had what they called grabs that they drove in, but they’d bring them logs down to the place where they was going to dump ‘em, roll ‘em like rolling them down through there. (1MVA, 08/1998)

I was helping to dig the grave, and I was in the grave, and I got out. (1MVA, 08/1998)
There’s another fellow was going to relieve me, (1MVA, 08/1998)

The Lord’s going to take some of them to Heaven and let some of them go to Hell, which I don’t believe that stuff. (1MVA, 08/1998)

I got, they put me in what they call a transfer from DNC mines, and I was working where the coal was being transferred off of one belt to another, and it would be so dusty sometimes that I couldn’t even see my buddy, and that’s where I got the most of my dust. (1MVA, 08/1998)

There’d be men, they’d be men a-sawin’ this virgin timber. (1MVA, 08/1998)

We wouldn’t have to work as hard, as much on ‘em, trimming. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Yes, Like a well or a pump pushing it, yeah. (1MVA, 08/1998)

They worked this lumber with hand planes, dressing it, built this church, a beautiful church. (1MVA, 08/1998)

He came to me one day, you know, all of this land to the top of the hill, counting both sides, and he came to me one day, and he said - - he wouldn’t sell land to nobody. (1MVA, 08/1998)

And I found a rock, we was a-digging a grave, and I was in the grave a-digging. (1MVA, 08/1998)

They’ve been some fellows still wanting to buy it. (1MVA, 08/1998)

Yeah, my sister was a-living over there. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Yeah, now I was a-standin’ in chairs and a-bakin’ cakes when I was just about six years old. (1FVA, 10/1997)

And you know, when they told about all this stuff on him and everything, my husband was sittin’ right there in the chair and I was sittin’ over here, and I said yes, and you voted for him. (1FVA, 10/1997)

No, never, still a-livin’ here. (1FVA, 0/1997)

Arnold Addington was one, now he’s still a-livin’. (1FVA, 10/1997)

And I’m still a-livin’. (1FVA, 10/1997)

One old man hollered at me, I was standin’ up on the porch over there on the road. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Yeah, and back when I was young and goin’ to school was the happiest days of my life. (1FVA, 10/1997)
And I said after he believed like that and everything, I hated to be a-goin’ to a different church and him a different church, so I just, I got my letter up here and I joined that church down there. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Yeah, it’ll blow a-goin’ around the curve or anything, you know, and you know to get off. (1FVA, 10/1997)

But I remember ‘em a-marchin’. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I know when Cox was a-running on the Democrat ticket. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Cox was a-running on the Democrat ticket, and I forget who was running on the Republican ticket. (1FVA, 10/1997)

…and Lord, it’d come big storms and when we’d come from church we’d have to go, the little chickens, it’d be drownding nearly and we’d have to go and gather in these chickens. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Paul Mann, a neighbor of ours across the road, had bought a car and he was a-workin’ and he wanted my husband to try it out, and she wanted to go to “Amos and Andy,” I believe was playin’. (1FVA, 10/1997)

He’s workin’ in the mines. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Daddy could hear it from where he’s a-workin’ and he’d come home. (1FVA, 10/1997)

No, Claude was a-workin’, he was a-workin’ for the Clinchfield then. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Well, my husband was workin’ of a night. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I know a Salyers woman lived here and she’d holler, if they’d work two days, she’d, holler, say, “Carter, we’ll have banana puddin’ for Sunday dinner. They’re workin’ tomorrow.” (1FVA, 10/1997)

They never did close down where he was workin’. (1FVA, 10/1997)

It went back to the old place where it’d been a-stayin’. (1FVA, 10/1997)

He said, “It’s dangerous. Now if you ever break a hip, he said, you’re a-hurtin’,” he said. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Everybody in that alley was a-hollering. (1FVA, 10/1997)
“Mommy, Mommy!” They’s a-hollering. (1FVA, 10/1997)

And that’s where they went, up under there when it was snowin’ and everything, and we lived in above it. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I’m still a-carrying it on my husband. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I was a-huntin’ for some kindlin’ wood or something. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I’d say, “Who was that you was talkin’ to?” (1FVA, 10/1997)

I don’t like to put things like that’s got my name on it in the garbage because you never know what people are lookin’. (1FVA, 10/1997)

…I might be funny but I don’t believe in women going in the service and don’t believe in ‘em a-workin’ in the mines. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I’ve took a lot off of children, boys a-runnin’ with my boys, messin’ up, you know, but I never did have a cross word with none of my neighbors. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Don’t never say nothin’ to him. I said, he’s a hot Democrat, says, if you ever say anything, he’d get you talkin’.” (1FVA, 10/1997)

And now, my job was cleaning them lamp chimleys and filling the lamps up. (1FVA, 10/1997)

…and Lyman said, “Well, Gladys, which are you going with, me or Claude.” (1FVA, 10/1997)

I didn’t do it at first, but I found out what they was doin’, so I done it too. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Yeah, now I was a-standin’ in chairs and a-bakin’ cakes when I was just about six years old. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I was makin’ it out of the William Tell flour. (1FVA, 10/1997)

When I was a-courtin’ I had my dates down there, and when it’s bedtime, he’d come out there and shook that gate and by hokey, they had to leave. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I was gettin’ milk and butter from the lady that lived right there, and she’d bring it to the fence over there to me. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I wouldn’t be a-drawin’ a check today if it wasn’t for the UMWA. (1FVA, 10/1997)

He was a-lookin’ out for the men, for the poor people. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Yeah, he was cuttin’ timber before, but I don’t remember. (1FVA, 10/1997)
They’s holdin’ a revival around there… (1FVA, 10/1997)

I’m goin’ to order you a cane.” (1FVA, 10/1997)

…I might be funny but I don’t believe in women going in the service and don’t believe in ‘em a-workin’ in the mines. (1FVA, 10/1997)

Yeh, I guess so, and put it down on the hearth and I’d keep shakin’ till it got good and warm till I could feed the chickens at night, and then I fed ‘em chop and clabbered milk of a morning, and put red pepper in it to make…. (laughs). (1FVA, 10/1997)

And you know what, he couldn’t keep up with me a-courtin’. (1FVA, 10/1997)

And I don’t remember my mommy whippin’ me but one time, when I told a lie and I needed it. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I don’t believe, I don’t remember us a-havin’ a radio. (1FVA, 10/1997)

I was raised to be honest and to not make, our daddy said, “If I ever hear tell of y’all makin’ fun of anybody, I’ll wear you out.” (1FVA, 10/1997)

…but you used to have to go all the way around like you going up to the cemetery and then turn and come around to go to Castlewood, or to go to St. Paul. (2MVA, 02/1998)

…and then some of them boarding houses is still standing over there at Kaiser. (2MVA, 02/1998)

You go from Hamlin like you’re going to Cleveland, across that way. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I don’t know whether he’s still living or not… (2MVA, 02/1998)

That was after I was married, and he was trying to get a job] and he couldn’t get nobody to go in with him, so I was living up here on the upper end and I was sitting on the steps there Wednesday night or evening and Dee came up. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He was slow, you know, poking along. (2MVA, 02/1998)

And he said, Preacher Cook, and he said, Preacher Cook’s been a Union man for years and said, he was coming up here loading coal while you was a scab and he said, he’d come up here and load coal to keep his family up, but he paid his obligation, paid his obligation years ago. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I went on to where I was a boarder and she went on home and the people I was boarding with….a fellow... (2MVA, 02/1998)
I was working here and boarding up here on Pigeon Hill with my cousin and they started a revival up there and I got going to church and I got converted up there. (2MVA, 02/1998)

The fellow I was boarding with was my boss. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He walked in and come in the back door, pulled that big ole long jacket off, overhaul jacket, and just set it down in the corner and he said, get ready children, we're going to church tonight. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Carter <name omitted> was standing beside the building up there and he motioned for to come up there. (2MVA, 02/1998)

She coming to, that daughter is a-coming to church up there now and been there ever since the church started. (2MVA, 02/1998)

So I went on and Lois was setting in the office, the doctor’s office, and I went in and he looked at me and he said, well, he said to Lois, write him a prescription for this, and you can go back to work in a day or two. (2MVA, 02/1998)

And he said, here you are still a-going and I had a heart attack and doctor says I can't do nothing, I can't do nothing. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I crawled out up there and they took me down there and slapped me in a car and took me over there to where the courthouse was going on. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Mister, I'm doing all I can, and he was just a-shoveling away and I was going right on. (2MVA, 02/1998)

We was going along, and somebody come along with a flashlight and shined in there and said, hey boy, said come out here. (2MVA, 02/1998)

We're coming in on the railroad yard. (2MVA, 02/1998)

They said we’re going to build this third line in here, I said no you ain’t, he said yeah we’re going out through here… (2MVA, 02/1998)

The judge said to him, his laawyer, that judge sat there and said to the clerk, said how far is it, the judge said, how fast was this man a-going? (2MVA, 02/1998)

He said he was a-moving on. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He said, how fast was he a-going out? (2MVA, 02/1998)

He was a-moving on, this man in the car a-moving on when he hit him? (2MVA, 02/1998)
I come here and went to work in the mines and on off days a lot of times in the evening we’d walk down, a bunch of us would, and she was going to school, and I’d see her down there and some way or another, and I don’t know why, but I begin to inquire who she was. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I said the creek’s all right, but you ain’t a-going under my floor like that, so he went down there and they started a-digging and they dug... (2MVA, 02/1998)

And I said go out and look at it, I said my driveway here, look what you’ve done to it, and now you say you’re going down here on this bank. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He said you was moving, wasn’t you? (2MVA, 02/1998)

He told him how long I’d knowed him and we’d hunted together and fished together and went over there a-fishin when we were coming in and that motorcycle hit me, and so I come out of that, well, where they had the trial. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He said, now she’s going walking up and down yonder by herself…(2MVA, 02/1998)

Well, I was boardin’ up here the same time I was going with Maude. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Well, I was going with a girl up here on the corner, Lucy Cline, and I'd tell her, I'd say, well, where we’re going Sunday? (2MVA, 02/1998)

I caught the bus and went to St. Paul and they was a bus going, I didn't know where it was going, and I got it and went to Dogtown, they called it over there. (2MVA, 02/1998)

We’re going on a picnic? (2MVA, 02/1998)

I remember well, we moved out on Friday and a week from that day my sister, I believe she was four year old, and she was steppin’ up on our old open-faced Franklin stove, well, you know what they ..., and her apron caught afire and burned her to death. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Oh, I loved the taste of liquor up there where I was a-boardin’ and we'd go to Crab Orchard over yonder. (2MVA, 02/1998)

When I went in the office, Doc Davis was settin’ there and he said, you got to get in the hospital. (2MVA, 02/1998)

So, that one in Bearwallow, the man I was boardin’ with, I'd go see her LD. (2MVA, 02/1998)

So the girl where I was a-boardin’, everytime we went anywhere she had to go with me. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Yeah, and everytime we'd start anywhere, Halsie, she was right there and them other girls would
say, yeah, if Halsie ain't a-hanging on your arm. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I boarded up there for about I don't know, I was boarding up there when I got married. (2MVA, 02/1998)

They’s some of them’s still living. (2MVA, 02/1998)

But now Halsie was my buddy, but she did like to hang on my arm and it didn't matter who else was going, and the other girls, and she was going with a Woods out of Bearwallow. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Old Castlewood used to be a booming town. Everything from here went through that way going to St. Paul and there wasn’t no road going to St. Paul… (2MVA, 02/1998)

And they was a picket line come up and I’d seen him a-sitting on the porch. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Well, they started a meeting up here in the hollow and I got to going to church and was converted, and I kept [asking] people who she was. (2MVA, 02/1998)

They was some old boy come out there and [he had one of these fancy hats on, all dressed up and a woman, girl hanging on his arm. (2MVA, 02/1998)

That hat sailed, it just kept sailing. (2MVA, 02/1998)

And he told you about the boss coming and loading coal and I said, I don’t owe a dime on that. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I was working here and boarding up here on Pigeon Hill with my cousin and they started a revival up there and I got going to church and I got converted up there. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Mac didn't bring my clothes so I got on that truck coming back home and this girl lived up here, May Miller, and I never will f...
Yeah, he said he said you said you saw that fellow a-coming at a distance from here to the corner there over here, less than thirty feet? (2MVA, 02/1998)

Church went down and membership droppin’ off and they called me back and I went back and stayed a while and then it built up a little bit and they decided they wanted a new preacher so they sent another one and now we just got a little handful comin’ out. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He’s got, let’s see. No, I don't know whether there's any of his family livin’ or not. (2MVA, 02/1998)

There wasn't nothing but sand there. They had a boy behind me shovelin’, some fellow standing up there with a big rifle hollerin’ at that boy, keep that dirt out, keep that dirt out. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Yeah, and so I’d been a-working a long time, working at Bearwallow at that mine and then I come to this one up here. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I was a-working with a fellow, a Rasnick, a little short fellow, and he was a good coal loader. (2MVA, 02/1998)

So Early Hobbs said, I’m leaving down there after my work, he said, and I’ll get him and I’ll give him an obligation. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He was boss and I was a-working down there at his dad’s a-getting out house coal and he come down there one Sunday and said, if you go home with me I’ll give you a job. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I was working here and boarding up here on Pigeon Hill with my cousin and they started a revival up there and I got going to church and I got converted up there. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I had a half-brother that rel I thought was working there, and they said he worked in the mines and stayed on Gravel Lick. (2MVA, 02/1998)

…and I come down here with old man Ramsey and went to work there with him and got house coal and I had a first cousin lived up here and he was a boss and this was his daddy that I was working for. (2MVA, 02/1998)

So, I'm still kicking. (2MVA, 02/1998)

It was where people back in, and we backed in there and went over there and asked some fellow about staying in that while it was raining. (2MVA, 02/1998)

It almost zero weather and that wind a-blowing. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He was a preacher too and me and him fished together and hunted together and we’d been a-
fishing when that motorcycle hit me over yonder, and he said that I thought I was a-passing a car and I cut off him. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I had a place up there, I believe it was fourteen inches and I’d been workin’, a-loadin’ coal about fifteen or sixteen year by hand, and they give me that little ole place and that’s when I started preaching] too, and a lot of times I’d be off to go preach a funeral or something, visit people in the hospitals. (2MVA, 02/1998)

In the spring of the year I went over there and I plowed and I wasn't but about nineteen years old, eighteen or nineteen and plowin’ with a old horse and plow, turn plow, and I said to my dad one Monday morning, I had a brother just a-loafing around and wasn't doing nothing and nobody working and I said, you tell Darce to take that team over there and finish that plowing. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Well, I knowed they was something wrong because I was workin’ on the belt line a-cleanin’ belts, shovelin’, and I had eat dinner, eat my lunch, and got to started shovelin’ and my knees got to shakin’ and I just sat down there on something, a lump of coal or a rock or something, and I sat down there awhile and it quit and I got up and started shoveling and again it started. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Well, her granddaughter told her, cause she was a-sleepin’ with her grandma and she told her. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Church went down and membership droppin’ off and they called me back and I went back and stayed a while and then it built up a little bit and they decided they wanted a new preacher so they sent another one and now [we just got a little handful comin’ out. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I was nervous and shakin’ and scared to death and he said, aw, go on, shaker. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Early went up there at the mines the next morning and told them what I had said and that fellow Meade spoke up and said, who are you talking about? (2MVA, 02/1998)

He told me, just a while back on the phone I was talkin’ to him and he said, I'll tell you, I've been so scared of you. (2MVA, 02/1998)

What in the hell you preachin’ about? (2MVA, 02/1998)

We’d done joined the Union and was slipping and paying our dues. (2MVA, 02/1998)

No, I come in, got me a box car, and when we got right at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, it was getting down in the evening and cold. (2MVA, 02/1998)

She married a lawyer’s boy and that one over yonder, she married a Milton and they're both well off and doing good and I'm just proud of ’em. (2MVA, 02/1998)
Had a little man trip jeep and he said, how are you getting along in your work, preacher? (2MVA, 02/1998)

That old big colored man, he wasn’t doing no good. (2MVA, 02/1998)

My Grandpa come here and nobody knewed where he come from, Jim Cook, and married a Minton and he got killed a-scouting in the World War, back in the old World War. (2MVA, 02/1998)

We loaded four cars and I said, now Dee, that’s enough, oh, no, we can load another one, with his legs a-bleeding. (2MVA, 02/1998)

No, I hear enough racket up there, you all a-rumbling around all the time in the night and she said, if I’d wanted a radio, I’d a got one. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I come out up there a-squalling. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I know one time I was preachin’ and there was some girls in the back just rompin’ and cuttin’ a big shine and I just quit preaching. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Well, I started out a-hoboing when I was in Kingsport. (2MVA, 02/1998)

But we started a-hoboing. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Sometime through the night I got up and went to the bathroom and come out and when I come to, I was in the floor and oh, my back felt like it was broke and I kept a-looking around, a-looking around, and they was a nurse at my feet and one at my head and one on to each side and I said, what are you doing with me in the floor? (2MVA, 02/1998)

Just lately he's got to where he'll play a round of golf. He used to fish and golf and we'd go golfing all over the country. (2MVA, 02/1998)

My buddy in the mines told me... I had a little testament and everytime we'd get a chance waiting on cars or anything, I’d have that testament out. (2MVA, 02/1998)

And I went around there and walked down to the depot and there was a train pulling out. (2MVA, 02/1998)

There wasn't nothing but sand there. They had a boy behind me shovelin’, some fellow standing up there with a big rifle hollerin’ at that boy, keep that dirt out, keep that dirt out. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He told him how long I’d knowed him and we’d hunted together and fished together and went over there a-fishin when we were coming in and that motorcycle hit me, and so I come out of that, well, where they had the trial. (2MVA, 02/1998)
And I stayed there thirteen months pastorin’. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Well, I knowed they was something wrong because I was workin’ on the belt line a-cleanin’ belts, shovelin’, and I had eat dinner, eat my lunch, and got to started shovelin’ and my knees got to shakin’ and I just sat down there on something, a lump of coal or a rock or something, and I sat down there awhile and it quit and I got up and started shoveling and again it started. (2MVA, 02/1998)

No, they figured it in. Now after they put in the scales, we got paid by the weight, but then we was gettin’ paid by the car. (2MVA, 02/1998)

We was loadin’ by the car, gettin’ paid by the car. (2MVA, 02/1998)

But now Halsie was my buddy, but she did like to hang on my arm and it didn't matter who else was going, and the other girls, and she was going with a Woods out of Bearwallow. (2MVA, 02/1998)

No, she stepped up on the little hearth up there we called it and they was a-roasting, I believe they said roastin’ hickory nuts. (2MVA, 02/1998)

He had powder burns all over his face where some way or another he was making him a shot and it blowed up and all of his face was powder burnt. (2MVA, 02/1998)

When we was doing that hand loadin’, just go ahead on our own. (2MVA, 02/1998)

Yeah, we was hand-loading. (2MVA, 02/1998)

I called him Abraham all the time, and he come up a-kickin’ them gravels and I said hey, what are you doing Abraham? (2MVA, 02/1998)

No. See because I was having, I’d be off sometimes for a funeral. (2MVA, 02/1998)

We’d done joined the Union and was slipping and paying our dues. (2MVA 02/1998)

After it got organized, I went up there one morning and they was striking. (2MVA 02/1998)

(He) went up there and the general mine foreman walked up to him and said, what are you doing up here? (2MVA 02/1998)

He was boss and I was a-working down there at his dad’s a-getting out house coal and he come down there one Sunday and said, if you go home with me I’ll give you a job. (2MVA 02/1998)

We’d done organized the Union and they was a-giving us on our card. (2MVA 02/1998)
That was after I retired now, when I was paying. (2MVA 02/1998)

She said, all right, but that boy, that boy she had been going with told me, he said, I’ll tell you one thing, he said you take her by the arm and she’ll slap you in the face. (2MVA 02/1998)

So we killed hogs on Saturday, and Saturday night they was working meat or somethin’ or another and me and her made it up and she said it wouldn’t do to ask her parents ‘cause they’d never let her away. (2MVA 02/1998)

This was on Friday, and Maynard said, eh-gad, what’s Tom and Mag a-saying ? (2MVA, 02/1998)

The Company was letting her have the house, and so I asked her and she said, well, I don’t pay no rent. (2MVA, 02/1998)

We stayed up there two weeks and they put me on night shift, and I bought me a little radio and I was putting a airline up. (2MVA 02/1998)

Then you had to run a airline, and this woman said, what are you a-doing and I said, well I’m going to run me a airline. (2MVA 02/1998)

When the Union come in, you see they was just a-paying us by the car for coal. (2MVA 02/1998)

They’d pay us about two dollars and a half a car, and we was loading about four ton of coal. (2MVA 02/1998)

And after the Union come in and the scales put in, why the Union made them go to these low places where they are and shoot it and we was a-loading four ton of coal on the cars. (2MVA 02/1998)

A car that was bringing us two dollars then brought us four. (2MVA 02/1998)

So the boss got in there a lot of mornings and run up and say, well what are y’all deciding on today? (2MVA 02/1998)

We didn’t know what we was striking. (2MVA 02/1998)

Well, we’ve come home and come back a many a time and didn’t even know what we was doing it for or what we struck for. (2MVA 02/1998)

So she was going with an old boy out of Bearwallow at that time and I said, I’m going to take her away from him. (2MVA 02/1998)

I know one time I was preachin’ and there was some girls in the back just rompin’ and cuttin’ a big shine and I just quit preaching. (2MVA 02/1998)
I said, bring that show up here and let everybody will know what y'all are doing. (2MVA 02/1998)

So I stayed up there on Gravel Lick till I got a job up here and I went up there, and I worked up there a-loading coal and I went in one morning and had a lot of slate fell on my coal and I was [a-loading it] and I picked up a piece like that and it slid down and caught my finger against the rail and just took the end off it. (2MVA 02/1998)

And they was a-working that road and I went over there with my finger all tied up and walked up to a fellow and said, how about a job and he said, yeah, we need a man. (2MVA 02/1998)

I guess I was a little slow and he sent somebody in there to see about me, but I had got my bath and was putting my clothes on. (2MVA 02/1998)

Sometime through the night I got up and went to the bathroom and come out and when I come to, I was in the floor and oh, my back felt like it was broke and I kept a-looking around, a-looking around, and they was a nurse at my feet and one at my head and one on to each side and I said, what are you doing with me in the floor? (2MVA 02/1998)

So I went over there and this fellow was there with a car, and he said they just come out and said they wasn't hiring nobody and he said, let's go to Knoxville. (2MVA 02/1998)

I was just a-climbing the walls. (2MVA 02/1998)

A-way out there they was boiling clothes in these old barrels, out there and he put shackles, nailed shackles there and there, and had chains. (2MVA 02/1998)

Mister, I'm doing all I can, and he was just a-shoveling away and I was going right on. (2MVA 02/1998)

He was a preacher too and me and him fished together and hunted together and we’d been a-fishing when that motorcycle hit me over yonder, and he said that I thought I was a-passing a car and I cut off him. (2MVA 02/1998)

They rolling them logs off of this hill, and she got it in her head that we had moved on the hill up there. (2MVA 02/1998)

Yeah. She was saving, there wasn't no question about it. (2MVA 02/1998)

Well, I was boardin’ up here the same time I was going with Maude. (2MVA 02/1998)

Well, I was going with a girl up here on the corner, Lucy Cline, and I'd tell her, I'd say, well,
where we’re going Sunday? (2MVA 02/1998)

Started, I was a-loadin’ coal with a shovel and they cut the shovel loadin’ out and got that machinery and I was timber man and then boss told me he wanted me to learn to run a joy, so I learned to run a joy. (2MVA 02/1998)

And the man that you went in was supposed to have been your helper, supposed to have been trainin’ you how PRO to do. (2MVA 02/1998)

We was loadin’ by the car, gettin’ paid by the car. (2MVA 02/1998)

I said, when we was a-fightin’ this thing and trying to get the Union. (2MVA 02/1998)

So we rented a big creek bottom down there and been a-farmin’ it. (2MVA 02/1998)

In the spring of the year I went over there and I plowed and I wasn't but about nineteen years old, eighteen or nineteen and plowin’ with a old horse and plow, turn plow, and I said to my dad one Monday morning, I had a brother just a-loafing around and wasn't doing nothing and nobody working and I said, you tell Darce to take that team over there and finish that plowing. (2MVA 02/1998)

I said, I need something to eat, and I'm a-huntin’ work, and he said, yeah, wait just a minute. (2MVA 02/1998)

And they had a barber shop down there and a filling station and they was remodelin’ it and they took the siding, the weather board off, and it was stacked over there and I said, what do you want for that? (2MVA 02/1998)

She just declared they was cuttin’ timber up here and they was a family lived up there and them children was gonna get killed. (2MVA 02/1998)

Eh-gad, what’s Mag and Tom a-sayin’? (2MVA 02/1998)

He said, I'm going to tell you something. (2MVA 02/1998)

I said, I'm going to work over here in the morning at the cotton mill. (2MVA 02/1998)

I said, I'm sick and he said, well get in here, and he come out there and he said, how are you going to get home ? (2MVA 02/1998)

(He said) No, I'm not going up there to testify agin my brother’s children. (2MVA 02/1998)

If I'm not going to work no more, they'd done told me I couldn't work no more. (2MVA 02/1998)

I said, I'm going to try my best to. (2MVA 02/1998)
Doc Bundy down here told me one time I had a long heart, but Doc Davis, when he looked at that chart, said that he's going to send me to the doctor. (2MVA 02/1998)

Well, I come back to Doc Davis, and Davis said well, he'd been trying to get me to retire. (2MVA 02/1998)

And said, you go down there and tell them people you’re going to work in the morning and they'll keep you. (2MVA 02/1998)

Oh, he was going to show off, you know. (2MVA 02/1998)

He said I’m going to take her home. (2MVA 02/1998)

He said, I’m going to call the law. (2MVA 02/1998)

So she was going with an old boy out of Bearwallow at that time and I said, I’m going to take her away from him. (2MVA 02/1998)

Then you had to run a airline, and this woman said, what are you a-doing and I said, well I’m going to run me a airline. (2MVA 02/1998)

He’s a-going to farm. (2MVA 02/1998)

I said, when we was a-fightin’ this thing and trying to get the Union. (2MVA 02/1998)

He said, we're going to cross this mountain and it's cold. (2MVA 02/1998)

After we got off and on the other side they slowed down and he said, now we're going to slow down here. (2MVA 02/1998)

I always tried to tell him, Tommy, I'm going to do my best to raise you, put you through school. (2MVA 02/1998)

And he'd say, I'm going to move now, when are you gonna? (2MVA 02/1998)

And I'd say, well if you're gonna move and the house is paid for, when are you going to give me a deed? (2MVA 02/1998)

My daddy-in-law come up, and we was going to have a working one Saturday. (2MVA 02/1998)

They said we’re going to build this third line in here, I said no you ain’t, he said yeah we’re going out through here… (2MVA 02/1998)

He said we’re going to have to put a bathroom in here. (2MVA 02/1998)
He said where am I going to put it, I said I don’t care whether you put it or not as far as I’m concerned… (2MVA 02/1998)

See you out there on that golf course and I was just lookin’ every minute for you to fall over. (2MVA 02/1998)

…and he told me, I’d been trying to get work up there and I had been there and been there. (2MVA 02/1998)

(361A, B, C) That was after I was married, and he was trying to get a job and he couldn’t get nobody to go in with him, so I was living up here on the upper end and I was sitting on the steps there Wednesday night or evening and Dee came up. (2MVA 02/1998)

So, I took Dee in and I told him, I said, now Dee... I was in high coal and I said, now Dee, you’re going to have to be careful. (2MVA 02/1998)

We’re going to work equal and when yardage day come, we’ll divide it even. (2MVA 02/1998)

Somebody said, well, he said, Emory Cook’s not took the obligation and he said, we ain’t going to work. (2MVA 02/1998)

…and Early said, now are you willing to pay fifty dollars and take your obligation? (2MVA 02/1998)

I said, yeah, I’m willing to pay fifty dollars, but I want every dollar back that you’ve took. (2MVA 02/1998)

I went there and told that girl I’d like to have my records from work ‘cause I’se going to retire. (2MVA 02/1998)

Said, they’re in West Virginia and Kentucky and everywhere and we’re trying to get it. (2MVA 02/1998)

So I had a place and was trying to get in and get through, cut in to get some air, and the boss come along one day and said, get back there and get your air and I’ll load a car or two. (2MVA 02/1998)

I wasn't going to tell them that same night, went out and sat down and eat breakfast that morning. (2MVA 02/1998)

I went on to the truck and [Annie was going to be baptized] with me and Mac said he'd bring my clothes down, so I went on, and Mac didn't bring them, and I was baptized. (2MVA 02/1998)

Well, she come down there and unlocked the door, and we’d give it out [that we was going to be there. (2MVA 02/1998)
They was four there besides us, me and the preacher, and one of the women told us, said, well, they said [they was going PRO to be a new preacher and said, I called Ms. Phillips and said, we'll go see what he looks like, said I guess one trip will do us. (2MVA 02/1998)

J. T. Hartsock was ordained to preach and he said if he didn't get a place to pastor he was going to quit preachin’. (2MVA 02/1998)

I told them when they put a pastor in up there and was going to pay him a thousand dollars a month to pastor, I said, now I don't believe that. (2MVA 02/1998)

So that doctor said I had, wasn't nothing wrong with my lungs, and if I had your blood count and your lungs, I'd count on being an old man. (2MVA 02/1998)

Said, I told him about you all getting married and I said, how did you know? (2MVA 02/1998)

Now he drank a lot even after he built that church and all and got that store a-going. (2MVA 02/1998)

And he said, Preacher Cook, and he said, Preacher Cook’s been a Union man for years and said, he was coming up here loading coal while you was a scab and he said, he’d come up here and load coal to keep his family up, but he paid his obligation, paid his obligation years ago. (2MVA 02/1998)

Well, I knowed they was something wrong because I was workin’ on the belt line a-cleanin’ belts, shovelin’, and I had eat dinner, eat my lunch, and got to started shovelin’ and my knees got to shakin’ and I just sat down there on something, a lump of coal or a rock or something, and I sat down there awhile and it quit and I got up and started shoveling and again it started. (2MVA 02/1998)

There wasn't nothing but sand there. They had a boy behind me shovelin’, some fellow standing up there with a big rifle hollerin’ at that boy, keep that dirt out, keep that dirt out. (2MVA 02/1998)

He rented two horses from my dad’s livery stable and rode ‘em to Hamlin to catch a train, and tied them up at Hamlin and my dad sent somebody over there and got the horses and took ‘em back, and he had a contract delivering coal. (2MVA 02/1998)

It was just everywhere you seen, somebody a-hauling coal or sawdust. (2MVA 02/1998)

Dad had his contract bedding the cars over there. (2MVA 02/1998)

Dad had a contract bedding them cars with sawdust. (2MVA 02/1998)

We’d take barrels and packed our canned stuff in it and all and went down on the train, and we was out there unpackin’ and Dad was back in a little building off the back of the house a-putting
his meat away. (2MVA 02/1998)

…and that man who was down there was, had his hat off, a-fanning her. (2MVA 02/1998)

Now he’d get and grab up something and go a-startin’, and he didn’t know when to quit beating. (2MVA 02/1998)

I called him Abraham all the time, and he come up a-kickin’ them gravels and I said hey, what are you doing Abraham? (2MVA 02/1998)

He said, we got men over here fighting for that privilege. (2MVA 02/1998)

He said, you know we’ve got a thousand men over yonder fighting for the same privilege he’s in. (2MVA 02/1998)

They had a organizer that come in and get out here and get a fellows that never did work in the mines, and get a picket line and go all through here a-picketing. (2MVA 02/1998)

After they got the union going, and they got up and come on a strike. (2MVA 02/1998)

Well, they started a meeting up here in the hollow and I got to going to church and was converted, and I kept asking people who she was. (2MVA 02/1998)

Well, [a lot of places loading coal when you’d start off they called it fan work. (2MVA 02/1998)

And he told you about the boss coming and loading coal and I said, I don’t owe a dime on that. (2MVA 02/1998)

But that burden kept bearing down on me, and I’d take a little testament that I carried in the mines with me and tried to read and tried to read, and I'd go back there under this hill and try to read and I opened my Bible up there one day, it come to me and I read it. (2MVA 02/1998)

And I just come out of there praising the Lord and they said that fellow went crazy and I said, yeah, I did. (2MVA 02/1998)

And that burden just a-bearing down on me. (2MVA 02/1998)

Mizzes Blackstone had a store house up there, using a temporary school house. (2MVA 02/1998)

And I said, this taking it a night about, if you get up there and feel like preachin’ tonight and then feel like preachin’ tomorrow night, get up there and preach! (2MVA 02/1998)

Mazel took over and he kept adding to us and giving us more and now we got a good church and a big parking lot. (2MVA 02/1998)
Nearly every church I went to, I started me a quartet a-singin’. (2MVA 02/1998)

So I stayed up there on Gravel Lick till I got a job up here and I went up there, and I worked up there a-loading coal and I went in one morning and had a lot of slate fell on my coal and I was a-loading it and I picked up a piece like that and it slid down and caught my finger against the rail and just took the end off it. (2MVA 02/1998)

She ain't got no business doing this. (2MVA 02/1998)

I'd played a little golf and there’s Preacher Minor, he was over there playing and I got to playing with him and we walked then and played twenty seven holes. (2MVA 02/1998)

Been all over the country playing golf and he'd say, I’d look to see you just fall over. (2MVA 02/1998)

I went out there and I guess I walked as far as from here to Hamlin along the road and they was some fellow mowing with one of those old push mowers in the yard…

I said the creek’s all right, but you ain’t a-going under my floor like that, so he went down there and they started a-digging and they dug… (2MVA 02/1998)

And me and one of my brothers and my mother was outside unpackin’ some stuff. (2MVA 02/1998)

Oh Lord, we had, we’d leave up there at seven o’clock, a-loadin’ the man trip, and it took thirty minutes to get to the place. (2MVA 02/1998)

I had a place up there, I believe it was fourteen inches and I’d been workin’, a-loadin’ coal about fifteen or sixteen year by hand, and they give me that little ole place and that’s when I started preaching too, and a lot of times I’d be off to go preach a funeral or something, visit people in the hospitals. (2MVA 02/1998)

Maude had a uncle lived just a little piece out there and Maynard went out every morning and milked the cow, and Aunt Sara was out there a-milkin’ and Sara had pumped out everything they could, and old Maynard, he’d say, eh-gad. (2MVA 02/1998)

I was just as stiff and sore trying to make a living. (2MVA 02/1998)

And he said, you go around here a-preaching they ain't no Hell. (2MVA 02/1998)

Now he’d get and grab up something and go a-startin’, and he didn’t know when to quit beating. So I just kept going. (2MVA 02/1998)

Well, we got up here and instead of coming all the way around that away we come off down
what they call Ten Percent, and come down the railroad and had a little path there and he’d done told me if I took her by the arm she’d slap me, and when we started down that path I just reached and got her by the arm, expecting to be slapped. (2MVA 02/1998)

There was no running around, no a-making noises and so on. (2FVA 03/1998)

So we’re going down, our family. (2FVA 03/1998)

We was living over yonder at that time, and it was so hard. (2FVA 03/1998)

Adaline, she sold her big fine home on Gray Hill and she married her old high school sweetheart and I reckon they are a-living in Richmond. (2FVA 03/1998)

He always said he was going back to work, wanted to go back to work but he just got worse and worse all the time. (2FVA 03/1998)

They said me and Joe was living in the dark ages and they'd seen the world and seen how they wanted something different. (2FVA 03/1998)

A lot of them went to Illinois to find work and you know now those people are coming back here to retire. (2FVA 03/1998)

Well, I was to meet him in Dante and my mommy went peddling that day and I went with her and I told her I was going up to see Pauline and I went up around the hotel and back down the railroad tracks and met them down at the depot, met Joe and Rufus. (2FVA 03/1998)

But they was a-marching for the union at that time and it wasn't too long till they organized and then that was a fine time for them. (2FVA 03/1998)

He'd say, oh, you’re a big fine girl, and just go on and brag about me and I'd work myself to death a-running up and down that hill carrying water for him. (2FVA 03/1998)

We didn't get by a-sitting around and watching T.V. (2FVA 03/1998)

There wasn't nobody laying around. (2FVA 03/1998)

We put two buckets in a sack and two buckets in another sack and tied those sacks together and put them over the saddle and I couldn't ride a-going. (2FVA 03/1998)

I had to lead the horse but a-coming back, why I stacked up those buckets and I came a-saddling. (2FVA 03/1998)

Coming back home I rode that horse. (2FVA 03/1998)

I didn’t never had any trouble with the kids but the big kids would come down and [just come
rushing into my room] just to say something to my little kids, to my kids, and I couldn't stand that. (2FVA 03/1998)

They come at Christmas time, the week of Christmas, and they'd have four jugs, two jugs in one sack and two jugs in another sack, and they’d tie them jugs together and go across their back and they'd be going out of here like a street parade carrying them jugs. (2FVA 03/1998)

…when I started high school in nineteen thirty, I didn't know what in the world those men was a-doing a-marching through town. (2FVA 03/1998)

But there would come about a hundred men down out of Bearwallow and came through there a-marching and a-singing and a-hollowing and I was up on the railroad track. (2FVA 03/1998)

I was just a little baby crawling on the floor and I was peeping under the dresser and my mommy come to see what I was a-peeping at and it was a copperhead and I don't know what she did. (2FVA 03/1998)

But they said, I remember them a-saying there's a mad dog out so y'all stay in and watch, and I remember saying, you know, it would be a-slobbering and I never did see one. (2FVA 03/1998)

And now I'm not driving anymore out on the highway on account of I've got sleep apnea and I go to sleep. (2FVA 03/1998)

Yeah. I'd leave many of a time, the stars was a-shining, yes sir. (2FVA 03/1998)

Yonder’s who we’re waiting on. (2FVA 03/1998)

His heart would just be pounding. (2FVA 03/1998)

I can remember Wilbur Mullins lived over here when he was a-working for Clinchfield at that time. (2FVA 03/1998)

They were working for two dollars a day and when they got the union, why they got the benefits and all kind of things that they began to get the benefits, the pension, and then of course they had the doctor. (2FVA 03/1998)

Well his daughter Mamie lived right across the street from Lucille, and Mamie was talking on the telephone to me here one day and she told me about her daddy and I want. (2FVA 03/1998)

My god, when you get married, you’re trying to make a living and a-working and never have enough money to get the things that you want and the things that you need and I wasn't making anything. (2FVA 03/1998)

I had a doctor and a nurse and I almost died and had to be taken with forceps, and so when I got to going again, in seven months I was a-going again, and the doctor told me to carry it. (2FVA
I think about her, wonder how she's getting along. (2FVA 03/1998)

So I'd take the old horse and I'd go and she'd empty those and I'd jump on him and come right back a-saddling, you know, and while I was gone, they would be picking berries. (2FVA 03/1998)

I was just a little baby crawling on the floor and I was peeping under the dresser and my mommy come to see what I was a-peeping at and it was a copperhead and I don't know what she did. (2FVA 03/1998)

That was the only choice they had, and they, they built their house close to water, which was always low, and on these mountains, you know, so that made them have to get down in there, in the lowest place to build the house, and then it was a hard time getting out. (2FVA 03/1998)

I had two wrecks driving asleep, so I don't drive on the highway anymore but I drive around the farm here. (2FVA 03/1998)

Just sloshing around in that bucket with our spoons stuck down in there, and we'd go out and sit down and two or three of us eat out of the same bucket. (2FVA 03/1998)

I had to lead the horse but a-coming back, why I stacked up those buckets and I came a-saddling. (2FVA 03/1998)

Walked from out there seven miles back to see me and then I went off to college again and we corresponded again and then when I got out, why I got to hunting for a school, a-hunting for a job, and my first job was in Buchanan County, Buchanan County. (2FVA 03/1998)

The mailman, the St. Paul mailman was there at his house a-working on something or another and Joe knew him and he knew Joe and I remember Joe telling him, if you tell on this I'll kill you, and they had a good laugh out of it. (2FVA 03/1998)

I'd get up of the night and I'd go by his bed and I'd hear him barely snoring.

That's one of the first things I can remember is me and that well being dug. (2FVA 03/1998)

Elsie and Stella being teachers, we got interested in it and I was really interested in it. (2FVA 03/1998)

But I had a good time being with the other kids you know. (2FVA 03/1998)

What makes Alzheimer's disease is your cells die and they aren't being replaced. (2FVA 03/1998)
They’s a Doctor Baszinsky in Houston, Texas, that has, he has found I don't know what, but he's treating people with brain cancer and they're being healed and I wanted to know, you know. (2FVA 03/1998)

And well, when Roosevelt got in and put the whiskey back and now everybody is getting killed a-drinking government whiskey. (2FVA 03/1998)

Like Fairy said, I'm getting old and I don't like it. (2FVA 03/1998)

I tell you, I'm getting real old and I don't like it. (2FVA 03/1998)

When I was just eighteen years old, everybody was digging wells. (2FVA 03/1998)

I've gone to school many a time with icicles on my coat tail, and I just had, we weren't wearing pants at that time. (2FVA 03/1998)

At that time Clinchfield was paying the workers in scrip. (2FVA 03/1998)

I think they realized what a hard time I was having. (2FVA 03/1998)

They learned where I lived. Learned that I was doing all that walking. (2FVA 03/1998)

I loved my mother so much and Dad was never kind and good to any of us for that matter and he just, it was just, say, jerking up by the hair of the head. (2FVA 03/1998)

Well, they're doing that in Tennessee you know. (2FVA 03/1998)

…while I was at home in the summer, that’s when we was picking those blackberries and taking them to town. (2FVA 03/1998)

And then he was without a job and just farming. (2FVA 03/1998)

Nearly every year I have been making a quilt top or two. (2FVA 03/1998)

He was playing the banjo and somebody else played the guitar and maybe a fiddle but that's where I met him, at Uncle Hop Holbrook's place and he had a son John and his son. (2FVA 03/1998)

My sister Stella was a-teaching here in the county and my brother Isaac was teaching here in the county, and they said didn't have room for me. (2FVA 03/1998)

I have the banjo and the guitar too and he, [during that time he was teaching me to play the guitar] and he was playing the banjo and he would nod to me when to change gear, he called it. (2FVA 03/1998)
He was just always having a sore throat and Roger was a healthy child and Virgil had a lot of trouble. (2FVA 03/1998)

The machine was up there a-digging coal like this and raking it back, and he was following way back here a-doing the timber work. (2FVA 03/1998)

You know they are learning so much here now. (2FVA 03/1998)

I read a lot about him and I wanted to know what he was using and he was using something about urine and I said, my God, whose urine? (2FVA 03/1998)

Well, when we take this premarine we're eating a pill made from the urine of a pregnant mare. (2FVA 03/1998)

Cause Doctor Baszinsky, he's really doing a lot of work, a lot of good work. (2FVA 03/1998)

He was kind of a fat fellow but I just feel like that they're a-learning so much now that people ought to pay attention to it and I want them to learn it. (2FVA 03/1998)

That's why I'm a-taking Ginkgo-Biloba and Co-Enzyme Q10 and they're in a pill together.

I'm taking them all the time. (2FVA 03/1998)

I think that he's a-changing his mind about it. (2FVA 03/1998)

I said, who's going to be next, you know. (2FVA 03/1998)

We're going to wait on Mizzes Hayes. (2FVA 03/1998)

You know the sheriffs liked my dad, so they weren't going to bother him. (2FVA 03/1998)

I'm hoping my son will come back to retire someday. (2FVA 03/1998)

He raised them little bitty ponies, them little tiny ponies, and he said he wanting, said he wanted it for to raise them ponies on it, but I found out that he was wanting to strip it. (2FVA 03/1998)

That's what he was wanting, to strip it. (2FVA 03/1998)

I told him I didn't have nowhere to go and I was going to make it right here, stayed right with it. (2FVA 03/1998)

He said, you have to know where I'm going to be buried. (2FVA 03/1998)

Never could get a face looking good. (2FVA 03/1998)
I miss her being here. (2FVA 03/1998)

You know, that snake was the biggest thing that I can remember and I don't even know whether I remember that or not because I just remember my mommy a-telling me about it, you know. (2FVA 03/1998)

I graduated from the seventh grade in nineteen thirty, June nineteen thirty, and that fall I entered Dante Central High School in Dante, starting on my high school. (2FVA 03/1998)

I went six quarters and got the non-professional certificate to teach and I enjoyed that job in the dining room waiting tables. (2FVA 03/1998)

They got to making fun of us, you know, peddling. (2FVA 03/1998)

I remember that but we wore that ole saddle out a-peddling on it. (2FVA 03/1998)

And well, when Roosevelt got in and put the whiskey back and now everybody is getting killed a-drinking government whiskey. (2FVA 03/1998)

Well, I was to meet him in Dante and my mommy went peddling that day and I went with her and I told her I was going up to see Pauline and I went up around the hotel and back down the railroad tracks and met them down at the depot, met Joe and Rufus. (2FVA 03/1998)

The mailman, the St. Paul mailman was there at his house a-working on something or another and Joe knew him and he knew Joe and I remember Joe telling him, if you tell on this I'll kill you, and they had a good laugh out of it. (2FVA 03/1998)

We lived in a shack, awful sorry shack, and then we got to building around the house, built onto it like this was the porch here and we boxed it in and we just kept adding onto it and got a big, a twelve-room house, twelve room, a big house. (2FVA 03/1998)

She’d get me to keep putting those white rags on it and I got well. (2FVA 03/1999)

Somebody else come out the end of the holler, going to sell them something. (2FVA 03/1998)

And I guess that's the reason that I worked so hard trying to get a education and get me a job till I could outlive that. (2FVA 03/1998)

Yeah, it's coming back all the time, moving the coal back. (3MVA 10/1997)

Well, Lee knew Dad real well and I know they come and was going. (3MVA 10/1997)

They had a power line that come to the mines over there pretty close to our house, and somebody shot that power line down, took dynamite and blew the poles down and it was all laying down, and they come to arrest some of the people over in there and they come a-questioning my dad,
and he says, “No, I had nothing to do with that. I was in the picket line at Dante.” (3MVA 10/1997)

So now you have to drill test holes if they're going back towards a old abandoned mines. (3MVA 10/1997)

Hopefully, you know, I've always said this ever since I come back from service and saw what was going on in our county and in our state. (3MVA 10/1997)

They would tell everything was going on and you had to watch who you talked to and what you said, and if you didn't, you had a job the next day. (3MVA 10/1997)

He worked five, six days a week. My dad come to work for Clinchfield, Pittston, and I can see him right to this day a-leaving every morning to go be on the picket line, conditions was so bad with the coal companies at that time. (3MVA 10/1997)

…and I know the first state police I ever saw in my life come down the road by our house going to Clinchco and they set up machine guns down there at Clinchco, and I'm going to tell you this, to show you what domination that the coal companies had over our community, they controlled every aspect of your life from the time you was borned if you stayed in the coal camps till the time you died or you left and got a job. (3MVA 10/1997)

I am against coal companies coming in and what we call raping our land and taking it all back to Boston or in New Jersey, taking all of our assets back and leaving us setting here with no water, no employment. (3MVA 10/1997)

Yeah, and then when me and her married, Earlene married, I was working for the Company and [they had [little houses sitting]] back up in the hollow from at Trammel and I leased that for twenty-five dollars a year with the Coal Company. (3MVA 10/1997)

And I stepped up into the mess hall and when I stepped up to the mess hall they had this big old sergeant standing there and he says, “Knock your feet off, soldier.” (3MVA 10/1997)

Uh huh, and now they's a lot that my dad told me that was killed on the other side of the tunnel a-coming through this side, and they took them down to what they call Barn Hollow, Beach Tree Hollow, Sugar Camp Hollow. (3MVA 10/1997)

But this day and time they’s not many people going to church. (3MVA 10/1997)

I went back in the mines, married Earlene, and went back into the mine and was working at Number Two up there and the explosion come. (3MVA 10/1997)

I first traveled for them as a demonstrator, demonstrating mining, new equipment was coming out on the coal market. (3MVA 10/1997)
Yeah, and then when me and her married, Earlene married, I was working for the Company and they had little houses sitting back up in the hollow from at Trammel and I leased that for twenty-five dollars a year with the Coal Company. (3MVA 10/1997)

I was working for Pittston, and we come here and got our stuff to house keep on what we call a lease. (3MVA 10/1997)

They give me a overcoat that was so big it was dragging. (3MVA 10/1997)

It was about four inches of snow, you know, and hit was dragging the snow up behind me, and oh, that upset me so bad that he would do me that way. (3MVA 10/1997)

Well, it's environment and the people that we have in this area here of all places why I've been, why course it's changing, gradually changing now and I don't like what I see now. (3MVA 10/1997)

At one time, they would come around in the mines and I know when I went to work in the mines, they come around and said, “Why’re you not trading down to the store?” (3MVA 10/1997)

I'm talking about Wise, Dickenson, Russell and all of them, but see the companies come in here and they controlled what taxes are set and every aspect of everything that went on. (3MVA 10/1997)

I'm just roughly guessing at it. (3MVA 10/1997).

Oh yeah, but going back to the coal company, when the coal company come in here, when I got big enough to understand the coal mining business, of course, all of my brothers went into the coal business and made their living in the coal business, which was all there was in this area at that time. (3MVA 10/1997)

They had so many men a-working that they couldn't give them enough cars. (3MVA 10/1997)

He was down on his knees praying, and we got up to him, was up on another section. (3MVA 10/1997)

We went down to help get those men out and retrieve them, and he was down a-praying and he said, “I've killed Woody.” (3MVA 10/1997)

Well, no they didn't, and my dad wore that and of course I had wore the light a little bit like that, but to get back to him working in the mines, he would work, about the only time us children would see him would be on the week-ends. (3MVA 10/1997)

I think a lot of that was me a-going to service and and seeing the world, seeing how everything operated and then come back. (3MVA 10/1997)
Well, talking about the Company, we had a lot of Hungarians and Polish people to come in here and different ethnic groups. (3MVA 10/1997)

But getting back to the Hungarians and the people that come in here. (3MVA 10/1997)

None of them could speak any English, and we was little boys with our dad working in the mines here. (3MVA 10/1997)

We was little boys working on the farm a-trying to raise stuff to help feed the family, and my mother would sell milk and butter. (3MVA 10/1997)

Talking about the churches, you know, when they first opened up these coal mines, of course, this area was, before the coal come into this area, this was actually a hunting ground, and most of the people that rel settled this area was what we call them, gatherers, hunters and gatherers. (3MVA 10/1997)

They let us stay there and so Lee Long come along, and uh I can remember it well if it’s yesterday, because you would hear them a-talking about the, what a hard time we was having, and uh Lee Long come along, stopped and said, he called my dad Rufe, he didn't call him Rufus. (3MVA 10/1997)

So the next term he run the people was getting real stirred up about it, so they elected a man and he goes up and has it changed back till they can have, get paid compensation for their injuries and which rock dust is terrible, silicosis. (3MVA 10/1997)

I was using a pick and shovel unloading coal, and I would help them drill the holes. (3MVA 10/1997)

No, I'd be doing it. (3MVA 10/1997)

Well, I put that sack on my back with the explosives in one hand, and I'd have the caps in the other one, because they'd tell ye, your dad would tell ye, don't get the caps close to the powder, and just nothing but a child was handling these explosives back then. (3MVA 10/1997)

He was braking on a motor for Marion <name omitted> and when we got down to where they was at, Marion was down on his knees. (3MVA 10/1997)

And about that time he come around the edge of the motor, and hit had throwed him out as far as he was taking it to load the cars back to load coal in them, and it killed his men up in the face up where, the closest to the pressure. (3MVA 10/1997)

Oh yeah, every day, as they gradually took the coal out you could hear it pop and crack and even the men said that night when we was getting ready to go into work that they was afraid that something real bad was going to happen because it was giving warning signs all the time. (3MVA 10/1997)
No, they was Union, so my dad went there and went to work and I know that we was, we was raising crops down on the creek there over from Trammel, up above Trammel there. (3MVA 10/1997)

They let us stay there and so Lee Long come along, and uh I can remember it well if it’s yesterday, because you would hear them a-talking about the, what a hard time we was having, and uh Lee Long come along, stopped and said, he called my dad Rufe, he didn't call him Rufus. (3MVA 10/1997)

Well, Dad was only getting about two or three days a week at Walkenva, so the next morning he comes over and picks up his check. (3MVA 10/1997)

George, it come time for the election and George had let it slip, and it got back to Lee Long that he was supporting the nominee against that, that Lee was supporting. (3MVA 10/1997)

Of course the Union was in then and they was making a little money and they's, these car people was wanting that. (3MVA 10/1997)

That what the bakery done was fed those, baked the bread for the people that was digging that tunnel through there. (3MVA 10/1997)

When they started that up, you know, I was telling you about they had a explosion in it years ago back in the twenties, thirties. (3MVA 10/1997)

What it was, Silicosis was drilling with a cutting machine, mining coal with a continuous miner or either hand loading it, loading it up, you know, where they blast that coal out and all the rocks in it and it blasted into fine powder usually just like dust on your tables and stuff, and you was breathing all of it. (3MVA 10/1997)

Well, he was getting him a safety post to set it and in the meantime a rock fell on him and killed him, and so his family sued the company, and the foreman got on the witness stand and swore that the man committed suicide. (3MVA 10/1997)

The older people are not teaching their children the values that I think they should have…

If they’d a started that up when they started these coal companies when they was just depleting our assets down here and have put it in a fund, we wouldn't have to ask. (3MVA 10/1997)

Oh yeah, every day, as they gradually took the coal out you could hear it pop and crack and even the men said that night when we was getting ready to go into work that they was afraid that something real bad was going to happen because it was giving warning signs all the time. (3MVA 10/1997)

A man a-making a living for his family’s going to commit suicide? (3MVA 10/1997)
You had to join the union by the second meeting after, or they would come and see what’s wrong with you that you wasn't going to join that union, and uh after I came back, why they charge you, initiation fee twenty five, twenty five initiation fee to go in to it, and then the dues. (3MVA 10/1997)

So the company was going to open a seam of coal there right pretty close to where the house was, so they tore the house down, they moved it down, on the Clinchfield property and [was going to] rebuild the house. (3MVA 10/1997)

It was a log house, and they was going to rebuild the house, and at that time they decided to get out of the home business, but the first that I can remember they charged fifteen dollars a year for the rent, all the property around where my dad lived there, and you could farm it, you could do whatever you wanted to with it. (3MVA 10/1997)

Or how serious it was going to be. (3MVA 10/1997)

…and I know the first state police I ever saw in my life come down the road by our house going to Clinchco and they set up machine guns down there at Clinchco, and I'm going to tell you this, to show you what domination that the coal companies had over our community, they controlled every aspect of your life from the time you was borned if you stayed in the coal camps till the time you died or you left and got a job. (3MVA 10/1997)

If they're going to take a big suitcases full of it out of here, they ought to leave a little to, to take care of their people that's made them all this money, which is water, a chance to have a decent living. (3MVA 10/1997)

Yeah, it's coming back all the time, moving the coal back. (3MVA 10/1997)

…and I remember Dad saying to him, he said “Lee, y'all fired me. Y'all don't want me, I'm for the Union.” and he said, “Rufe, we fired the best man we had.” (3MVA 10/1997)

I first traveled for them as a demonstrator, demonstrating mining, new equipment was coming out on the coal market. (3MVA 10/1997)

Then I went into service, servicing those equipment. (3MVA 10/1997)

I think a lot of that was me a-going to service and and seeing the world, seeing how everything operated and then come back. (3MVA 10/1997)

Lee gets in his car here at Dante and goes over and takes the team of horses and him a-grading the road, takes them away and gives them to another man, see. (3MVA 10/1997)

No, I didn't see them baking the bread. (3MVA 10/1997)

Just like the companies mining coal, and they's an old abandoned mines behind it. (3MVA
It's two people in line all the way around to this here store here, pay window there, getting, drawing their paycheck. (3MVA 10/1997)

He'd been about three months in the mines, and they come from down St. Paul to our house and talked to him all day trying to sell him a car for five hundred and twenty-seven dollar, a new car, new Ford car. (3MVA 10/1997)

We was little boys working on the farm a-trying to raise stuff to help feed the family, and my mother would sell milk and butter. (3MVA 10/1997)
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