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PRETERITE *HAD* + *V-ED* IN THE NARRATIVES OF AFRICAN- AMERICAN PREADOLESCENTS

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IN THIS PAPER, we discuss an unusual use of the pluperfect form *had* + Verb-*ed* that we first noticed in 1988 in the narratives of preadolescent African-American students (primarily sixth-graders) in East Palo Alto [EPA], California. Many vernacular features, like *been*, unmarked possessives, existential *it*, and others occurred in the recorded speech and writing of the children in this urban, low-income, and predominantly African-American community. However, the feature that we found most striking—because it had not previously been reported as a feature of African-American Vernacular English [AAVE]—was the use of preverbal *had* to mark the preterite rather than the pluperfect.

Our paper will proceed as follows. In section 1, we will explain the distinction between the preterite and the pluperfect and provide preliminary textual examples of the use of preterite *had* by the preadolescents in our EPA sample. In section 2 we will provide a series of quantitative and qualitative analyses of the preadolescents' usage of this form in an attempt to account for, if not predict, its occurrence. In section 3 we will consider the use of preterite and pluperfect *had* by other AAVE speakers, including adolescents in EPA,¹ preadolescents and adolescents from East Harlem, New York, whose usage was described by Labov et al. (1968), and adolescents and young adults from Springville, Texas, whose usage was described more recently by Cukor-Avila (1995) and by Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995). The usage of Puerto Rican youth in New York will also be mentioned in this section. In section 4, we will summarize our findings on this feature, and suggest directions for further research.

1. THE PRETERITE VERSUS THE PLUPERFECT

It may be helpful to clarify at this point the distinction between the preterite or simple past and the pluperfect or past perfect.² Reichenbach (1947, 290) diagrams these two tenses along a left-to-right timeline (see figure 1), showing the EVENT POINT (E), REFERENCE POINT (R), and SPEECH POINT (S; or what Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994, 55, and others refer to

FIGURE 1

The Distinction between the Pluperfect and Preterite Tenses
(R = Reference Point, E = Event Point, S = Speech Point;
after Reichenbach 1947, 290)



equivalently as the “MOMENT OF SPEECH”). In both instances, the Event being described precedes the Speech Point; however, the past perfect has a Reference Point (R) between the Event and the Speech Point. That Reference Point is often defined by an adjacent clause whose verb occurs in the preterite tense, as in (1).

1. I HAD SEEN (E) John already by the time Mary ARRIVED (R).

But the Reference Point might also be established by a time adverbial, like the phrase *by six o'clock yesterday evening* in (2) from Comrie (1985, 65).

2. John HAD ARRIVED (E) BY SIX O'CLOCK YESTERDAY EVENING (R).

Comrie's description (1985) of the difference between the preterite and pluperfect is very similar to Reichenbach's, but his conceptualization and additional detail are revealing. Comrie defines the preterite or simple past as an ABSOLUTE TENSE, one which takes “the present moment as its deictic centre” (36) and simply locates a situation or event “prior to the present moment” (41). The pluperfect, by contrast, is an ABSOLUTE-RELATIVE TENSE, insofar as it situates a reference point in the past (the “ABSOLUTE” component) and locates an event “prior to that reference point” or “past in the past” (the “RELATIVE” component, 65). Comrie makes the point that since the event “referred to by the pluperfect is itself located in the past” (see figure 1) and since “the time points that can be referred to by the pluperfect can in principle be referred to by the past,” it might at first seem puzzling why the relatively complex pluperfect should exist at all. He explains:

... in locating situations in time, it is necessary not only to relate situations relative to the present moment, but also to relate them chronologically to one another. A simple sequence of past tense fails to do this, e.g. “John arrived; Mary left,” which leaves open whether John's arrival preceded or followed Mary's departure. Given the tendency for linear order of clauses to follow chronological order of events, the example just given is most likely to be interpreted as meaning that John's arrival took place first, then Mary's departure. If for some reason it is desired to represent

events in other than chronological order, the pluperfect is an ideal mechanism for indicating this, as when the previous example is changed to "John arrived; Mary had left." [Comrie 1985, 67]

What is interesting about the EPA children's use of *had* is that it is NOT used in the pluperfect-favoring situation which Comrie describes—for indicating an event which is later in narrative time than another one but earlier in real time.³ On the contrary, *had* + *V-ed* is used as an absolute tense and in situations where a preterite or simple past form occurs regularly in English narratives. In describing this usage as "preterite *had*," we are trying to convey the point that it has the FORM of the standard English (SE) pluperfect but the FUNCTION of the SE preterite.

One common context for preterite *had* in our data, for instance, is to mark the FIRST complicating action in a narrative, ruling out the possibility that it could be serving the "flash-back" function referred to above. For our definition of narratives we draw on the following cogent characterization by Schiffrin (1981), which draws on earlier work by Labov (1972) and Labov and Waletzky (1967):

Narratives are oral versions of experience in which events are relayed in the order in which they presumably occurred. Their defining characteristic is a relationship of TEMPORAL JUNCTURE between at least two clauses: if a change in the order of the two clauses results in a change in the interpretation of what actually happened, then those two clauses are NARRATIVE CLAUSES, and the events reported are NARRATIVE EVENTS. [Schiffrin 1981, 47]

In the following narratives from twelve-year-old Dafina and twelve-year-old Nathan, preterite *had* occurs in the first narrative or complicating action clause, marked as "a." In presenting these and subsequent texts, we adhere to the conventions of Schiffrin (1981, 45n1), according to which narrative or complicating action clauses are lettered,⁴ while nonnarrative clauses are unlettered, but labeled as abstract, orientation, evaluation, embedded evaluation, or coda clauses:⁵

3. This is a story that happened to me Monday, not too long ago [ABSTRACT]
 - I was on my way to school [ORIENTATION]
 - a. and I HAD slipped [cf. "and I SLIPPED"]
 - b. and fell⁶
 - c. and I ran back in the house
 - to change my clothes
 - and I almos'—[laughs]
 - d. And, and my mother told me to be more careful around myself
 - because I always slip and fall

And that's all my story. [CODA] [Dafina, 12, EPA]

4. I was riding home from school,
and on my way home I was, when I was up in the driveway [ORIENTA-
TION],
 - a. a car HAD backed up [cf. "a car BACKED up"]
 - b. and it ran over my bike
 - c. and I tried to run.
 - d. Then, it just ran over me.
 - e. I tried to, I tried to get up from under,
 - f. but it kept on going forwards and backwards, riding all over me.
 - g. Yeah, that's when I woke up. [CODA] [Nathan, 12, EPA]

Of course, as Comrie (1986, 18–19) has noted, the English pluperfect is not RESTRICTED to "flash-back" situations in which narrative order diverges from chronological or event order. With respect to the following example:

5. Old Sam's boat approached the other side of the pier. He HAD docked before I began fishing.

Comrie (1986, 18) observes that

... the three relevant events are actually narrated in their chronological order, but nonetheless the pluperfect is (correctly) used for the second of the three events.

There is a single, simple characterization of the meaning of the pluperfect that captures the full range of its uses. . . . THE PLUPERFECT LOCATES A SITUATION PRIOR TO A CONTEXTUALLY GIVEN REFERENCE POINT, THIS REFERENCE POINT ITSELF BEING LOCATED IN THE PAST. . . . With respect to the reference point, apart from locating it chronologically relative to the situation in question and relative to the present moment, all that the pluperfect tells us is that such a reference point exists in the context. It does not in itself give us any indication as to how we should find that reference point—this is part of the interpretation of the pluperfect in a particular context, not part of its meaning. [emphasis added]

Bearing this in mind, one might argue that the *had* predicates in (3a) and (4a) are functioning as regular pluperfects since their reference is to a point chronologically prior to the reference of the verbs (*fell*, *ran back*, and so on) in the immediately following and subsequent clauses. Although we consider it important to note that these and other instances of preterite *had* in our data ARE prior to subsequent reference points, since this helps to explain their grammaticalization from and connection with English pluperfects,⁷ the East Palo Alto tokens differ from conventional English usage in several ways. For one thing, unlike the example in (5), the *had* clauses in our EPA data are NOT linked to the reference points of subsequent clauses by anterior-marking conjunctions like *before*. Second, the EPA tokens of preterite *had* are NOT used in the out-of-sequence or look-back function in which the pluperfect is favored in English. Third, in conventional American-English narratives, comparable sequences of actions are sufficiently and most commonly expressed by sequences of preterite forms

(sometimes also by "historical presents"; see Wolfson 1979 and Schiffrin 1981) rather than by pluperfect forms.

To understand the functions of the preterite *had* tokens in our EPA corpus, we will, in the next section, analyze them both quantitatively and qualitatively.

2. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EPA EXAMPLES

In the Appendix, we list all of the preterite *had* examples (52 in all) which we recorded in narratives from African-American school children (9 in all) in East Palo Alto in 1988. On the basis of these examples and on the evidence of all the past-reference verbs that occur in these narratives (281 cases in all⁸), it is possible to make some quantitative generalizations which extend our understanding of preterite *had* and its role in the tense-aspect system and narrative structure of its users. We will also consider some individual texts in detail to understand the qualitative functions of preterite *had* therein.

2.1. RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF PAST REFERENCE FORMS. Table 1 shows the frequencies of all past-reference verb forms in those EPA narratives which included at least one occurrence of preterite *had*. Note, first of all, that most of the past-reference verbs in these narratives—two-thirds—are standard, morphologically marked preterites (e.g., *walked*) and that unmarked forms (e.g., *walk*) occur only 5% of the time. One of our initial hypotheses

TABLE 1
Frequency of Past Markers* in Narratives with Preterite *had* + V-*ed*

	Total	With then
<i>Had</i> + V- <i>ed</i> (<i>had walked</i>) as preterite†	52 (19%)	27 (52%)
V- <i>ed</i> (<i>walked, fell, started</i>) as preterite‡	185 (66%)	53 (29%)
V-Ø (<i>walk, fall, start</i>) as preterite§	13 (5%)	7 (54%)
<i>Had</i> + V- <i>ed</i> (<i>had walked</i>) as pluperfect	2 (1%)	0 (0%)
<i>Had</i> as main verb preterite (<i>had a cat</i>)	16 (5%)	2 (13%)
No change (<i>hit</i>) as preterite	13 (4%)	6 (46%)
TOTAL	281 (100%)	95 (N/A)

*Excludes past tense copulas (151), modals (6), and *didn't* (5), which do not vary with preterite *had* + V-*ed* in our corpus (i.e., **had been sick* 'was sick').

†Includes one token of *had* + V-Ø (*had push*).

‡V-*ed* verbs: regular (*walked*) = 31 (17%); irregular (*fell*) = 145 (78%); syllabic (*started*) = 9 (5%).

§V-Ø verbs: regular (*walk*) = 4 (31%); irregular (*fall*) = 6 (46%); syllabic (*start*) = 3 (23%).

was that the standard marking of the preterite (*V-ed*) might have been weakening in this variety and that preterite *had* + *V-ed* might have entered the dialect as a compensatory process. However, the low frequency of unmarked preterites in these narratives casts some doubt on this hypothesis, as does the fact that zero past marking is relatively infrequent in AAVE in general, particularly so with strong or irregular verbs (e.g., *came*). Labov et al. (1968, 138), describing their Harlem, New York City data, noted, “The great majority of verbs in text occurrence are irregular, and these show the past tense forms.” In a similar vein, Fasold (1972, 38–39) reported that only 1.6% of the strong or irregular past reference verbs examined in his AAVE corpus from Washington, DC, were unmarked, and Rickford (1992, 189) found that only 6% of irregular past forms were unmarked in samples recorded from AAVE speakers in EPA ranging in age from 13 to 88.

The possibility that preterite *had* might have emerged in this variety to compensate for the weakening of *V-ed* is further minimized by the data in table 2, which shows both the relative frequency of unmarked preterites in the narratives by verb type and the distribution of *had* + *V-ed* tokens by verb type. If the preterite weakening hypothesis were correct, we might have expected the verb type with the highest frequency of zero marking to be most commonly represented among the *had* + *V-ed* tokens, but in fact the opposite is true. Irregular verbs, which are LEAST frequently unmarked (4%), are MOST commonly represented among the *had* + *V-ed* tokens (56%), and syllabic verbs, which are MOST frequently unmarked (25%), are LEAST commonly represented among the *had* + *V-ed* tokens (2%).

2.2. VERBS MARKED WITH *HAD* AND THEIR FORM. Table 3 shows the specific verbs which co-occur with preterite *had* in our corpus, in the forms in which they occur and with their respective frequencies. One noteworthy point is that all but one of these predicates (*had a fight*) are nonstative or action verbs, the kind that are conventionally found in complicating action rather than orientation clauses in narrative. Another point worth noting is that the form of the main verb is always *V-ed* (*had came, had went, had threw, had*

TABLE 2
Relative Frequency of Unmarked Preterite Verbs (*V-Ø*/[*V-Ø* + *V-ed*])
by Verb Type and Distribution of Preterite *had* + *V-ed* Tokens by Verb Type

Verb Type	Unmarked (<i>V-Ø</i>)	had + <i>V-ed</i>
Regular (<i>walk</i>)	4/35 (11%)	13/52 (25%)
Irregular (<i>tell</i>)	6/151 (4%)	29/52 (56%)
Syllabic (<i>start</i>)	3/12 (25%)	1/52 (2%)
No change/ambiguous (<i>hit</i>)	13 (N/A)	9/52 (17%)

TABLE 3
Verbs Occurring with Preterite *had* in EPA Corpus

asked	1	kicked	1
backed (up)	1	left	3
bit	1	messed	1
broke (up)	1	missed	1
came (around/in)	3	pushed /push	4
crashed	1	put	1
drove	1	said	1
gave (up)	2	slipped	1
got (Ø/wet/out/mad/ up/him)	6	took	2
grabbed	1	threw	1
had (a fight)	1	uppercut	1
hit	6	walked (off)	1
hurt	1	went (home/outside/ inside/somewhere)	6
kept	1	won	1

bit) rather than *V-en* (*had come, had gone, had thrown, had bitten*). The morphological distinction which SE draws between preterite or past tense (*V-ed*) and past participle (*V-en*) forms is weak in many English vernaculars,⁹ but it is particularly unmarked in AAVE, as noted by Fasold and Wolfram (1970, 62):

In standard English, most past participles are formed with the *-ed* suffix and so are identical with the past tense form. But there are a number of semi-regular and irregular verbs for which the past participle and past tense are formally distinguished (e.g., *came* versus *has come*, *ate* versus *has eaten*, etc.) In [AAVE], however, it seems that there may not be any irregular verbs for which the past tense and past participle are distinct. Sometimes the standard English past participle form is generalized to serve both functions (*He taken it; He have taken it*), but MORE COMMONLY THE SIMPLE PAST FORM IS USED IN BOTH KINDS OF CONSTRUCTIONS (e.g., *He came; He have came*). [emphasis added]

2.3. OCCURRENCE IN *THEN* CLAUSES. Table 1 shows the relatively high frequency (52%) with which preterite *had* occurs in clauses which begin with *then*, marking the action as chronologically subsequent to the previously related event or events (cf. Schiffrin 1990, 254).¹⁰ It is significant that these occurrences of *then* are all clause-initial, since, as Schiffrin (1990, 255; 1992, 756) has shown, initial *then* marks successive shifts in reference time from one clause to another while clause-final *then* marks overlapping occurrences. Comparably high frequencies of co-occurrence with *then* are found for virtually all the other preterite tokens in these narratives,¹¹ and the frequencies are especially similar in the case of the unmarked (*V + Ø*) and no-change preterites—54% and 46% respectively—where there might

similarly be some question about their preterite reference. By contrast, neither of the two pluperfect tokens in our corpus co-occurs with *then*.¹²

In this connection, it is interesting to note the following observation by Fleischman (1990, 157), which establishes the semantic relationship between the temporal conjunction *then* and the use of the preterite tense in narrative and which supports our classification of the *had* tokens in our corpus as preterites rather than pluperfects:

Narrative events are separated from each other by *temporal juncture*, which is semantically equivalent to the temporal conjunction “then”: *a* happened, then *b*, then *c*, and so forth. . . . [¶] . . . It will be observed that the events reported in the lettered narrative clauses are all punctual and completed; their time reference is conventionally assumed to be that of the “current narrative plane” of the story (i.e., past). The expected tense-aspect category is therefore the [PRETERITE].

2.4. NARRATIVE FUNCTION OF PRETERITE *HAD* FORMS. Another pattern of the use of preterite *had*, which is apparent from the narratives in (3) and (4) above and which receives confirmation from quantitative analysis of the entire data set (see table 4), is the high frequency (94%, 49 of 52 tokens) with which it occurs in narrative or complicating action clauses, where the preterite, as noted above, is the expected tense. In many languages, the pluperfect is more common in orientation and other backgrounding clauses, as Fleischman (1990, 140) observes:

Also common in Orientation are before-pasts (PLP [PLUPERFECT] or PA [PAST ANTERIOR]) for explanatory circumstantial material—what had already happened to produce the situation in which the events of the story will take place, . . .

Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995) have argued that what we call here preterite *had* + *V-ed* and what they call “innovative *had* + past” represents a reanalysis of the conventional English pluperfect by AAVE speakers and its grammaticalization as a simple past or preterite. We agree with them on this but feel that the occurrences of this innovative preterite *had* need closer analysis to understand why and how the grammaticalization occurs—that is, what connection there is between conventional (pluperfect) and innovative (preterite) *had* usage, and why SOME preterites are more likely to be marked with *had* than others.

TABLE 4
Preterite *had* + *V-ed* Tokens by Discourse Function in Narratives

Orientation	1 (2%)
Embedded Orientation	1 (2%)
Complicating Action	49 (94%)
Incomplete/Unclear	1 (2%)

Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995) hypothesize that the reanalysis/grammaticalization process which produced preterite *had* began in orientation and similar backgrounding clauses and subsequently spread to complicating action or narrative clauses. Forty percent (40/99) of their preterite *had* tokens from Springville, Texas, occur in orientation clauses. By contrast, only 4% (2/52) of the tokens in our EPA corpus occur in orientation clauses. However, the Springville corpus includes older speakers like Vanessa,¹³ who was between 27 and 30 years old when her examples, including the following one, were recorded:¹⁴

6. a. When I was working at Billups
- b. me an' the manager we HAD BECAME real good friends
- c. and so she HAD STARTED callin' me her sister.
- d. So I liked workin' there
- e. because uh, we did the work together.
- f. We made it easy for each other. [Vanessa, about 27, Springville, Texas, from Cukor-Avila and Bailey, 1995, 407, example (22)]

Discussing this example, Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995, 407) observe that

Vanessa's use of *had* + past suggests that she views the events of 'becoming friends' and the manager 'calling her her sister' not as sequenced events, but as a result of some other action, perhaps the fact that they worked together a lot and got along so well. In this brief orientation section to a much longer narrative, Vanessa is offering background information, in essence 'setting the scene' for the rest of the narrative. Additionally, there is no explicit reference point stated in conjunction with the use of these forms. Instead there is an implied reference time which is the beginning of the actions that comprise the narrative. . . . In both examples (22) and (23), then, innovative *had* + past functions as a type of remote past signaling that the events described occurred prior to the telling of the narrative.

We agree (with the authors here, and with the extended discussion of this example which Cukor-Avila has kindly provided us via electronic mail) that the explicit reference point which would favor the use of a conventional "pluperfect" in this narrative is not obvious. The real-time reference of the *had* predicates in lines (b) and (c) could not have preceded the reference of *working* in line (a), and standard-English speakers would probably encode them both as simple preterites (*we BECAME good friends*; *she STARTED calling me her sister*). However, the preterite *hads* in this intriguing example are not only prior to the start of the complicating action of the narrative; they are also prior (at least in part) to the stative (and evaluative) predicate *liked working there* in line (d), with the conjunctive *so* helping to reinforce this earlier/later, cause/effect relationship. To the extent that this is in fact the case, we can see something of the pluperfect's "relativeness" in the grammaticalization of *had* as a preterite.

The following narrative from the EPA corpus similarly reveals how the relativity of the English pluperfect carries over into the preterite *had* usage of AAVE:

7. One time my mom and my dad *HAD* went somewhere [ORIENTATION]
 And she left me and my brother and my little sister at home.
 - a. And my brother he *HAD* got mad at me
 'cause I was on the phone.
 - b. And so he threw a pillow
 - c. and I ducked
 - d. and he hit the table
 and my mom's crystal was on it
 - e. and he broke it.
 And I got in trouble for it [EVALUATION]
 and he didn't.
 I couldn't get back on the phone for like about three weeks.
 I was so mad.
 Then when he *HAD* broke it,
 I was trying to clean it up, and, you know, stick it back together.
 But some of it was just broken [into] too many pieces.
 I couldn't put it back together.
 - f. Then she came home.
 - g. It [She] was like, "Uh, uh, who broke this?"
 - h. I'm like, "I don't know." (Laughs.)
 - i. Then so my brother, he said, "She was on the phone and then she came in here and hit me and then I threw the pillow."
 - j. And so she said, "Well, it's really your fault because you ain't supposed to be on the phone." [Cathy, 12, EPA]

The *had broke* preterite in the evaluation section (see Labov 1972, 370–75) of the narrative—where the action is suspended while the narrator reveals her frustration at the injustice of the situation—was classified by us as a conventional pluperfect, fulfilling the classic flashback function of marking a time prior to the reference point of the immediately preceding clauses (*GOT in trouble*; *COULDN'T GET back*; *WAS so mad*). The other *had* predicates in the opening lines of this story—*had went*; *had got mad*—were classified by us and by others whom we polled on this issue as preterites rather than pluperfects, since the reference points to which they might establish anterior reference do not precede them textually and they could just as well be encoded as conventional preterites (*WENT somewhere*; *GOT MAD at me*). Note, however, that the parents' going out marks a crucial part of the orientation phase of this narrative (this is the single orientation clause tabulated in table 4), providing an essential backdrop for the brother's getting mad and throwing a pillow at the narrator. Although the brother's getting mad may be legitimately interpreted as the first complicating action

in the narrative (this is how we have interpreted and coded it), it could also be seen as another part of the orientation section, the final precursor to his throwing the pillow and breaking the vase. These initial *had* predicates, then, provide good examples of the use of preterite *had* to mark events prior to the first complicating action in a narrative (cf. Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1995 on this point above), and while they might most naturally be encoded in standard English as conventional preterites, at least some of the linguists whom we asked felt that they could also be encoded as conventional pluperfects in standard English (*had gone; had gotten mad*).

Relatedly, it is interesting to note that several of the preterite *hads* in our data, although they are part of the complicating action of the narrative, also mark temporary (re)orientation points or what Schifffrin (1992, 763), following Psathas (1979), calls LANDMARKS: "locations that the speaker uses as a base from which to orient the next action." Examples include the sentences (1)–(6) in the Appendix, from a relatively long narrative by Tabitha. Like other (re)orienting markers, these predicates include motion verbs (*had walked off; had came; had went; had left*) which describe the location of the protagonists as one episode ends and another begins, with a new set of complicating actions:

8. n. And then she hit kinda hard in his face, but not that hard . . .
- p. And then so they HAD WALKED off.
- q. And Gerald started walking off, said, "I'ma bring my peoples!"
- r. Then Corey walked up to him,
- s. Corey Corey walked up to him and decked him in the eye, I mean in the jaw.
- t. And then he said, "I'ma bring my people."
- u. And then and um, we HAD CAME around a corner,
And then we HAD CAME around a corner,
- v. We HAD WENT home,
- w. And then Gerald mother and him come up, and Gerald was crying.
[Tabitha, 12, EPA]

Sometimes, the reorientation does not involve movement to a new location but the temporary cessation or resolution of a conflict (e.g., *had broke up* in the following example), which re-erupts with greater intensity in successive clauses:

9. j. and then she take him off the pole
- k. And then she was jus' beating him up.
- l. And then they HAD BROKE UP.
- m. And then she walked back over to him
- n. And then she slapped him in the face
- o. And she had him on the fence, just punchin him and stuff. [Clinton, 12, EPA]

The following example is particularly interesting because while the first *had* precedes the climactic PEAK of the narrative (the protagonist/narrator being “whipped” by her aunt for having gone to the bathroom in a bumper car at Disneyland), the subsequent *hads* precede and reinforce the sad POINT of the narrative—that everyone remained mad at the narrator for this accidental by-product of her excitement while on the bumper cars, and that in the middle of all the activities that Disneyland had to offer, the physically and emotionally exhausted family members went to their motel room and slept:

10. b. And then, and then (I was around eight), I used the bathroom.
- c. And then I got off the bumper cars.
- d. And that man he have to wipe it off and everything.
- e. And so, um, my auntie, she HAD TOOK me to the bathroom,
- f. And she whipped me and everything.
 I was crying. [EVALUATION]
 I was crying.
 We was staying at Disneyland for around for around three days.
 I was crying and everything.
- g. And then, so, and then, so she HAD JUST TOOK me up to the car,
- h. And we HAD JUST LEFT, 'cause they was mad at me and everything.
- i. And we just went to our motel room
- j. and slept. [Angie, 12, EPA]

Cases like these, where the *had* precedes the descriptive peak or the emotional/moral point of the narrative, represent yet another instance of the “subjectification” which commonly occurs in grammaticalization, the pragmatic-semantic process whereby “meanings become increasingly based in the speakers’s subjective belief state/attitude toward the proposition” (Traugott 1989, 35; 1994, 4). Although they do not exactly resemble English pluperfects, they exploit the pluperfect’s characteristic of “locating a situation prior to a contextually given reference point” (Comrie 1986, 16) to direct our attention to key complicating actions and evaluative points in a narrative. Strategically, the *had* predicates function as foreshadows of key actions and points in the narrative, directing us to seek in adjacent clauses the reference points which occurrences of *had* would normally require.

Another way of understanding (9) and (10), and several other texts in our corpus, is to recognize that the *had* predicates presage the evaluative component of the narrative, what Labov (1972, 366) describes as “the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its *raison d’être*: Why it was told, and what the narrator was getting at.” Sometimes, the evaluation is external, by explicit statement (“I was crying,” “they was mad at me and everything”), and, sometimes, the evaluation is embedded

in the actions described ("we just went to our motel room and slept"). In (10), the external evaluation is provided at a point at which the action is suspended (Labov 1972, 374), and the following example is also of this type:

11. l. And then he HAD MESSED—
 m. And then he HAD PUSHED the referee,
 n. so I uh, let Anthony win.
 Because I'm the referee and I make the decidings. [EVALUATION]
 Because whoever mess with the referee, he can make the decide. . .
 [David, 10, EPA]

Altogether, 42% of our *had* marked predicates (22/52) are of this (re)orienting or point-preceding type. It is perhaps just a short step from using *had* to mark the PRELUDE to a particularly intense complicating action to using it for the FIRST such complicating action itself (as in examples 3 and 4 above), or to mark the particularly dramatic or emotionally intense developments themselves, as in the following two narratives.¹⁵

12. One day, I was, I was jus' sleepin' [ORIENTATION]
 and then I, I had, I was sleep,
 and my mother, my mother, she was whuppin me.
 She was whuppin me.
 She was whuppin me
 and I was hollerin an everything.
 a. And then all of a sudden this, this man was, this man come in my
 room,
 he had blood over his face and everything.
 b. And he HAD grabbed my mother [cf. "he GRABBED my mother"]
 c. and slammed her down to the ground
 and I was hollerin an everything [EVALUATION]
 And then all of a sudden—
 and that was the end of my dream.
 d. I woke up
 I was goin, "Ma! Ma!"
 e. And then she HAD just came, came in there [cf. "she just CAME"]
 f. and then she HAD threw water on me and stuff [cf. "she THREW water"]
 g. and told me to wake up, right?
 h. She just went, "Angie, wake up! Wake up! Wake up! It was just a
 dream! It was just a dream! Wake up!"
 i. And then I, I just woke up
 And I was crying. [EVALUATION] [Angie, 12, EPA]
13. Well, one day I was like, I was riding my [bike] over . . . Dumbarton
 [bridge]. [ORIENTATION]
 This was a scary dream. [EVALUATION]
 a. And then I fell.
 And I was, I was like,

- the water had like,
 it was sort of hard a little bit [RE-ORIENTATION]
 and I was riding my bike
- b. and then it [the bridge] broke.
 And then this big old shark was chasing me.
 And I was trying to ride on my bike under water,
 But I wasn't going nowhere [EMBEDDED EVALUATION]
- c. so I tried to start swimming.
- d. And then the shark HAD bit, HAD got my leg [cf. "BIT," "GOT"],
 and it was biting me.
- e. And then it, another shark came
- f. And grabbed my other leg,
 And they was just chewing off my legs,
- g. And um they chewed my legs off . . . [Clinton, 12, EPA; narrative continues]

Following Fleischman (1990) we may describe these dramatic high-points of the narrative as constituting a *PEAK*, "a point in the Complicating Action in which discourse tension reaches a climax" (141). The significance of this is that Peaks "are frequently marked in surface syntax by various devices" including tense shifting:

Observing that Peaks are typically zones of linguistic turbulence (marked discourse micro-contexts) where predictable correlations between grammatical features and levels of information relevance operative elsewhere in the text are often cancelled or even reversed, Longacre (1976, 219ff) notes that a frequent strategy for achieving the highlighted vividness of narrative Peaks is through tense switching, in particular through a shift into the PR [Present]. [Fleischman 1990, 142]

In the case of the EPA texts, the tense shift is marked with preterite *had* rather than the present tense. The usage is not entirely unprecedented, however, since, according to Fleischman (1989), Paceño Spanish (the Spanish of La Paz, Bolivia) "uses the *PLUPERFECT* as a non-relative tense . . . to express 'surprise and nonpersonal knowledge upon encountering an unknown or something seen for the first time that occurred without one realizing it' (Laprade 1981, 223)" (29). Examples from Fleischman (1989, 30, drawing on Laprade 1981) are provided in (14) and (15):

14. Te habías casado [PLUP]
 'You got married! (and I hadn't heard)'
15. Había sabido [PLUP] hablar Aymara muy bien
 'It turned out he DID know how to speak Aymara very well'

The parallels are not exact—for one thing this unusual Spanish use of the pluperfect for the preterite can occur in a single sentence without its being in a sequence, and for another, its nonpersonal function is not shared with the EPA usage. But in both cases it can be said that the use of a pluperfect

form marks a surprising or unexpected development, and one which, in at least the immediately preceding EPA texts, corresponds to a narrative Peak.

Having described preterite *had* as sometimes marking the landmarks to actions in new episodes of narratives, sometimes marking the preludes to dramatic peaks or moral/emotional POINTS, and sometimes marking those dramatic peaks themselves, it must be admitted that in a number of examples—about 38% or 20 of our 52 tokens—preterite *had* appears to be simply used as a variant of *V-ed*, with absolute time reference and none of the relative time reference which would link it, however tenuously, to its pluperfect source. This is particularly true of the usage of David, a prolific *had* user whose single extended narrative accounts for just over a third of our preterite *had* examples (34–52, Appendix), many of them alternating in preceding or successive lines with simple preterites (e.g., *hit . . . had hit; push . . . had push*).

16. x. Cause when he HIT me like this. . . .
- y. he HAD UPPERCUT me like that,
- z. and then he HAD HIT me like that
- aa. He had kicked me,
- ab. It was half-wrestling
- ac. And then one I was tired
- ad. then he just beat me,
- ae. And PUSH me down.
- af. That's when he HAD PUSH me down. [David, 10, EPA]

These examples resemble the use of *had* for unsequenced listings and single events which Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995) describe as later stages of the grammaticalization process.

3. USE OF PRETERITE AND PLUPERFECT *HAD* BY OTHER SPEAKERS

Our analysis of the narratives of the nine preadolescents from East Palo Alto who provided the data for this paper—all but two of them 12 years old¹⁶—has so far established that they use preterite *had* quite commonly and pluperfect *had* quite rarely. How does this compare with the usage of other groups of speakers? We have four primary groups for comparison: (1) African-American adolescents and adults in East Palo Alto; (2) African-American preadolescents and adolescents in Harlem whose usage a quarter century ago was reported by Labov et al. (1968); (3) African-American adolescents and young adults whose usage is discussed in Cukor-Avila (1995) and Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995, 1996); (4) Puerto Rican teenagers and young adults in New York City, as reported to us by Ana Celia Zentella (1989).

3.1. CONTEMPORARY USAGE AMONG AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS IN EAST PALO ALTO. A computer search of the transcripts of recordings made separately in 1986–87 with two East Palo Alto adolescents, Foxy Boston, 13, and Tinky Gates, 15,¹⁷ turned up NO instances of preterite *had*, but several instances of pluperfect *had*. One of Foxy Boston's pluperfect *had* tokens occurred in a narrative about the shooting of Greg, a friend of hers:

17. . . . they was playin cards, right, an' Greg paid all his money but 'cept a quarter, cause he didn't have change, and he *TOL' HIM* [R] that he *HAD*—he *HAD GIVE IT BACK* [E] to him, but—an Alabama wuh—Alabama, he didn' mean to shoot him . . . [Foxy Boston, 13, EPA 7, p. 9]

Note that the event (E) referred to in *had give it back* in (17) is chronologically earlier than the reference point (R) established by *tol' him* but that E occurs later than R in narrative time—precisely the pluperfect-favoring situation described by Comrie (1985, 65).¹⁸

Tinky has ten tokens of pluperfect *had*, and they are all similar to Foxy's, insofar as they describe events (E) which are chronologically earlier, but later in narrative time, than another event which serves as the reference point (R). We will give three examples:

18. Then the Black girl came back, an they was tearin her up. So then tha' thing got turned out, an' I *WAS TRYIN' TO FIN'* [R] my cousin Ruth. Ruth *HAD ALREADY LEFT* [E]. [Tinky Gates, 15, EPA 12, p. 26.]
19. But you know what, mama? Tell her 'bout that time yo' mama left you there to cook them beans an [laughter]—you ran off an the beans was burnt. An y'all had to go get some new beans and *TELL HER* [R] that them was the ol' beans that y'all *HAD COOK* [E]. . . [Tinky Gates, 15, EPA 12, p. 77.]
20. Steven's fifteen. An we all *GOT SENT HOME* [R]. Okay, this wha' happen. Okay, all day, he—we *HAD BEEN* [E] with each other all day long. [Tinky Gates, 15, EPA 12, p. 80.]

Finally, a search of the transcript of a contemporaneously recorded interview with Penelope Johnson, a 76-year-old woman from EPA, turned up nine instances of *had*, all of them used as regular English pluperfects, for instance:

21. You know, he finally decided [E], he—because he *HAD* retired [R], you know, from work. [Penelope Johnson, 76, EPA 5, p. 9]

Tentatively, in the light of this evidence from Foxy, Tinky, and Penelope Johnson, we conclude that the use of preterite *had* in EPA is restricted to preadolescents. A related respect in which the preadolescents differ from the adolescents and adults in this area is that the preadolescents do not use

present perfect *have*, while the older speakers use it at least some of the time (two tokens from Foxy, one from Tinky, and four from Penelope Johnson), as in these examples:¹⁹

- 22. I don't know how long I've been staying here. [Foxy Boston, 13, EPA 7, p. 2]
- 23. An today—today I HAVEN'T seen— [Tinky Gates, 15, EPA 12, p. 79]²⁰
- 24. I HAVE seen the next house . . . change owners or whatever a lot.
[Penelope Johnson, 76, EPA 5, p. 22]

One must be careful about the negative evidence from the preadolescents because their recordings are generally shorter and restricted to narrative, which is not an ideal site for the present perfect. But it is possible that the adolescents and adults have acquired both pluperfect *had* and present perfect *have* as part of a system of oppositions which the younger AAVE-speaking children do not yet control. This possibility is reinforced by the fact that the two African-American adults whose voices are heard on the Foxy/Tinky recordings—Faye McNair-Knox, the interviewer, and Paula Gates, Tinky's mom—use the present perfect forms even more often than the adolescents do, suggesting that we may indeed be dealing with a developmental or age-graded phenomenon.

3.2. USAGE 25 YEARS AGO AMONG AFRICAN-AMERICAN PREADOLESCENTS AND ADOLESCENTS IN EAST HARLEM. Although Labov et al. (1968) do not discuss preterite *had* directly, we can glean from their study several interesting facts about the use of auxiliary *have* and *had* among African-American preadolescents and adolescents in East Harlem, New York City, just over a quarter of a century ago.

For one thing, they note (224–25) that, as a verbal auxiliary, *had* was more common than *have*, *had* occurring 150 times in recordings with the Thunderbirds (8–13 yrs. old), Cobras (11–17 yrs. old), Jets (12–19 yrs. old), Oscar Brothers (16–18 yrs. old) and Lames (9–13 yrs. old), while *have* occurred only 66 times. In this respect, Labov et al.'s data agree with our East Palo Alto data.²¹ Although their data are not presented in a way that would allow us to see whether it was also true at that time that use of the present perfect increased with age, there are several hints that this may have been the case, as it is in our data. The authors note, for instance that “adults use more *have* than adolescents” (226). And the three examples of present perfect *have* which they present from Harlem peer-group members are from adolescents aged 13 and 15,²² while the one example they present to show that some native speakers may not have ready access to the present perfect is from a younger, ten-year-old peer group member:²³

25. I WAS BEEN in Detroit. [10, T-Birds, #498; Labov et al. 1968, 254]

With respect to the semantic function of auxiliary *had*, Labov et al. identify it as the “past perfect” and suggest that both “preadolescent and pre-pre-adolescent speakers” use it “with appropriate semantic force” (254). They provide the following example from an eight-year-old Thunderbird member to support this point:

26. [How did the fight start?]
I HAD CAME over . . . [8, Thunderbirds, #933, Labov et al. 1968, 254]

But note that as the initial predicate in a narrative, this would represent an unusual use of the English pluperfect. However, the fact that it occurs with a motion verb, the fact that it's the first complicating action in the narrative, and the fact that it appears to serve as a foreshadower of some other action are all characteristic of EPA preterite *had*. The authors provide only two other full examples of *had* + *V-ed*, and of these the first (27 below) seems to us to be an example of preterite *had*, while the second, in context, might well be a pluperfect.

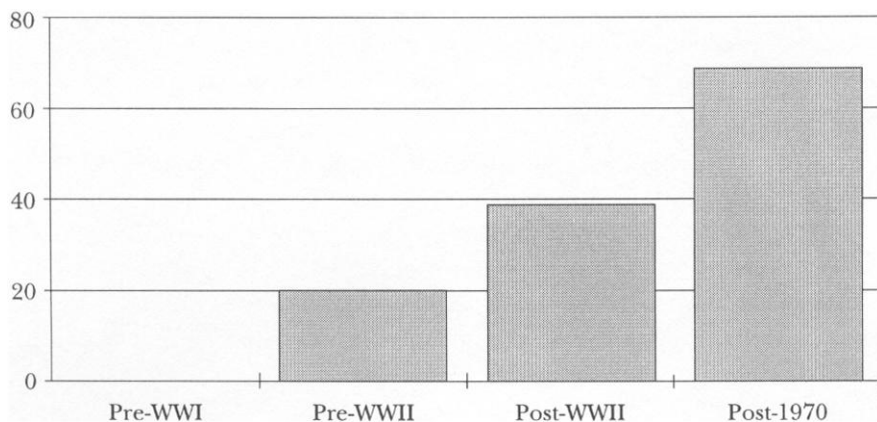
27. When I went down there—they almost HAD TOOK me away. [13, Jets, #606, Labov et al. 1968, 225]
28. I never HAD GOT tol' on. [14, Jets, #527, Labov et al. 1968, 254]

If examples (26) and (27) really are tokens of preterite *had*—and we would need the entire narrative context to be certain—this usage may have been in existence for a quarter of a century or more.

One final feature of Labov et al.'s discussion of the use of *had* and *have* that is worth noting is their observation, “the perfect forms do not seem to be clearly distinct . . . from the preterit forms” (258). They cite in support of this, examples like *Have you ever SAW*; *He hadn't SEED*; *she had SWAM out*; *we had RAN down*; *she had CAME over*; *I had THREW UP*. As noted above, this is also the case in our recent East Palo Alto data, where the canonical form is *had* + *V-ed* rather than *had* + *V-en*.

3.3. USAGE AMONG AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS IN SPRINGVILLE, TEXAS. We have already noted (in section 2.4) the claim of Cukor Avila (1995), and Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995) that “innovative” *had* + PAST (= preterite *had*) in Springville, Texas, represents a reanalysis of the conventional English pluperfect by AAVE speakers and its grammaticalization as a simple past or preterite. What remains to be added in this section, and related to the EPA data, is their specific claim that this grammaticalization represents an ongoing change which began about half a century ago. Figure 2 (= figure 3 in Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1995), showing

FIGURE 2
Preterite *had* as a Percentage of All *had* + V-ed Forms
(after Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1995, fig. 3)



the percentage of innovative or preterite *had* + PAST as a proportion of all *had* + PASTs (traditional pluperfects and innovative preterites), provides the crucial data for this claim. Note that the first evidence of innovative *had* + PAST (20%) is found among speakers born pre-WWII (between 1918 and 1945) and that its percentage use increases (to about 40%) among speakers born post-WWII (1945–1969) and increases yet again (to about 70%) among speakers born in 1970 or later.

Given the fact that the comparable percentage of preterite *had* for our EPA preadolescents is 96% (52/54 tokens, see table 1), one might hypothesize that they represent an even more advanced stage of the change depicted in figure 1. However, apart from the fact that the proportion of preterite *hads* in the EPA data would drop somewhat if computed against the total of ALL narratives or ALL recorded speech from these speakers,²⁴ there is the problem that our two adolescent speakers (Foxy and Tinky) show no traces of this innovative usage.²⁵ Since they were also born in the post-1970 period, we might have expected them to show some evidence of preterite *had*, the more so because we have longer recordings with them than we have with the preadolescents, and because the adolescent recordings include many narratives, the context which favors preterite *had*. On the basis of the EPA data alone, we would be hard-pressed to distinguish between preterite *had* as an age-graded feature (diminishing or dropping out of use as the speakers got older, and perhaps gained firmer control of the opposition between present and pluperfect) or as change in progress

(remaining in the speech of these preadolescents as they grew older, and increasing in frequency in the speech of successive preadolescent cohorts). Given the ancillary evidence of Labov et al. (1968) that innovations resembling preterite *had* were attested in New York over 25 years ago, we are tempted to conclude that preterite *had* represents change in progress in AAVE more generally, but we would need additional data both from the EPA and New York communities to confirm this.

3.4. USAGE AMONG PUERTO RICANS IN NEW YORK CITY. Since 1989, when we first presented this paper, we have received reports of preterite *had* being used elsewhere in the United States by African-American youth or Puerto Rican youth in contact with African Americans. Some of the reports, like those of Cukor-Avila (1995) and Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995, 1996) are formal, with attestations and analysis. Most are informal, without accompanying attestations. However, one scholar who has given us actual attestations is Ana Celia Zentella (of the City University of New York, Graduate Center) who reported similar usage among young Puerto Ricans in New York City (1989). To illustrate the similarity, Zentella shared with us a book report written by a nineteen-year-old Puerto Rican woman, born and raised in New York City, which was replete with *had* + *V-ed* constructions. Some of these were pluperfects, as in (29), where reading and reflecting on *A Time with a Future* establish a reference point between the earlier events involving the student's grandparents and the moment of writing.

29. Reading *A Time with a Future*, I began to think of how my grandmother HAD PLANNED my grandmother's life after my grandfather died. Like Carmela, my grandmother HAD BEEN MARRIED to my grandfather for over 45 years. They HAD LIVED a happy and fantastic life most of the time. [19-year-old NYC Puerto Rican, in writing; from Zentella 1989]

But many others were preterites or simple pasts, without clear intervening reference points, as in examples (30) and (31). And in her comments on the paper Zentella suggested that the student contact a writing instructor "to go over the differences in meaning between 'had + __ed' and the regular past tense."

30. *Happy Birthday Lucia* HAD BROUGHT tears to my eyes. . . . What HAD TROUBLED me was when Virginia HAD SIMPLY UP AND LEFT Mateo and the kids.
31. Aunt Rosanna's Rocker was a story which I HADN'T NECESSARILY LIKED or understood. The story HAD APPEARED to be a good one, up until the point when Zoraida's rocking chair HAD BEEN TAKEN away.

From this limited evidence, it appears that preterite *had* usage has a wider social distribution, in terms of geography and age-range, than our East Palo

Alto data indicate, that it might indeed have increased in frequency since Labov et al. (1968) made their recordings with African-American youth in New York in the mid-1960s, and that it might have spread to other ethnic groups in contact with African-American youth.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this paper, we have drawn attention to the innovative use of *had* + *V-ed* in the narratives of African-American preadolescents from East Palo Alto as a preterite rather than a pluperfect tense, that is, without the relational reference point (usually earlier in narrative time) which the standard English pluperfect requires. However, close analysis of the preterite *had* tokens reveals that more than half of them serve the function of marking a narrative reorientation or peak, or of foreshadowing a narrative peak or evaluative point. In these respects, the grammaticalization of *had* as a preterite retains something of the relational nature of its source, the English pluperfect.

Comparisons with the usage of other speakers are quite revealing. On the evidence of Labov et al. (1968), preterite *had* appears to have been attested in New York City over a quarter century ago, and to the extent that more recent usage among Puerto Rican students in New York is any indication, the innovation may have increased in frequency and spread to other ethnic groups in the interim. Data from Springville, Texas (as reported in Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1995), suggest that the grammaticalization of *had* as a preterite may have begun in the orientation clauses of narratives and spread from there to complicating action clauses and even to single events and unsequenced listings outside of narratives. Moreover, the Springville data suggest that the innovation began with speakers born before World War II and that it has increased steadily in its frequency with successive generations. It is tempting to see in the Springville and New York City data a more general pattern of change in progress and to assume that the EPA preadolescents represent the vanguard of such a process. However, the fact that EPA adolescents do not (yet) show any evidence of this innovation gives us pause, since age-grading is also a possibility.

Some of the directions for future research on this feature—which constitutes yet another exciting development in the study of AAVE's tense-aspect markers (compare how much we have learned about *done*, *be done*, stressed *BIN*, invariant *be*, *steady*, and *come* in the past quarter century)—are already implicit if not explicit in what we have written above. We need larger corpora of preterite *had* tokens, from EPA, Springville, Texas, New York

City, and other American cities, and we need qualitative exegesis of their functions both within narratives and without, combined with quantitative tabulations of their use in relation to other past-reference predicates. We also need more substantive data on preterite and pluperfect *had* usage among older speakers (adolescents, young, middle-aged, and old adults), combined with data on present-perfect and completive usage, to distinguish between age-grading and change in progress. Finally, we need better data and analysis of the English pluperfect, as used in spontaneous and informal speech, for the innovation represented by preadolescent AAVE usage might reflect or might have helped to initiate a more general change in American English usage which is not (yet) documented in grammatical handbooks and formal studies in linguistics.

APPENDIX

Sentences with Preterite *had* + V-*ed* in East Palo Alto Corpus

Parenthetical information includes name, age, and example number in our list of narrative predicates. An asterisk indicates a written narrative.

1. ... And then so they HAD walked off and Gerald started walking off. ... [Tabitha, 12, #65]
2. ... and um we HAD came around a corner. ... [Tabitha, 12, #70]
3. ... and then um we HAD came around a corner. ... [Tabitha, 12, #71]
4. ... we HAD went home. ... [Tabitha, 12, #72]
5. ... and then um we HAD went outside. ... [Tabitha, 12, #84]
6. ... and then we HAD left. ... [Tabitha, 12, #87]
7. ... and um um after that we HAD missed the bus. ... [Tabitha, 12, #93]
8. ... and then me and Roné came and we HAD got wet too. ... [Tabitha, 12, #105]
9. ... I was on my way to school and I HAD slipped and fell. ... [Dafina, 12, #3]
10. ... Adie said ... and then um I HAD went home. ... [Anita, 12, #29]
11. ... and then my cousin HAD asked me. ... [Anita, 12, #30]
12. ... and then um Jeanine HAD said. ... [Anita, 12, #34]
13. ... she drove cars, then she HAD drove some that looked like bubber cars. ... [Jane*, 13, #299]
14. ... and then they HAD broke up. ... [Clinton, 12, #124]
15. ... and then all of a sudden this man come into my room, he had blood over his face and everything and he HAD grabbed my mother. ... [Angie, 12, #137]
16. ... I was goin' 'Ma! Ma!', and then she HAD just came, came in there. ... [Angie, 12, #143]
17. ... and then she HAD threw water on me and stuff. ... [Angie, 12, #144]
18. ... And then the shark HAD bit, ... [Clinton, 12, #175]
19. ... HAD got my leg. ... [Clinton, 12, #176]

20. . . . when I was up in the driveway, a car HAD backed up and it ran over my bike. . . . [Nathan, 12, #219]
21. . . . I was drivin' and then when we HAD got. . . [Angie, 12, #230]
22. . . . my auntie, she HAD took me to the bathroom. . . . [Angie, 12, #238]
23. . . . she HAD just took me up to the car. . . . [Angie, 12, #244]
24. . . . and we HAD just left. . . . [Angie, 12, #245]
25. . . . and they blew this thing up and it HAD crashed. . . . [Clinton, 12, #255]
26. . . . and it HAD went inside this place and this lady had him captured. . . . [Clinton, 12, #256]
27. . . . and then he HAD put the organ together and he start playing. . . . [Clinton, 12, #261]
28. One time my mom and my dad HAD went somewhere and she left me. . . . [Cathy, 12, #277]
29. . . . and my brother he HAD got mad at me 'cause I was on the phone. . . . [Cathy, 12, #277]
30. I said "No," and then so she HAD left me alone. . . . [Cathy, 12, #317]
31. . . . and then [she] HAD went home on our way. [Cathy, 12, #318]
32. . . . she pushed me and I fell and I HAD hurt my leg. . . . [Cathy, 12, #332]
33. . . . and then so I HAD got up so we started fighting. . . . [Cathy, 12, #334]
34. . . . I HAD got him on the ground and I had him like this. . . . [David, 10, #351]
35. We was playing yesterday and then after that him and his brother HAD had a fight. . . . [David, 10, #363]
36. . . . and he HAD gave up. [David, 10, #364]
37. . . . I said, "Man he messed you up, . . . and then he HAD messed. . ." [David, 10, #374]
38. . . . then he HAD pushed the referee so I uh let Anthony win. [David, 10, #375]
39. . . . and then uh Anthony HAD won. . . . [David, 10, #379]
40. . . . he made him uh give up cause he HAD hit him. . . . [David, 10, #382]
41. . . . he HAD hit him in his nose. . . . [David, 10, #383]
42. . . . and Jojo HAD gave up. [David, 10, #384]
43. . . . and then when it was my turn to fight him I HAD kept on hitting him. . . . [David, 10, #387]
44. . . . cause we was half wrestling, half boxing and he HAD pushed me down. . . . [David, 10, #411]
45. . . . after he HAD hit me in my jaw then I hit him back. . . . [David, 10, #412]
46. . . . and then he HAD just pushed me down. . . . [David, 10, #415]
47. . . . and I run go backwards and once he HAD uppercut me like that. . . . [David, 10, #419]
48. . . . and then he HAD hit me like that. . . . [David, 10, #420]
49. . . . and he HAD kicked me. [David, 10, #421]
50. . . . that's when he HAD push me down. [David, 10, #426]
51. And I HAD hit him in his nose. [David, 10, #458]
52. I HAD hit him in his nose, though. [David, 10, #460]

NOTES

This paper represents an extensive revision of a paper, "Preterite *had* in the BEV of Elementary School Children," which we presented at the eighteenth annual Conference on New Ways of Analyzing Variation in English (NWAVE 18), held at Duke University in October 1989. That paper in turn drew on data originally included in Th  berge (1988), a senior honors essay. We are grateful to Raina Jackson, Arnetha Ball, and Bonnie McElhinny for allowing us to use narratives they recorded in East Palo Alto; these provided a substantial number of the preterite *had* tokens in our data set. We are also grateful to Renee Blake for transcription and to Jabrina Walker for helping us to analyze the usage of older EPA speakers. We are also grateful to Educational Testing Service for supporting Christine's later work on this paper through a postdoctoral fellowship. Finally, we are indebted to Elizabeth Closs Traugott for helpful discussion of several critical points in the analysis and to Angela Rickford and Howard Rafal for their encouragement and support.

1. We follow Labov (1972, 393) in classifying speakers 10 to 12 years old as preadolescents and speakers 13 to 16 years old as adolescents. By this criterion, Jane, one of the "preadolescents" in our sample, is technically an adolescent, but her lone token of preterite *had* is included with those of the twelve-year-olds because she was a member of their peer group and in the same elementary school grade (sixth) as them.

2. According to Binnick (1991, 6, 11), the term *preterite* comes from Latin *praeteritum* 'gone by', while the term pluperfect comes from the Latin *plusquam-perfectus* 'more than perfect (i.e., completely done)'.

3. Fleischman (1990, 132) describes this pluperfect-favoring situation in terms similar to those of Comrie. Of the sequence *I finished writing my paper, I went to bed*, she notes that "a minimal narrative is produced by simply juxtaposing two clauses whose order is iconic to the assumed real-world chronology of the events they report." By contrast, the sentence *I went to bed after I had finished writing my paper* is described as configuring "the same scenario in terms of a foregrounded action in the main clause ('going to bed') to which the action of 'finishing the paper' is backgrounded by means of a subordinating conjunction ('after') and a tense of anteriority—the [pluperfect]."

4. Additionally, following the conventions of Labov (1972, 362) and Schiffrin (1981, 46), subordinate clauses and quotations are not considered narrative clauses and are therefore unlettered.

5. Labov (1972, 370) provides the following convenient characterizations of each of the major components of a narrative as answers to different underlying questions: ABSTRACT: What was this about? ORIENTATION: Who, what, when, where? COMPLICATING ACTION: Then what happened? EVALUATION: So what? RESULT (= RESOLUTION): What finally happened? To this we may add, from Fleischman (1990, 135), PEAK: What was the highpoint? CODA: What is the relation to the present context?

6. In conjoined verb phrases, as in (3a) and (3b), *had* occurs with the first verb only, and not the second (**I HAD SLIPPED and HAD FELL*). This is true even when the conjuncts are clausal and the second verb has an overt subject, as in (4a) and (4b) (*a car HAD BACKED UP and it RAN over*).

7. On grammaticalization in general, see Traugott and Heine (1991) and Hopper and Traugott (1993).

8. Not included in the count of past reference verbs, because they show no variation with preterite *had* + *V-ed*, are past tense copulas (151 tokens), modals (6 tokens), and instances of *didn't* (5 tokens). Past reference verbs within the dialogue rather than the narrative clauses of the story (e.g., "Mom, Andrew cracked his head open") were also excluded because they showed no variation with preterite *had* + *V-ed*.

9. We have recorded a number of present and past perfect examples from white Americans recently which include *V-ed* rather than *V-en*.

10. In one additional case (number 7 in the Appendix), preterite *had* + *V-ed* occurs in a clause beginning with *after that* instead of *then*. In another case (number 15 in the Appendix), the preterite *had* + *V-ed* clause is separated from *then* by two intervening clauses but still appears to be governed by it. Neither of these tokens was included in the *then* clause count for table 1, which includes only clear and unambiguous cases.

11. The one exception is main verb *had* as a preterite, which co-occurs with *then* only 13% of the time. This may be due to the fact that this is a stative predicate, since virtually all of the *had* + *V-ed* preterites are nonstative verbs, referring to actions which are more likely to be described as subsequent to other actions.

12. One of the two pluperfect tokens appears to occur in a *then when* time clause (e.g., *Then when he HAD BROKE it, I was trying to clean it up*), but as we can see from the larger context of the narrative (example 7 on page 236) in which this clause occurs, this *then* is equivalent to *moreover* and serves the function of discourse-marking rather than that of an anaphoric reference-point shifter. Note that the time frame of this *then* clause is NOT subsequent to the time frame of the immediately preceding clause or clauses (as it is in the case of the 25 tokens of *then*-clauses with preterite *had*), but that it takes us back to a point somewhere in the middle of the preceding sequence (see example 7 on page 236).

13. The data in Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995) were collected in a rural east-central community of Texas (Springville) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Although Vanessa is older (born in 1961) and her relatively high percentage of preterite *had* use in orientation clauses (48%, 13/27) accords with the hypothesis, the correlation between age and use of preterite *had* in orientation clauses is relatively weak in the Springville corpus, at least to the extent that we were able to compute it from the data in Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995, table 1). Brandy, born in 1982, shows an equally high percentage of *had* use in orientation clauses (46%, 6/13), and Lamar, born in 1976, shows categorical use (100%, 4/4) in orientation clauses. Sheila, born in 1979, uses preterite *had* in orientation clauses less often (29%, 11/38) than Vanessa does, as the hypothesis would lead us to expect, but the older speaker Travis, born in 1965, showed categorical NON-use (0%, 0/7) in orientation clauses, contrary to the hypothesis. These fluctuations, of course, may be due to the relatively small number of tokens and speakers. If we restrict ourselves only to speakers with 25 tokens or more, we get a relatively clear contrast between Vanessa (born in 1961), with 48% *had* use in orientation clauses, and Sheila (born in 1979), with only 29%. It will be interesting to see if this correlation holds up with additional data.

14. For convenience, we retain the line lettering of Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995) in this and other examples, which follows the conventions of Labov (1972) insofar as both narrative and nonnarrative clauses are lettered as long as they are independent clauses. Our own practice, as noted above, is to follow the convention of Schifffrin (1981) and letter only the narrative or complicating action clauses.

15. Dream narratives, such as those in (12) and (13), can be temporally complex. Whether the reference point is related to tense in the dream itself or in the consciousness of the dreamer after waking is not always clear. Note, however, particularly in (12), that the analysis of the use of *had* + *V-ed* to mark a particularly intense complicating action holds for both the narration of the dream and for the narration of an event that took place after waking.

16. The exceptions were David, a fourth grader who was about 10 when he was recorded, and Jane, a sixth grader who, at 13, was just one year older than most of her classmates.

17. In Foxy's case, only the transcript of the first reel-to-reel tape resulting from her first interview (EPA 7) was searched; in Tinky's case, the transcripts of both reel-to-reel tapes from her first interview (EPA 12 and 13) were searched. Searches were done for these strings: *had*, *hadn'*, *'d*, *have*, *haven'*, *'ve*, *done*, and *been*.

18. In this respect, the *had give it back* clause would also be anterior in Caribbean English creoles, eligible for marking with *bin* (in the basilect) or with *did* or *had* (in the mesolect). On this point, compare Givón (1982): "It [*bin*] marks out of sequence clauses in the narrative, specifically those which 'look back' and relate events that occurred earlier than the preceding clause in the narrative" (121). See also Bickerton (1975, 109) and Rickford (1987, 141–43).

19. Other present perfect forms used by Foxy and Tinky include *Ø been*, *done*, and *ain'*. See Winford (1993) for a related analysis of these and other present perfect variants in Trinidadian English Creole (TEC).

20. Tinky's other three tokens all involved modals (e.g., *shoulda been* and *would have changed*), suggesting that Winford's suggestion (1993) that these forms serve as entry points for the acquisition of the present perfect in TEC might also be applicable to AAVE.

21. This does not mean that we agree with their primary explanation for this fact—that the lone *d* remaining from the contraction of *had* is less subject to deletion than the lone *v* or *z* remaining from the contraction of *have* or *has* (225). Whether or not this phonetic explanation turns out to be valid, we suspect that auxiliary *had* as a category is acquired before auxiliary *have*, so that the grammar provides more *had* forms than *have* forms as input to the phonetic reduction rules.

22. A fourth example is from an 11-year-old New Yorker who is not a peer-group member.

23. Of course, Loflin (1967) had earlier asserted that AAVE had no underlying *have* at all. Labov et al. (1968) argue persuasively against this sweeping generalization, although they themselves conclude that "one cannot say that the position of *have* in [AAVE] is entirely secure" (223).

24. Recall that table 1 shows frequencies only in narratives containing at least one occurrence of preterite *had*.

25. Penelope Johnson's non-use of preterite *had* is, of course, precisely what we would expect if Cukor-Avila and Bailey's hypothesis about the time course of this change applied more generally, since she was born before World War I.

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