

GH.Pittsburghese.AAVE (AW 10/19/2005-10/26/2005)

Line	Speaker	
1	TP	So have you ever heard of Pittsburghese?
2	GH	Mmhm.
3	TP	... What, like, [either, where] ... where have, where was your, where were you when you first ... either heard the word or ... experienced ... hearing the word, or seeing [billboards,] or whatever the case may be, where, ...
4		[[laughs]] [You know,]
5		[where do you]
6	GH	[I've seen it on,] ... it, I've seen it, I've seen it more as a, sort of a <u>touristy</u> thing, ... you know, like, I've seen t-shirts, and ... um ... uh, like in the Visitor's Bureau stuff, [that kind of,]
7	TP	[Yeah.]
8	GH	you know, that kind of thing.
9	TP	Right.
10	GH	As a, as a, sort of like a ... a characteristic of the city, [kind of.]
11	TP	[Right.] Yeah.
12	GH	You know?
13	TP	Unhunh.
14	GH	It's kind of where I see it. You know, I've ... the t-shirt thing,
15	TP	Right.
16	GH	You know, like, if you go to a t-shirt shop, [it'll have] Pittsburghese, and it's got these things on it. You know, you're kinda like, "Mmm, okay."
17	TP	[You'll see it.] ((laughs)) Um, ... have you ever, actually ever bought ... [any] ... souvenirs? ((laughs))
18	GH	[No.] No.
19	TP	Would you say you actually speak it?
20	GH	No.
21	TP	No?
22	GH	Ununh. (<i>no</i>) I don't say, "SLIBERTY."
23	TP	None of the time? Do you ever see your-, find yourself saying it <u>any</u> of the time?
24	GH	... I don't ever say, "SLIBERTY."
25	TP	No?
26	GH	No.
27	TP	What about, "yinzer?"
28	GH	No. "Younz?" No.
29	TP	"Yinz" or "yinzer?"
30	GH	I don't say, "younz." No. "Yinzer?" No.
31	TP	Do you ever ...
32	GH	"Younz." Mm mm. (<i>no</i>)
33	TP	What about people, like, ... in your family? Do you think that they talk Pittsburghese? Or,

34	GH	Mm mm. (<i>no</i>)
35	TP	No?
36	GH	Mm mm. (<i>no</i>)
37	TP	So I'm just gonna ... say some words,
38	GH	Okay.
39	TP	And I want you to tell me, ((laughs)) if you say them, or if you don't,
40	GH	Okay.
41	TP	Or if you [think] that [they're] Pittsburghese or not.
42	GH	[Okay.] [Okay.]
43	TP	Um, "These ... leftovers need eating." It's a structure, ... the way that the structure of the sentence is.
44	GH	Say it again.
45	TP	"These leftovers need eating." Or, ((1 second pause)) you could ... easily say that, "the grass needs cutting," ... or, "the clothes needs ... washing." ((2 second pause)) [Do you]
46	GH	[Do I use] those?
47	TP	Do you use that structure?
48	GH	Mm mm. (<i>no</i>)
49	TP	No? Okay.
50	GH	Mm mm. (<i>no</i>)
51	TP	What about "red up?"
52	GH	... Mm mm. (<i>no</i>)
53	TP	Have you ever heard of "red up" though?
54	GH	Mmhmm.
55	TP	Okay.
56	GH	I know what it means.
57	TP	What is it? ((laughs))
58	GH	It means like to straighten up, or to, you know, [get stuff] together.
59	TP	[Yeah.] Where, where have you heard it? Like, do [you have, other people?]
60	GH	[Just, ... just as a part of] Pittsburghese.
61	TP	Other people, so other people are talking to you would use that word, (and)
62	GH	... No, ... I've, I've heard that as a term
63	TP	Term?
64	GH	when people were saying, ... "This is an example of"
65	TP	Pittsburghese.
66	GH	"Pittsburghese."
67	TP	Okay. ... But you never actually heard it used in any sentence by any person?
68	GH	You know, I (don't), I'm trying to think if my grandmother used it, ... I, I, I ... don't, but it's not a, it's <u>not</u> a phrase that
69	TP	That you ... would use at all?
70	GH	Ununh. (<i>no</i>)
71	TP	So you would say, "I clean up," right? Not,
72	GH	Mmhmm.
73	TP	Okay. ... Alright. Uh, ... what about ... "grinny?" "Grinny?"

74	GH	I [don't know] what that is.
75	TP	[No?] Uh, "PIXBURGH?"
76	GH	Oh, I <u>hate</u> that. ((laughs)) Oh, I hate that. No, I don't say that.
77	TP	No?
78	GH	((laughs)) I hate that.
79	TP	Have you heard people [actually pronounce it] "PIXBURGH?"
80	GH	[Oh, ... absolutely.] Absolutely.
81	TP	Yeah?
82	GH	Oh yeah.
83	TP	((laughs))
84	GH	Oh, ... it, it's horrible. [I think it's terrible.]
85	TP	[Do you,] do you think that that form of speaking is like, ... I don't know, uh, =
86	GH	= I think it's <u>sloppy</u> .
87	TP	Sloppy?
88	GH	Mmhmm.
89	TP	... Okay.
90	GH	It's not ... I mean, ... "P-I-C-K-S."
91	TP	No?
92	GH	It's "P-I-T-T-S."
93	TP	"P-I-T-T-S." ((laughs))
94	GH	You know what I'm saying, I mean it's
95	TP	Yeah. ((2 second pause)) I see.
96	GH	Am I snobbish? ((laughs))
97	TP	No, I don't think so.
98	GH	You know, ... [I just]
99	TP	[There are] a lot of people who, ... interestingly enough, ... the, the, the people that I interview that are ... from the older generation ... will say, "Well, I think it's a lazy way of speaking."
100	GH	Yeah.
101	TP	I haven't interviewed anybody from the younger generation ... so, ... who either grew up during the hip hop era or whatever,
102	GH	Yeah.
103	TP	when slang was really at a height
104	GH	Yeah.
105	TP	in, in speaking.
106	GH	Yeah. [I think it's sloppy.]
107	TP	[I still have yet] to, to hear their, ... their opinion on it.
108	GH	Yeah. ((2 second pause)) I mean, it's like, it's like ... when people say, "I AXED somebody."
109	TP	"I AXED." ((laughs)) Do, ((laughs))
110	GH	It's not, "A-X-E-D." It's not, "A-X-E-D."
111	TP	Do you ever find yourself correcting people... when they, when they speak Pittsburghese?
112	GH	Oh, and here's, here's the other one, I, I started thinking ... No, I don't. I

		don't really, I'm not around a lot of people who use it.
113	TP	Mmhmm.
114	GH	The other one is, "I seen." I hear people say, "I seen" ... so often... I started to wonder whether or not they've changed, you know, like, is ... (obviously), everybody says, "I seen him ... I seen so and so." I'm like, "What happened to 'I saw?'" The past tense of "see" is "saw."
115	TP	But see I think that that's the ... when people,
116	GH	What is that?
117	TP	Removing one word makes it easier ... to ... to, to ... to say it.
118	GH	"I seen?"
119	TP	Instead [of saying, "I had seen,"] or
120	GH	[Instead of, "I saw?"] "I saw."
121	TP	(And I), ... right, but ... people don't understand that ... you have to have a past participle [to go with the]
122	GH	[Right. You have to say, "I ..."], ["I've seen." "I've seen."]
123	TP	[You have to have the "had" to go with the] "seen." Yeah.
124	GH	But that's a whole different ... that's a different ... uh, =
125	TP	= Tense.
126	GH	Yeah.
127	TP	Yeah. ((1 second pause)) So if you say, "I had seen," ... I mean that tense is awkward in and of itself, but "I saw," yeah that would make more sense. I've [seen more people say that, too.]
128	GH	[And that's, ... and that's where,] and that's where I see, ... to me ... it's ... "I saw." I mean it, I mean people say, "I seen him yesterday."
129	TP	((1 second pause, then laughs)) "I seen him yesterday."
130	GH	And that's how they use it.
131	TP	(And), are you talking, are you referring to like, ... African Americans?
132	GH	Um,
133	TP	Or [just in general?]
134	GH	[Uh, mostly.]
135	TP	[Okay.]
136	GH	[... Mostly.] Mostly. And I don't know if it's a, if it's a Black phenomenon, [(or if it's) not.]
137	TP	[[laughs]]
138	GH	But I am just ... really articulate people say, "I seen." ((2 second pause)) And that I'm tempted to correct.
139	TP	[[laughs]]
140	GH	I hate that, I think that's horrible, oh, oo, (real) bad.
141	TP	[And another question,] do you think that African American Pittsburghers speak different ... from <u>White</u> Pittsburghers? ((2 second pause)) Either as ... and not even saying like, that they speak ... poorly ... but do they just share a different way of speaking ... either about their culture, about their identities ... that's fundamentally different from ((2 second pause)) White Pittsburghers?
142	GH	((1 second pause)) I think it depends on ((1 second pause)) socioeconomic

		status.
143	TP	You think so?
144	GH	Mmhmm. =
145	TP	= Mmhmm.
146	GH	Mmhmm. I do. ((1 second pause)) I, you know, I think my friends speak like I do.
147	TP	Yeah.
148	GH	You know, ... um, ... and even my daughter's friends, I mean, ((2 second pause)) I think, ... sometimes I, I, I think that, uh, ... they're almost bilingual ... in a sense.
149	TP	Really? =
150	GH	= I mean there's a whole, I mean cause they understand the whole rap thing,
151	TP	Yes.
152	GH	You know?
153	TP	Yes.
154	GH	But my daughter ... and her friends also ((2 second pause)) speak well.
155	TP	Mmhmm. So they can code switch? They can go from talking ... for, in professional language, or a professional manner,
156	GH	Unhunh. ... Unhunh.
157	TP	to talking <u>in</u> slang.
158	GH	Mmhmm.
159	TP	And do you think that that's because of the influence of hip hop as a music, as a, as a ... emerged in African American culture ... to be a ... powerful phenomenon ... in the way young people speak?
160	GH	Unhunh. ... I mean, I think it's had a, I think it's had a, a <u>really</u> significant impact.
161	TP	Yeah.
162	GH	And, and ... where I think it's <u>not</u> good ... is where ... that's all ... a, a youngster knows. =
163	TP	= Can, ... can say.
164	GH	Right.
165	TP	Right. =
166	GH	= Right.
167	TP	So they can't ... [so they can't] ... go back and forth.
168	GH	[They can't go back and forth.]
169	TP	No.
170	GH	So that when, so if that's all you <u>know</u> , ... then when you come into a <u>job</u> situation,
171	TP	And then you <u>use</u> that,
172	GH	Then you <u>use</u> that, ... then ... that's
173	TP	That's ... a detriment to them.
174	GH	Right.
175	TP	Mmhmm. ((shuffling papers in background))
176	GH	Right. ... And ((2 second pause)) you know, I don't, I don't, I mean, you know there's probably some school of thought that would say, ... "What's

		wrong with that?" You know, "Why, why, why, does, does ... the culture require me to speak <u>this way</u> ?"
177	TP	Well, I think if you don't have to reach outside that ... context then it's fine.
178	GH	Mmhmm.
179	TP	But ... in order to have any success ... in life, I think you <u>have</u> to.
180	GH	Yeah. Yeah. But there, but I'm sure there are people who are resentful,
181	TP	[Yeah.]
182	GH	[like,] "Why do, why do I have to speak like" =
183	TP	= I agree with that. And therefore ... even ... because of that ... resentment, they don't wanna
184	GH	Yeah.
185	TP	speak at all. Like, I remember talking to someone about a, a young man ... who ... who had the option to, to learn English, ... he spoke Spanish, ... and he <u>refused</u> to because he says, "That's ... truly a part of my identity, ... and I don't want to learn ... American English ... at all. Like, I don't even want to have that be in my," ((2 second pause))
186	GH	Mmhmm.=
187	TP	= "you know, my way of doing <u>anything</u> ."
188	GH	Mmhmm.
189	TP	Just so, to, to show passion and pride for his identity as a, a Hispanic. =
190	GH	= Mmhmm. Mmhmm. Mmhmm.
191	TP	Um, ... and one last question, do you think that African Americans, uh, in general ((1 second pause)) uh, or African Americans in Pittsburgh ... share, uh, common ways of speaking ... with, from African Americans in other cities, ... either Cleveland or ... even like African Americans ... in the South? Um, do you think there's a commonality ... amongst us ... in our language? ((2 second pause)) Or do you think it ... again depends on socioeconomic status?
192	GH	((2 second pause)) I, I kinda do.
193	TP	Mmhmm.
194	GH	I think, I think that has a lot ... to do with ... how people articulate.
195	TP	Yeah.
196	GH	You know?
197	TP	And who has access to resources to [be able] to learn [Standard] English.
198	GH	[Mmhmm.] [Mmhmm.] Mmhmm. Mmhmm. Or, or, ... and, and I think the other thing that, that, that, that plays a role in it, when, when my children, I can remember when my children were, were, were little and they were first learning how to speak ... one, one of the things ... and there were some other things that my, my ex-husband and I agreed on was... we corrected our children.
199	TP	Okay.
200	GH	You know, like, if they said the wrong tense or if they, ... you know, left out the verb ((breathes in)), you know, it was low key, it wasn't, you know, "I'm gonna beat you over the head," =
201	TP	= ((laughs)) =

202	GH	= Or, "You made a mistake," ... but, [you know,] if my daughter said, "I seen," I'd say, "Naw, that's, 'I saw.'"
203	TP	[[((laughs))] Okay.
204	GH	You know, ... so, our thing was ((1 second pause)) let's, ... they need to learn it right.
205	TP	Right.
206	GH	Whether they understand it, [why] or not,
207	TP	[Or not,] Mmhmm.
208	GH	they need to understand ... the tenses, and the ... you know, they need to understand how to say it correctly.
209	TP	Yes.
210	GH	They'll understand the why later ... somewhere along the line, but they're not going to have to <u>unlearn</u>
211	TP	Yes.
212	GH	((2 second pause)) incorrect
213	TP	Okay.
214	GH	usage ... and then relearn it,
215	TP	Yes.
216	GH	Or,... or, or be ... fumbling, going [back and forth]
217	TP	[... Back and forth.]
218	GH	And so, and I think that ... if you, if ... there's so many really really young kids <u>having</u> young kids ... they can't correct them, ... cause [they don't know it themselves]
219	TP	[Because they] still haven't learned it [themselves.]
220	GH	[Yeah.] They don't know it themselves, and I think that ... has a significant ... impact on things, too. ... Um, ... I think that you, you model what you, what you hear,
221	TP	Mmhmm.
222	GH	And if you're, if you're in a household where you hear people speaking a particular way, you're more likely
223	TP	... To speak [as them.]
224	GH	[To speak] ... the way you hear people around you speak.
225	TP	Yes.
226	GH	Um, ... and I think that has a lot to do with language skill development.
227	TP	Mmhmm.
228	GH	Um, ... and reading, I think, you know, reading, ... you know, I'm, I, I'm in-, I'm involved with ... organization called, uh, Beginning With Books, ... you know, and that, and that, you know, ... I've learned so much about early childhood literacy ... and the importance of reading
229	TP	Yes.
230	GH	to young children. I mean, and you kind of know it, ((breathes in)) but, um, ... you realize how important that is for language formation, ... [and just,]
231	TP	[It is.]
232	GH	I mean, it's <u>critical</u> .
233	TP	But do you think like that African American culture ... is inherently an oral

		tradition? ((1 second pause)) Much like
234	GH	Yeah.
235	TP	Okay.
236	GH	I do.
237	TP	((1 second pause)) But do you think that sometimes that it can be ... too .. there's, there's too much of a good thing, if you will? ... Too much of the oral and not enough of the literate ... coming together ... to work in conjunction with each other? ((breathes in)) So if you have a child who's growing up in a household where the parents really don't ((1 second pause)) promote reading, but more or less is growing up in a household where ... the oral tradition is really,
238	GH	Mmhmm.
239	TP	you know, ... how they communicate,
240	GH	Mmhmm.
241	TP	um, ((1 second pause)) then that child is not going to have, obviously, the same sort of ... language skills as [someone] who's parents ... can balance [the oral] tradition with literate tradition.
242	GH	[Mmhmm.] [Yeah.] Yeah.
243	TP	Do you, do you agree ... that ... that that can sometimes be a detriment?
244	GH	... I think you need to balance. =
245	TP	= I, I, I think so, too. =
246	GH	= I really do. =
247	TP	= I agree. =
248	GH	= I really do. I think you need the balance. I think ((breathes in)), I think, you know, you do, you do kids such a disservice.
249	TP	Yeah. ... You do. =
250	GH	= Um, ... you know, and, and I ((2 second pause)), you know ... () having, I taught, you know, I taught, you know, seventh, eighth and ninth grade, and ((1 second pause)) when you, when you ((1 second pause)) when you send kids on unprepared, it just ... it just ... it's gonna, it's gonna catch up with them
251	TP	It will.
252	GH	at some point. And I, and I can remember ... being really really frustrated with ... you know, as a <u>history</u> teacher ... you know, having kids who couldn't write a sentence ... you know, ... and so =
253	TP	= And what grades did you teach?
254	GH	I taught seventh, eighth and ninth.
255	TP	Okay.
256	GH	And ... I used to ... I used to say to them ... I don't want ... sentence fragments. ((1 second pause)) You know, don't give me a sentence fragment. I want a, a subject and a verb and a capital letter and period. You know, I want a =
257	TP	= And subject verb agreement? ((laughs))
258	GH	Yeah. ((laughs)) I want, ... this is, I want a complete sentence. They thought I was, they thought I was, like, crazy.

259	TP	... [That's amazing.]
260	GH	[... You know,] and I would say, you know, you don't walk out of English and leave your English in English. You bring it to History, you take it to Math, ... you know, and they (were just). ((breathes in)) And they would get good grades ... in other subjects, and they would not get good grades from me.
261	TP	Mmhmm. =
262	GH	= And they'd wonder what was wrong with me.
263	TP	Mmhmm.
264	GH	You know, ... but people were passing kids based on the fact that they were ... no problem, they were, you know, good kids, they were, you know, ... and, you know, and I'd, and I'd see teachers and I'd say, ((breathes in)) you know, "Don't give em an A ... in Reading ... give em an A in Citizenship."
265	TP	Right. [Oh.] I like that.
266	GH	[You know.] "Do not give them an A in Reading, cause when they come to History, ... and they can't read, ... I'm not giving them an A."
267	TP	No.
268	GH	You know, so, [... so] the uneven, ... the unevenness in, ... in the school system, ... I think, ... was, was ... difficult
269	TP	[I agree.] Yeah.
270	GH	for kids. It sent kids the wrong messages. =
271	TP	= Mmhmm. ... [Mmhmm.]
272	GH	[Uh,] ... about what they knew, and, and, you know, and, and, and that was years ago, and I don't, I don't, you know, I don't know, ... it's been a long [time since I been] ... been in the public system, but ... it was <u>tough</u> . Teaching was tough.
273	TP	[Oh, I think it's gotten worse.] ((2 second pause)) Hmmm. Okay. Well thank you [((GH's first name)).]
274	GH	[I talked your] ear off, didn't I?
275	TP	No, I had a good time.
276	GH	((laughs))