



Sudan University of Science & Technology

College of Languages
English Department

Sociolinguistics

African American Vernacular English (AAVE)

**A research submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree of (B.A) in English language**

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this piece of work firstly to my dear family and particularly to my mother, mother, mother and then to my father whom have given me the hope. To my brothers and sisters and special tribute goes to my dear brother Mohammed.

Secondly, many thanks go to my faithful friends Hani, Emad and Ala'aldin whom the stood by me in my critical times. To my dear friend Amjad Al-Saim

Thirdly, appreciation goes to my colleagues with whom I have spent

nice times. Fourthly, I dedicate it to my lovely girl- friend.

Ultimately. To anyone who teaches me a lesson in the life.

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Fourthly, I would like to pay tribute to the staff of English department at SUST for their endless efforts in directing me to the right path. They have done a lot to me whereas others failed.

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Abstract

This studied was carried out at Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUST), it entitled “ African American Vernacular English AAVE”. AAVE is a widespread dialect spoken by the black American people of African origin in different towns of USA. This study serves as analogy between the AAVE and the Standard Language of America for the purpose of finding out the similarities and the differences between them.

This study points out the discrepancy between AAVE and the Standard Language (SL). Also, the study looked at the phonological, grammatical and lexical differences between the two dialects. The methodology of this study is analytical method.

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter one consists of overview, statements of the problem, the questions of the study, the hypotheses of the study, objective of the study, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study and methodology of the study. Chapter two consists of theoretical framework and literature review. Moreover, the researcher speaks about the variety of dialects within the English language, and then he sheds some light on the different terminology of these dialects. The researcher gives great deal of details about the matter of AAVE in terms of its origin and speakers.

Furthermore, in the third chapter, the researcher speaks about the AAVE’s community and the method followed to compile the data, in addition to, the methodology adopted by the researcher.

In the fourth chapter, the findings pointed out that, there are considerable differences between AAVE and SL in terms of lexical, phonological and

grammatical aspects. Nevertheless, it states that, the AAVE descended from the SL and each one has its distinctive features.

Lastly, the researcher provides summary about the study and he shows the final results of the study.

مستخلص البحث

أجريت هذه الدراسة في كلية اللغات بجامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا، حيث عنونت بي (African American Vernacular English) وهي اللهجة الشائعة في مدن جنوب أمريكا والتي يتحدثها عدد كبير من الأمريكيون السود ذو الأصول الأفريقية. هذه الدراسة هي عبارة عن مقارنه بين هذه اللهجه واللغه الرسميه لأمريكا، من أجل إكتشاف أوجه الشبه والإختلاف بين هاتين اللهجتين.

وتشير الدراسة إلي وجود إختلافات عديده بين هذه اللهجه واللهجه الرسميه والشايعة في أمريكا، حيث تطرقت الدراسة للحديث عن الإختلافات الصوتيه والنحويه والمفردات بين اللهجتين. حيث تنتهج هذه الدراسة المنهج التحليلي للبيانات من أجل التوصل للنتائج المرجوا.

تتكون هذه الدراسة من خمسة فصول:

في الفصل الأول قام الباحث بإعطاء مقدمه عن هذه الدراسة، ثم قام بإيضاح المشكله التي تتضمنها هذه الدراسة والتي تسعى في إيجاد الحلول لها. ثم تطرق للحديث عن أهمية هذه الدراسة والأهداف التي تسعى إلي تحقيقها، ومن أجل تحقيق هذه الأهداف قام الباحث بوضع فرضيات للأسئله التي توجهها هذه الدراسة حتي تتحقق الأهداف التي تسعى إليها هذه الدراسة بإثبات هذه الفرضيات أو العكس.

في الفصل الثاني قم الباحث أولاً بالحديث عن تنوع اللهجات التي تحتويها اللغه الإنجليزيه مما يساعد علي إيضاح أي نوع من اللهجات التي تتضمنها هذه اللهجه. ثم تطرق بعد ذلك للحديث عن هذه اللهجه بالتفصيل معطياً تعاريف لهذه اللهجه وموضحاً الأسماء العديده التي تكني بها ، وأيضاً تحدث الباحث عن أصل هذه اللهجه وعن الذين يتحدثونها.

الفصل الثالث يشمل منهجية البحث، حيث قام الباحث بالحديث عن المجتمع الذي يشمل هذه الدراسة وقام أيضاً بالحديث عن الأداء التي إستخدمها من أجل جمع البيانات مع إيضاح المنهج الذي ينتهجه لتحليلها. وتطرق للحديث عن الإجراءات اللأزمه التي إتبعها في جمع البيانات وتحليلها.

تناول الفصل الرابع تحليل البيانات والنتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة مع المناقشه، حيث أشارت النتائج بعد المقارنه بين كلي اللهجتين إلي وجود إختلافات عديده بينهما من حيث النطق والنحو والمفردات وعلي الرغم من أن بعض السمات التي تتسم بها لهجة السود تتحدر من اللغه الرسميه لأمريكا، إلا أن الدراسة أثبتت ان كلاهما تتصف ببعض السمات التي تميزها عن غيرها.

وأخيراً في الفصل الخامس إختتم الباحث كلامه بملخص شامل للبحث، ثم وضع النتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة .

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African American Vernacular English (AAVE)

Chapter One

Research Proposal & Layout

1.0 Introduction:

When people belong to the same group, they often speak similarly. But there are many different groups in a community, and so any individual may share linguistic features with a range of other speakers. Some of features indicate a person's social status; others distinguish women and men or identify a person as a teenager rather than as a middle-aged citizen. There are also linguistics clues to a person's ethnicity, and closely related to all these are linguistics features which characterize a group of people. Individuals draw on all these resources when they construct their social identities.

Many ethnic groups use a distinctive language associated with their cultural identity. It is often possible for an individual to signal their cultural background by the language they choose to use.

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is an African American variety of American English. It shares parts of its grammar and phonology with Southern American English, which is spoken by many people in the United States. Several Creolists, including William Stewart, John Dillard, and John Rickford, argue that (AAVE) shares so many characteristics

with African Creole dialects spoken in much of the world that (AAVE) itself is a Creole, while others maintain that there are no significant parallels.

(AAVE) shares several characteristics with Creole English language-forms spoken by people throughout much of the world. (AAVE) has pronunciation, grammatical structures, and vocabulary in common with various West African languages.

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

The distinction between the standard and non standard dialects still the issue for many linguists, and the majority of students have no ability to differentiate between (AAVE) and (SAE), because each one has own characteristics which are differ from another. The study tries to expose the differences between (AAVE) and American English in terms of phonology, vocabulary and grammar.

1.2 Significance of the Study:

Firstly this study is very important to the students, because it supplies them a lot of information and deep knowledge about (AAVE), also it helps them to differentiate between standard and non standard dialects particularly (AAVE) and (SAE), add for that it will be useful to those who want to make deep progress in American English, and surely to those who are always interested of the language change.

1.3 Research Questions:

This study addresses the following questions:

- 1- To what extend do the rules of (AAVE) differ from the rules of (SAE)?
- 2- Do they have the same characteristics of phonology?

3- Do they differ in their vocabulary or they share some words?

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study:

This study attempts to confirm the following hypotheses

- 1- The rules of (AAVE) are quite different from the rules of (SAE).
- 2- They do not have the same features of phonology.
- 3- (AAVE) and (SAE) have mutual vocabulary.

1.5 Objectives of the Study:

This study aims to realize the following goals

- i. To provide the students deep information about (AAVE).
- ii. To find out the differences between (AAVE) and (SAE).

1.6 Methodology of the Research:

This study follows the analytical method. The researcher will collect the data to answer the questions of the study. Data will be collected from two sources: Primary data will be documents from internet. Secondary data will be collected from different references.

1.7 Scopes of the Study:

This study is limited to (AAVE) dialect, its deep study about this dialect. Also it contains some comparison between this dialect and (SAE).

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework & Literature Review

2.0 Introduction:

This chapter talks about AAVE variety in details and it includes two sections. The first section is theoretical framework and it gives information about language varieties and some terms which related to this variety and it is very important to focus on these terms and give background about them. The second section is the literature review which it focuses on the background of AAVE, definitions, names and some reviews about the origin of this variety; moreover it presents the features of this variety.

Section One

2.1 Theoretical Framework:

2.1.1 Language Varieties:

A particular language is never an entirely homogeneous entity. A language consists of many varieties which are different but mutually intelligible. Speakers of the same language may use different words, syntactic structures and pronunciations, and individual speakers' speech may vary from time to time. In addition, we are aware of variation in one another's speech, often unconsciously. We have the capacity to understand the different varieties of our native language and also to understand the social significance they carry. For indeed, variation in

language is linked with a speaker's regional background, social class, race, age and gender (Wardhaugh 1993, 130). Thus, society and language are intertwined.

2.1.2 Standard Language:

When we describe the sounds, words and sentences of English, we are in fact concentrate on the features of only one variety, usually labeled Standard English. This is the variety, which forms the basis of printed English in newspapers, and books, which is used in the mass media and which is taught in schools. It is the variety that it is normally try to teach to those who want to learn English as a second language. It is clearly associated with education and broadcasting in public contexts and is more easily described in terms of the written language (i.e. vocabulary, spelling, grammar) than the spoken language. It is also the variety, which some people consider to be the only type of correct English, and as such should be kept "pure". An extreme version of this point of view has been institutionalized in France where a body of scholars known as the French Academy, regularly meets and decides whether a particular word for example is a part of Standard French or not. In their attempts to keep the French language "pure" the Academy mostly decides against words, which have been borrowed from other languages. Despite these decisions terms such as le whisky and le weekend have become commonly used expressions in what we would normally think of Standard French.

2.1.3 Vernacular Language:

The term Vernacular is used in a number of ways. It generally refers to a language which has not been standardised and which does not have official status. There are hundreds of vernacular languages, such as Buang in Papua New Guinea, also Juba Arabic is considered as a vernacular language in northern Sudan, many of

which have never been written down or described. In a multilingual speech community, the many different ethnic or tribal languages used by different groups are referred to as vernacular languages. Vernaculars are usually the first languages learned by people in multilingual communities, and they are often used for a relatively narrow range of informal functions.

There are three components of the meaning of the term vernacular, then. The most basic refers to the fact that a vernacular is an uncodified or unstandardised variety. The second refers to the way it is acquired – in the home, as a first variety. The third is the fact that it is used relatively circumscribed functions. The first component has been most widely used as defining criterion, but emphasis on one or other components has led to the use of the term vernacular with somewhat different meanings.

Some have extended the term to refer to any language which is not the official language of a country. An influential 1951 UNESCO report, for instance, defined a vernacular language as the first language of a group socially or politically dominated by a group with a different language. So in the country such as Sudan where Arabic is the language of the dominant group, a language like French is considered as a vernacular language. But French would not be regarded as a vernacular language in France. The term vernacular simply means a language which is not an official language in a particular context. When people talk about education in a vernacular language, for instance, they are usually referring to education in an ethnic minority in a particular country.

The term vernacular generally refers to the most colloquial variety in a person's linguistic repertoire. In a multilingual community this variety will often be an unstandardised ethnic or tribal language. The vernacular is the variety used for communication in the home and with close friends. It is the language of solidarity

between people from the same ethnic group. By extension the term has been used to refer in a monolingual community to the most informal and colloquial variety of a language which may also have a standardized variety. Finally, the term vernacular is sometimes used to indicate that a language is used for everyday interaction, without implying that it is appropriate only in informal domains. Hebrew, for instance, used to be a language of ritual and religion with no native speakers. It was no one's 'parental tongue' and was certainly not considered a vernacular language.

2.1.4 Pidgins and Creoles:

A pidgin is a language which has no native speakers. Pidgins develop as a means of communication between people who do not have a common language. Some people think that a pidgin is like a baby – talk and it is not a real language, but in fact that believe is not correct, a pidgin is a real language and it has own characteristics, as the following example demonstrates:

(Young visitor to Papua New Guinea)

"When I first heard Pidgin English I just thought it was baby-talk. I thought anyone can do that. It has word like liklik for 'little' and cranky for 'wrong' and nogut for 'bad'. It just made me laugh. Then I began to realize it wasn't easy as I'd thought. People kept correcting me when I tried, and they got annoyed if I didn't take it seriously. I soon learned better". (Holmes,2008,86).

The structure of a pidgin is not very complicated as the structure of the standard variety, for example: Juba Arabic is a pidgin language spoken in the southern Sudan. It has a small vocabulary of words for trade and basic communication, and borrows when necessary from native languages of the Sudan or from colloquial

Arabic. It has a very simple sound system and has almost entirely eliminated the complicated morphology of Arabic (which has inflections for gender, number and person on the noun, and tense and negation on the verb). Juba Arabic has its own distinct structure, and it's a stable variety. Though it is easier for an Arabic person to learn than for an English speaker, it does require learning and cannot be just improvised for an occasion. To sum up, a pidgin language has three identifying characteristics:

1. It is used in restricted domains and functions.
2. It has a simplified structure compared to the source languages.
3. It generally has low prestige and attracts negative attitudes – especially from outsiders.

Pidgin languages do not have high status or prestige and, to those who do not speak them, they often seem ridiculous languages. They have been described as mongrel jargons and macaroni lingos. Because of the large number of pidgin words which derive from a European language in a pidgin such as Tok Pisin, many Europeans consider pidgins to be a debased form of their own language. They assume they can guess the meanings; this can lead to misunderstandings which can be very serious, as the following example demonstrates:

"A Papua New Guinean stumbled against a white woman coming out of the theatre. When questioned about what had happen, the Papua New Guinean replied: 'Mi putim han long baksait bilong misis' {I touched the woman's back with my hand}. As Suzanne Romaine reports: 'The answer cost him half a tooth, his job, and three month in prison, due to the confusion between the meaning of Tok Pisin baksait meaning "back", and English 'backside'.

Pidgins often have a short life. If they develop for a restricted function, they disappear when the function disappears. Alternatively a pidgin can become so useful as a lingua franca that it may be expanded and used even by people who share a tribal language. In multilingual speech communities, parents may use a pidgin so extensively during the day, in the market, at church, in offices and on public transport, that it became normal for them to use it at home too. In this case, too, children will often acquire it as their first language and it will develop into a Creole. Tok Pisin is the first language of many children in Papua New Guinea. Many present-day creoles are spoken by descendants of the African slaves in the United States of America and the Caribbean. The common language of the plantation was generally a pidgin, and children naturally acquired the pidgin as a first language. As the families' communicative needs expanded, so did the resources of the language they used. The pidgin developed into Creole.

A Creole is a pidgin which has acquired native speakers. Many of the languages which are called pidgins are in fact now Creole languages. They are learned by children as their first language and used in a wide range of domains. Tok Pisin which was a Pidgin is one obvious example of a pidgin which has developed into a Creole language. This makes it clear that the label of a language is not an accurate guide to its status as Pidgin or Creole. Despite its name Tok Pisin is a Creole because it has been learned as a first language by a large number of speakers, and has developed accordingly to meet their linguistic needs. A Creole is a pidgin which has expanded in structure and vocabulary to express the range of meanings and serve the range of functions required of a first language. Once a Creole has developed it can be used for all the functions of any language: politics, education, administration, original literature and so on.

The Creole may develop towards the standard language from which it has derived large amounts of vocabulary. When a Creole is used side-by-side with the standard variety in a community where social barriers are not insuperable, features of the Creole tend to change in the direction of the standard variety. This process is described as *Decreolisation*. Eventually there may exist a continuum of varieties between the standard language and the Creole – sometimes described as a *Post-Creole Continuum*. In this situation, linguists label the variety closest to the standard an *Acreolect* (where *acro* means 'high'), whereas the variety closest to the Creole is labeled the *Basilect* or 'deep' Creole. These two varieties are often mutually unintelligible. Varieties in between these two extremes are described as *Mesolects* or intermediate varieties. Example can be found in Jamaica and Guyana. Over time a Creole in this situation may be engulfed by the standard language, as Negerhollands has been by Dutch in the Dutch West Indies. One further possibility is that a creole may be standardized and adopted as an official language, as Tok Pisin was in Papua New Guinea, or become a national language, as did Indonesian, a language which developed from pidgin Malay.

Section Two

2.2 Literature Review:

2.2.1 Definitions of (AAVE) & the Names of the Variety:

The non-standard variety of English spoken by many African Americans in the United States is remarkably consistent throughout the country. As a matter of fact, it shows little variation in such cities as Boston, New York, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles, and seems to better resist change over time than the English spoken by the corresponding white populations in these areas (Labov 2001,

506–508, cited in Wardhaugh 2006, 345). Wardhaugh (2006, 342) remarks that the reasons for this uniformity are twofold: the first is the relatively recent migration of African Americans from the south, and the second is the persistence of racial segregation.

There exists a plethora of names for this variety in the literature, including “Negro dialect”, “American Negro speech”, “Black communications”, “Black dialect”, “Black street speech”, “Black English”, “Black Vernacular English”, “African American English” and the name used in the present work, “African American Vernacular English”.

Another well-known term is Ebonics, made famous by the 1996-1997 Oakland school board controversy (see Baugh 2000a, and for a brief overview see Wardhaugh 2006, 349) Eventually, the school board abandoned this proposal. Although the media frenzy surrounding the controversy has led many to associate the term “Ebonics” with AAVE, the term was originally invented to “refer specifically to the language of people of African descent that had its roots in West African languages, and not as a reference to any dialect of English” (Green 2004a, 77).

The term is used, as it is the one most commonly used in current research (Hurd 2006, 71). As Green (2002a, 5) notes, the same label that is used for the speakers of a particular variety at any given time will also serve as the label for the variety itself.

Until 1967, speakers of AAVE were identified as “negroes” and subsequently as “blacks” until 1989, and finally, in the era of politically correct discourse, they have come to be designated as “African Americans”

(Patrick, 2007). For more information on changes in the labelling of this ethnic group and for an explanation of the years mentioned here, see Smitherman (1994, 11–16).

The word *English* is included in many of the terms, which implies that AAVE shares characteristics with other varieties of English (Green *ibid.*, 6). When *English* is missing from the name (e.g. *Negro dialect* and *African American Language*), the emphasis is on the African and Creole background of the variety (*ibid.*).

2.2.2 The Origins of AAVE:

There are some views of the origins of AAVE according to Holmes (2001, 463-465), it is simple to date the beginning of AAE --- the first black people were brought in chains to Virginia in 1619. There are however, different theories as to the factors that led to the systematic differences between AAE and other American English dialects.

One view suggests that AAE originated when the African slaves learned English from their colonial masters as a second language. Although the basic grammar was learned, many surface differences persisted, which were reflected in the grammars constructed by the children of the slaves, who heard English primarily from their parents. The dialect differences persisted and grew because social and racial barriers isolated in America. The proponents of this theory point to the fact that the grammars of AAE and SAE are identical except for a few syntactic and phonological rules that produce surface differences. (*ibid.*).

Another view that is receiving increasing support is that many of the unique features of AAE are traceable to influences of the African languages spoken by the slaves. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, African who spoke different languages were purposefully grouped together to discourage

communication and to prevent slave revolts. In order to communicate, the slaves were forced to use the one common language all had access to, namely English. They invented a simplified form---- called a pidgin that incorporated many features from West African Languages. According to this view, the differences between AAE and other dialects are due more to deep syntactic differences than to surface distinctions. (ibid).

It is apparent that AAE is closer to southern dialects of American English than to other dialects. The theory that suggests that the Negro slaves learned the English of white Southerners as a second language explains these similarities. They might also be explained by the fact that for many decades a large number of southern white children were raised by black women and played with black children. It is possible that many of distinguishing features of southern dialects were acquired from AAE in this way. A publication of the American dialect society in 1908-1909 makes this point clearly:

"For my part, after a somewhat careful study of east Alabama dialect, I am convinced that the speech of the white people. The dialect I have spoken all my life and the one I tried to record here, is more largely colored by the language of the Negroes {sic} than by any other single influence". (Holmes, 2001, 465).

The two –way interchange still goes on. SAE is constantly enriched by words, phrases, and usage originating in AAE; and AAE whatever its origins is influenced by the changes that go on in the many other dialects of English.

2.2.3 Who speaks AAVE?

Smitherman notes that AAE is predominately spoken by lower-class African American though African American adolescents irrespective of class use AAE grammar and phonology more than adults (cf. Morgan 1994a).

Rickford et al. (1991) likewise found copula absence (e.g. He funny) to be quite common among the youngest African American speakers in their east Palo Alto sample.

Even among adolescents, however, the strict use of AAE grammar and phonology across formal and informal contexts is quite marked as they demonstrate an ability to condeswitch between AAE and SAE when speaking with their elders and other authority figures. In fact, many African Americans display a command of both AAE and SAE, though individual speakers differs with respect to their use of each variety (Dillard 1972, Morgan 1996b). Middle class speakers employ less AAE features, yet condeswitch between SAE and AAE (Spears 1988, DeBose 1992). Additionally, Morgan (1993a; 1994a) notes that working class speakers also employ both of these codes for conversational signifying.

2.3 Features of (AAVE):

(AAVE) shares several characteristics with Creole English language-forms spoken by people throughout much of the world. AAVE has pronunciation, grammatical structures, and vocabulary in common with various West African languages.

Many features of AAVE are shared with English dialects spoken in the American South. While these are mostly regionalisms (i.e. originating from the dialect commonly spoken in the area, regardless of color), a number of them such as the

deletion of *is*, are used much more frequently by black speakers, suggesting that they have their origins in black speech.

2.3.1 Phonology of (AAVE):

(AAVE) and Standard English pronunciation are sometimes quite different. People frequently attach significance to such differences in pronunciation or accent and as such the study of phonology (the systematic patterning of sounds in language) is an important part of sociolinguistics. It should be noted that phonology has nothing to do with spelling. The way something is spelt is often not a good indication of the way it "should be", or much less is, pronounced.

2.3.2 The Grammar of (AAVE):

The most noteworthy traits of AAVE have typically been associated with the verb phrase, including the use of tense, mood, and aspect. For several decades now, researchers (Fasold 1972; Labov 1972a, 1998; Dayton 1996; Baugh 1983; Rickford 1999) have acknowledged that these dimensions distinguish AAVE from other varieties of English, although there is no consensus on its distinctive aspectual parameters. Although there are a number of distinguishing traits, the most prominent features are a distinct set of preverbal particles or auxiliaries.

2.3.3 Lexicons and meaning:

Certain words and phrases have a specialized or unique meaning in AAE: *saditty, kitchen,pot liquor, get my praise on*. Some of these words and phrases are used by African Americans from a range of age groups, while others are common to speakers of a particular age group. One way of adding phrases to the AAE lexicon is by the productive process in which a word of the appropriate grammatical class such as noun or verb is inserted into a template.

Whatever the structure, the African American and general American English lexicons vary in that there are lexical items that sound the same but have different meanings. For example, the word *kitchen* is used by African Americans in the same way it is used commonly by other speakers of American English, but it is also used uniquely by African Americans to refer to the hair at the nape of the neck. Other examples would be *mannish* and *womanish* which could be used to refer to characteristics of a man and characteristics of a woman, respectively, the general American English definitions. However, these words can also be used to refer to boys and girls, respectively, who are seen as behaving inappropriately for their young ages. These terms, in the sense of the African American lexicon, usually carry negative connotations in that they refer to a type of mature behavior that is unbecoming of children. But they do not always have to be negative. For example, *mannish* can be used to describe the behavior of a baby or young boy who is particularly advanced or independent for his age. A baby boy who figures out how to get his bottle from a hard-to-reach place can also be called *mannish*.

The African American lexicon includes the same type of information that is found in general American lexicons. The difference is that the former lexicon will have entries for words that sound like words in general American English; however, the meanings and perhaps other information will be different from the corresponding homonyms in general American English lexicons.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction:

This chapter presents the method used by the researcher to conduct his study. It shows the population in which the study was conducted; also it gives an idea about the sample that actually subjected to the study. Otherwise it provides details about the instrument that the researcher used to collect the data in addition to the validity and reliability of the tool. Finally this chapter explains the method of data analysis and procedures.

3.1 Population of the Study:

The population of this study will be Black English and Standard American English community.

3.2 Sample of the Study:

The sample of this study will be documents from internet, either it will be recorded or written documents collected randomly from internet.

3.3 Validity and Reliability of the Tool:

The tool is reliable, because it includes an official websites. Also it is valid, because the collected materials are authentic.

3.4 Procedures:

The researcher is going to select Black English materials and materials from Standard American English dealing with the similar context. Then these materials

from the two varieties will be compared to find out the similarities and differences between them.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

4.0 Introduction:

This chapter includes data analysis, results and discussion. After the data collected from various sources and references, the researcher is going to analyze the data collected by making a comparison between the two varieties in pronunciation, grammar and lexicons in order to find out the similarities and differences between them.

4.1 Phonological Differences between (AAVE) and (SAE):

4.1.1 Consonants:

A) Clusters at the ends of words:

When two consonants appear at the end of a word, the clusters *st*, *sk*, *sp*, *pt*, *kt*, *nd*, and *ld* are reduced in final position (for instance the **st** in **test**),: the final **t** is deleted. This happens, to some extent, in every variety of English including standard ones. In AAVE the consonant cluster is reduced variably (i.e. it does not happen every time) and systematically.

Sociolinguists have shown that the frequency of reduction can be expressed by a rule which takes account of a number of interacting facts. Crucially, the frequency of reduction depends on the environment in which the sound occurs. The following

two factors, among others, have been found to affect the frequency of reduction in consonant clusters:

If the next word starts with a consonant, it is more likely to reduce than if the next word starts with a vowel. For example, reduction is more likely to occur in **west side** (becoming **wes side**) than in **west end**.

A final **t** or **d** is more likely to be deleted if it is not part of the past tense **-ed** than if it is. (The past tense **-ed** suffix is pronounced as **t** or **d** or **Id** in English depending on the preceding sound.) For example, reduction is more likely to occur in **John ran fast** (becoming **John ran fas**) than in **John passed the teacher in his car**.

According to Holmes (2001, 460_461), A consonant cluster simplification rule in AAE simplifies consonant clusters, particularly at the ends of words and when one of the two consonants is an alveolar (/t/, /d/, /s/, /z/). The application of this rule may delete the past-tense morpheme so that *meant* and *mend* are both pronounced as *men* and *past* and *passed* (pass + ed) may both be pronounced like *pass*. When speakers of this dialect say I *pass* the test yesterday, they are not showing an ignorance of past and present, but are pronouncing the past tense according to this rule in their grammar.

The deletion rule is optional; it does not always apply, and studies have shown that it is more likely to apply when the final /t/ or /d/ does not represent the past-tense morpheme, as in noun like *paste* {pes} as opposed to verbs like *chased* {cest}, where the final past-tense {t} will not always be deleted. This has also been observed with final {s} or {z}, which will be retained more often by speakers of AAE in words like *seats* /sit + s/, where the /s/ represents plural, than in words like *keats* /kit/, where it is more likely to be deleted (ibid).

Consonant cluster simplification is not unique to AAE. It exists optionally for many speakers of other dialects including SAE. For example, the medial {d} in *didn't* is often deleted producing {dint}. Furthermore, nasals are commonly deleted before final voice-less stops, to result in {hit} versus {hint} (*ibid*).

As Fasold and Wolfram (1973, 118–119) describe, consonant cluster reduction follows a systematic rule: if both consonants in the cluster are either voiceless or voiced, as in *post* (both consonants are voiceless) and *cold* (both consonants are voiced), the cluster is reduced. If, however, one consonant is voiceless and the other one is voiced, as in *jump* or *count*, the cluster is retained (*ibid.*).

The following table indicates the differences of consonants cluster sound either at the middle of words or at the end between the two dialects:

Consonant Cluster	SAE	AAVE
Clusters at the end of words	One test/ two tests. Desk, list, wasp, accept, spend, contact, build, find, hand.	One tes/ two tesses. Des, lis, was, accep, spen, contac, buil, fine, han.
Clusters at the middle of words	Kindness, friendly, colder, spending, handful.	Kiness, frienly, coler, spenin, hanful

B) The /th/ sounds:

The written symbol **th** can represent two different sounds in English: both an "unvoiced" sound [θ] as in **thought**, **thin** and **think**, and a "voiced" sound [ð] as in **the**, **they** and **that**. In AAVE the pronunciation of this sound depends on where in a word it is found.

At the beginning of a word, the voiced sound (e.g. in **that**) is regularly pronounced as **d** so 'the', 'they' and 'that' are pronounced as **de**, **dey** and **dat**. AAVE shares this feature with many other nonstandard dialects, including those of the East Coast of United States and Canada. Less common in AAVE is the pronunciation of the unvoiced sound as **t**. Thus 'thin' can become **tin** but rarely does. This however is a very common feature of Caribbean creoles in which 'think' is regularly pronounced as **tink**, etc. When the **th** sound is followed by **r**, it is possible in AAVE to pronounce the **th** as **f** as in **froat** for 'throat'.

Within a word, the unvoiced sound as in **nothing**, **author** or **ether** is often pronounced as **f**. Thus AAVE speakers will sometimes say **nufn** 'nothing' and **aufa** 'author'. The voiced sound, within a word, may be pronounced **v**. So 'brother' becomes **bruva**, etc.

At the end of a word, **th** is often pronounced **f** in AAVE. For instance 'Ruth' is pronounced **Ruf**; 'south' is pronounced **souf**. When the preceding sound is a nasal (e.g. **n** or **m**) the **th** is often pronounced as **t** as in **tent** for 'tenth'; **mont** for 'month'.

The following table shows the differences between the two dialects according to the position of the sound **th** at the beginning, middle and at the end of word:

The position of the sound th	SAE	AAVE
At the beginning of the word	This, that, they and those. Think, thin.	Dis, dat, dey and dos. Fink, [θɪn]
At the middle of the word	Brother, mother, birthday.	Brova, mova, birfday.
At the end of the word	Ruth, smooth, bath, mouth, with.	Ruf, smoov, baf, mouf, wit.

C) The sounds /l/ and /r/:

When they do not occur at the beginning of a word **l** and **r** often undergo a process known as "vocalization" and are pronounced as **uh**. This is most apparent in a post-vocalic position (after a vowel). For instance 'steal', 'sister', 'nickel' become **steauh**, **sistuh**, **nickuh**. In some varieties of AAVE (e.g. in the Southern US), **r** is not pronounced after the vowels **o** and **u**. The words **door** and **doe**, **four** and **foe**, and **sure** and **show** can be pronounced alike.

Like a number of dialects both British and American, AAE includes a rule of r-deletion that deletes /r/ everywhere except before a vowel. Pairs of words like *guard* and *god*, *nor* and *gnaw*, *sore* and *saw*, *poor* and *pa*, *fort* and *fought*, and *court* and *caught* are pronounced identically in AAE because of this phonological rule. Holmes (2001, 460).

There is also an l-deletion rule for some speakers of AAE, creating identically pronounced pairs like *toll* and *toe*, *all* and *awe*, *help* and *hep*. (ibid).

4.1.2 Vowels:

A) Nasalized vowels:

When a nasal (**n** or **m**) follows a vowel, AAVE speakers sometimes delete the nasal consonant and nasalize the vowel. This nasalization is written with a tilde (~) above the vowel. So 'man' becomes **mã**.

B) Nasals consonants and front vowels:

In many varieties of English, including standard varieties, the vowels /i/ in **pin** and /e/ in **pen** sound different in all words. In AAVE, these sounds are

merged before a nasal (like **n** or **m**). So in AAVE **pin** and **pen** are pronounced with the same vowel. Most Southern US varieties of English merge these vowels too, so this is only a distinctive feature of AAVE in the northern United States.

According to Holmes (2001,461), AAE shares with regional dialects a lack of distinction between /i/ and /e/ before nasal consonants, producing identical pronunciations of **pin** and **pen**, **bin** and **Ben**, **un** and **ten** and so on. The vowel sound in these words is roughly between the /i/ of **pit** and the /e/ of **pet**.

The Standard English endings **-ing** and **-ink** in some words are realised as **-ang** and **-ank** (e.g. **thang** for **thing**, **rang** for **ring** and **drank** for **drink**) (Smitherman 1977, 18; 1994, 7).

4.1.3 Diphthongs:

Some vowels like those in **night** and **my** /ai/ or **about** and **cow** /au/ are called "diphthongs". This means that when the vowel is pronounced, the tongue starts at one place in the mouth and moves as the vowel is being pronounced. In AAVE the vowel in 'night' or in 'my' is often not a diphthong. So when pronouncing the words with this diphthong (as in **tied** /ta : d/; **nice** /na : s/), AAVE speakers (and speakers of Southern varieties as well) do not move the tongue to the front top position. So 'my' is pronounced **ma** as in **he's over at ma sister's house**.

A) Diphthong Reduction:

AAE has a rule /oj/ ----→/o/

That reduces the diphthong /oj/ (particularly before /l/) to the simple vowel /o/ without the glide, so that **boil** and **boy** are pronounced {bo}. Holmes (2001, 461).

4.1.4 Stress Mark:

AAVE differs from some other varieties in the placement of stress in a word. So, where words like **police**, **hotel** and **July** are pronounced with stress on the last syllable in Standard English, in AAVE they may have stress placed on the first syllable so that you get *po-lice*, *ho-tel* and *Ju-ly*.

4.2 Syntactic Differences between (AAVE) and (SAE):

4.2.1 Copula/auxiliary absence:

The absence of copula and auxiliary for contractible forms of is and are (e.g. She nice for ‘She’s nice’ or They acting silly for ‘They’re acting silly’) has been one of the most often described structures of AAVE (e.g. Labov et al. 1968; Wolfram 1969; Fasold 1972; Baugh 1983; Rickford 1999).

In most cases, if in Standard English the verb can be contracted, whereas in African American English sentences it is deleted. The following examples show that syntactic rules operate in both dialects although they show slight systematic differences.

SAE	AAVE
He is nice / He’s nice.	He nice.
They are mine / They’re mine.	They mine.
I am gonna do it / I’m gonna do it.	I gonna do it.
He is / He’s as nice as he says he is.	He as nice as he say he.
Here I am.	Here I.

4.2.2 *Habitual “be”*:

In SAE, the sentence *John is happy* can be interpreted to mean *John is happy now* or *John is generally happy*. One can make the distinction clear in SAE only by lexical means, that is, the addition of words. One would have to say *John is generally happy* or *John is a happy person* to disambiguate the meaning from *John is presently happy*.

In AAVE, this distinction is made syntactically; an uninflected form of *be* is used if the speaker is referring to habitual state. And the following examples illustrate that.

AAE	SAE
John be happy.	“John is always happy”
John happy.	“John is happy now”
He be late.	“He is habitually late”
He late.	“He is late in this time”
Do you be tired?	“Are you generally tired?”
You tired?	“Are you tired now?”
I never be looking for that	“I usually never look for that”
I be ringing the bell twice	“I usually ring the bell twice”

The syntactic distinction between habitual and nonhabitual aspects occurs in languages other than AAE, but it doesn't occur in SAE. It has been suggested that the uninflected *be* is the result of a convergence of similar rules in African Creole, and Irish English sources.

4.2.3 *Completive done*:

The use of *done* with the past tense of the verb, as in *They done used all the good ones*, is a persistent structural trait of AAVE that is shared with Southern European

American vernacular varieties of English. Although the verbal particle *done* also occurs in Caribbean creoles, its syntactic configuration in AAVE and its semantic-pragmatic function differ somewhat from its creole counterparts. In AAVE, *done* occurs only in preverbal auxiliary position with past tense forms whereas it occurs with a bare verb stem (e.g. *They done go*) and can occur in clause-final position in some creoles (Holm 1988: 162). In many respects, it functions in AAVE like a perfect, referring to an action completed in the recent past, but it can also be used to highlight the change of state or to intensify an activity, as in a sentence like *I done told you not to mess up*. It is a stable feature, but it is more frequently used in Southern rural versions of AAVE than in urban AAVE. The table below shows the use of *done* in AAVE and the equivalent meaning in SAE:

AAVE	SAE
He done did it.	He has already done it.
He done failed out ages a go.	He failed out ages a go.
I told him you done changed.	I told him that you have changed.
I done already finished that.	I have already finished that.

4.2.4 *Sequential be done:*

AAVE may also show a combination of *be* and *done* together in sentences such as *My ice cream be done melted by the time we get there*, marking a resultative or a future conditional state. On one level, this construction seems to function like a future perfect similar to Standard English *will have melted* in the example given above. Dayton (1996) suggests that a newer use of this form functions more like a future resultative-conditional, referring to an inevitable consequence of a general condition or a specific activity, as in a sentence like *If you love your enemy, they be*

done eat you alive in this society. According to Dayton (1996) and Labov (1998), the resultative-conditional meaning, which is often associated pragmatically with threats or warnings, is a newer semantic-aspectual development. Although Dayton (1996) documented numerous examples of this type during her years of participant observation with AAVE speakers in Philadelphia; it still seems to occur rather infrequently in most varieties of AAVE. The following table indicates the use of **(be done)** in AAVE and the equivalent meaning in SAE:

AAVE	SAE
<i>She be done had her baby.</i>	“She will have had her baby.”
<i>She be done graduated by June.</i>	“She will have graduated.”

4.2.5 *Remote been:*

The stressed use of *béen* with a past tense form of the verb may denote a special aspectual function that marks an activity that took place in the distant past. In sentences such as *I béen had it for about three years* or *I béen known him*, it refers to an event that took place, literally or figuratively, in a distant time frame. In some contexts, the form may be interpreted as the deletion of a contracted form of the perfect (e.g. *She’s béen married*), thus camouflaging some of its subtle semantic difference from other varieties. For example, Rickford (1975) showed that European Americans and African Americans, when given the stimulus utterance *She béen married*, had quite different responses to the question *Is she still married?*

European Americans interpreted the stressed *béen* as a deleted perfect form (e.g., *She’s been* † *She been*) and as implying that the referent is no longer married, whereas African Americans interpreted it as a distinctive aspectual marker indicating that the referent had been married a long time. With the exception of the phrase *I béen known* or *I béen knowin’* (phonetically quite similar if not identical to

known [noun]) in casual speech, the use of remote *been* in urban areas appears to be receding. The following example indicates the usage of *been* in the past:

AAVE	SAE
<i>I 'been travel to New York.</i>	'I travelled to New York a long time ago.'
<i>Jodie, she 'been marry to Chuck.</i>	'Jodie married Chuck a long time ago.'
<i>I been bought her clothes</i>	"I bought her clothes a long time ago".
<i>I been buying her clothes</i>	"I've been buying her clothes for a long time".
He been sick.	"He has been sick."
She BIN married.	"She has been married a long time."
He BIN ate it.	"He ate it a long time ago."

4.2.6 *Simple past had + verb:*

One of the newer features of AAVE is the narrative use of the auxiliary *had* with a past or perfect form of the verb (see the section on irregular verbs) to indicate a simple past tense action, as in *They had went outside and then they had messed up the yard... .* This use is equivalent to the use of the simple past (e.g. *They went outside and then they messed up the yard*) in Standard English. Whereas earlier descriptions of AAVE (Labov et al. 1968; Fasold and Wolfram 1970; Fasold 1972) do not mention this feature at all, recent descriptions (Cukor-Avila 2001; Rickford and Th  berge-Rafal 1996) observe that this construction may be quite frequent in the narratives of some preadolescents. Descriptions of AAVE document the

narrative use of *had* + verb in both urban (Rickford and Th  berge-Rafal 1996) and rural AAVE settings (Cukor-Avila 2001). The fact that this feature is so frequent among preadolescents raises the possibility that it may be age-graded, and that AAVE speakers will diminish its use as they become adults, although this interpretation is discounted in some of the data from Cukor-Avila (2001). Of course, age-grading and language change are not necessarily incompatible notions, and it may be that it is a newer feature that shows some degree of age-grading.

The table below shows the usage of *had* in the past simple of AAVE and the equivalent meaning in the SAE:

AAVE	SAE
One time my mom and my dad had went somewhere.	“One time my mom and my dad went somewhere”
What had happened was?	What happened was?

4.2.7 *Specialized auxiliaries:*

Several auxiliaries fill specialized semantic-pragmatic roles that subtly set apart AAVE from other vernacular varieties of English. Among these auxiliary-like constructions are the use of *come* to indicate a state of indignation, the use of *steady* to mark a continuative intensifying activity, and the use of *finna* to indicate an immediate future or planned event. The use of *come* with *v-ing* in the sentence *He come walkin’ in here like he owned the damn place* (Spears 1982: 852) indicates a speaker’s annoyance about the action or event. Structurally, this use closely resembles the use of *come* with movement verbs (e.g. *She came running*) in other varieties, and is thus a camouflaged form.

Another apparent camouflaged form is *steady* in sentences such as *Ricky Bell be steady steppin’ in them number nines* (Baugh 1983: 86), where the adverb *steady*

indicates an intensified, persistent activity. The specialized auxiliary *finna* in *I'm finna go*, related to the generalized Southern form *fixin' to* (also *fixta*, *fitna*, and *fidda*), refers to an immediate future or planned event. Camouflaged forms such as indignant *come* seem to be more recent developments concentrated in urban varieties, although it may be the case that these forms simply have not been noticed in Southern varieties because of their relative infrequency and structural similarity to related forms in benchmark European American varieties.

At the same time, the use of other auxiliaries in urban AAVE seems to be receding when compared with their use in Southern vernacular counterparts. Whereas double modals such as *I might could do it*, counterfactual *liketa* in *I was so scared I liketa died*, and causative *have to* in *I'll have him to do it* can be found in contemporary urban AAVE, they tend to be much more robust in rural Southern versions of this variety. The table below indicates the usage of each auxiliary in AAVE and the equivalent meaning in SAAE:

Auxiliary	AAVE	SAE
Come	Don't come acting like you don't know what happened.	"Don't try to act as if you don't know what happened."
Steady	Them students be steady trying to make a buck.	"Those students are always working diligently to make money."
Finna	He finna go.	"He's about to go."
Liketa	I liketa drowned.	"I nearly drowned."
Poseta	You don't poseta do it that way.	"You're not supposed to do it that way."

4.2.8 Irregular verbs:

The irregular verbs of urban AAVE follow those found in other vernacular varieties of English, in particular, rural Southern white varieties. These include the extension of past as participle (e.g. *I had went down there*), the participle as past (e.g. *They seen it*), the bare root as past (e.g. *They run there yesterday*), and regularization of past tense (e.g. *Everybody knowed him*). Unlike rural Southern varieties, it does not tend to retain some of the older different irregular forms (e.g. *hearen* for *heard* or *clumb* for *climbed*).

4.2.9 Subject-verb agreement:

In AAVE, singular and plural verb forms may be identical (e.g. *he/they eat*) (Green 1998b, 40, 42). Lack of agreement between subject and verb also holds for past tense forms (e.g. *I was, they was*) (Green 2002a, 38). In addition, stressed emphatic affirmation forms *DO*, *WAS* and *HAVE* are invariant with singular and plural subjects (e.g. *He DO eat, They DO eat*) (*ibid.*). Labov (1998, 146) notes that subject-verb agreement is “marginal”, although frequently present with *is* and *am* occurring with third person singular and with first person singular subjects.

The table below indicates the main differences between the two dialects according to the rule of subject-verb agreement:

Subject verb agreement in AAVE	SAE
Lack of agreement between subject and verb as in: they walks, he walk	They walk, He walks

4.2.10 *Nominals:*

One significant feature of AAVE is the absence of possessive and plural *-s*. That is why instead of “John’s house” and “two boys” AAVE speakers say *John house* and *two boy*. The third person singular *-s* is also missing and AAVE speakers use the corresponding pronoun, as in *That teacher, she yell at the kids* meaning “That teacher yells at the kids.”

Associative plurals are marked with *and (th)em* or *nem*, so “Felician and her friends/family/associates” would be *Felician an’ (th)em* or *Felician nem*. Second person plural possessive is marked with *y’all* and third person plural is marked with *they*. Hence, “It’s your ball” would be *It’s y’all ball* and “It’s their house” would be *It’s they house*. Object pronouns are used as personal datives, as in *Ahma git me a gig* meaning “I’m going to get myself some support.”

Some relative pronouns are omitted.

That’s the man come here. – “That’s the man who came here.” (Rickford 7-8)

The following table shows the position of the possessive marker ‘s and plural marker in AAVE and SAE:

AAVE	SAE
Lack of possessive marker as in: The dog tail was wagging.	The dog’s tail was wagging.
Lack of plural marker as in: Two book	Two books

4.2.11 *Question formation:*

There are two aspects of question formation that distinguish AAVE syntax, both involving subject auxiliary inversion. First, questions may be formed without subject- auxiliary inversion, as in *Where that is?* or *Why I can’t go?*. These non-

inverted forms tend to occur with *wh*- questions and syntactically simple sentences. While the productive use of simple non-inverted question order may be receding, it is still quite common in some fixed phrases such as *What it is?* or *Who that is?* At the same time, embedded questions may retain subject-auxiliary inversion, as in *I asked her could I go with her*, contrasting with the standard pattern in which *if* or *whether* is used with non-inverted order, as in *I asked him if I could go with him*. This is a stable pattern shared with a number of vernacular varieties. The table below explains the main differences according to the question formation between the two dialects:

Question formation	AAVE	SAE
Yes or No questions		
Wh questions	<i>Who you be talking to like that?</i>	<i>You be talking to who like that?</i>
Indirect questions	<i>Ask him can you do it?</i>	“Ask him if you can do it”

4.2.12 Negation:

There are two phenomena related to negation in AAVE: multiple negations also called negative concord and pleonastic negation (Martin and Wolfram 1998, 17). (e.g. *He ain't got no car*) and negative inversion (e.g. *Didn't nobody ask me do I be late for class* (“Nobody asked me if I am usually late for class”).

In multiple negation constructions, negation is marked on the auxiliary and an indefinite noun phrase (Green 2002a, 77). More than two negative elements may occur, as evidenced by the following example from Labov (1972b, 177): *I ain't never had no trouble with none of 'em*.

As Smitherman (1977, 30) observes, double negation is present in other varieties of English, but the use of more than two negative elements is characteristic of

*AAVE. The so called “logical double negation” of Standard English, whereby two negatives make a positive, also exists in AAVE (Martin and Wolfram 1998, 18). The difference is marked by stress patterns: one negative word in the construction receives normal stress and the other negative is realised with “heavier stress” and often with a rising tone (e.g. I didn’t say **nóthing** (emphasis in the original) means that the speaker did say something (ibid., 18–19).*

In negative inversion, the sentence begins with a negative auxiliary and is followed by a negative indefinite noun phrase (Green 2004a, 81). As Mufwene (2001a, 306) observes, it is ungrammatical to use a definite noun phrase in such constructions (e.g. **Didn John come* (“John didn’t come”).

Like other vernacular dialects, AAVE uses *ain’t* as a general preverbal negative for present tense *be* (*am not, isn’t, aren’t*) and for the perfect auxiliary *haven’t/hasn’t* as in *She ain’t here* or *She ain’t been there lately*.

Also AAVE uses *ain’t* for *didn’t* as well, as in *She ain’t do it*. Finally, *ain’t* and *don’t* may be used with *but* to indicate ‘only’ or ‘no more than’ as in *She ain’t but three years old* or *He didn’t take but three dollars*.

The table below indicates the differences of the usage of negation in both, AAVE and SAE:

Negation	AAVE	SAE
Negative concord or multiple negation	I don't know nothin.	I don't know anything.
Negative inversion	Didn' no white people stay in Africa .	White did not stay in Africa.
Ain't as Be + not (present tense)	it really ain't no time for discussion.	There is no time for discussion.
Ain't as Be + not (past tense)	She ain't born in Washington.	She was not born in Washington.
Ain't as have + not (present tense)	I'm real sorry we ain't had a chance to chill lately.	I'm real sorry we have not had a chance to chill lately.
Ain't as had + not (past tense)	ain't is never used for past tense had+not	
Ain't as do + not (present simple tense)	I ain't want some more.	I don't want some more.
Ain't as did not (p. simple)	I ain't know y'all didn't know each other.	I did not know you did not know each other.

4.3 Lexicons of AAVE:

Green suggests that the AAVE vocabulary can be divided into two categories: words and phrases that are used by all age groups and words, and phrases that are used by a certain age group. The use of certain words and phrases also naturally varies between different regions. Slang words are usually introduced to AAVE through hip-hop culture and are characteristically short lived. In addition, there are

some terms that have both the Standard American English meaning and an African American English meaning.

Here are some examples of AAVE vocabulary collected from Green (15-30):

AAVE	SAE
Balla	a man with money and material possessions
bopper / chickenhead	a woman who is interested in gaining material things
bounce / push off / murk	Leave
Funeralize	to conduct funeral services
get over	take advantage, to succeed by using wit but little effort
Krunk	Exciting
Saddity	a bourgeois, snobbish, and pretentious black person
ting an' ting	exactly alike
yard axe	preacher of little ability
He didn't pay me no mind.	He didn't pay me any attention.

4.3.1 Slang: adding words to the lexicon:

“In a culture driven by the ever-evolving slanguistics of rapspeak, ‘whoa!’ is to modern hip hop vernacular what prime-time game shows are to TV land: something so old fashioned that it’s new again” (Mao 2000, p. 161). Black Rob, who uses the term whoa in his single “Whoa!” defines the word in a 2000 Vibe article in the following way:

“There’s nothin’ else that you can say; when something is lookin’ so good for you, it’s just ‘whoa!’” (p. 161). Whoa is one of the lexical items that is found in that part

of the African American lexicon in which words and phrases are used by speakers in a particular age group, may vary from geographical region to geographical region and may be short lived. Finally, a large number of these lexical items originate in and are perpetuated through hip-hop culture, including music.

Attempting to give an account of slang in any work presents very interesting challenges. Perhaps the most formidable problem is that slang changes rapidly, so it is virtually impossible to give an accurate account of current slang items. It is certain that by the time this book is completed, many of the lexical items that are presented in this section will be obsolete. When I first started collecting information for a project related to this book in the early to mid 1990s, phat (adjective meaning extremely nice, good looking or of good taste) was popular among African American adolescents, teens and young adults. In 1999 and probably long before that, the word was no longer popular according to students in a large introductory lecture class in African and Afro-American studies. In the fall of 1999, I gave a guest lecture on the topic of AAE in that class and found that black and non-black students differed in their recognition and classification of words in the African American lexicon. For example, black students gave the correct definition of saditty, and while phat was taken to be in vogue by some white students, none of the black students shared this view or at least admitted to sharing it. Another point that the saditty and phat examples make is that these lexical items often divide blacks and whites, as noted by Rickford and Rickford (2000, p. 93).

The goal of this section is not to give a complete account of current slang. However, it is to use some selected examples to make two points about that part of the lexicon that constantly changes: (1) Slang items can be divided into categories and (2) new slang items can be added to the lexicon by applying productive processes of creating phrases. These two points can be illustrated just as well with items that are no longer in use, but more current words and phrases will be used in

the discussion.

4.3.2 Labeling people, money, and actions:

In a discussion of language used by adolescents, Teresa Labov (1992) notes three categories of slang: (1) those for labeling people, (2) those for painting people, activities and places positively or negatively and (3) those for ways of spending leisure time, focused upon having fun. Teresa Labov's data are based on responses to a questionnaire that was completed by adolescents from different high schools in the United States. In one part of her data analysis, she compared the use of slang by whites and African Americans, and found that of the thirty-three slang terms (in the speech of her informants) that show significant social difference "eight show 2.5 times or greater likelihood of African-American usage, and 25 at least three times or greater white usage. Social types account for five African-American terms (bougies, homies, mondos, freaks, and rednecks); fresh and bad in 'approval' sense; and the phrase to be busting out 'looking good'" (p. 351). Teresa Labov's data are consistent with Rickford and Rickford's claim that such vocabulary items serve as dividing lines between the groups.

More current terms fit into the same types of categories discussed by Teresa Labov. One of the largest categories for slang terms today is that for referring to people. Folb (1980) also reported this finding in her ethnographic research on the use of specialized vocabulary by adolescent African Americans. The slang terms in (3) are used to refer to females, and those in (4) are used to refer to males:

(3) Terms for females	(4) Terms for males
a. bopper	a. balla
b. dime	b. cat
c. honey	c. cuz
d. hot girl	d. dawg (also dog)
e. ma	e. fool
f. shorty	f. homes
g. wifey	g. hot boy
	h. kinfolk
	i. mark
	j. money
	k. player (playa)
	l. scrub
	m. slick

The first observation is that the list for females is shorter than that for males. The term bopper is used to refer to a woman who is preoccupied with material gain, and a term that has come to have a similar meaning is chickenhead. Although women may use general terms (e.g., girl, in Hey, girl) to address each other, the names in (3) are not used in that way; they are labels for females. On the other hand, the majority of the terms in (4) are used by males as terms of address for other males. Two exceptions are the terms balla and scrub. Balla is used to refer to a man who has acquired money and material possessions, and scrub, which is derogatory, refers to a male who is not self-sufficient, so he depends on others for his livelihood. The term dog also has a negative connotation when it is used to refer to a male who mistreats females, but dog/dawg is used by males as a term of address,

without negative import.

The terms for males (4) may be used as common nouns or as terms of address, and, as the latter, they share some properties of names.²⁰ Consider the term money (4j), which can be used as a common noun (5a) and as a term of address (5b). (5) a. That's my money (as in That's my friend).

b. What's up, money? (as in What's up, man/Bruce?)

According to some males who use this term, money cannot be used in all the ways in which a common noun such as man can be used. For example, the following is not acceptable: #Look at that money (cf. Look at that man). The same is true for slick and homes: #Look at that slick standing over there (cf. Look at that guy standing over there.). #Look at that homes (cf. Look at that guy.). Although I have not conducted extensive research on the different constraints on uses of these items, one suggestion is that they cannot occur in this environment because they may be used most often in cases in which males are familiar with each other. As such, the sentence #Look at that slick standing over there may be unacceptable because it makes reference to an unfamiliar male. One possible indirect argument against this hypothesis, however, is given in Brathwaite (1992), in which it is noted that homes is also used in addressing someone whose name one does not know.²¹ Also, the terms dawg and money (see (5a)) can be used in possessive noun phrases ('my dawg,' 'my money'):

(6) a. That's my dog.

b. That's my money.

But this is not a general rule that can be applied to all terms for males. The use in (7) is unacceptable:

(7) #That's my slick.

There are also regional twists on labels for people. The members of the New Orleansbased rap group Cash Money have filled their lyrics with terms and phrases

that are now associated with that geographical area. So for a member of Cash Money, his dawg or comrade is whoadie.

As is apparent in current hip-hop music, another category to which terms are frequently added is money (as in currency). One of the rappers from the hip-hop group OutKast makes his point by using three terms for money in the course of a sentence. He says, “I want greens, bills, dividends is what I’m talking about” (“Git Up, Git Out”).

Other terms for money are given in (8):

(8) Terms for money

- a. benjis (benjamins)
- b. cabbage
- c. cheese
- d. cream
- e. duckets
- f. franklins
- g. paper
- h. scrilla

Brathwaite (1992) lists at least eight terms for money, with only one being cross-listed with a term in (8): bucks, dead presidents, dime, paper, cash money, dividends, dough and knot. Dime and knot have more specialized meanings, in which the former refers to ten dollars, and the latter refers to a wad of money.

One recurrent theme in rap and hip-hop is material gain, and to that end, terms for material possessions, in addition to money, are used robustly. Two such terms are ice, which refers to diamonds, and bling bling, which can be used broadly to refer to jewelry or platinum. The latter term is the title of a single in which the artist attests that guys wear jewelry that is “the price of a mansion round [their] neck and wrist” (“Bling Bling,” B.G.).

A very broad category that can be subdivided into groups according to topics is that for lexical items referring to actions. Included in the list of terms for actions are (1) Terms for leaving: bounce, push off, murk; (2) Terms for expressing or showing envy: playa hatin (or hatin, hatin on), balla blockin; (3) Terms for communicating or connecting: feel, we're here (with gesture pointing to eyes); (4) Terms for making advances toward a member of the opposite sex: push up on, get wit(h), holler at that, sweatin; (5) Terms for labeling that which is good, exciting, etc.: off the hook/chain, krunk (used in the South in the early 1990s and revived in 2000), banging, too stupid.

The next subsection considers a productive process which is used to coin phrases that mean to engage in some activity.

4.3.3 Productive process of adding elements to the lexicon:

A common phrase that was used in the early to mid 1990s is get your groove on to mean to get something going, as in dance. The phrase has become extremely productive, not necessarily by using words to mean dance, but by inserting different words in the phrase, as indicated below:

(1) get – possessive pronoun – noun – on ‘to become engaged in some activity’

a. get my chill on

‘to rest’

b. get my drink/sip on

‘to drink’

c. get my eat/grub on

‘to eat’

d. get my mac (mack) on (usually refers to males toward females)

‘to engage in acts such as dancing with numerous partners, getting phone numbers, etc.’

e. get my praise on

‘to praise or worship’

f. get my sleep on

‘to sleep’

Forming phrases based on the template in (9) has become a productive process to create phrases used to express the meaning ‘to become engaged in some activity.’ The general rule is to insert a word that can be used as a verb in the position following the possessive pronoun and preceding on. The phrase (get – possessive pronoun – noun – on) is used as a verb and consists of four elements: the verb get, a possessive pronoun (usually my or your, but other possessive pronouns can occur here), the inserted verb (e.g., sleep) which is also used as a noun in the phrase and the preposition or particle on. What is of interest here are the words that name the actions and that are inserted between the possessive pronoun and on. The words chill (a), drink/sip (b), eat/grub (c), mack (d), praise (e) and sleep (f) are commonly used as verbs to name some type of action (e.g., Jack eats apples, It’s easy to sip this shake with this wide straw, I just want to chill for a minute). But when these verbs occur in the phrase in the position of the ‘X’ in get my X on, they must be used as nouns because they follow the possessive pronoun my. A word that follows a possessive pronoun is a noun, as in my shoes, your house, his table and her book.

The get-my/your-X-on phrases are attested in everyday speech and in the media such as television and radio. They also occur in print in magazines such as *Essence*. For example, the following line appears in one of the articles in the leisure section of the January 2000 issue: “Michelle chills at the Spa Atlantis, where she got her hydrotoning on” (Burford 2000, p. 116). Obviously, the reference is to a woman who engaged in the activity of hydrotoning at the Spa Atlantis. Also, the hip-hop group Cash Money plays on the productivity of this construction in the single “Get Your Roll On,” a song that encourages listeners to go out and do what is pleasing to

them. In the video, people get their roll on by ‘rolling’ in expensive cars, those that are nice or off the chain, such as the Bentley and Lamborghini.

AAVE does not have a vocabulary separate from other varieties of English. However AAVE speakers do use some words which are not found in other varieties and furthermore use some English words in ways that differ from the standard dialects.

The table below shows many words which dominant in AAVE, and the equivalent meaning of each word in SAE:

AAVE	SAE
to cop	to steal
Dude	guy
get over	chance for a robbery
Score	hold up
the deal goes down	the crime is comitted
to cut s.o.	to hurt s.o. with a knife
Hood	ghetto neighborhood
to be down	to be willing to join
Badge	policeman
to cop some z's	to secretly take a nap
to diss	to insult
a heavy	a 10 year prison term
to take a hit on	to take a certain amount of s.th.
Crank	drugs
Beef	quarrel
to light s.o up	to shoot s.o.
to muscle	to attack
to drop a dime on s.o	to report s.o. to the police
to get busted on a humble	to be arrested on a small charge
to cop rocks	to buy cocaine
Bourgie	middle-classe
Crack	a type of cocain
Crap	nonsense
to be cooked	to have no chance
Joit	prison

Chapter Five

Summary and findings

5.0 Introduction:

This chapter contains two sections. The first one is general summary about the study; and here the researcher is going to summarize all the aspects of the study. The second, it is intended to mention the final results of the study.

5.1 Summary:

The study includes five chapters and each one branches into other elements. At the first of each chapter there is a small introduction which identifies the general layout of it. In addition to that, each chapter has many fields.

The first chapter branches into (background, statement of the problem, significance of the study, also it includes questions and hypotheses of the study, objectives and methodology of the research, in addition to the limitation of the study). In the first field; the researcher gives background about the topic that he is going to make a study about it. In the second field the researcher states exactly what is the main problem that the study tries to solve. After that in the third field the researcher shows the questions of the study. The first one is a question which concentrates on the phonological differences in the two dialects, whereas the second one focuses on the syntactic differences. Otherwise the third question is concerning with the lexical differences between both. The fourth field is about assuming answers to the research questions, and here the researcher speculates three hypotheses according to his point of view, the hypotheses ordered according to the questions, and each one of them is relevant to the specific question. These speculations have been done by the researcher in order to realize the objectives of

the study, by confirming these speculations later at the end of the study, if it is true or not. In the fifth field the researcher indicates the goals that the study tries realize. Then the researcher speaks about the methodology of the study. Indeed, in the last field of chapter one, he shows the limitation of the study.

The second chapter is divided into theoretical framework and literature review. In the first section the researcher talks about the language varieties and shows that the language may vary from time to another and any language may develop according to the needs of its speakers. Also he explains the development stage of English language, starting with as follow (Standard language, Vernacular, pidgins and Creoles). And in order to show the changes in English language, he talks about each variety one by one in details and indicates the characteristics of each one. In the second part of chapter two, the researcher talks about AAVE variety, starting with its name, the origin of the dialect and who speak it. After that he gives background about its features.

The third chapter includes the methodology of the study. Here the researcher talks about the population of the study, and then he talks about the sample of the study. After that, he shows the validity and reliability of the study. Finally, the researcher talks about the procedures that he follows in order to analyze the data. However, the analytical method is used in this study to compare between the two varieties in order to find out the similarities and differences between them.

Chapter four is about data analysis. It contains three sections. Firstly, the researcher talks about the sound features of AAVE and then he compares each item of the sound features with SAE by choosing the same context, and in order to show the similarities and differences among them, he uses tables. Secondly, he shows the grammatical differences and finally he speaks about the lexical features of AAVE and compares it with the standard variety. Finally, the last chapter contains two

items: The first one is a summary of all the study. On the other hand, the second item is about the final results and exactly in this part the researcher shows that, the hypotheses that he has already speculated in the first chapter is right or wrong.

5.2 Findings:

After the data analyzed in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that:

- 1- The results indicate that, there are syntactic differences between the two dialects, so the first hypothesis which belongs to the first question is true.
- 2- The results show that, the phonology of AAVE is quite different from the SAE, so the second hypothesis is also true.
- 3- The results indicate that, most AAVE vocabulary are based on SAE, so they share some lexicons, but AAVE has Special terms dominants between them, and this terms identify them from the standard variety. So the hypothesis that belongs to this question is right.

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