ACKNOWLEDGING THE VOICES OF FAMILIES: METADISCOURSE AND LINGUISTIC

IDENTITY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN SPEAKERS OF AAE

by

SASHA ROSENA JOHNSON

(Under the Direction of Marlyse Baptista)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation evaluates the use of African American English (AAE) and how identity is

manifested through dialectal features used by African American families from various

socioeconomic classes in Norfolk and Virginia Beach, Virginia. AAE linguistic features are

examined detail, which is traditionally done in sociolinguistics. In addition, this study also

analyzes metadiscourse discovered through metadiscursive commentary of AAE that the

interviewees have experienced, witnessed and perceived in multiple social situations and

institutions. Through their language use, each interviewee's discourse is analyzed using social

realist theory and the methodology of critical discourse analysis (CDA). With this particular

framework, the concepts and theories of speech as a social act, agency, the epistemic and moral

stances in narratives, and social and personal identities are examined and discussed.   The

findings connect traditional Sociolinguistics analysis with that of metadiscourse and include

comparisons of participants through the social factors of age, gender, education, and household

income. This research is useful to linguists and educators because it gives a voice to African

Americans revealing their linguistic attitudes towards AAE, education, and more. Furthermore,

it shows AAE-use as a form of solidarity among the African American community and that it is

more than a dialect of only the working class and the poor.

INDEX WORDS: African American English, African American Culture, African American
                 Identities, Black Culture, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Language in the
                 African Diaspora, Language and Identity, Language and Education,
                 Sociolinguistics, Metadiscourse, Critical Discourse Analysis

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Ronald and Rosena Johnson, my sister Sazara, my brother Ronnie, and my major professor Dr. Marlyse Baptista. Mother, thank you for loving me unconditionally and giving me discipline, for instilling a love for reading and education, for never giving up on me, for pushing me to always do my best and to never give up, for allowing me to experience new, positive and different things in life-even if I did not carry them through, for believing in me, for praying for me even when I thought I could not go on, and for supporting me emotionally, financially, and spiritually. Dad, thanks for loving me unconditionally, for instilling a love for language, for re-enlisting in the military so long ago which gave us a very cultured and exciting upbringing, for bringing me mountain dews and snacks to comfort me as I was having a rough time freshman year (assuring me that I would be able to make it), for having pity on me when Mother was disciplining me (smile), for validating me, and for supporting me emotionally, financially, and spiritually. Sazara ("Shewy") and Ronnie, thank you for being my best friends and supporting me in so many ways. Sazara, we have laughed together, cried together, been disciplined together (running away together thereafter), and done so much together (like riding the elephant bus). Ronnie, you are the nicest brother a person could have. You have overcome so many obstacles becoming a productive, healthy and inspirational young man, despite having "autism". Dr. Marlyse Baptista, I will never forget how you willingly without hesitation took me on as your student when the odds were against me, believed in me and my research, mentored me and gave me direction. I will always be grateful to you. Thank you so much.

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[1] To clarify any confusion regarding the composition of my committee, it should be stated that Dr. Baptista directed this dissertation, and as such, is my sole major professor. However, as she resigned from the University of Georgia in Summer 07 to take a new position at the University of Michigan, the UGA Graduate School would not allow her to remain my major professor on paper without becoming adjunct faculty. Sarah Blackwell then graciously accepted to fulfil the role of my major professor on paper. I moved to Ann Arbor during the academic year 07-08 to complete this dissertation under Dr. Baptista's supervision.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

African American English (AAE) is possibly the most researched and highly recognized dialect in US Sociolinguistics (Childs, 2005; Eckert, 2000; Rickford, 1999). What more could be added to that body of literature that would be of interest and stand out among the rest? Until recently (Green, 2002; Spears, 1999; Weldon, 2004), most studies on AAE have focused on the working class and poor (c.f. Baugh, 2000; Green, 2002; Heath, 1983; Howard, 2003; Johnstone, 2000; Labov, 1972; Milroy & Gordon 2003, Rickford, 1999; Smitherman, 2000; Wolfram, 1969; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 1998). Yet, as an African American[1] speaker of AAE, I know of many people who are in higher socioeconomic classes who speak AAE and a few who do so almost exclusively. These studies also have taken place in large, urban cities or rural areas in neighborhoods or communities that usually lack multi-racial diversity (see Chapter 2: Literature Review). Then, the findings from these studies have been used to make generalizations on AAE across the board.

Thus, there is a need to look at AAE regionally or locally. Because of familial ties, I wanted to conduct research in Norfolk and Virginia Beach, which are two of the largest cities in Tidewater Virginia, a place that is rich in history and racially and ethnically diverse that includes small to midsize cities and suburban and rural areas. It is the place where the first known Africans initially set foot on what would be later known as the birthplace of the United States ("Virginia," 2008). Additionally, a majority of the studies on ethnolects tend to look at the

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[1] I interchange the terms *African American* and *Black* for people of African descent living in the U.S.

differences in speech between those in the majority and those in the minority. In the case of AAE, there is an abundance of literature on Black-White speech differences. That is the reason this work is an intra-racial study.

Although Sociolinguistics investigates interesting topics, such as age, race, education, employment, and identity, like other fields of the social sciences and business (e.g. Organizational Behavior), there is still a lack of ongoing interdisciplinary studies. The fields of Education, Sociology, and Linguistic Anthropology are doing some fascinating work on language. Sociolinguistics could benefit greatly from those disciplines and apply their concepts and theories in research. Conversely, Sociolinguistics could contribute to those disciplines as well.

Linguistic Anthropology and Sociolinguistics are closely related fields and often share concepts (Duranti, 1997). There are social theories in Sociology that prove to work well with Sociolinguistic studies, such as social realist theory (Archer, 2000; Carter & Sealey, 2000; Fairclough, 2003), which is used in this research. The literature that I have read in Education, especially Language Education, whether culturally sensitive or not, constantly mention the assumption that minorities, i.e. African Americans, are wary of the educational system (Howard, 2005, 2003), do not care about education because it equates to "acting White" (Ogbu, 1997), or are too inferior to be educated (Jensen, 1969, 1968). There are many works in Education that are discrediting the viewpoints that the Black community, especially the youth, does not value education and the importance of mainstream American English (MAE) acquisition. I know these stereotypes to not be entirely true from conversing with people from housing projects or from upper-class neighborhoods; the majority of Black people value it despite the fact that some of them are apprehensive of or distrust the educational system and its potential lack of cultural

awareness and understanding. Thus, I knew I wanted to create a work that contributes to that body of literature. Additionally, I want to add to the existing body of work on language and identity, especially due to the insights and theories concerning it. More importantly and above all, regardless of these above-mentioned reasons and motivations, I definitely wanted the work that I conduct or I am a part of to benefit society as a whole.

Consequently, it is with this in mind that this research project was created and executed. In a recent article, according to Wolfram (2007), "sociolinguists have unwittingly created similar myths related to the study of AAE, including the supraregional myth, the unilateral change myth, and the social stratification myth" (p. 293), but now "it is time to subject some of our [Sociolinguistics'] conventionally accepted sociolinguistic wisdom on the status of AAE to more exacting empirical scrutiny" (p. 311). Therefore, this study seeks to question and get rid of these myths, incorporate change, and help progress the field of Sociolinguistics under the direction of an African American linguist, who considers herself a part of the AAE speaking community. This is also rare being that most linguists, especially ones who study AAE, have been non-Black (Cukor-Avila & Bailey, 2001; Rickford, 1999; Wolfram, 2007, p. 309).

1.1   Purpose of the Study

This dissertation analyzes the use of African American English among African Americans of multiple socioeconomic classes and how AAE and the participants' metadiscourse help to shape their personal and social identities. Traditionally, "metadiscourse is the language you use when you refer not to the substance of your ideas, but to yourself, your reader, or your writing" (Williams, 2007, p. 65). Coined by Zellig Harris in 1959, it represents "a writer's or speaker's attempts to guide a receiver's perception of a text" (Hyland, 2005, p. 3). However, AAE is more of a verbal language than a written language. Although they note that only little

research has been done on verbal language, Crismore, Markannen, and Steffenson (1993) extend the use of metadiscourse from texts to spoken language as well (p. 40-43). Thus, metadiscourse in this dissertation will be referred to the participants' metadiscursive commentary, which is their descriptions, assumptions, and views of language and the significance thereof (B. Rymes, personal communication, August 6, 2006). It focuses on research questions concerning race, education, and language attitudes and linguistic perceptions of their own, their families, and of society. It will also consider how the interviewees have responded to these attitudes, and how their families and society have informed them and others of these possible attitudes. Many times in research on language and education, the participants are usually teachers and/or students. You rarely hear from the parents or the families of the students even if they are mentioned in the study; although, as of late, more studies are including them (e.g. Allen, 2007; Shockley, Michalove, & Allen, 2005). That is why this analysis evaluates AAE and the metadiscourse on language of families via the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and social realist theory; this method and theory will be thoroughly discussed in chapter 5. Thus, the main research questions are introduced and postulated in the following:

1) What perceptions and attitudes do African American speakers have on AAE?

The interviewees' perceptions and attitudes of AAE will probably vary. There will probably be differences based on age and gender. There may even be signs of linguistic insecurity (coined by Labov (1966), which is what Baugh (2000) refers to as linguistic vulnerability). Some may not agree with AAE and/or claim they do not speak it, but the transcribed text may show otherwise. They may talk about how parents, family and other members of the Black community have influenced their attitudes and perceptions of AAE. The interviewees' may also speak about when and where AAE can or cannot be used. Since I'm African American, a few interviewees

may even want to know my personal views of AAE and may even be concerned to see how I react to what they are saying about it.

2) How do the perceptions and attitudes of the educational system (teachers, administration and fellow students) affect the perceptions and attitudes of AAE by African American speakers (AAE)? What impact (i.e. alienation, achievement/success, drop-out rate, segregation, codeswitching) does/did the educational system have on African American speakers of AAE?

I believe that the educational system has played a great role in the positive and negative attitudes and perceptions of AAE. Formal education, which is highly valued in the Black community (Morgan, 2002), and the educational system have made significant marks on Black Americans as a whole, from obtaining the right to be educated (DuBois, 1903; Siddle-Walker, 1996; Woodson, 1933), to having quality school systems (Baugh, 1999; Kozol, 2005), to be given the choice of an academic curriculum over a vocational curriculum (Eckert, 1989), to the high proportion of Black students (mis)labeled as learning disabled, etc. (Baugh, 2000; Delpit, 1995; Labov, 1972; Rickford, 1999; Smitherman, 2000).   I think that historical reasons (such as slavery and racial segregation) have made AAE both disliked, being seen as "slave talk" and a symbol of ignorance, and embraced, being viewed as a symbol of solidarity by Blacks.

Since AAE is not promoted by the educational system, those who speak it may have become disillusioned with school, failed or did not do well in school, or even dropped out of school (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; Green, 2002; Rickford, 1999; Smitherman, 2000). They may even think negatively of their speech and others who speak AAE (Baugh, 2000; Morgan, 2002; Smitherman, 2000). However, there may be some who agree with the educational system, have abandoned AAE altogether and feel like that has contributed to their achievement or success.

Still, there may be some who feel like keeping AAE as a part of their linguistic repertoire has contributed to their success, as well, or has not adversely affected their success. Most, if not all, of the interviewees will recount stories of language regulations, which are enforced by teachers and administration, of appropriate and inappropriate speech and language.

3) How well does the socioeconomic status model, defined as "sub-elements of social class [which] include education, occupation, income and type of housing" (Chambers, 2003, p. 7), concerning non-mainstream language use, perceptions and attitudes work with the two African American communities of different socioeconomic classes studied in this research?

As aforementioned, it is often said that AAE is mostly spoken by people of lower socioeconomic status while those of higher socioeconomic status usually codeswitch between AAE and Mainstream American English[2] (MAE) or exclusively speak MAE. However, that is not completely accurate. Education, mainstream dialect use and higher socioeconomic class do not always go hand in hand. For example, there are people who are highly educated, speak MAE, and are in lower socioeconomic brackets and vice versa. Identity(ies) can be manifested in language; moreover, as an act of solidarity, many Blacks, regardless of social class, speak AAE or attempt to do so. For instance, many Blacks go to a Black hair salon, attend family reunions or are members of clubs and organizations where a tremendous amount of speaking in AAE takes place. While it may be mostly true that Blacks of higher socioeconomic ranks speak AAE in only certain contexts, this may also be true for working class Blacks as well. In addition, it is

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[2] I do not believe that there are "standard" and "nonstandard" languages or dialects, especially since linguistically speaking all languages and dialects are created equal. However, society does make a distinction, elevating some over the other. It is common, even in current Linguistics' terminology, to report the language or dialect of social/cultural power as "standard". Yet, in the footsteps of Lippi-Green (1997) and others, I will refer to it as "mainstream" and its counterpart as "non-mainstream", which are still somewhat problematic but less pejorative. "Standard" and "nonstandard" are only used when referring to a body of work or discussion where those terms are used.

believed that Blacks of lower socioeconomic classes speak AAE exclusively or more often than those of higher socioeconomic classes. Nevertheless, there may be more Blacks of higher socioeconomic classes who speak AAE exclusively or more often than MAE as well, which was what happened in a previous study of mine.   In 2004, I conducted a study on language awareness and attitudes in education of a middle-aged, Black male who was a teacher and owned a business, but spoke AAVE all the time. He said that whenever people, no matter who they were, heard him talk, he wanted them to know that they were talking to a Black man.

Overall, it is too naïve to think that just because someone is in a lower socioeconomic class that they may speak AAE more than someone who is in a higher socioeconomic class or that AAE is spoken more by the interviewees in Norfolk than in Virginia Beach because its median income is lower. Nothing is ever easily clear-cut or black and white. This study may lead to unexpected findings, which are welcomed by the open-ended research questions (see Appendix A).

1.2   Outline of the Dissertation

The following briefly describes the subsequent chapters in this dissertation.   Chapter 2 is the **Literature Review**. It consists of four major sections. The first section is entitled *The Early African American Community in Norfolk and Virginia Beach*. It gives an historical account of Blacks in those neighboring cities from the 1600s to the 1800s. Next, is *The African American Community and African-American English (AAE)*, which looks at the Black community at large and their linguistic history including naming practices, the deficit and difference theories, and relevant legal cases on race, language and education. *Discrimination and the Educational System* is on public education and its support of assimilation and misdiagnoses in education. The

final section, *Progressing Towards the Difference Theory and Beyond*, discusses AAE and its relation to education, identity, and social class.

Research Location, Participants and Methods is chapter 3. It begins with a description of Hampton Roads or Tidewater Virginia and goes more into depth of why this location was chosen as the research setting. Next, historical facts of Norfolk and Virginia Beach are given followed by present day demographic information of these two cities. Information on the participants, such as how they were recruited and individual descriptions of them, is given. Lastly, the methodology, data collection, and data analysis are explained.

Chapters 4 and 5 are the analyses chapters. Chapter 4 is **Linguistic Data and Analysis**. It reviews three major linguistic features in AAE, the copula, negation and agreement. Then, it illustrates the AAE features extracted from the data. Chapter 5 is **Metadiscourse Data and Analysis**. It connects the linguistic features examined in Chapter 4 to the participants' metadiscourse. The metadiscourse is analyzed through CDA methodology and social realist theory.

Chapter 6 is **Findings**. Overviews of the linguistic and metadiscourse analyses are presented. There are tables, charts and descriptions thereof comparing gender, age, socioeconomic class, education and the city in which the participant lives. The pre-formulated research questions are answered and insights on the participants' ideas, opinions and views on the subject of language, identity and education are discussed. The hypotheses and main research questions are revisited and answered with the data collection.

Chapter 7 is **Conclusions and Implications**. It is a summation of the entire dissertation. The purpose of the dissertation is reiterated and evaluated. Limitations of the study and questions emerging from the data collected are also offered. An explanation of the relevance of

this study and its findings and the way it helps to further Linguistics, related fields, and social

institutions beyond academia. Finally, the connection of this research to the importance of

critical research and its benefits to society at large is restated.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review consists of four major sections that attempt to give a chronological and comprehensive view of African Americans and AAE. The first section specifically reports the early history of Blacks in Norfolk and Virginia Beach, the two communities in which the research takes place. The next section relates the history of naming practices of those of African descent in the US and the linguistic history of the AAE dialect originated from them. AAE dialect and its connection to the deficit and difference theories are recounted from the early 20th century to the present. Additionally, several historical cases concerning race, discrimination, and education affecting the Black community as a whole are reported. The third section relates educational malpractices, as coined by Baugh (1999), in the US public education system. The last section connects AAE use to education, identity, and social class.

2.1   The Early African American Community in Norfolk and Virginia Beach

In this section of the literature review, a historical view of Blacks in the cities of Norfolk and Virginia is given. Both of these communities began with those who were enslaved and those who were not. It cites early African American history, looking at the demographics of the people during this time period, including but not limited to marriage and heads-of-household.

2.1.1   Norfolk, Virginia

According to Tommy L. Bogger (1997), author of *Free Blacks in Norfolk, VA 1790-1860*, free Black family structures in Norfolk, VA were diverse. Many families could trace their lineage to Africa and/or some prominent White family (p. 103). Some families consisted of both free and enslaved members (p. 103). In many cases, many of those who were enslaved actually

gained their freedom from their family members' purchasing it. Some of those enslaved family members were even owned by their family members in order to keep them in the state (p. 113-14). Bogger (1997) does note that by 1832 there were laws that prohibited Black ownership of slaves except for family members and by 1858 another law passed where Blacks could not own slaves, not even family members (p. 114). Other families were either male-headed or female-headed households (p. 108-09). Some female-headed households had men living there, but because these women were less mobile and had steady employment and their spouses did not, the Census considered them as the head of the household (p. 108-109). Even though women had better economic opportunities, many who were married did not work outside the home because the men worried about the possible sexual exploitations from White men, who would most likely be their employers. If the women did work outside the home, they worked as laundresses and seamstresses which allowed them to work at home. Also, many of the women wanted to distinguish themselves from enslaved women, which is another reason why they chose to stay at home (Bogger, 1997, p. 110). Yet, some of these women in the female-headed households were actually mistresses of White men, in which some actually acknowledged their children although they kept the relationship with the mother discreet. There were also White headed households that Blacks were a part of, but by 1860 that drastically lessened, especially due to less contact between the races. This was most likely due to the fact that in 1860, Abraham Lincoln was sworn as the President of the US. The Republican Party, to which he belonged, opposed the expansion of slavery, causing the Southern states, including Virginia, to secede from the US ("slavery," 2008). Thus, this most likely surmounted to increase hostilities between Whites and Blacks resulting in less contact between the two.

From 1812-1863, due to the records of ministers, only 82 marriages of free black couples were recorded, but many were not recorded. In free Black families, marriage and choosing a spouse was a major ordeal with family members playing a great role in the selection process. Spouses were carefully chosen in order to maintain social status. Therefore, respectability, property ownership, legal and residential status and personal qualities were examined. However, the most important of these all was skin color, preferably light skin color, because it was important to approximate the White ideal of beauty. So, mulattoes usually chose mulattoes and so on and so forth. Through marriage, the creation of extended family and reinforcing bonds and the interests of the Black community were made.

Men had a greater opportunity to find a mate than women. From 1820-60, women outnumbered men 2 to 1. However, black boys outnumbered black girls. Yet, when these same black boys became men, many left Norfolk for better economic opportunities, which, in turn, shortened the black adult male population (Bogger, 1997, p. 108). The men even had non-marriage unions with White women, and because their Mothers were White, the children were "free" even if there fathers were not. In fact, many of these children decided to "pass" as White in society (p. 111). When the men looked for Black wives, many went out the area, and even out of the state, in order to maintain the social status of their families, as previously mentioned. By 1860, however, there was an even more marked decline in male headed households (p. 109). And, many free Blacks even emigrated to Africa, especially to Liberia (p. 115). As part of the Back to Africa Movement of the 1800s, Liberia was the most popular country of choice because it had an elected Black government, having gained its freedom in 1847, and free land to African American settlers were being offered.

2.1.2 Virginia Beach, VA

Before it was called its present-day name, Virginia Beach was formerly known as
Princess Anne County in 1691, dividing Lower Norfolk County into Norfolk and Princess Anne
Counties (see more information below in Chapter 3) (Hawkins-Hendrix, 1998, p. 19). The first
known account of Blacks in Princess Anne County were three no-named enslaved Blacks
brought by Adam Thoroughgood in 1621 (p. 20); yet, there were Blacks in this county before the
Lower Norfolk divide (p. 20).   They were slaves of the prominent Walke family of Barbados,
who settled in what would later be called Princess Anne County in 1662 and owned the Fairfield
Plantation (p. 20, 23). In addition, county court records corroborate the existence of Blacks in
the county before 1691[3].

In 1790, the Census recorded only 64 free Blacks and by 1793, every free Black person
was required to register in the city or county in which they lived at a cost of twenty-five cent
(Hawkins-Hendrix, 1998, p. 42). In addition, they had to carry around their certificate wherever
they went or face jail time for as long as a year until their freedom status was proven (p. 42).
According to the Norfolk State University archives' earliest Census records of 1810, Princess
Anne County had 267 free Blacks and 3,926 enslaved Blacks. Slavemasters continued to free
their slaves through manumissions, which are formal notices of emancipation from slavery, and
wills, and if the mother was free, than the child was free too (p. 42). The following are the
numbers of free Blacks after 1810 (p. 42):

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[3] These records are of a Black man named William, enslaved by William Basnett Squire, who committed fornication
with Mary Williamson in 1687, and a single Black woman named Katharine Makove, who had an illegitimate child,
who died, and was fined 500 pounds of tobacco in 1699.

Year	Free Blacks
1820	251
1830	343
1840	232
1850	259
1860	192

Hawkins-Hendrix (1998, p. 42)

Some of the prominent free Black families were the Gatlins, Fullers, Andersons and Hodges[4] (who had been free since the 1700s) (p. 41).

With an historical background of the African American Community of Norfolk and Virginia Beach recounted, it is fitting to look at the African American community-at-large in the US. The next section seeks to do so, focusing on the linguistic history of African American English (AAE).

2.2   The African American Community and African-American English (AAE)

The African American presence has been around since the first colony of Virginia was created in the 1600s. This section attempts to link the history of the naming practice of African Americans to that of the AAE dialect. Then, it looks at two major theories, deficit theory and difference theory that have affected AAE and its speakers. At the end of this section, historical and legal cases surrounding AAE are presented.

2.2.1 Linguistic History

Approximately since the 1700s, people have noted differences in speech patterns (especially in the arts and entertainment- minstrelsy[5], literature- slave narratives and literary

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[4] In fact, Reverend Charles E. Hodges (b. 1819) served in the House of Delegates from 1869-1871(Hawkins-Hendrix, 1998, p. 42).

dialects, and social sciences) between Whites and Blacks (Ewers, 1996; Poplack & Tagliamonte, 2001; Rickford & Rickford, 2000). Although Black American speech has been assumed under many names (Negro English, Black English, Black English Vernacular, African American Vernacular English), its most recent label is African American English (AAE) (see section 2.2.1a for more on this topic) (Baugh, 2000; Rickford & Rickford, p. 2000; Schneider, 1989; Smitherman, 2000). The hypotheses of its origin vary.

In 1619, the Atlantic slave trade brought nineteen Africans, who would later become, in the next year, legally enslaved, to what is now Jamestown, Virginia. AAE began, in the African slave trade, as pidgins, which are trade languages that are a linguistic mixture of African (substrate) and European (superstrate) languages. These pidgins developed into creoles[6], which were once pidgins but became the first or native languages of the children of the pidgin speakers, in Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas.

In the US, Lorenzo Turner (1940s) and Beryl Bailey (1960s) were the first to study AAE, but have not been recognized as such (Smitherman, 1999, p. 77). They were followed by Walt Wolfram and William Labov (1960s), Smitherman (1970s), and Rickford, Mufwene and Baugh (1970s-1980s).

In *Problems Confronting the Investigator of Gullah*, Turner (1948) informs those who research Black speech that there is a misconception that Africa had nothing to do with Gullah. In order to rid one's self of this misassumption, s/he "need[s] adequate knowledge of the conditions surrounding the importation of slaves to the US", some acquaintance with the speech of Blacks in areas of the New World where they had no contact with the English language in the 17th and

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[5] Minstrelsy is the singing and playing of a minstrel (any of a troupe of performers typically giving a program of black American melodies, jokes, and impersonations and usually wearing blackface).
[6] Although, Mufwene (2001) does hypothesize that some creoles were developed independently of being a pidgin first.

18th centuries (i.e. Haiti, Brazil, etc.), and some familiarity with African culture, especially with African languages (i.e. Mende, Vai, Thi, Fante, Gã, Ewe, Ibo, Bini, Efik, Ibibio) spoken by those enslaved in the US (p. 1-2). He continues with the problem of the observer's paradox stating that the researcher needs to be familiar with the Gullah informants because if not the Africanisms will not be shared, only English, which is used for strangers (p. 9-10, 12). Turner also tells us that Gullah speech has been attested in Black speech in Alabama, Mississippi and elsewhere as those speakers have moved westward and northward (p. 12).

Beryl Bailey (1965) denounces the linguistic scholars, who negatively discuss Black speech, as ethnocentric in *Toward A New Perspective in Negro Dialectology* (p. 41-42). In addition she proposes, "I would like to suggest that the Southern Negro "dialect" differs from other Southern speech because its deep structure is different, having its origins as it is undoubtedly does in some proto-Creole grammatical structure" (p. 43). She reminds us that a great deal of Linguistics is, in her terms, "hocus pocus" or guesswork that even when she looked at her native Jamaican Creole, she had to adopt some unorthodox procedures and modify the orthodox procedures[7] (p. 43). Bailey notes, just as Turner mentions, that informants do a great deal of code-switching (p. 44), and that the Black American operates in a linguistic continuum, fluctuating from speaking mainstream American English (MAE) to the most vernacular AAE (p. 44).

After these earlier works from Bailey and Turner, other significant work on AAE came along (more detail is given of these works in Chapter 4). The works from Labov et al. (1968) and Labov (1972) on Black male adolescents in Harlem, NY and Wolfram's Detroit study on African Americans and social class (1969) are also pioneering works. Smitherman's work,

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[7] Beryl L. Bailey looked at the Black, AAE speaking character Duke in *The Cool World* by Warren Miller (1959, Boston, MA: Little, Brown, & Company).

(1977), *Talkin and Testifyin*, which is written in AAE and MAE analyzes AAE features and the different contexts it is used, e. g. in the Black church. Rickford (1975) establishes and makes clear the difference between remote BIN and *been* in his work, *Carrying the new wave into syntax: The case of Black English BIN*. In *Black Street Speech,* Baugh (1983) conducts a multi-city study of AAE and notes that the AAE features he collected are not just spoken by city dwellers but those in the country and suburbs as well.   There are a host of so many others that have came after them and/or studied under them who have contributed to the field.

For those who have studied AAE, many fall into one of the two camps of AAE's origin, Anglicist (includes neo-Anglicist) or Creolist (Africanist is included under Creolist). In the Anglicist hypothesis, the main source of AAE is superstrate influence with little to no Creole or African influence. While on the other hand, the Creolist hypothesis states that AAE is heavily influenced by African languages and European languages. The two major arguments are more vividly represented by Rickford (Creolist) and Schneider (Anglicist).

In *The Creole Origins of AAVE: Evidence From Copula Absence*, Rickford (1998) annotates and describes seven different kinds of evidence of the creole origins of AAE. He cites the following: 1) socio-historical conditions- it is best to look at the US South for evidence of creolization due to the large Black population (p. 158), 2) historical attestations- through literary texts, which are brief and their authenticity is questioned, and ex-slave and Black recordings of those born in the mid 1800s, which are questioned on the stereotypical dialect features overrepresented by fieldworkers (p. 159), 3) diaspora recordings- assuming that the present day speech of isolated Blacks (Samaná English in the Dominican Republic, Liberian Settler English, African Nova Scotian English) is still quite similar to their foreparents who emigrated to other countries (p. 160), 4) creole similarities- with sociohistorical evidence of Caribbean slaves

brought to the US, AAE is compared to the mesolectal varieties of the English based creoles of

Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, South Carolina Seal Islands and Liberian Settler English (p. 161), 5)

African language similarities- the "demonstration that contemporary AAVE parallels West

African languages in key aspects of its grammar [i.e. copula absence] might be taken as evidence

of the kind of admixture or substrate influence" (p. 161), 6) English dialect differences-

comparing Black speech with White US and British speech varieties showing how different the

speeches are presently and in the past (p. 162) and 7) age-group comparisons- could provide

decreolization in apparent time of speakers of various ages, although this is used mostly for

divergence hypotheses (p. 162).

In *American Earlier Black English: Morphological and Syntactic Variables*, Schneider

(1989) acknowledges that "the question should not be which of the positions (creole/substrate

theory vs. dialectologists theory) is wrong or right but rather how great was either source of

influence at any particular point in the history of the dialect" (p. 27). However, his research

shows a preference towards the Anglicist theory. He notes that the use of ex-slave narratives

from the Federal Writers' Project (FWP) and the Works Project Administration (WPA) are better

sources over literary works "for obvious reasons"[8]. Schneider examines the following: 1) subject

concord of finite main verbs (e.g. I owns, us leaves) 2) formation of the past tense of verbs (e.g.

deletion of –ed in regular verbs), 3) past tense and past participle forms of irregular verbs (e.g.

draw → drawed), which Schneider says is related to White nonstandard dialects and old British

dialects, 4) perfective constituents of the auxiliary complex (e.g. have/has + past participle),

which Schneider says AAE uses "been done" and is a British English structure with some

African/Creole aspect modifications (i.e. been) 5) progressive aspect (-ing) which Schneider says

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[8] The only problems Schneider (1989) notes about ex-slave narratives are that the transcripts are written and the text
of the transcripts may not be actually identical with what was said.

is the same as standard English, 6) verbal prefix –a (e.g. a-saying) which is derived from nonstandard White dialects, 7) the present participle form of go (e.g. gwine) which is a British feature being preserved, 8) plural formation of regular nouns uses –s, 9) plural formation of irregular nouns using regular patterns (i.e. man → mans) and 10) the genitive –s of nouns which is seldom deleted (e.g. Momma car or Momma's car) (p. 62, 87, 148, 149-150).

With the use of ex-slave narratives recorded from the research of the Workers Project Administration (WPA), literary dialects, mechanical slave recordings, and present day Samana, Nova Scotian, British and American Englishes, there are many linguists who espouse the Anglicist theory. According to Ewers (1996), AAE originates from superstrate influences-British and American English sources [and] there are features of it that cannot be explained by any hypothesis (p. 240). Schneider (1989) echoes this in saying that although he does not rule out any creole or African influence, credit should be given to British features being preserved and nonstandard White dialects (p. 280). Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001) state that AAE is a relic of British English, retaining older forms of British English because Samana speakers are members of the Black elite so they spoke standard English and that outside influences are "gratuitous and beside the point" (p. 237). Additionally, although they do admit that it is often overlooked that White vernaculars have assimilated some features of Black speech, Bailey, Maynor and Cukor-Avila (1991) agree that AAE has been significantly affected by White vernaculars (p. 11).

Although some people put him in the category of advocating the Anglicist theory (Morgan, 2002, p. 64), Wolfram and Thomas (2002) question the use of ex-slave recordings to provide evidence of the origin hypothesis of AAE. In accordance with Wolfram & Thomas, Michael Montgomery (as cited in Bailey et al. 1991) and John Rickford (1999) also agree that

these recordings cannot be used as solid proof for AAE's origin. Smitherman remarks that in the 1960s and 1970s, the origins of AAE were ignored and were strictly synchronic and heavily statistical (p. 81). Lisa Green (2002) notes that AAE's relationship with other varieties of English is very complicated (p. 219) as she further discusses Labov's model of interdependence of AAE and MAE (p. 219) and Hilliard's insistence that AAE can only be understood via understanding African language, history and culture (p. 221). Rickford's diffusion theory (1999) explains that African, Creole and British English languages have contributed to what is called AAE (p. 129-130, p. 157) and that due to legal and "sociopsychological" barriers between Blacks and Whites, AAE has been used as a marker of identity, which is the cause of its uniformity among Blacks from all over the US (p. 135, 143).

Yet, Morgan and Wolfram and Thomas divide the origin camps differently. According to Morgan (2002), there are three theoretical positions and she names the linguists who she believes fall in those particular categories: 1) dialectologist/early sociolinguistic position (Bailey/Maynor, Fasold, Krapp, Kurath, McDavid, Schneider, Williamson, Wolfram), 2) creolist/substratist (Bailey, Dillard, Stewart, Winford), 3) dialectologist, creolist and Africanist (Baugh, Mufwene, Rickford) (p. 64). Although in his earlier works it seems that Wolfram (1970, 1974) was more inclined toward the Anglicist theory (see below), in later works with Thomas, as mentioned above, he just explains and questions the different positions without really siding with one. In an earlier work (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 1998) with Schilling-Estes, Wolfram says that there are two major hypotheses of the AAEs origins, creolist and anglicist. However, in the above mentioned later work (Wolfram & Thomas, 2002) with Thomas, Wolfram shows that there are three views, which are the following: 1) anglicist, 2) creolist and 3) neo-anglicist, which says that earlier postcolonial African American speech was quite similar to the early British dialects

brought to North America; however, it is acknowledged that AAE has since diverged and it is now quite distinct from contemporary White vernacular speech (p. 14).

Regardless of what theory one may espouse concerning the origin of African American English, with it being non-mainstream, it has been devalued by many of its own speakers as well as non-speakers from various educational backgrounds. Furthermore, the status of AAE in society has had a history of oscillation from being devalued and disrespected to valued and appreciated. Since the 1960's AAE has been considered the most widely studied dialect in Sociolinguistics (Eckert, 2000, p. 9; Rickford, 1999, p. 90), but still there is a great deal to be learned about it (Smitherman, 2000, p. 146).

According to Chambers (2003) in *Sociolinguistic Theory*, "in modern industrial societies, these three social characteristics-class, sex, and age-are the primary determinants of social rules" (p. 7). However, I would add race and ethnicity to the previously mentioned list of social characteristics, especially concerning dialect and sociolinguistic studies in the US where race is a salient characteristic. As Rickford mentions (1999) in *African American Vernacular English*, "American sociolinguistics has made less progress in understanding the role of ethnicity as a sociolinguistic boundary than it has understanding other social variables" (p. 90). Quoting Labov, he further notes that major Black-White differences persist even when other social variables are controlled for (Rickford, 1999, p. 101). Therefore, instead of looking at interracial differences in dialects, this study looks at African American English (AAE) intra-racially, which is rarely done, by means of socio-economic class, in which the "sub-elements of social class include education, occupation, income and type of housing" (Chambers, 2003, p. 7).

Although AAE is one of the most widely studied dialects in Sociolinguistics, as aforementioned (Rickford, 1999, p. 290), it has rarely been looked at intra-racially based on

socioeconomic status. In fact, Beryl Bailey suggested that, "AAE must be understood as an independent structure in its own right" (Labov in Mufwene, et al., 1998, p. 112). It is usually seen as a working class dialect and is examined interracially contra White dialect speech. However, it is believed by some linguists that AAE is not just a non-educated working class speech; it has plenty of varieties with a continuum of the most vernacular to the least vernacular, which is a standard AAE (Rickford & Rickford, 2000, p. 224). AAE is more than just lexicon, but pitch and tone are included as well. In fact, through perception tests, speakers are still identified as Black despite the fact that they are using mainstream English (ME) grammar; it is most likely intonation that identifies people as Black (Green, 2002; Rickford, 1999; Smitherman, 2000; Spears, 1988).

2.2.1a Chronological history on the labeling of AAE. The labeling of the speech/dialect that many African Americans, and those who are non-Black but have close contact with Blacks, speak, coincides and is just as complex as the labeling of the people, from which the language derives. In accordance with this, Green (2002) says, "to some extent, the labels have been used to link the variety to those who speak it; the same label that is used to refer to the speakers is used for the variety" (p. 5). Geneva Smitherman (1999) gives a detailed, chronological history of the naming practice of those of African descent in the US, which is seen below. Additionally, according to Walter Brasch, the language they use can be represented in five cycles: colonial, revolution, antebellum, reconstruction, Negro Renaissance and civil rights (hypothesis of Walter Brasch quoted in Green, 2002, p. 166). However, here I have summarized it slightly different in conjunction with African American self-naming practices below.

In order to differentiate people based on race, White colonialists in the US referred to those of African descent as "free" or "slave", but if their status was unknown they were referred

to as "nigger[9]" or "negro", which is a derivative of the Portuguese and Spanish "negro", which means "black" (Smitherman, 1999, p. 44). According to Mufwene (2001), most slaves in the formative years of slavery came from Africa (p. 88). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of Blacks spoke an African language or dialect, while a few spoke some type of English. Furthermore, he also notes that "slave populations were stratified in ways that provided variable access to colonial native varieties of the lexifier [English]…house slaves for instance had more exposure to it than the vast majority of field hands (p. 91).

According to Smitherman (1999), free Blacks would call themselves "colored", but would also label themselves as African, hence the African Methodist Episcopal Church[10] (p. 44). She says that, "*African* symbolized a common heritage, thus becoming a focal, unifying semantic for socially divergent groups of Africans, both creating and reinforcing the social construction of group solidarity and commonality" (p. 45). By the 1800's, the term "colored" began to become the new label for those of African descent, for the most part due to decreasing cultural connections of Blacks with Africa. This designation even lasted until the beginning of the twentieth century with W.E.B. DuBois' National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Yet, during this time period "negro" began to penetrate and become the most widely used title with usage from Booker T. Washington and the support of the NAACP, which later advocated and pushed for the capitalization of "N" as a sign of racial self-respect (p. 47). Although "Black" was used before the 1960s, it was not until then that it became the new linguistic term with the advent of the Black Power Movement. "Negro" was considered

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[9] According to Smitherman (1999), "nigger" was not a racial epithet until the 1800s (p. 44).
[10] The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church is known as the first denomination of Christianity started by Blacks in the US (Parramore, et al., 1994).

antiquated and a throwback to slavery, while "Black" was self-empowering, turning what is bad as good (Smitherman, 1999, p. 47-48).

Baugh (2000) notes that the term Black English was first introduced to Linguistics by Wolfram and Fasold in 1969. Although Schneider (1989) says there is no generally shared term for Black English, according to Spears (1988), "the term Black Vernacular English is the current favorite because it does not call forth invidious comparisons, nor does it case aspersions on its speakers" (p. 102). He further notes that,

> the kind of English that the term *Black Vernacular English* refers to has
>
> previously been called Nonstandard Black English, Nonstandard Negro
>
> English [by Labov in 1966], colored lingo-it gets worse from here on.
>
> One thing we notice is that the further we go back in time, the more
>
> derogatory the terms become. (p. 101)

Ebonics, which was short-lived and given media attention in the late 1990's with the Oakland's Ebonics case, was actually created by Robert Williams in 1973 at a conference he hosted in St. Louis called, *Cognitive and Language Development of the Black Child* (Smitherman, 1999, p. 29; Baugh, 2000, p. 15; Rickford, 1999, p. 309). In the DuBois-ian Pan-African tradition, it was meant to unify and encompass all languages and dialects, not just AAE, spoken by Blacks throughout the African diaspora.

Yet, "Black" and "Black English" were still not representative of the people and their speech. W.E.B. DuBois often talked about the double-consciousness many Blacks have being African and American, which can be a constant struggle to balance and/or bridge the two identities. More recently, in the late 1980's, the term "Afro-American" or "African-American" became and still is the most common term, used in conjunction with "Black". It was first heard

by Dr. Ramona Edelin, who was the President of the National Urban Coalition, in 1988, before

Jesse Jackson, who erroneously is given credit for the label (Smitherman, 1999, p. 41). Baugh

(2000) also corroborates this by noting that Black linguists used the term "African American"

long before Jackson (p. 84). For a while, African American Vernacular English (AAVE) was the

most common term for the dialect, but "vernacular" was seen as an equivalent to nonstandard

grammar. However, it is noted by many linguists, such as Smitherman (1999), Spears (1988)

and Rickford and Rickford (2000) that the dialect not only consists of grammar but also prosodic

features such as tone and pitch, as well. The grammar could be standard, but the tone and pitch

can still give one the perception of "African American", and this is called African American

Standard English. Thus, the newest label for the dialect has been African American English.

Labov said that the term African American English, in conjunction with Black English, is used,

instead of Ebonics, to refer to all the ways that the English language is used by African

Americans in the US (quoted by Rickford, 1999, p. xxi; Baugh, 2000, p. 58). In view of the

aforementioned, in this study, AAE is used instead of AAVE. Plus, it puts it on par with the

other Englishes, i.e. Appalachian English, New York English, Southern English, Puerto Rican

English, British English, etc.

    2.2.1b Deficit Theory. Anyone who studies Linguistics learns that all languages and

dialects are equal linguistically speaking. This proclamation or declaration was a counter

response to a past, popular and common belief by many in the US academia that non-mainstream

dialects, like AAE, were inferior to MAE. This idea gave way to the *deficit or verbal deprivation*

theory. Especially popular in the mid 1900s, the deficit theory was used to explain the

educational failures of Black students. This theory proposes the supposed absence of culture

along with linguistic and genetic deficiencies (Baugh, 2000; Delpit, 1995; Lanehart, 2002;

Labov, 1972; Smitherman, 2000). The research of the educational psychologist Arthur Jensen

has been well documented in advocating the deficit theory. In *Patterns of Mental Ability and*

Socioeconomic Status, Jensen (1969) compared Black, Chicano and White children's intellectual

abilities and deficiencies. Jensen claimed his research was "culture-free" and pronounced that

80% of intelligence is based on heredity. According to his findings, Black children were

intellectually inferior to White children due to genetics and that this research "help[s] to localize

the nature of the intellectual deficit of children called disadvantaged [i.e. Black]" (p. 1336).

During that same time frame, academic scholars asserted that physical traits, such as thick lips,

and genetic inferiority were the reasons why Blacks talked a certain way and were less intelligent

than other races/ethnicities of people (Baugh, 2000; Labov, 1972; Smitherman, 2000). Even

earlier in the twentieth century, in correspondence with Robert Rives La Monte, the oft-quoted

H.L. Mencken (1910, 1972) stated that:

> I admit freely enough that, by careful breeding, supervision of
>
> environment and education, extending over many generations, it might
>
> be possible to make an appreciable improvement in the stock of the
>
> American [N]egro, for example, but I must maintain that this enterprise
>
> would be a ridiculous waste of energy, for there is a high-caste [W]hite
>
> stock ready at hand, and it is inconceivable that the [N]egro stock,
>
> however carefully it might be nurtured, could ever even remotely
>
> approach it. The educated [N]egro of today is a failure, not because he
>
> meets insuperable difficulties in life, but because he is a [N]egro. He is,
>
> in brief, a low-caste man, to the manner born, and he will remain inert
>
> and inefficient until fifty generations of him have lived in civilization.

And even then, the superior [W]hite race will be fifty generations ahead

of him. (p. 116)

The deficit theory exuded the lack of adequate, empirical, and attested research in which theoretical claims were based off of long-established, deep-rooted stereotypes and prejudices. Yet, on the contrary, there were scholars whose research counteracted that of the deficit theorists (as reviewed below) . This opposing theory came to be known as the difference theory.

2.2.1c Difference Theory. During the same timeframe as Jensen, many historians, linguists, dialectologists and other scholars (e.g. Bailey, 1965; Fasold, 1969; Labov, 1966 1968; Wolfram, 1969; McDavid, 1951; Woodson, Carter G., 1933) negated the *deficit theory* through the use of the *difference the*ory affirming that AAE is rule-governed and systematic just like any other dialect or language. This opposing theory states that that Black (or other minority) culture and language are not deficient or worse than White (or other majority) culture and language; it's just different (Baugh, 1999; Delpit, 1995; Fasold & Wolfram, 1970; Green, 2002, p. 166; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1972; Purcell-Gates, 2002; Smitherman, 2000, p. 75, Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 1998).

The historian Carter G. Woodson (1933), stated in *The Miseducation of the Negro* that "[The Western educational process] depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other peoples" (p. xiii). Through the use of historical evidence, Woodson also proved that African (diaspora) culture is not and was not inferior and emphasized the re-education of African Americans, the discarding of Western education, learning about and appreciating African American/African culture, and using education to aid in the success of all African Americans. While conducting several present day reform projects, the educational

historian Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) notes that Black students seemed "unengaged, alienated, misunderstood, distracted, overlooked, or uninspired" (p. xiii). In her book, *Their Highest Potential*, Walker finds that during segregation, Black schools' principals and teachers, were "builders of men and women" (p. 149) because "teaching was more than the imparting of subject matter; it was the task of molding children to be successful. Theirs was a job of collective racial uplift" (p. 149) in that they wanted the students to "reach their highest potential" (p. 158)-there was no system of what is now called "tracking" and "labeling", "having every child succeed" (p. 70). Many of these students under segregation achieved academic success despite mainstream society's lack of support.

Investigating Gullah, the linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner (1948), dispelled myths and demonstrated how this Creole language, spoken by Blacks from coastal North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, was a legitimate, rule-governed language (Green, 2002, p. 166; Smitherman, 2000, p. 75). In addition, in the first two pages of their article, *The Relationship of the Speech of American Negroes to the Speech of Whites*, dialectologists, Raven McDavid and Virginia McDavid (1951) proclaimed that

> Almost without exception, any scholar studying American Negro speech, whether as an end in itself or as part of a larger project, must dispose of two widely held superstitions: (1) he must indicate that there is no speech form identifiable as of Negro origin in solely on the basis of Negro physical characteristics; (2) he must show that it is probably that some speech forms of Negroes-and even of some Whites-may be derived from an African cultural background by the normal processes of cultural transmission. (p. 3).

They further recognized that the "misinterpretations", as they put it, were due to skin differences.

The studies of Fasold and Wolfram (1970) and Labov (1972) have been critical in vindicating AAE and its speakers from those in the educational system who oppose the difference theory. Using research concerning AAE conducted by themselves and other scholars (i.e. William Labov), in *Some Linguistic Features of Negro Dialect*, Fasold & Wolfram (1970) presented non-technical facts on AAE for teachers and "those who would like to write teaching materials but do not feel secure in their knowledge of the features involved" (p. 41). AAE is distinct because of its linguistic history, which is independent from other American English dialects, and the persistent segregation pattern of our society. The researchers also emphasized the fact that the two kinds of differences between AAE and MAE are pronunciation and grammar. One of the main points of the article is that AAE is systematic just like the standard and that a teacher should reflect upon his/her own language use and not expect their non-standard speaking students to learn language rules that are not in his/her speech.

In Labov's work, *Language in the Inner City*, the participant "Junior" and his friends understood and verbalized the importance of education and how it could better their futures, but they still were reading behind grade level (Labov, 1972, p. 251). Their teachers did not believe that they could be academically successful and looked at nonstandard English as a deviation and unsystematic (p. 4). Labov (1972) states that inner city, lower income African American children are "defined as outsiders from the beginning and that no one in the school system has seriously considered that this principle [Protestant work ethic and the importance of a quality education] is to apply to them" (p. 252). Because of cultural and political conflict in the classroom, Labov proposes a young (16-25 years old), Black non-college graduate, male cultural

intermediary, who can relate to the students and the teacher and bridge the gap between them, to combat the problems between the teachers and students (p. 254). It is assumed that lower income students do not have the same values as their middle class teachers, which causes conflict between the students and teachers and false assumptions and stereotypes of the students by the teachers.

2.2.2 Historical and Linguistic Legal Cases

Plessy v. Ferguson's 163 US 537 (1896) separate but equal ruling never really happened. Louisiana passed Act 111 in 1890. It required separate and supposedly equal accomodations for Blacks and Whites in railway cars. However, there were Black and Whites who opposed this act and formed the Citizens' Committee to Test the Separate Car Act. They deliberately chose Homer Adolph Plessy, who was one-eighth Black, to test the act because they wanted to prove how senseless the lack of a clear racial definition in science or law to show segregation by race. Thus, in 1892, Plessy boarded a White only railway car, refused to leave and was consequently arrested and jailed. He argued that the courts violated his constitutional rights under the 13th (banned slavery) and 14th (explains US citizenship; secured rights of Blacks as citizens) Amendments.

However, the ruling under Judge Ferguson was against Plessy stating that Louisiana had the right to regulate the railroad companies as long as they operate within state boundaries. Still yet, Plessy appealed to the Supreme Court of Lousiana, which also upheld Ferguson's ruling. Finally, Plessy took it to the US Supreme Court in 1896. And, in a seven to one vote, it ruled against Plessy saying that the previous rulings did not violate the 14th Amendment but the law separating the races was a matter of public policy. Justice Brown, who wrote the law, said that it was Blacks who consider themselves inferior not Act 111. While the only dissenting judge,

Justice John Marshall Harlan disagreed. However, this case made concrete and set the precedent

for the "separate but equal" doctrine (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896).

Although *Brown v. Board of Education* 347 US 483 (1954) made segregation in

education illegal, it still persists today. Yet, its ruling counteracted Plessy v. Ferguson stating

that "separate but equal" has no place in the field of education. In addition, the 14th amendment

was considered inconclusive and the history of the amendment out of date concerning the present

day conditions of public education. But, more importantly, *Brown v. Board of Education*

(appealed from rulings in the states of Kansas, South Carolina, Delaware and Virginia) ruled that

segregation in public schools denies Black children of equal educational opportunities, regardless

if the facilities of the segregated schools are equal. Yet, presently, the public school system is

still just as segregated today as it was thirty plus years ago. In major US cities, the following

schools are predominantly Black and Hispanic: Chicago 87%; Washington, DC 94%; St. Louis

82%; Philadelphia 79%; Cleveland 79%; Los Angeles 84%; Detroit 96%; Baltimore 89%; and

New York City about 75%. In addition, these school systems are also plagued with low funding

and insufficient resources (Kozol, 2005).

These two cases coupled together, seemed very promising, but the educational system

failed to bring these cases to realization, despite the latter case's favorable ruling. With growing

recognition that the US is a diverse and multicultural nation, research concerning language and

education has increased greatly since the middle of the twentieth century. Chronologically after

these above-mentioned legal cases, much of the linguistic research on AAE, as seen above, has

concentrated on either the *deficit/verbal deprivation theory* or the *difference theory*, analyzing

the linguistic, cultural, and family backgrounds of the students.

Many researchers have used their findings on AAE in the education arena with the most famous cases concerning Linguistics and education being the Ann Arbor case (1979) and the Ebonics case (1996). In the *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School v. Ann Arbor School District Board* case (1979), twenty-five years after the *Brown* case, low-income parents of fifteen Black students of the Green Road Housing Project[11] successfully sued the school system for placing their children in special education classes and speech pathology instead of taking into account their cultural and dialectal differences. They were worried that their children would become functionally illiterate. Blacks made up 13% of the student population[12], which had a predominantly White upper middle class majority (Smitherman, 1999). According to Smitherman (1999),

> the attitude of school officials was that the school had done its job, and that perhaps the children were uneducable…yet close scrutiny of the academic records and psychological and speech-language evaluations failed to uncover any inherent limitation in the children's cognitive or language capacities. (p. 133)

The ruling, which:

> require[d] the defendant School District Board to take appropriate action to teach them [the children] to read in the standard English of the school, the commercial world, the arts, science and professions…[in order] to keep another generation from becoming functionally illiterate (p. 139)

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[11] It is presently known as Green Baxter Court.
[12] As of 2006-07, King Elementary is only 5.6% Black (25 students), with a large White, 42.2%, and Asian, 36.1% majority ("Headcount by Ethnic Group of School," 2008). Ann Arbor Public Schools System's webpage also has statements on their Non-Discrimination policy and beliefs, which is part of their strategic plan (i.e. "heritage shapes individual identity" and "racism is destructive"), which can most likely be credited to the King vs. Ann Arbor case .

was not only victorious for students who speak Black English but also potentially victorious for students who speak other nonstandard forms of English. This ruling also pronounced that "schools must teach speakers of Black English literacy in the language of the school, the professions, and the marketplace, while simultaneously recognizing and 'taking into account'-as Judge Joiner [who issued the ruling in favor of the children] would later put it in his lengthy opinion-the legitimacy of the language of Black America" (Smitherman, 1977, p. 243). However, once again, just as the previously mentioned cases, the ruling of this case failed to be adopted and manifested in other school districts outside of Ann Arbor.

The *Oakland Ebonics* case (1996) is a testament to the failure of schools adopting this above-mentioned ruling after the *Ann Arbor case*. Studies have proven that the use of a student's home language can facilitate mainstream or standard language learning. Using English as a Second Language (ESL) strategies, the Oakland School Board approved of California's Standard English Proficiency (SEP) program to use AAE in order to teach the students MAE and help the teachers to understand Black culture and AAE (Baugh, 2000, p. 37-38). Thus, teachers in Oakland had been using AAE, which was spoken by about 90% of their school system's population, to teach MAE.

The school board sought funding (Title VII) to continue to do so, but were met with severe public outcries from Blacks and Whites, the government, the educational system, the media and popular culture who were misinformed about the teachers' intensions and caught up in media hype (Baugh 2000, Smitherman 2000). Perhaps one of the main reasons they did not receive funding is because of how they worded their resolution; they wanted funds for "English proficiency" instead of "standard English proficiency". According to Baugh (2000), "…these classifications [language and dialect] have direct statutory and funding implications for educators

and legislators who must implement corresponding policies" (p. 37). In addition to not receiving funding, Ebonics paralleled stereotypes of African Americans and became a source of humor (Rickford & Rickford, 2000, p. 218).

Even now, in spite of all the legal cases and research that show how to help Black students achieve academic success and regardless of the fact that if there is a predominantly White or Black environment or a mixed environment, many Black students continue to perform worse in schools, especially concerning standardized tests and achievement in reading and mathematics, than non-Black students (US Department of Education, 2008). Nevertheless, just what Labov (1972) proved over thirty years ago, still remains true that the,

> Concept of verbal deprivation has no basis in social reality. In fact, black children in the urban ghettos receive a great deal of verbal stimulation, hear more well-formed sentences than middle class children, and participate fully in a highly verbal culture. They have the same basic vocabulary, possess the same capacity for conceptual learning, and use the same logic as anyone else who learns to speak and understand English. (p. 201).

Thus, looking at the above legal case rulings and the findings from the US Department of Education and from other academic research, "there is still need for more, not less, research on AAE" and how the disconnect between students, and their families, and teachers and administration can be bridged through cultural and mutual understanding and respect (Smitherman, 2000, p. 146).

2.3   Discrimination and the Educational System

2.3.1 Public Education and Assimilation

Although the world has become more globally linked than ever before, nationalism, ethnocentrism, classism and assimilation still prevail despite rhetoric of the contrary-diversity and multiculturalism. Baugh (1999) echoes this stating that the "US remains far from being the color blind society that most Americans seek" (p. 147). He (2000) further relates that there are a "mosaic of linguistic preferences and prejudices worldwide…[and in the] US, despite a history as a melting pot, it has yet to fully eliminate regional, racial, ethnic prejudice which is partially embodied within the inventory of languages and dialects we tend to favor or disfavor (p. 82). Smitherman (2000) confirms this by reminding us that, "though Americans preach individualism and class mobility, they practice conformity and class stasis" (p. 344).

2.3.1a Upper-class conformity. According to Morgan (2002), "since its beginning, public schooling has been viewed as a key socializing agent and resource for individual improvement and economic equality" (p. 135). However, as an important institution in the US, the educational system is living proof of promoting conformity and the ways of life of those in power. Delpit (1995) explicitly says, "power plays a critical role in our society and in our educational system" (p. xv), "schooling is intimately related to that power (p. 25), and "to act as if power does not exist is to ensure that the power of the status quo remains the same" (p. 39). Those in power are the ones who promote mainstream White (upper) middle class values and beliefs. Concerning these values, Morgan (2002) states that, "the split, often presented as a battle over "traditional" values, is essentially a policy argument over whether a fully developed literacy education is for the economically privileged alone or includes the working class (p. 136).

Citing Claude S. Fischer[13], Morgan (2002) asserts that, "Inequality is in that sense designed" (p. 138).

Thus, socioeconomic disparities play a major role in a person's educational career. As declared by Baugh (2000) there is an "educational paradox" where

every American child is guaranteed a (good?) public education as a birthright…[however,] educational Darwinism prevails-those with the financial means invest in high quality education above and beyond their tax contributions to public education in the form of individualized affirmative action (form of private tutors or private schools)…affluent communities routinely offering educational benefits unavailable to schools where financial and educational resources are inadequate. (p. 79)

Baugh (1999) also states that, "parents who are not only wealthy but are members of the dominant linguistic groups can offer clear educational, linguistic and perhaps occupational advantages to their children in ways that speakers of non-dominant dialects of the same language cannot" (p. 20). Therefore, it is not surprising that in the educational system, values and mores of those of the dominant linguistic groups and higher socioeconomic classes are promoted and respected.

2.3.1b Loss of minority cultural identity. According to Morgan (2002), "It is the unspoken dirty secrets of public education: to receive a middle class education you must criticize working class and African American cultural practices" (p. 143). Complementing this, Baugh (1999) further adds that "what is rewarded by teachers-who must advocate the standard-is often equated to so called White behavior-which can be perceived as rejection of native minority

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[13] Fischer, Claude S.; Hout, Michael; Jankowski, Martin Sanchez; Lucas, Samuel R.; Swidler, Ann & Voss, Kim (1996). *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

culture" (p. 68). Quoting Milroy and Milroy, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998) write that, "it

appears that discrimination on linguistic grounds is publicly acceptable" (p. 311).

2.3.2 Misdiagnoses in Education

Labov (1972) notes that "teachers are reluctant to believe that there are systematic

principles in nonstandard English which differ from those of standard English. They look upon

every deviation from schoolroom English as inherently evil, and they attribute these mistakes to

laziness, sloppiness, or the child's natural disposition to be wrong" (p. 4). Thus, non-mainstream

students are subject to misdiagnoses, labeling, and tests that

> track blacks in learning disability and speech pathology classrooms…
>
> [and can lead to future problems] to justify Black exclusion from
>
> employment opportunities, entry into professional schools, participation
>
> in the media, and in general become the basis for rationalizing Black
>
> people's differential access to social and economic power (Smitherman,
>
> 2000, p. 90).

In addition, Baugh (1999) maintains that, "educational malpractice as it relates to African

American students thrives in too many schools" (p. 63) and "it still remains legal to use

pathological diagnostics to place African American students in remedial (or bilingual) classes

which may be detrimental to their educational welfare" (p. 54).

Therefore, students continue to be discriminated against, misdiagnosed, and mislabeled

because of their non-mainstream linguistic backgrounds (Bailey & Thomas, 1998, p. 86; Baugh,

1999, p. 54; 2000, p. 77-78; Delpit, 1995; Eckert, 2000, p. 9; Green, 2002, p, 162, 217; Gumperz,

1982, p. 28; Labov, 1972, p. 6, 202; Morgan, 2002, p. 135; Rickford, 1999, p. 286; Smitherman,

2000, p. 90, 141). Consequently, these wrongful trackings or placements have negatively

affected many of the students' educational careers and opportunities (Rickford, 1999, p. 303, Smitherman, 2000, p. 90). What is even more alarming is that students who are members of a minority racial group and/or lower socioeconomic class are more likely to receive misdiagnoses (Delpit, 1995; Rickford, 1999; Smitherman, 2000, p. 106). The educational system should take into consideration that language is one of the ways cultural and personal identities are manifested. Lippi-Green (1997) explains that "it has become clear that language can serve to mark a number of kinds of identity . . . [which] are all embedded in language" (p. 31). Therefore, it is important for the educational system to become more sensitive, culturally aware and open to the diverse backgrounds, which manifests in identity, of all the students they serve. In accordance with these changes toward cultural sensitivity, Moore, Ford, and Milner (2005) suggest, "when students present needs based on their race, gender or socioeconomic status, it is important that school officials address them" (p. 168). However, Eckert (2000) comments that usually the school's preparation consists of teaching children their place in society and how to behave in that place (p. 7); thus, middle class students learn to lead and lower income class students learn to be respectful and obedient (p. 10).

2.4   Progressing Towards the Difference Theory and Beyond

2.4.1   AAE and Education

Following the pioneering studies, which support the difference theory, mentioned in the *Linguistic History* section above, subsequent studies were conducted focusing on language and culture in the educational system. Ladson-Billings (1994), McAllister and Jordan (2002), and Delpit (1995) focus their studies on teachers and culturally relevant pedagogy. In the *Dreamkeepers*, Ladson-Billings (1994) analyzes the teaching ideology of culturally relative pedagogy and the common behaviors of a diverse group of eight Black and White teachers, who

successfully teach African American students, in a low-income school district in "Pinewood",

Northern California. According to Ladson-Billings (1994), "the primary aim of culturally

relevant teaching is to assist in the development of a "relevant black personality" that allows

African American students to choose academic excellence yet still identify with African and

African American culture" (p. 17), which is in opposition to mainstream assimilationist teaching.

In *The Role of Empathy Teaching Culturally Diverse Students*, McAllister and Jordan

(2002), analyze the attitudes and beliefs of thirty-four teachers of Black, White and Latino

ethnicity and had them visit families from four cultures-Southeastern Asian, urban Appalachian,

Mexican and African American, which was deemed as the most valuable part of the program in

overcoming cultural prejudice.   Specifically in this research, all of the participants "believed that

empathy was an important factor because it can lead to "more positive interactions with their

students, supportive classroom climates, and a student-centered pedagogy". The teachers

believed that the cultural immersion (visiting families of different cultures) was the most

valuable part of the program citing that direct contact rather than learning from second hand

information was a way to "overcome cultural prejudice".

In *Other People's Children*, Lisa Delpit (1995) narrates situations she has encountered

from teaching or from her research and gives tools of how to combat cultural conflict in the

classroom. For instance, she supports the idea of members from the students' cultural

backgrounds to help teachers understand the "intricacies of that particular culture" and combat

cultural conflict in the classroom (p. 123), just as Labov (1972) advocated two decades earlier

(see above). Through interviews and personal experiences, Delpit (1995) gathered that teachers

from ethnic and racial minority communities believe teaching begins with establishing of

relationships between themselves and their students (p. 139).

Despite the findings from these studies that emphasize positive relationships between teachers, students, and parents and the need for culturally relevant pedagogy, assimilationist theory and mainstream norms, which alienate many non-mainstream students, are still promoted by many in education. In *African American Education: A Cultural-Ecological Perspective* John Ogbu (1997) asserts Black students equate success with acting White. He claims that,

> …they [parents] may be teaching their children ambivalent attitudes…children learn that even if they succeed in school they may not make it as adults in the wider society. Eventually, Black children become disillusioned and "give up", blaming "the system" for their school failure, as their parents blame "the system" for their own failures.
> (p. 245)

In addition, Ogbu (1981, 1997) notes that Blacks attribute their disillusionment with the job ceiling and inferior education to low pay-offs from education. Contrary to Ogbu, from her research with African American and Latino students, Marcyliena Morgan (2002) realizes that irrespective of the studies where education is equated as acting White and is devalued, these African American students "value education precisely because they believe it might lead to lucrative careers" (p. 135) and "maintain high academic achievement goals" (p. 149). Therefore, education is valued among Blacks, but on the other hand, the educational system's slant toward assimilation is not.

2.4.2 AAE and Identity

These studies above brought about more research on the significance of identity and how it is manifested through speech and cultural/social practices. Some have an educational bent while others focus more on whole communities.

2.4.2a Linguistic Identity in Education. Thus, with education being important and valuable to students and their families, studies from Heath (1983), Eckert (2000), Rymes (1995) and Howard (2003) focus on students and the need for those in the educational system to recognize student identity and to use the resources students bring with them to help them achieve success in school. These studies analyze how identity is manifested through language with respect to education, race, and socioeconomic class.   In her decade long ethnographic study, *Ways With Words*, in the Piedmont region of North Carolina, Shirley Brice Heath (1983) analyzes the speech patterns of Black ("Trackton") and White ("Roadville") non-mainstream communities, and compared them to each other and to the mainstream community. Heath also looks at the linguistic performance of the non-mainstream students in school revealing that it was not the quantity of words in their lexicon that kept those students at a disadvantage but the kinds of words that they used and brought with them from their respective communities (p. 352). According to Heath (1983), "the ways with words, transmitted across generations, and covertly embedded and intertwined with other cultural patterns, will not change rapidly" (p. 366).

Eckert's *Jocks and Burnouts* (1989) is an ethnographic study of White suburban Detroit Belten High School students who belong to two social categories that are based on suburban or urban values that mirror the categories of upward or downward mobility in society. According to Eckert (1989), the misjudgments of students' abilities and attitudes are many times due to dialect characteristics of many non-mainstream students (p. 9) and the school provides the main context in which cohorts develop a sense of ethnic and socioeconomic identity (p. 23). In *The Construction of Moral Agency in the Narratives of High School Dropouts*, Rymes (1995) conducts research on Latino high school dropouts who attend an alternative school. These students, who would be considered deviants-gang members, petty criminals, etc.-by society,

linguistically framed and identify themselves as being good people, performing criminal activities as means of survival. Rymes (1995) suggests that, "narrative, language and grammar are crucial resources for the expression of self [identity] and agency" (p. 496).

Tyrone Howard's socio-cultural study (2003), *"A tug of war of our minds: African American High School Students' Perceptions of Their Academic Identities and College Aspirations",* consisting of twenty African American high school participants from either a Midwestern or Western city, reveals that students consider having an education as valuable even though they believe their teachers do not support them. Howard (2003) suggests "that educators need to realize how their attitudes, words, and behaviors, both intentional and unintentional, can have serious implications on the manner in which students view their academic capability". Many of the students do not enjoy the subject material in class; therefore, they do not make good grades. Also, according to the students, intelligence does not equate to attending college. Additionally, a major finding is the great influence of parents in the student's academic performance, which dispels the myth that low-income and minority parents are not interested in their child's education. He concludes that, "it is critical to recognize the role that parent and teacher expectations, race, and socioeconomic status play in the formations of these [academic] identities".

2.4.2b Persistence in maintaining linguistic identity. Looking past education and at communities-at-large, Wolfram and Thomas (2002) and Wolfram & Schilling-Estes (1998), examine the importance of identity through language. Wolfram and Thomas (2002) analyze dialects of English spoken by Blacks and Whites in Hyde County, North Carolina. Their research showed that African Americans are ahead of White Americans in terms of divergence (p. 198). According to the researchers, ethno-linguistic differences persist even if the minority

population is considerably smaller than the majority population (p. 91). That corroborates an earlier study by Wolfram & Schilling-Estes (1998) that "ethno-linguistic boundaries can be remarkably persistent, even in face of sustained daily interethnic contact, most likely because ethnic dialects are an important component of cultural and individual identity" (p. 115).

2.4.3 AAE and Social Class

There are stereotypes that lower income parents do not care about their children's welfare (Delpit, 1995; Morgan, 2002). Nevertheless, Labov (1972) challenges this by noting that the "educational goals of the adult black community [despite their socioeconomic status] are the same as that of our society as a whole" (p. 253). Consistent with this, in his research study of low income African American high school students, Howard (2003) emphasized the great influence of parents in their student's academic performance which dispels the myth that low income and minority parents are not interested in their child's education. Students stated they wanted to continue to go to school and attend college thereafter due to the value placed on education by their parents.

Many of those teacher-centered or student-focused studies above casually mention the influence of parents on their child's education. Ladson-Billings (1994) consulted parents, whom she called "education consumers" (p. 17) in choosing the teachers in her study, and Howard (2003) dispels the myth that low-income and minority parents are not interested in their children's education. However, parents were still not major participants in either study.

2.4.3a Family maintenance of Black identity despite social class. Nevertheless, the studies of Tatum (1996) and Ochs, Smith and Taylor (1996) do include parents as a major focus in their study. Yet, they specifically do not focus on education but are related to those previously

mentioned because they examine the creation and reinforcing of racial and family identity

(Tatum) and individual agency and family identity (Ochs, et. al, 1996).

In *Out There Stranded? Black Families in White Communities,* the psychologist Beverly

Tatum (1997) studies suburban Black families, in which parents who were reared in

predominantly Black neighborhoods are raising their children in predominantly White

neighborhoods. Some of those parents who had strong African American community ties have

lost those ties due to changes in lifestyle and general disinterest; and, consequently, for their

children it is "a loss of cultural continuity" where relationships and ties with the Black

community are not possible or desirable for their children (p. 220). What is interesting is that

many of the Black children who were raised in predominantly White neighborhoods and had no

ties with the African American community became very isolated in college, not fitting in with

Blacks or Whites, and wished that their parents would have done more to connect them with the

Black community. However, Tatum (1997) notes that those parents who maintain ties with the

African American community make an "affirmation of their children's cultural heritage [while

still being able] to reap the benefits and the opportunities that drew them to the suburbs [i.e.

better schools] without leaving their children "stranded in the process" (p. 231).

Although Tatum does not particularly look at language use, Ochs et al. (1996) do

examine it. Through the lens of cognitive and sociological narrative analysis, in *Detective

Stories at Dinnertime,* Ochs et al. (1996) examine suburban White middle-class families and how

dinnertime is an opportunity space that provides the possibility of joint activity among family

members (p. 95). Centralized dinners can help families sort out problematic events in their lives

through co-narration while promoting adults' exertion of control over their children (p. 97).

Narratives can also strengthen social relationships and that a general sense of co-membership

provides a way for illustrating common beliefs, values and attitudes of the tellers and audiences (p. 109).

    2.4.3b Use of AAE in spite of social class. African Americans continue to speak AAE, and not just lower-income Blacks, regardless of the push for conformity by those in education, the negative statistics of Black students, the devaluation of Black culture and language, and the linguistic schizophrenia, which is 1) to love and hate the way you (and/or your group) speak, simultaneously and 2) to be proud of your language/dialect and then turn around and be ashamed of it in a different setting or context,[14] of those who speak AAE. Corroborating this, Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) claim that, "…linguistic items are not just attributes of groups or communities, they are themselves the means by which individuals both identify themselves and identify with others…" (p. 5). Most studies state that it is usually the lower working class and the poor who speak non-mainstream languages and dialects (Johnstone, 2000; Labov, 1972; Milroy & Gordon, 2003; Smitherman, 2000; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 1998).

    Although use of nonmainstream speech is socially stratified, many scholars fail to realize that higher income people, who are usually more adept in code-switching, are capable of speaking non-mainstream dialects and do so quite often depending on the context. This is especially true for African Americans[15]. For many Blacks, AAE is important to have as part of one's linguistic repertoire, especially when going to the barbershop or the hair salon, attending family gatherings and church functions, and being members of other predominantly African American organizations and societies. In concordance with this, Rickford and Rickford (2000)

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[14] I coined the phrase while doing research for a Sociolinguistics class in 2004, and I think it is quite fitting for the way that I use it, although, I am aware that some may be offended by the use of "schizophrenia". This is what Labov (2000) refers to as linguistic insecurity and Baugh refers to as linguistic vulnerability.
[15] Dr. Mary Zeigler (personal correspondence, April 2006), of Georgia State University, and I talked about this recently at a Linguistics conference.-socioeconomic status and usage of non-mainstream dialect is different for Blacks than non-Blacks.

state in *Spoken Soul* that, "one of the many fascinating features of black vocabulary is …how solidly it can connect blacks from different social classes".   In agreement with this, Spears (1988) talks about growing up in the Midwest and that Blacks of high socioeconomic status spoke AAE for reasons of "solidarity and intimacy" (p. 108). Baugh (1999) examined how the use of AAE, incorrectly spoken by Blacks who speak mainstream American English as their first dialect, is important in conveying cultural allegiance and solidarity to the African-American community as a whole (p. 131). Therefore, as frequently discussed by many scholars, in spite of many sociological factors, language is an important factor in one's social and cultural identity (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002, p. xvii; Mufwene, 2001, p. 16; Wolfram & Schilling Estes 1998, p. 115; Wolfram & Thomas, 2002, p. 201).

As seen with all the previously mentioned studies, there is room for more research specifically looking at African American families from various socioeconomic classes, their use of AAE, and how these factors have affected their educational opportunities. Instead of just casually mentioning the influence of parents on their children's lives, this study will consider parents as major participants along with their children. AAE-use by Blacks from lower and higher socioeconomic classes will be included instead of just lower income Blacks; it is typical of most Linguistics studies to focus on the working class or the poor (Baugh, 2000; Heath, 1983; Howard, 2003; Labov, 1972; Rickford, 1999; Smitherman, 2000). In addition, this project adds to and extends beyond the *difference theory,* pass the domination theory, which is a Marxist perspective that "combats institutional processes and ideologies", and towards the *discourse theory,* a post-modern perspective, which looks at how the "reality of people's circumstances is actively shaped by the ways in which they interpret and respond to them" (Rampton, 2006, p. 18-19). Overall, this particular study combines the concepts or analytical frameworks from these

aforementioned studies that analyze the linguistic, cultural, and personal identities of Black families from varying socioeconomic strata through the metadiscourse of African Americans as they discuss language and education. This is further discussed in Chapter 3, which discusses the present-day African American community in the two cities in Tidewater Virginia, where the research is based, along with information on the participants, procedures and methods.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH LOCATION, PARTICIPANTS, AND METHODS

3.1   Hampton Roads

Tidewater Virginia, recently known as Hampton Roads, is located in the southeastern region of the state of Virginia. Although the area has been recently expanded to northeastern North Carolina, it consists of the following seven major cities: Williamsburg, Newport News, Hampton, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake and Portsmouth. One of the main reasons the Hampton Roads area was chosen as the research setting is because my family is from this area. Additionally, the population is very diverse, being a major port area and home to the largest naval base in the country. It has one of the largest African American populations in Virginia. Norfolk has a very visible African American community, where the Black-White population is almost equal. Virginia Beach has a small Black population who are members of a higher socioeconomic class. Thus, all of this combined makes this area the ideal setting to conduct research on metadiscourse, attitudes and self-perception of AAE among different socioeconomic classes.

While talking with other African Americans, who live in the area, many of the older people who are originally from the deep South said that they moved up to Virginia for better opportunities and/or to eventually move up farther north, but stayed because it was not the hustle and bustle of many northern cities and it was not like the slower paced areas of their home cities in the deep South. As for many Northern Blacks, many who are younger, they were leaving the Northeast and Midwest for better economic and educational opportunities and liked the

Tidewater because it is a mixture of the South and North. Specifically, Norfolk and Virginia Beach were the two cities chosen in this study because they are geographically beside each other, but are very different in multiple ways in their population make-up, socioeconomically, education-wise, and otherwise demographically.

3.2   Historical Facts of Norfolk and Virginia Beach

Norfolk. Around the sixteenth century, Europeans, the Spanish and English, began to seize the land from Native Americans and settle in the present day areas of Hampton Roads. In the seventeenth century, settlement of Norfolk became widespread and then divided into what is now Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Chesapeake, Portsmouth and Hampton. Tobacco became the dominant crop in the area. Of course, in the northern Tidewater area of Jamestown, the first Africans arrived in 1619, initially as indentured servants but later to become enslaved ("race," 2008). According to Parramore et al. (1994), there was a small number of Blacks in indentured servitude, who were looking to be free after a certain amount of years of labor, in Norfolk in the 1660's and 1670's (p. 47). However, the expected freedom that many wanted quickly terminated into what would be permanent slavery[16]. In 1790, the Black population in Norfolk rose to 1274 enslaved and 61 free (Bogger, 1997, p. 8).

In the nineteenth century, trade was becoming widespread with the use of waterways and railroads and the construction of a navy yard. Virginia seceded from the Union and abolitionist movements took place. Also African Americans established Baptist and African Methodist Episcopalian churches in the early part of the century that would allow Blacks to hold leadership positions within the church and would later teach literacy and organize social and political events (Bogger, 1997, p. 152; Parramore, et al., 1994, p. 184). Because Norfolk was a port city and

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[16] In 1682, the Virginia General Assembly declared that all Blacks arriving in Virginia would be enslaved for life; however, there were free Blacks during and after this declaration (Bogger, 1997, p. 9).

many ships frequented the area, there was a large Underground Railroad movement aided by free

Blacks (Bogger, 1997, p. 165). Parramore (1994) also note that the first Black-owned

newspaper, the *True Southerner*, was created in Hampton but moved to Norfolk in 1866 (p. 227)

and a secondary school, Norfolk Mission College, was established for Blacks in 1886 (p. 254).

In the twentieth century, more economic growth with trade and the expansion of roadways (p.

290), legal segregation in schools established and fought against (p. 365), housing projects

constructed (p. 336, 352-53), more colleges and universities (Norfolk State University in 1935

and 1942, Old Dominion University in 1930, Tidewater Community College in 1968) established

and/or become independent of major universities (i.e. Virginia State University, Virginia Union

University, and William and Mary).

In 1956, Virginia responded to the Brown v. Board of Education ruling (see Chapter 2, p.

49) with what was called "Massive Resistance where the Virginia senator Harry F. Byrd pledged

to fight against the ruling by altering the administrative structure of the state's public schools

(Rose, 2007, p. 122-123). Yet, while the Massive Resistance law was taking place, the Norfolk

School board was in the process of complying with Brown v. Board. Mass Resistance gave

tuition grants to students who were opposed to school integration and created a law that withheld

state funds from not only any school that complied with integration but also any school that

agreed to do so. Therefore, Whites pulled their children out of the schools scheduled for

integration. The majority of middle-income and affluent White Norfolk parents accepted

integration and put their kids in private, church-organized schools, private tutoring academies,

boarding schools, and various other private institutions (p. 123) while less affluent White

Norfolk parents adopted a "wait-and-see" stance (p. 124). Massive Resistance only applied to

schools in process of integration and black schools did not meet the requirements of integration

so they were never closed (p. 124). However, a proposal was put forward at the city council to withdraw funds for all grades above the sixth grade in Norfolk in order to punish the African American community for their resilience in withstanding Mass Resistance (p. 124). While all of this educational and political mayhem was taking place, the NAACP had seventeen students, known as the Norfolk 17[17], educated at First Baptist Church on Bute Street solely to educate them[18]. These selected students had a principal, teachers, and administration along with a curriculum that paralleled those of white students so when integration came they would be on equal footing (p. 124).

Virginia Beach. What is now northern Virginia Beach, the Cape Henry area, is where in 1607, Christopher Newport and his men arrived, with orders from England. Much of Virginia Beach's history is the same as Norfolk's history since it was a part of Norfolk until 1691, when it became what was known as Princess Anne County (Parramore, et al., 1994, p. 53; Hawkins-Hendrix, 1998, p. 19-20) Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, economic development took place with plantations-Fairfield and Nimmo Plantations- and the tobacco industry (Hawkins-Hendrix, p. 23, 34). In addition, courthouses, churches and lighthouses were built. In 1784, the Methodist church said that slavery is "contrary to the laws of God" (p. 35) and gave their members a year to free them. However, of course, members overturned that for economic reasons but did allow their slaves to attend church and become educated so they could read the Bible and become familiar with Christian doctrines (p. 107).

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[17] According to Rose (2007), the Norfolk 17 was "selected to be the test case against school desegregation in Norfolk. They bore the brunt of the hostilities and frustrations of both sides. Because Norfolk was determined to portray its final compliance as peaceful, they were strongly encouraged to mute their accounts of the subtle and not-so-subtle confrontations that left permanent scars on their psyches" (p. 73).
[18] They would not be returned to their regular schools but would "wait it out" in their own school until the appeals process was over (Rose, 2007, p. 124).

The American Missionary Society sent teachers as early as 1863 to educate Blacks (p. 108). Martha Love Brown was the first to educate Blacks in Princess Anne County, where she taught at Piney Grove School for thirty years (p. 109). Other educational pioneers are Mary Poole Gray, who was the first supervisor for Black schools and in 1937 helped form the first high school, Princess Anne County Training School[19] for Blacks, Bettie Forbes Williams, who was the second supervisor, and William Skinner who erected the first adequate school building for Blacks with the help of the Rosenwald Fund (p. 110-113).

Also, Virginia Beach was more known as a vacationing spot with its many hotels and recreational facilities (Parramore, et al., 1994, p. 265). In 1906, the Virginia Beach resort area was incorporated as a town and in 1952, it became an independent city. However, in 1963, Princess Anne County merged with the Virginia Beach resort to become known presently as the City of Virginia Beach. Seaview Beach was once called the best "Negro Beach Resort" in the US (Hawkins-Hendrix, 1998, p. 146). In 1989, Virginia Beach made headlines for its Greekfest riots on Labor Day weekend, when predominantly African American sorority and fraternity members came head to head with the Virginia Beach police officers (Bourne, 2006). The ill-effects of this riot were looting, vandalism, racist attacks and many Black organizations refusing to patronize the area for a while (Bourne, 2006).

3.3   Present Day Demographical Information of Norfolk and Virginia Beach

Virginia Beach is a suburban-like resort area where the median income is approximately $61,333[20] with a majority White American population-73% (American Communities Survey, 2006). The African American population is less than a third of the White population with a total of 20%. The total population of the city is 435, 619 people. In the 2007-2008 school year,

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[19] Anne T. Jeannes, a wealthy Quaker woman, helped Martha Love Brown, a Black woman, to form the first high school in Princess Anne County (Hawkins-Hendrix, 1998, p. 109).
[20] The mean household income is $74,864 (American Communities Survey, 2006).

Blacks made up 27.8% of the public school population while Whites made up 56% (Virginia Department of Education, 2008). 92% of the population, who are at least 25-years-old have graduated from high school, and 31% have at least a bachelor's degree. Only 7% of the residents are below the poverty line, which is less than the state's average of 10%. There is a 65.5% homeownership rate. (American Communities Survey, 2006)

Norfolk with an overall population of 229,112 on the other hand, is deemed more inner city with a larger African American population (46% as compared to Virginia Beach which is 20%) with an income of $40,230, which is less than the median household income in Virginia, $56,277 (American Communities Survey, 2006). Its White population is 48%, only about 2% larger than the Black population. However, 63.9% of the students are Black and 23.7% of the students are White who attend the public school system (Virginia Department of Education, 2008). 83% of those 25-years-old and older are high school graduates while only 23% have a bachelor's degree or higher. About 17% of the residents are below the poverty line, which is a little less than twice the state's average. There is a 45.5% home ownership rate (American Communities Survey, 2006). Taken as a whole, these statistics illustrate how comparatively different Norfolk and Virginia Beach are from each other.

3.4   Participants

The participants were recruited by flyers that either I sent and were posted in churches and community/organization activity boards or that I handed out at church and homes. I also recruited families by word of mouth by means of the "snowball" technique (Milroy and Gordon 2003) without asking for personal information of potential interested interviewees, but by asking a participant to give potential interviewees my contact information. Subsequently, the interviewees contacted me and we scheduled a time for them to be interviewed.

The participants in this research are African Americans of varying incomes. In this study, the participants' incomes will be used as part of the categorization of their socioeconomic status. I interviewed a total of twenty participants, but only seventeen are included in this research. There are seven family systems consisting of siblings, spouses, parent and child, or aunt and nieces. I extended the families to consist of spouses and siblings because many times I was not able to interview a family consisting of only one parent and one child. The parents would be interviewed, but the children were unavailable or just decided at the last minute that they did not want to participate. As for the aunt and nieces, the mother of the nieces did not want to be interviewed, but the mother and her sister are close and have helped to raise each other's children. Therefore, the aunt and her nieces will also be a family unit to be examined. In African American culture, kinship ties are very resilient, strong, and significant crossing over geographical boundaries and including blood and non-blood kin (Billingsley, 1988; Scott & Black, 1994; Wilson, Greene-Bates, McRim, Simmons, Askew, Curry-El, & Hinton, 1995). It is common that those who would be traditionally seen as extended family are treated as immediate family (Billingsley, 1988; Tatum, 1999). In fact, those who are not blood-related can be considered part of the family, which is known as fictive kin or "play" family members, and may be addressed as "aunt", "uncle", or "cousin", for example (Tatum, 1999). Thus, all together there are 14 people who are a part of a family system and three other people who are not. I will keep the other three people when I am looking at generational, age, educational, occupation, and income differences.

The following are all the participants, who have been assigned pseudonyms:

1. siblings: Angel (sister) and Tamika (sister)

2. aunt/niece: Marguerite (actually the aunt of Angel and Tamika)

3. siblings: Lela (sister) and L.J. (brother)

4. spouses: Rose Marie (wife) and James (husband)

5. spouses: Carla (wife) and Tony (husband)

6. parent/child: Virginia (grandmother), Yvette (mother), Antonio (son)

7. parent/child: Vanessa (mother), Alex (son)

8. independent: Esther, Terri, Linda

The following is a table on the participants' background information, such as age, gender, city of dwelling, education and household income.

Table 3.1

PARTICIPANTS

NAME	AGE	GENDER	CITY	EDUCATION	HOUSE-HOLD INCOME
Angel	18	Female	Norfolk	in high school	$0-9K
Tamika	21	Female	Norfolk	high school	$0-9K
Lela	30	Female	Norfolk	B.A.	$50-59K
L.J.	20	Male	Norfolk	working on B.A.	$0-9K
Tony	34	Male	VA Beach	B.A.	$60-69K
Carla	33	Female	VA Beach	B.A.	$60-69K
Rose Marie	66	Female	Norfolk	high school	$10-19K
James	68	Male	Norfolk	some high school	$30-39K
Virginia	66	Female	Norfolk	high school	$0-9K
Yvette	45	Female	Norfolk	A.A.	$30-39K
Antonio	29	Male	Norfolk	working on A.A.	$20-29K
Vanessa	47	Female	VA Beach	working on Ph.D.	$100K +

NAME	AGE	GENDER	CITY	EDUCATION	HOUSE-HOLD INCOME
Alex	21	Male	VA Beach	working on B.A.	$10-19K
Marguerite	46	Female	VA Beach	working on GED	$0-9K
Esther	62	Female	Norfolk	working on B.A.	$70-79K
Terri	38	Female	VA Beach	working on B.A.	$20-29K
Linda	54	Female	VA Beach	Ph.D.	$60-69K

Angel and Tamika are two sisters, who are about three years apart. Tamika has completed a little over a year of community college. She is the older sister and Angel tends to defer to her. Tamika is more outspoken, enjoys cooking, shopping and sewing. Angel tends to base what she says off of what her sister says. She is still in high school and enjoys the computer and wants to be a police officer. Both attended a predominantly Black high school. They live with their mother and baby sister in Norfolk. Their family has the lowest income of all the families, and they hope to move to Virginia Beach for better housing.

Marguerite is the aunt of Angel and Tamika. She grew up poor and moved around to numerous places in the US, but she considers Norfolk her home, where she was also partially raised. She is the mother of three children and has grandchildren. She is divorced and lives in Virginia Beach. She is working toward her GED, and is very active in church. Marguerite is currently unemployed.

Lela and L.J. are sister and brother who are about ten years apart. Lela is a college graduate and a nurse in the military. She is married with two children. Lela is like a second mother to L.J., who is an undergraduate working on a degree in the Humanities at one of the local four-year universities. They were both born and raised in Norfolk and attended private

schools. Their parents' income is in the six-figures, and they grew up in a wealthy section of Norfolk and were used to being around more White people than Blacks. According to Lela, their father wanted them to be around Whites to learn more about them and their culture so that they would be on equal-footing as the White people they would encounter in school, their neighborhood, and other places.

James and Rose Marie are husband and wife who have lived in the northeastern part of North Carolina and Tidewater Virginia. Virginia has been a housewife since she has been married and is currently a school bus driver. James is a pastor and retired worker from the Norfolk Ford plant. As a couple their income is approximately $50,000. They have five children, with one being deceased. James is the oldest participant in this research. Being a couple of years younger than her husband, Rose Marie finished high school, but he did not. They both attended segregated schools and gave detailed descriptions of their K-12 experience. They also compared segregated schools to desegregated ones noting that Black students cared more about education before desegregation.

Tony and Carla are a married couple in their early thirties with two young children. They are college graduates. Recently, Carla quit her job to become a full-time stay-at-home mother, so her income reflects that of her husband's. They live in Virginia Beach, but Tony works in Norfolk. They are originally from two northern Tidewater cities. They have been together for about fifteen years.

Virginia, Yvette and Antonio are three generations of one family. Yvette is the mother of three children, divorced and a former military wife. She was born and raised in Norfolk and lives there now, but has lived in other parts of the country in her younger adulthood. She is a computer operator with an A.A. degree. Her mother is Virginia, who has six children and has

been separated from her husband for many years. She is originally from South Carolina, moved to Baltimore, Maryland with her family at eighteen years old, met her husband and moved with him to Norfolk. She is a high school graduate, a nanny and a housekeeper. She is very active in her church. Antonio is the son of Yvette and the grandson of Virginia. After high school, he spent four years in the military and lived abroad. He is divorced with four children and has custody of them. He is working towards an A.A. degree now and works for the city of Norfolk, where he lives now. Yvette's income is the higher than her son's and her mother's income.

Vanessa and Alex are mother and son. Beverly has the highest income in this study. She is married with three children. Her husband is in the military, and she is a nurse working on her Ph.D. She lives in Virginia Beach in an affluent neighborhood. She is originally from North Carolina from a working class family. She has lived in other parts of the country. Alex is Vanessa's youngest child and an undergraduate working on a degree in computers at a local university. He attended and graduated from high school in Virginia Beach and currently lives there.

Esther is married and has three adult children and several grandchildren. She has lived in Norfolk for over thirty years with her husband. She is finishing up her undergraduate degree in Psychology at a local university. She is originally from another Tidewater city. She is well-known in the Norfolk Black community because she is a member of many local, state and national organizations. Additionally, when I spent a couple of days with her for this research, many random people came up to her, reminding her how they knew of her. She and her husband own several businesses and real estate. Her husband's income is not included in the income she reported on the background questionnaire.

Terri has two adult children, who are in college. Her husband, who was a military veteran, recently passed away. Terri is finishing up her B.A. at a local university, where she is very active. She is originally from New York and brought up in an upper middle class family, although her current income is quite modest. She currently resides in Virginia Beach and has been there for about ten years.

Linda is recently divorced with two adult children. Originally from North Carolina, she has lived in Norfolk and Virginia Beach for about thirty-five years. She is from a working class family and attended segregated schools growing up. She currently lives in Virginia Beach and is a professor at a local university. She has the highest educational degree, a Ph.D., of all the participants, but her income is not the highest.

3.5   Methodology and Data Collection

After IRB forms were explained, read and signed, data for this research was collected by use of questionnaires and interviews. Prior to the interview, a questionnaire was handed out to each interviewee (see Appendix C). It consisted of background information concerning race/ethnicity, age, gender, place of birth, place of residence, schools attended, highest level of education, and an approximate family income. The actual interviews, which were conducted by me, were located in the homes of the interviewees and one interview was conducted at an elementary school. In order to jump-start the interviews, I had a series of formulated questions (see Appendix A). However, these interviews were not formal, but informal using a conversation-like pattern, I asked questions based on responses of the interviewees. I interviewed each participant for forty-five minutes to an hour and a half using an audio-tape digital recorder. However, some interviewees felt more comfortable being interviewed with another family member present. So, group interviews were done in these cases. I also did participation

observation-diagramming the interview setting and taking field notes during each interview noting the time frame and gestures and movements of the interviewees. Interviewees were given duplicates of all information that I collected from them. After the interview, they also received ten dollars for allowing me to interview them.

3.6   Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed using American English alphabet symbols and other symbols (diacritic marks, periods, exclamation marks, etc.). There are approximately 350 pages of transcription, which took about 170 hours total. After transcription, use of AAE features (for instance, copula absence and lexical items) by the interviewee were marked and annotated. Some of those AAE features were re-transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in order to look at the commonalities between the speakers, in order to report on trends and patterns. Then, I looked at the transcriptions again and mark the usages of the concepts of the theoretical framework Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (as seen below and in more detail in Chapter 5).

Using the questionnaires, I made charts and tables showing the background information of the interviewees. I also made charts and tables correlating some frequently used AAE features of the speakers with CDA concepts by the speakers such as speech as a social act, the epistemic stance, moral stance, social identity, personal identity and agency. According to Duranti (1997), speech as a social act means "in saying something, we are always doing something" as in challenging, sustaining or reproducing social norms through speech (p. 222). In an epistemic stance, the active voice is used the majority of the time. When one looks at narratives and moral stance, s/he is examining how the interviewee is using the personal narrative to validate what the interviewee believes as true. Social identity, simply stated is assumed in society, while personal

identity is ever-present. Social identity can quiet down personal identity. For example, if an adult feels like they want to yell at someone (personal identity), the social identity regulates the personal identity through social norms, i.e. social rule- it is inappropriate and immature to yell at someone. In the grammatical social act, the inclusive "We", social identity can only be manifested if interlocutors share cultural and linguistic backgrounds, if they share economic, political, other social histories and conventions that associate those acts with a particular social identity, and if interlocutors are willing or constrained to ratify speaker's claim to identity (Ochs, 1993, p. 290).

However, before the data is analyzed using the concepts of CDA, the next chapter is a linguistic analysis listing and annotating the major AAE features found in the data collected. Then, chapter 5 examines the data utilizing CDA, as mentioned above.

CHAPTER 4

LINGUISTIC DATA AND ANALYSIS

Language is one of the many ways that identity is manifested, and as previously

mentioned AAE use by African Americans is a way to show membership in the Black

community (Baugh, 1992; Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 2000). Section 2.2 shows

African American history and how AAE is originated from the contact between Africans,

Europeans, Native Americans, and others. Although AAE shares features of other dialects and

languages, it is still uniquely its own dialect. Its existence is proven, for example, through

numerous empirical and non-empirical descriptions from everyday people and scholars and

scholarly, detailed analyses from data gathered by linguists and other academics. AAE is

characterized by its deep structure, oftentimes consonant pronunciation, rhetorical style and

strategies for discourse (Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 2000). In the traditional style

of Linguistics, this chapter displays tokens of AAE linguistic features found in the data.

4.1 Introduction

This research accrued a great amount of linguistic data including lexical, phonological,

morphological and syntactic data. The first section consists of a brief literature review from

scholarly works on the copula, agreement and negation. These three features are some of the

most well-studied and hypothesized features of AAE. Then, the next section lists examples of

the major, recurring linguistic features found in the data. The last section focuses on the five

major features that will be given more attention.   Because it is customary that most non-

mainstream varieties of English are compared with mainstream English, the AAE features below

will be presented with its Mainstream American English (MAE) counterpart beside it.

4.2   Research Concerning the Copula, Agreement and Negation

The copula, agreement and negation are a few of the most studied linguistic features in AAE. Below is a brief review of research from some scholars concerning these features. With the copula, the auxiliary and habitual "be" are included. Concerning agreement, the third person singular –s and hypercorrection of –s in the first and third person plural is discussed. Finally, negative concord is reviewed concerning negation.

4.2.1   The Copula

When it comes to AAE, the copula is probably the most symbolic feature of the dialect. According to Rickford (1999), "AAVE copula is a showcase variable in American dialectology and quantitative sociolinguistics. It is one of the best-known to linguists in other subfields" (p. 62). However, there has been a lack of consistency and "considerable variation among previous copula researchers on matters as basic as what forms [of the copula] to count and how they should be counted" (p. 62). Still yet, Rickford notes that, "if different researchers use different formulae (as they *do*), comparisons across studies might be difficult if not impossible to interpret (as they sometimes *are*) (p. 65).

The copula is one of the most functional uses of grammar in AAE. It is also one of the most studied features of AAE, mainly because there is absence not only in the plural, like many other non mainstream varieties of English, but also in the singular, which makes it unique (Rickford, 1999, p. 62). Absence of the copula connotes present tense (simple present and present progressive, in which the copula would be the auxiliary). The absence of the copula can be found before the locative, verbal, adverbial, adjectival and nominal predicates (Green, 2002, p. 49).   In this data set, the adjectival predicate and the locative predicate had the

most tokens. *Be* forms of the copula connote habitual *be*, showing aspect/duration of a habitual meaning, and past morphology, i.e. completed *be*, showing that something is already finished at a particular time (Green, 2002, p. 98). Copula absence and contraction are features of AAE and associated with African American identity.

    4.2.1a   Absence and contraction of copula. Although White nonmainstream American English (WAE) shows *are* absence, the dialect has little to no *is* absence unlike AAE, where the absence of the third person singular and plural are high (Rickford, 1999, p. 61). Earlier research corroborates this, as in Labov et al.'s research of pre-adolescent adolescent Black boys in Harlem in the 1960's. Labov (1969) states in the article, *Contraction, Deletion, and Inherent Variability of the English Copula,* that deletion of the copula is an inherent variable for all of the NNE [nonstandard Negro English, which is AAE] speakers whom we have studied (p. 728). Additionally, "full, contracted, and deleted forms are all characteristic of NNE. The contracted but undeleted form is least typical of NNE, and most characteristic of WNS [White nonstandard English] and SE [standard English] (Labov, 1969, p. 729).

    In his research of the AAE copula in East Palo Alto, CA, Rickford (1999) and his colleagues show that when examining the absence of the copula, "we can conclude tentatively that *is* and *are* behave similarly enough to be treated together" (p. 70). This is in agreement with what Labov (1972) said almost 30 years prior.

    In *Black Street Speech*, Baugh (1983) says that "the similarities are more striking than the differences" between *is* and *are* (p. 102). He discusses *is* and *are* and their historical origins of not being part of AAE's underlying grammar by creolists and definitely being a part of its underlying grammar by dialectologists (p. 99). The use of these two features are not so much influenced by social factors but by linguistic factors. Grammatically, *is*, in its absent and

contracted forms, are highest in the following environment: before *gon(na)* and verb + *ing* (p. 101). While *are* in its absent and contracted forms, is more frequent in the environment pre *gon(na)* and pre *locative* (p. 102). It is assumed that *is* has been in AAE grammar longer than *are*, in which *are* came into play when AAE speakers had contact with MAE (p. 103).

In accordance with *is* being in the grammar longer, Smitherman (1977) states, in *Talkin and Testifyin*, that "when the forms of *be* are used they are simplified so that *is* and *was* usually serve for all subjects of sentences, whether the subjects are singular or plural, or refer to *I*, *you*, *we*, or whatever" (p. 81). These *be* forms are produced by the speaker in order to convey meaning, as in the use of *was* to convey to the listener that s/he means past tense. When the copula is omitted, it is due to "conditions that are fixed in time" and non-reoccurring events (p. 81).

4.2.1b Habitual "be". In the copula's habitual use, Green (2002) remarks that "one well-established syntactic feature of AAE is the use of the verbal marker *be* [italics are mine] to signal the habitual occurrence of an event. The feature is very common and has been used to show how AAE differs from other varieties of English, and it has also been used as the topic of jokes and derogatory remarks about AAE and its speakers" (p. 35). Although, as previously mentioned, WAE speakers have the absence of the copula in third person plural, habitual "be" is moreso a characteristic of AAE alone.

In the earlier work, *Talkin and Testifyin*, Smitherman (1977) conveys how dynamic *be* is in that it not only expresses habitualness, but it can also express the future. Context is greatly relied on in order to distinguish *be* as habitual action or future tense. For example, the use of the adjective *everyday* in conjunction with *be* further conveys habitualness while the adverb *tomorrow* expresses the future.

Baugh (1983) agrees that "without question *be* is truly a national feature of street speech; furthermore, it is well known to adult speakers" (p. 74). He quotes Rickford on his 1974 work, "The Insights of the Mesolect", on *be* that it connotes habitual or incomplete action, but he also adds that it would not be wise to consider it as its "predominant characteristic" (p. 71). Baugh also points out that his data on habitual *be* and its environments corresponds with that of Labov et al. (1968) and Wolfram (1969).

4.2.1c 'been' and remote BIN. Noting Dillard's suggestion (1972) that *been* has two meanings, one stressed and the other unstressed, Rickford (1975, reprinted 1999) differentiates *been*, which is discussed below, from remote BIN, which he focuses on more. Remote BIN, which he refers to as BÍN, means "action in the distant past" and shows "total completion of the event" (p. 23). Its use is followed by non-stative verbs. However, that is only one meaning of BÍN. Most of the previous researchers only had instances of BÍN with non-stative verbs, which is why only a limited definition of it was given (p. 24). Rickford explains that the use of BÍN followed by "stative verbs, or with either kind in the progressive" is different "assert[ing] only that it began in the distant past and is still very much in force at the moment of speaking" (p. 23).

The auxiliaries *been* and remote BIN are distinct although they sound the same with the latter pronounced with more stress than the former. Generally speaking, Smitherman (1977) says that "Black English speakers use *been* to express past action that has recently been completed" (p. 21) where "it is not time itself that governs the verb choice, but the way the time is expressed" (p. 23). When spoken, *been* is used by itself which would be equivalent to MAE's auxiliary *have* plus *been* (p. 22). Stressed BEEN, which is her reference for remote BIN, is emphatic showing that the action took place a long time ago or it is an assertion that the action

already happened regardless if it was done a while ago or recently (p. 23).   That is similar to what Rickford stated above.

Looking further, Baugh's work on *Black Street Speech*, "the stress on *been* [my italics] is phonemic in black street speech and therefore capable of changing the meaning of the word" (p. 81). Giving credit to John Rickford who was the first to make the distinction between the varying forms of *been* in AAE, Baugh explains the differences in meaning concerning remote BIN. Depending on the type of verb that follows, with non-stative verbs remote BIN can mean an action in the distant past that it totally completed while, on the other hand, with stative verbs remote BIN means an action that took place in the distant past but is still in progress (p. 81).

4.2.2   Agreement

The lack of the verbal morpheme –s in the third person singular is another constant linguistic feature in the speech of AAE speakers. The hypercorrection of –s in first and third person plural is also recognized. In their research in Harlem, Labov et. al (1968) differentiates this feature from the plural –s, which is considered "quite intact" and "the small amount of disturbance" is due to consonant cluster simplification, "several individual items that have zero plurals" in AAE, and " a few individual speakers who show much less regularity in plural inflections than the norm" (p. 163). They conclude that,

> there is no underlying third singular –s in NNE" because 1) the
> percentage of its use never falls below 50%, 2) "there is no stylistic shift
> observable in moving from group style to single sessions", 3) "there is
> no tendency whatsoever for the effect of a following vowel to lower" –s
> and hyper -s ["I trusts" and "my brothers plays"] which "does not seem

to follow any regular pattern and "has unsystematic character (Labov, et

al, p. 164-165).

According to Wolfram (1969), in his work on AAE and social class in Detroit, working

class AAE speakers have more –s absence (p. 137). His research aligns with Labov's, and he

affirms that there is structural evidence for Labov's view that there is no underlying –s in AAE

and that its occurrence is due to "dialect importation from SE [standard English]" (p. 137). In

addition, the hypercorrection of –s "formed on the basis of grammatical categories suggests a

grammatical rather than a phonological unfamiliarity with SE –s third person" (p. 140).

In *Black Street Speech*, Baugh's (1983) data reveals that "third person /-s/ is the most

likely to be absent in street speech (p. 96)[21]" in comparison to other suffix /-s/ absences-

possessive and plural, which is compatible to Wolfram's (1969) work in Detroit. Furthermore,

he notes that the adult participants "gravitated toward street speech among familiars".

On the contrary, Butters (1989) contradicts Labov (1968) and Wolfram (1969) saying

that verbal –s is not an underlying feature of AAE.   He goes on to say,

> I am willingly to tentatively accept increased absence of verbal –s as a
>
> QUANTITATIVELY [his capitalization] divergent feature in BEV
>
> [Black English Vernacular or AAE] (108)…[but] my own belief is that
>
> verbal –s is indeed alive and well in the speech of many speakers of
>
> BEV; to say that it "does not exist in BEV: is merely to define "pure"
>
> BEV as pertaining only to those lects in which there is no verbal –s—a
>
> rather circular and misleading procedure, if true (p. 109).

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[21] According to Baugh (1983), "street speech is the nonstandard dialect that thrives within the black street culture,
and it is constantly fluctuating, as new terminology flows in and out of colloquial vogue" (p. 5-6).

 Butters (1989) questions if this is a core grammatical change or just a stylistic one (p. 108).

This is in opposition to what Wolfram (1969) concludes that it is grammatical.

Green (2002) also examines verbal –s as a third personal singular agreement marker, a

narrative present marker, in which see cites Butters (1989) and Labov (1987), and a habitual

marker (p. 100). She reveals that

> the number distinction between both singular and plural verbs is
>
> neutralized, resulting in the use of one form in both singular and plural
>
> contexts. It is often the case that the plural verb form is used as the
>
> default form, so for example, the plural form may occur with third
>
> person singular…[and] the verb that occurs with the third person singular
>
> subject is not marked with an –s (p. 99-100).

Rickford (1999) discusses and compares verbal –s among several studies, Labov et al.

(1968), Wolfram (1969), Baugh (1979) and Fasold (1978) looking at internal constraints and

style-shifting (p. 128-131). Fasold's study looks at the effects of the race of the interviewer on

the speech of the informants and did not find statistically significant difference between White

and Black interviewers (p. 128-129). Baugh's study examines familiarity and unfamiliarity

between interlocutors, and shows that familiarity between the interviewer and interviewee can be

significant (p. 129-130). Wolfram investigates style-shifting of the participants when reading a

passage versus being in an interview and found significant style shifting among the working

class speakers (p. 130). Labov et al. observes adolescent peer group sessions and single sessions,

and did not identify and style shifting between these sessions (p. 130-131).

Poplack and Tagliamonte (1991) gives a synopsis of four hypotheses of verbal –s (p. 282-

283). Citing the earlier works of Labov, Wolfram, and Fasold, one hypothesis is that verbal –s is

not a feature in AAE, its occurrence is irregular, and thus, it is a case of hypercorrection (p. 282-283). The second hypothesis, citing Bickerton, Roberts, Pitts and Brewer, is that verbal –s is "governed by an underlying creole grammar that is distinct from SAE [standard American English]" (p. 283). Referring to Schneider, the third hypothesis states that verbal –s marked present tense and was not irregular, stemming from the English dialects that the enslaved Africans were introduced (p. 283). The last hypothesis, citing Myhill and Harris, claims that contemporary verbal –s marks the Historical Present and is variable but not irregular (p. 283). Contrary to the first and second hypotheses, Poplack and Tagliamonte proclaim that verbal –s shows regular phonological conditioning, it is not random hypercorrection, "was an integral part of the early Black English grammar", and influenced by the White English dialects during slavery (p. 316-318). Thus, this is more in tune with the last two hypotheses.

4.2.3 Negation

In the *Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City,* Labov et. al. (1968), declare "we can say that the study of negative attraction and concord offers one of the best opportunities to study the relations between grammatical systems [MAE, WAE and AAE]" (p. 267). Later Labov (1972), in his research in Harlem on AAE of Black boys, notes that "the first thing that we note in BEV [Black English Vernacular] is the extraordinary proliferation of the negative" (p. 178) and "the most relevant fact about negative concord in BEV is that it is *not* optional; in the major environment, within the same clause, negative concord to indeterminates is obligatory" (p. 180). However, it is not obligatory in certain instances, as in the pre-verbal position (c.f. see pages 180-181 of his book for a more thorough account of this). Looking at linguistic use of these features, the research shows that, "most importantly, consistent use of negative concord is the characteristic of core speakers of BEV in their peer-group

interaction. Marginal members of the peer-group culture and isolated individuals ("lames") do not show consistent negative concord" (p. 181). Yet, as for adults, they use negative concord at a smaller percentage than pre- adolescents (p. 183). Labov concludes that Wolfram's (1969) Detroit study corroborates with his findings concerning negative concord.

      With his data on AAE in Detroit, Wolfram (1969) shows that in AAE "it [single underlying negative element] may be realized on every indefinite within the sentence" (p. 153). Furthermore,

> multiple negation is a property of NNE and nonstandard White
> speakers…[but still there are] several types of multiple negative
> constructions [found only in AAE] (p. 153): negative on pre-verbal
> auxiliary and its realization on an indefinite preceding a verb (p. 153),
> negative inversion (p. 154), multiple negation across clauses (p. 155).

Looking at social class structure, his study confirms that the Black middle class and MAE White speakers "show almost a complete absence of multiple negation, whereas the working-class [Blacks] show multiple negation in over half of all of its potential occurrences" (p. 156). Concerning gender, males show higher percentage of multiple negation (p. 162).   With regards to age, pre-adolescents use more multiple negation than teenagers and adults (p. 163).

      Just as Labov's and Wolfram's data show that the older the speaker is the less s/he uses multiple negation, Baugh's (1983) data is in agreement. According to him adult speakers of AAE are consciously aware of their use of multiple negation and willingly use it in contexts where little to no stigma will be attached to them (p. 82). Baugh claims this heightened awareness of the use of negation, multiple negation and *ain't*, is due to the fact that it is deemed

unacceptable in the educational system, especially writing-wise. Thus, its use becomes more limited and less frequent as one becomes an adult (p. 85).

Martin and Wolfram (1998), comment that multiple negation (also known as negative concord and pleonastic negation), where "the use of two or more negative morphemes to communicate a single notion", is "one of the most noticed characteristics of AAE" (p. 17). It is not like the rule in MAE where two negatives equal a positive (p. 18). Multiple negation in AAE "shares the majority of its structural aspects" with many other dialects and languages that allow multiple morphemes (p. 25). They conclude that the differences between multiple negation in AAE and MAE are due to the grammatical conditions on the formation of the negative chains (p. 25), where the negative chain is a single entity (p. 22) and the head of the negative chain is the morpheme responsible for the negation (p. 24).

As mentioned above, Green (2002) states that multiple negation in AAE does not make a positive (p. 77). In multiple negation, multiple negators can be used in one sentence, and these extra negators do not have any added meaning. Thus, the head negator is the one that is responsible for the negation in the sentence as aforementioned (p. 78).

As aforementioned, these three features have been very well researched and studied among linguists, educators and others whose interests lie in AAE. Below are the linguistic features, which include the three features discussed in this section, found in the data analyzed in this dissertation. Furthermore, a few of the features mentioned are not as common as others.

4.3 Linguistic Features in the Data

When analyzing the data, the following linguistic features below were extracted from the data. The features are presented in a chart, and above the chart is a prosodic description. For many of the features, there are numerous examples, while a few features may have as small as

one example. However, only several examples of each feature are given, and beside each example is the MAE equivalent. These representative examples of each particular feature from the data gathered from the participants are randomly selected.

4.3.1   Absence of the Copula

In the absence of copula, the charts below are sorted by predicate, which would follow the exact environment where the missing copula would be. The following charts consist of two examples per row illustrating a locative, verbal, adverbial, adjectival and nominal predicate.

The examples in Table 4.1 show the absence of the copula with the locative predicate. The first example is an indirect question embedded in a larger declarative sentence; thus, it has a subject and predicate (Green, 2002, p. 87). The missing copula is the third person singular *is*. The second through fourth examples are missing the third person plural form of the verb "to be", *are*. Hence, any form of the copula may be absent.

Table 4.1

Locative Predicate	
AAE	**MAE**
find out where that phone at (Antonio)	find out where that phone is located
if they out of school (Virginia)	if they are out of school
they still on the first page (Carla)	they are still on the first page
we in school grounds (Angel)	we are on school grounds

In the examples in Table 4.2, the auxiliary *be*, which conveys the present progressive, is absent.

Table 4.2

Verbal Predicate	
AAE	**MAE**
what we supposed to drink (Marguerite)	what we are supposed to drink
they giving them a hug (Angel)	they are giving them a hug
why you paying this (James)	why are you paying this
you set in your ways (Antonio)	you are set in your ways

In Table 4.3, the copula may be absent before the adverbial predicate. Both sentences lack the copula in the second person singular before the adverbs "here" and "there" respectively.

Table 4.3

Adverbial Predicate	
AAE	**MAE**
just like you do when you here (Yvette)	just like you do when you are here
when he gets to work you there for a purpose (Yvette)	when he gets to work you are there for a purpose

The adjectival predicate consists of an adjective(s), where the copula is separating the subject from the description of the subject. The first and fourth sentences lack the third person plural "are". While the second and third sentences are missing the third person singular "is". Table 4.4 shows that the copula may be absent in any number before the adjective (3rd person plural and singular respectively).

Table 4.4

Adjectival Predicate	
AAE	**MAE**
they cool (Angel)	they are cool
she dead and gone (Virginia)	she is dead and gone
something wrong (Antonio)	something is wrong
they more worrisome than we are (Tamika)	they are more worrisome than we are

Table 4.5 shows that the copula may be absent in equative constructions. The last example begins with "where", which is usually an adverb. However, in accordance with Merriam-Webster (2008), "where" can be used as a noun meaning "what place, source or cause" (Merriam-Webster, 2008). Thus, "where" in this instance means "the place".

Table 4.5

Nominal Predicate	
AAE	**MAE**
this your son right (Yvette)	this is your son right
you a leader (Antonio)	you are a leader
that my sister right here and here (Antonio)	that is my sister right here and right here
this where we've been (Virginia)	this is where we've been

This section on copula absence shows that the copula may be absent with predicates: locative, verbal, adverbial, adjectival, nominal predicates. The majority of the participants who exhibit copula absence have a household income of $30,000-39,000 except for one whose income is $60,000-69,000. Carla has the highest education level, which is a B.A., while Tamika has the lowest since she is still in high school. Yet, Carla comes from a working

class family. Yvette is the only one with a white-collar job, the others are either blue-collar employees or unemployed. Consequently, the data shows that copula absence is prevalent among those of lower socioeconomic status. The next section is dedicated to the auxiliaries *been* and *have*.

4.3.2 Auxiliary

In English, auxiliaries are used as "helping" verbs to the main verb. The auxiliaries are *have, been* and *do*. According to Green (2002),

> the aspectual markers (or verbal markers) in AAE are similar in form to auxiliary verbs in general American English, and this shared identity may cause some confusion between speakers of the two language systems. Because of this similarity, non-AAE speakers may expect these markers to have the same role and meaning as some auxiliary verb forms in general American English. (p. 44)

The auxiliary *do* is discussed below in section 4.3.4. In this section, we consider the auxiliaries *have* and *been*. Both of these auxiliaries have a high frequency in this data.

Table 4.6 shows examples of the auxiliary *been*, which is different from remote BIN (4.3.4 Table 4.14). The auxiliary *have* is also missing from constructions expressing present perfect progressive and after the modal *would*.

Table 4.6

been	
AAE	**MAE**
he been acting (Marguerite)	he has been acting
I'm one of the older ones that been there (Virginia)	I'm one of the older ones that has been there

AAE	MAE
I'd been like what (L. J.)	I'd have been like what
that would never been open (Alex)	that would never have been open

The auxiliary *have* can be absent or it can be used as the simple past in narrative contexts,

which is the preterite *had*. Table 4.7 shows that the preterite *had* can be used to mark "the time

before the present" and it is "often used in narrative contexts" with events that culminate before

now, basically referring to the simple past (Green, 2002, p. 92-93). This use of the past is

associated many times with children, adolescents and young adults (Rickford, 1999; Green,

2002, p. 91).   It is formed with "had" plus the past tense of the verb, as seen in both of these

examples below.

Table 4.7

have (preterite had)	
AAE	**MAE**
so what I had did was taught myself (Carla)	so what I did was teach myself
I had went to the library (Carla)	I went to the library
I forgot what Janet had told me (Virginia)	I forgot what Janet told me
they had built skating rinks (Yvette)	they built skating rinks

Although there were not that many instances of it, it should be noted that the conjugated

form of *be* preceding the main verb *did* but conveying a passive interpretation.

Table 4.8

be + participle	
AAE	**MAE**
That's how I was did when I was younger (Antonio)	That's what was done to me when I was younger

The preterite *had* is associated with younger people as aforementioned; however, no one under the age of thirty-three had this feature in their speech. In fact, Virginia, who is one of the oldest participants had multiple representations of this in her speech. Antonio is the only one who has *be* plus the participle in his speech, and only one of example of it. In comparison to the other participants who lack the auxiliaries, L.J. and Alex, who both lack the auxiliary *have* before *been* come from a $100,000 plus background, although their current income as a student does not reflect that. Otherwise, the participant make-up for these features resembles that of the section on copula absence. The following section looks at agreement between subject and verb, the adjective and the noun, and with the determiner phrases.

4.3.3   Agreement (see 4.2.2 above for a thorough description)

Agreement in AAE and MAE can be different. The following charts show agreement or the lack thereof in comparison to MAE. Agreement patterns are shown in the following: subject-verb in the first and third person singular and the first and third person plural, adjective-noun, and article-noun.

The lack of agreement is evident in the data in subject-verb agreement in first person and third person, as seen in Table 4.9. The third person singular /-s/ or verbal /-s/ is added with a first person singular subject (Green, 2002, p. 101). The use of second person singular and first and third person plural *were* and *do* are used for the first person singular and third person singular. The plural *have* is used with the singular subject "God".

Table 4.9

Subject-Verb Agreement: 1st and 3rd person singular	
AAE	**MAE**
I says yes (Yvette)	I say yes
that I were Black (Virginia)	that I was Black
it don't matter (Angel)	it doesn't matter
God have (Marguerite)	God has

Verbal –s in MAE is usually used for singular subjects in MAE, but it can be used for plural subjects in AAE, as seen in the last two examples in Table 4.10. The first two examples are *be* forms, the first one being *be* as the auxiliary in the singular form for a plural subject and the second one is *be* as the main verb with a plural subject.

Table 4.10

Subject-Verb Agreement: 1st and 3rd person plural	
AAE	**MAE**
there was no kids (Lela)	there were no kids
her and Amy is ten years apart (Yvette)	she and Amy are ten years apart
what they wears around here (Tamika)	what they wear around here
the other kids doesn't (Tamika)	the other kids don't

In the examples of adjective-noun agreement in Table 4.11, the adjectives are plural numerals except for the first, third and fourth example. The second example also has plural adjectives, the description of two types of schools-elementary and high. In all four examples the subject is in the singular.

Table 4.11

Adjective-Noun Agreement	
AAE	**MAE**
two other guy (L. J.)	two other guys
elementary and high school (Esther)	elementary and high schools
three class (James)	three classes
twenty five cent (James)	twenty five cents

Regardless of whether the noun begins with a vowel or a consonant, the indefinite article

a is used. The examples in Table 4.12 show the indefinite article *a* being used even though the

following noun begins with a vowel. In MAE, a noun, whose initial sound is vocalic, uses *an* as

the indefinite article for supposed ease of articulation.

Table 4.12

Article (a, an)-Noun Agreement	
AAE	**MAE**
a active (Antonio)	an active
a entrepreneur (Esther)	an entrepreneur
a opportunity (Virginia)	an opportunity
a organization (Esther)	an organization

There are more tokens concerning agreement than any other feature in this study.

Dividing agreement further, subject-verb agreement has the most tokens in first and third person

singular. Every participant has a lack of agreement in their idiolect except for Linda, who has

the highest education of them all, a Ph.D. in English. This feature crosses over all the

socioeconomic class boundaries. The next section illustrates three aspectual markers, habitual *be*, remote BIN, and *done.*

4.3.4 Aspectual Markers

Habitual "be" refers to an action that is always or usually happening (Rickford, 1999; Green, 2002, p. 49). Remote BIN "asserts that the action began in the distant past and is still very much in force at the moment of speaking" (Rickford, 1999, p. 23; Green, 2002, p. 54-55). The use of "done" emphasizes a completed action (Rickford, 1999, p. 6; Green, 2002, p. 60).

As stated above, the examples in Table 4.13 show action that takes place on a regular basis. In the first example, the speaker talks about a group of people who think they are "down", which means "cool", all the time. The speaker in the second example narrates a story about her dating experience, and says that when her date took her home, her Dad would always stand outside the front door waiting for her return. The third example means they are always saying something. The fourth example is a negative version of habitual *be*. The last example is an emphatic form of habitual *be* because of the addition of the auxiliary *do*.

Table 4.13

Habitual *be*	
AAE	**MAE**
they be thinking they're down (Angel)	they are always thinking they're cool
Dad be standing at the door (Virginia)	Dad is always standing at the door
they be saying (habitual be) (Antonio)	The always/usually say
don't be having (habitual be) (Tamika)	don't usually/always have
they do be listening (habitual be-emphatic) (Yvette)	They are always/usually listening

Table 4.14 shows that the MAE equivalent of remote BIN has the auxiliary *have* before it and also an adverbial phrase such as "since way back in the past". Many times a speaker may add the adverb "always" to show the action is ongoing and the prepositional phrase "for a long time", as is done by the speakers below to connote that the action has been taking place for a great length of time.

Table 4.14

Remote BIN (remote past)	
AAE	**MAE**
she always BIN fussing and complaining (Antonio)	she has been fusing and complaining for a long time (since way back in the past)
she always BIN into doing hair (Marguerite)	she has always been interested in doing hair for a long time (since way back in the past)
I BIN already graduated I'm out of high school (Angel)	I graduated from high school a long time ago

Done means resultant state or that an event has ended. It indicates the recent past or having had some experience (Green, 2002, p. 60-61). Additionally, "the *done* [my italics] sequence is quite similar to the present perfect in general American English but it's not clear that it always shares the range of meanings of the present perfect" (Green, 2002, p. 61). Table 4.15 shows that the use of *done* is to show that an action has already been completed. The auxiliary *done* is followed by the past tense form of the verb. The speakers use this verbal aspect of completed action in the illustrative examples. Below are examples of the use of *done* where the third example is equal to MAE's present perfect and in the other examples the speaker is telling the person that s/he has already performed the action.

Table 4.15

done [dən] (resultant state)	
AAE	**MAE**
she done went through all the rig-a-ma-roll (Yvette)	she has already gone through all the rig-a-ma-roll
you done showed him everything (Virginia)	you have already showed him everything
they done get into the point (Antonio)	they have gotten to the point
they done had their little argument (Virginia)	they have already had their little argument

Habitual *be*, remote BIN, and *done* are three common aspectual markers in AAE. There was also one form of completed *be* where the speaker executed a task and finished it a long time ago:

Table 4.16

Completed *be*	
AAE	**MAE**
I be already finished the story and they still on the first page (Carla)	By the time the other children finished reading the story, I would have already finished reading a long time ago before they finished reading.

These four markers connote the duration of an action, whether completed or habitual. They also look at tense or time which refers to when the event took place, as in remote BIN which means that the event already happened and it took place a while ago. The next topic of investigation is negation.

4.3.5   Negation (see 4.2.3 above for a thorough description)

The selections below consist of three main types of negation found in this corpus:
negative concord, *ain't* and *won't*. Negative concord is a familiar grammatical feature in AAE.
The word *ain't* can have three meanings, *be + not*, *have + not*, and *do + not*, as seen below.
Many times it is the negative form of the auxiliaries *be*, *have* and *do*. The word *won't*, in many
instances in this data, is the past tense of *be + not*.

Negation, in the tables below, consists of negative concord and the contractions *ain't* and
won't. Negative concord (what some may term as multiple negation) is common in AAE. A
speaker can use as many negators as he or she chooses, just as in Russian or Spanish. Thus, the
MAE rule of double negatives being ungrammatical because they equal a positive does not apply
in AAE (Green, 2002, p. 77). As is the case in mathematics, many prescriptive English
grammatical rules state that two negatives equal a positive. Thus, multiple negation will make a
negative statement positive. However, that is not the case in AAE. Multiple negation is
frequently used in an AAE sentence, as is illustrated in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17

Negative Concord	
AAE	**MAE**
I don't know really nothing (Marguerite)	I don't really know anything
the value don't get nothing (James)	The value doesn't rise.
don't ask the Lord to give you no rest (Virginia)	Don't ask the Lord for (any) rest
don't go shoot nobody (Tamika)	Don't shoot anybody

According to Green (2002), "*ain't* as a negator does not have distinct past or non-past
forms" (p. 39). For example, it can be used in the present perfect tense as well as the past,

present progressive, present perfect progressive, and future tenses (p. 36-39). Tables 4.18, 4.19,

and 4.20 represent *ain't* as the auxiliaries *be + not*, *have + not*, and *do + not*. As noted above

there can be an absence of the auxiliary *be*, *have* or *do* in AAE in a positive sentence. Therefore,

it is questionable if *ain't* is part of the auxiliary or just the negator (see Green, 2002, p. 39-41 for

further details).

In Table 4.18, *ain't* conveys the present tense of the auxiliary *be* negated. Though, the

third example has the missing copula as the main verb. In addition, that same example lacks

"there" so that what would be "there are" in MAE is equivalent *ain't* in AAE.

Table 4.18

ain't = be + not	
AAE	**MAE**
I ain't trying to read (Yvette)	I am not trying to read
no, you ain't going to work (Antonio)	no, you aren't going to work
ain't no need of being in there (Virginia)	There isn't any need of being in there
God ain't going to do things that we can do (Virginia)	God isn't going to do the things that we can do

In the examples in Table 4.19, *ain't* is the equivalent of the auxiliary *have* plus *not* in

MAE.

Table 4.19

ain't = **have** + **not**	
AAE	**MAE**
they ain't never catch him (Angel)	they haven't ever caught him
I ain't seen him (Virginia)	I haven't seen him
they ain't never put me in Spanish (Angel)	They haven't ever put me in Spanish
your Mama ain't teach you about (Angel)	your Mama hasn't taught you about

Ain't is equated to *do* plus *not*. In some instances *ain't* means *do have* plus *not*, as in examples one and three. Both examples are seen in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20

ain't = **do** + **not**	
AAE	**MAE**
I ain't got nothing to worry about (Angel)	I don't have anything to worry about
he ain't keep in touch with my children (Antonio)	he doesn't even keep in touch with my children
meet a man ain't got no car (Virginia)	meet a man who doesn't have a car
I ain't know nothing better (James)	I didn't know anything better

In Table 4.21, *won't* is used instead of *weren't* and *wasn't*. At first, it would seem that the pronunciation of *won't* may be due to r-deletion of *weren't*. Yet, for plural and singular subjects the third person singular verb is often times used for both, which would be *wasn't*. *Won't* is used only as the past tense *be* + *not*. Its other use is the traditional MAE meaning of *will not*.

Table 4.21

won't = be + not	
AAE	**MAE**
Daddy won't there so I did this (Antonio)	Daddy wasn't there so I did this
yall won't going to live (Virginia)	yall weren't going to live
mama won't there it doesn't matter (Antonio)	Mama wasn't there so it didn't matter
I couldn't get used to it and then I got married I still won't [used to it] well I kinda liked (Virginia)	I couldn't get used to it and then I got married I still wasn't [used to it] well I kinda like

The participants that show features of negation in their speech have a household income of $30,000-39,000 and below. The highest income level represented by these speakers is an Associate's degree. Most of the tokens on negative concord are exhibited by the two oldest participants, James and Virginia. Angel and Virginia have the most tokens of *ain't*. The only tokens of *won't* are spoken by Virginia and Antonio, who are related to each other. By looking at this data, negation is a feature associated more with lower socioeconomic classes. The next section also looks at contractions, but those that are the reduced forms of the auxiliary *have* and the future mood.

4.3.6   Modal Perfect and Future Tense

The contraction + *a* is the reduced forms of the auxiliary *have* and the future tense "will/going to" (Green, 2002, p. 40). The modal perfect consists of the modals *should* or *would* plus *have* in MAE. In AAE, the modal perfect construction sometimes can be the modal plus *a*.

The examples in Table 4.22 show that the modal *would* in contracted form with the subject plus *a*, which is the reduced form of *have*.

Table 4.22

would have (modal perfect)	
AAE	**MAE**
He'd-a been there (Virginia)	he would have been there
I'd-a (James)	I would have
she taught you what is right…she-a tell you the truth (Virginia)	she taught you what is right…she would tell you the truth
I get to by-pass that class and they-a change me out of that class (Tamika)	I would get to by-pass that class and they would take me out of that class

The first example in Table 4.23 is an example of "going to" being reduced to *a*, immediately following the contraction "I'm". The other examples can be either the full form of the contraction "will" or the reduced form, which is *'ll.*

Table 4.23

will/going to (future tense)	
AAE	**MAE**
I'm-a give you all the rights (Antonio	I am going to give you
if they don't they-a be in a cop car…they will get a warning (Tamika)	they'll be in a cop's car…they will get a warning
he-a make me go help somebody else (Angel)	he will make me go and help somebody else
they…say I'm-a kill you (Virginia)	they say I will kill you

All of the speakers who use the feature contraction + a in the modal perfect and future tenses make $30,000-39,000 and below. The oldest participants, James and Virginia have this feature in their linguistic repertoire and so do two of the youngest ones, Angel and Tamika. The highest education level of these participants who use this feature is high school. The next section shows irregular nouns and verbs that are formed with the regular MAE endings in AAE.

4.3.7   Regularizing the irregular

In MAE, there are irregular and regular nouns and verbs. The regular forms of these parts of speech are more common. For nouns, to make the plural, add an –s word final. For verbs, in order to make the past tense, add an *–ed* word final. In the examples below, the speakers used regular constructions for irregular nouns and verbs.

The irregular nouns are *children*, *gentlemen*, and women which are already in their plural form, with *child*, *gentleman*, and *woman* being their singular forms respectively. The speakers below added plural /-s/, which is the regular plural construction, to an irregular plural noun forming *childrens*, *gentlemens* and *womens*.

Table 4.24

Nouns	
AAE	**MAE**
three childrens (Marguerite)	three children
two grandchildrens (Marguerite)	two grandchildren
these gentlemens (James)	these gentlemen
these womens (Virginia)	these women

Table 4.25 shows that although in MAE, *grow* and *know* have irregular past tense forms, *grew* and *knew* respectively, AAE speakers formed the past tense of the verbs using a regular verb form rule for past tense endings. Consequently, the endings become *growed* and *knowed*.

Table 4.25

Verbs	
AAE	**MAE**
I growed (Marguerite)	I grew
I knowed (James)	I knew

The morphological rules for regular nouns and verbs are more common. Thus, these rules are also applied to irregular nouns and verbs in non-mainstream English, like AAE, which makes the grammar more consistent and systematic.

Only three participants, Virginia, Marguerite, and James, with lower socioeconomic status use regular noun plural formation for irregular nouns and regular verb past tense formation for irregular verbs. James has the highest income of $30,000-39,000 but does not have a high school diploma. Virginia graduated from high school but only makes between $0-9,000. Marguerite's income is also between $0-9,000, and she is working on her GED. The subsequent topic of discussion is on five types of pronouns.

4.3.8   Pronouns

There are five different types of pronoun displayed below: resumptive/appositive, possessive, reflexive, demonstrative, and expletive or existential "it".

The resumptive pronoun in AAE follows directly the proper noun in the subject position. In this instance, resumptive is referred to, not in the traditional sense of being in object position, but as belonging to the subject. Rickford (1999) refers this type of pronoun as an appositive or pleonastic (does not contribute any extra meaning) pronoun (p. 7). In the examples below "Dad he", "my grandfather he", "Antonio he", and "my daughter she" are one and the same.

Table 4.26

Resumptive/Appositive Pronouns	
AAE	**MAE**
Dad he graduated (L. J.)	Dad graduated *or* he graduated
my grandfather he would see (James)	my grandfather would see *or* he would see
Antonio he played (Yvette)	Antonio played *or* He played
my daughter she (Marguerite)	My daughter *or* she

Table 4.27 shows subject pronouns can be used as possessive pronouns and are most common with the plural possessive pronoun "their" being realized as "they". Both the possessive and reflexive pronouns can have "own" added as an intensifier (Green, 2002, p. 22).

Table 4.27

Possessive Pronouns	
AAE	**MAE**
they child (Yvette)	their child
they thing that is most needed (Rose Marie)	their thing that is most needed
they own life (Antonio)	Their life, "own"= intensifier
they friends (Angel)	Their friends

Table 4.28 shows that in MAE, the reflexive pronoun is formed with the object pronoun + self. The following speakers create the reflexive pronoun by using the possessive pronoun plus self, e.g. "hisself". Additionally, as seen below, it can also be formed with the subject pronoun plus self along with the MAE version of the object pronoun plus self. For example, "theyself", "theyselves" and "theirselves" are all variants of "themselves". Furthermore, just because the pronoun is plural does not mean that self will become selves, as seen in example four below.

Table 4.28

Reflexive Pronouns	
AAE	**MAE**
hisself (Antonio)	himself
theirselves (Yvette)	themselves
theyselves (Antonio)	themselves
theyself (Tamika)	themselves
your own self (interviewer)	yourself, "own" = emphatic

Table 4.29 shows a particular use of demonstratives. The speakers use the object pronoun "them" as the demonstrative pronoun. In MAE demonstrative pronoun for plural nouns is "these" or "those".

Table 4.29

Demonstrative Pronouns	
AAE	**MAE**
them scholarships (Yvette)	these/those scholarships
T Model Fords thems was old cars (also resumptive) (Virginia)	those were old cars
them people (Lela)	those people
them grades (Marguerite)	those grades

Table 4.30 shows that AAE makes a generalized use of "it" instead of "there". The expletive pronoun is also known as existential it, meaning that something exists (Rickford, 1999, p. 8; Green, 2002, p. 80). It is also known as existential "it" or dummy "it". "They" is another existential pronoun, but there are no signs of it in this data. "It" is used instead of the MAE equivalent "there", as seen in the examples below.

Table 4.30

Expletive/Existential "it"	
AAE	**MAE**
it's one teacher named (Angel)	there's one teacher named
it's people thinking that (Virginia)	there are people thinking that
it's snow on the ground (Yvette)	there's snow on the ground
it is still a lot of racial (Marguerite)	there is still a lot of racism

A wider range of socioeconomic status is represented in this section on pronoun use. Income levels range from $0-59,000. Lela and L.J. are a part of this group, and they were raised by parents who make $100,000 plus. The highest degree level is a Bachelor's of Arts and the lowest education level is some high school. Some of these participants are not employed while others have blue-collar and white-collar jobs.

In this data, besides Linda who has the highest education level, every participant has at least one AAE feature present in their speech. Thus, a broad range of education levels, income, and occupations are represented. Those of lower socioeconomic classes have more AAE features in their idiolect than those of higher socioeconomic classes. Generally speaking, this data reveals that the use of AAE extends beyond the working class or the poor and lower education levels. In the following sections, I turn to phonology.

4.3.9 Pronunciation

In Table 4.31, examples of AAE pronunciation are given. The first one deals with the word *tests*. It is common in AAE to have consonant cluster reduction. Therefore, the singular form of the word *tests* would be *test* ending in [-s] and not [-st]. Using MAE phonology rules of the plural with words ending in a fricative, one should add /-əz/. Thus, the AAE form of *tests* would be [tɛsəs]. For many words beginning with the cluster /str-/, there is a tendency for AAE

speakers to pronounce [skr-], which is viewed as stigmatized, especially before high vowels

(Green, 2002, p. 122-123; Rickford, 1999, p. 5). In AAE and Southern English, it is common to

delete [-r] word final after a vowel, as seen below in the word *hear* (Rickford, 1999, p. 5). James

says "pastoring", which is used as a verb, for example "to pastor a church". He pronounces the

final [ŋ] as [n]. This is also a common phonological feature in AAE (Green, 2002, p. 121-122;

Rickford, 1999, p. 4).

Table 4.31

Pronunciation	
AAE	**MAE**
tests [tɛsəs] (Yvette)	tests [tɛs]
street [skrit] (Esther)	street [strit]
hear [hɪjə] (Linda)	hear [hiɚ]
pastoring [pæstɚɪn] (James)	pastoring [pæstɚiŋ]

All of the participants have AAE phonological features represented in their speech. Linda, who

has a Ph.D. and did not have any grammatical features of AAE, has several AAE phonological

features in her speech including deletion of word final "r" as seen above, deletion of word initial

vowel that precedes a consonant, "a" in "about", consonant cluster reduction, and the realization

of the interdental "th" as "d" in "them". Being a speaker of AAE is more than just grammatical

features but of phonological features as well. According to Rickford and Rickford (2000), "it is

often the pronunciation of consonants that distinguish the speech of Blacks from other ethnic

groups" (p. 102). Most standard AAE speakers, like Linda, do not have grammatical features of

AAE but do have phonological AAE features (Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 2000;

Spears, 1988). The next section gives an example each of hypercorrection and folk etymology.

4.3.10   Hypercorrection and Folk Etymology

There is use of the MAE superlative ending /-ɛst/ of singular nouns for multi-syllabic words in AAE. Thus, a word like "spoiled", which has a schwa that makes it a two-syllable word, becomes "spoiledest" in AAE. The use of "spoildest" is a form of hypercorrection.   Folk etymology[22] is common when a new word is formed and the hearer did not perceive the word correctly; therefore, s/he comes up with an analogous word that, for example, may sound the same and/or is related in some way. In the example below, the speaker, a 66-year-old female, referred to a man suffering from a "rheumatic heart" as "romantic heart". "Romantic" and "rheumatic" sound similar. Additionally, "romantic" and "heart" are semantically related in that they correspond to feelings.

Table 4.32

Hypercorrection and Folk Etymology	
AAE	**MAE**
most spoildest (Yvette)	most spoiled
romantic heart (Virginia)	rheumatic heart

The above examples are of hypercorrection and folk etymology. The word "spoildest" can be deemed as a form of hypercorrection while "romantic heart" is an example of a folk etymology term. The following examples are terms or lexicon retrieved from the data.

4.3.11   Lexicon

The lexicon is one of the most dynamic features in AAE. Some of it has crossed over to mainstream lexicon, e.g. "cool", while others still remain mostly a part of AAE lexicon, e.g. "saditty" (see Green, 2002, p. 13-15). The following examples are from the data collected.

---

[22] In personal correspondence (May 1, 2008) with the socio-phonetician Rebecca Childs, Ph.D., folk etymolygy is when the speaker re-parses or re-phonologizes a word, like in this instance a health –related term to make the term seem less severe.

These terms are "slowful" and "drank". There were several participants between the ages of 50-65 years old who used this term, "slowful"[23] to mean lazy, slow, lethargic, and sluggish. When they used this term they said it with annoyance. The word "drank" means beverage, and Virginia is referring to an alcoholic beverage. It is a common Southern English term for beverage with "drink" as the most common variant of it. The word "funeralized" is mentioned by several of the oldest participants in this data. The noun funeral is made into a verb. If someone says that, "Ann will be funeralized tomorrow", its MAE equivalent is "Ann's funeral will be/will take place tomorrow".

Table 4.33

Lexicon	
AAE	**MAE**
slowful (Virginia)	lazy, slow, lethargic, sluggish
drank (Virginia)	beverage
to funeralize (Virginia, James, Rose Marie)	X's funeral will be/is (taking place, happening)

According to Green (2002), "the lexicon of AAE includes items that are unique to it" (p. 12). Additionally, as mentioned earlier Rickford and Rickford (2000) remark that it is African American English vocabulary that connects Blacks from all socioeconomic classes. From grammatical features to phonological features to lexicon, section 4.3 displays examples of the major linguistic features found in my sample. The data reveals that every participant, regardless of his or her socioeconomic status has at least one grammatical or phonological feature.

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[23] Recently, I have heard the use of "slowful" by African Americans in Alabama and Michigan. When I asked one of the informants to repeat the word, the informant did and explained to me that it was in the Bible. When I looked in the King James Version, I found the word "slothful", a word originating in the 15th century, which means "inclined to sloth, indolent; lazy" (Merriam-Webster, 2008). It can be pronounced as [sloʊəfəl]. With consonant cluster reduction in AAE, "slothful" sounds like "slowful" [sloʊfəl].

4.4   Summary

The majority of many of the features listed above are taken from some of the same participants. The participants with the higher socioeconomic status have fewer AAE linguistic features than those of lower socioeconomic classes. However, in the next chapter, *Metadiscourse Data*, examples from those participants that did not have much representation in linguistic features will be given. These other participants may not have many AAE linguistic features, but their (meta)discourse reveals their membership in the African American community. The metadiscourse analysis supplements the linguistic analysis by revealing AAE membership of those participants who have very little grammatical and phonological features represented in their speech.

CHAPTER 5

METADISCOURSE DATA AND ANALYSIS

5.1   Introduction

In the previous chapter, African American English linguistic features such as the copula, agreement, and negation were extracted from the data, examined and explained. This is the traditional sociolinguistics way of listing linguistic data while looking at the contextual factors of race, socioeconomic class, age, gender, and geographic location. Although it is necessary and fruitful to analyze data in this fashion, that is only one way of analyzing linguistic data and one-half of the analysis for this particular research. Besides looking at just phonology and grammar to examine how identity(ies) is manifested through language, examining one's perceptions, views, and attitudes on language, and those of others, is also another way of doing so. Consequently, it is with this in mind that the analysis extends to looking at the metadiscourse, albeit in an unnatural setting (interviews), of the participants. According to Betsy Rymes (2006), metadiscourse is "generally speaking, people's description of language and their hypotheses about what certain kinds of language mean, which is called metadiscursive commentary" (personal communication, August 6, 2006). Further, Hyland (2005) explains that,

> Essentially metadiscourse embodies the idea that communication is more
> than just the exchange of information, goods or services, but also
> involves the personalities, attitudes and assumptions of those who are
> communicating. Language is always a consequence of interaction, of the
> differences between people which are expressed verbally, and

metadiscourse options are the ways we articulate and construct these

interactions. This, then, is a dynamic view of language as metadiscourse

stresses the fact that, as we speak or write, we negotiate with others,

making decisions about the kind of effects we are having on our listeners

or readers. (p. 3)

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, metadiscourse in this research refers to the spoken language

of the participants concerning topics of language, race, and education.

A language is not only "a system of words and grammatical rules, but also an often

forgotten or hidden struggle over the symbolic power of a particular way of communicating, with

particular systems of classification, address and reference forms, specialized lexicons, and

metaphors" (Bourdieu cited in Duranti, 1997, p. 45). According to Bourdieu, a "certain

linguistic expression can perform an action only to the extent to which there is a system of

dispositions, a *habitus*[24], already shared in the community" (p. 45). This is something that

Linguistics, as a whole, does not often take into account. Therefore, the next section of the

chapter continues with the idea that language is a social act, discussing membership in the

African American community among the interviewer and the participants and how this

familiarity plays a role in analyzing identity via language. This, in turn, resumes into an

overview of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) first and then social realist theory explaining

why both this method and theory, respectively, are used in analyzing metadiscourse and identity

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[24] In personal correspondence with Amy Heaton (May 2008), a linguist who studies discourse analysis, habitus is "the durable motivation, perceptions, and forms of knowledge that people carry around in their heads as a result of living in a particular social environment and that predispose them to act in certain ways" (her notes).

for this data. Thereafter, the following elicited questions (also included in Appendix A) on

metadiscourse will be answered using examples from the interviews[25] in this data:

1. Tell me about the way you speak. Do you like it? What makes your speech different from
   the way mainstream English speakers speak?

2. Were there attempts to correct your speech?

3. Who speaks like you do (family, friends, etc.)?

4. Tell me how people speak where you live.

5. Has a teacher (principal or any school official) ever corrected your speech? Tell me what
   happened. How did you react?

6. Give me an example of "correct" or "proper" English.

7. Describe how people should speak at school, church, home, etc.

8. What can you tell about a person from the way s/he speaks?

9. How do Black people speak?

10. Tell me what people say about the speech of Black people.

11. How do you think White people speak?

12. How do people judge the way others speak?

Instead of answering every individual question, these questions[26] were put into categories based

on themes extracted from the transcripts. Consequently, the following are the created categories:

Perceptions of Their Idiolect, *Society's Metadiscourse*, *Speech in Different Contexts, Black*

Speech vs. White Speech, African American Identity, and *Blacks in Education and Employment*.

---

[25] The interviews are transcribed using some punctuation for clarity, although I do think that speech is constantly flowing and lacks the structure of written language.

[26] These formulated questions use the terms "proper" or "correct" due to the fact that in a past pilot study on the same topic those terms were a part of the language the participants used when conversing about MAE and non-mainstream English. It is in this vein, that these terms, being synonymous with mainstream English or standard English, will also be used in this chapter.

It should be noted that every participant did not answer every question. Moreover, in most cases, the answers to these questions were answered without having to pose the question. Because of this, the interviews flowed like a conversation rather than a question-answer session. Finally, the last section examines the associated concepts of CDA, which are the epistemic stance, moral stance, social identity, personal identity, and agency, through the chosen narratives of the participants, found in Linguistic Anthropology, narrative analysis, and Sociology (Archer, 2000; Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999; Duranti, 1997; Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2005; Ochs, 1993; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Rymes, 1995).

5.2   Speech as a Social Act: Membership in the African American Community

Linguistic practices are cultural practices; thus, "in saying something we are always doing something" (Duranti, 1997, p. 222). According to Bakhtin (1986), "the speaker's very selection of a particular grammatical form is a stylistic act" (p. 66). In addition to a "stylistic act", speech can be used as social action in order to "…sustain, reproduce, or challenge particular versions of the social order and the notion of person (or self) that is part of that order" (Duranti, 1997, p. 228). Just through speech alone, the listener can identify the social information of a speaker, i.e. race/ethnicity, gender, age. Thus, grammatical and phonetic features along with social factors go hand in hand. According to Ochs (1993), "speakers attempt to establish the social identities of themselves and others through verbally performing certain social *acts* and verbally displaying certain *stances* [italics are Ochs] (p. 288). In addition, she says,

> Whether or not a particular social identity does indeed take hold in a social
>
> interaction depends minimally on (a) whether the speaker and other
>
> interlocutors share cultural and linguistic conventions for constructing
>
> particular acts and stances; (b) whether the speaker and other interlocutors

> share economic, political, or other social histories and conventions that associate those acts and stances with the particular social identity a speaker is trying to project; and (c) whether other interlocutors are able and willing or are otherwise constrained to ratify the speaker's claim to identity. (p. 290)

Yet, there are sociolinguists that do not necessarily agree with that. In *The effects of the race of the interviewer on sociolinguistic fieldwork*, Cukor-Avila and Bailey (2001) initially note that much of the data on AAE comes from that done by Whites (p. 254) and "the role of familiarity has received little attention in sociolinguistics" (p. 256). In concluding, they admit that it would be "premature" to claim that the interviewer's race does not have an effect on data gathered, but "that controlling for factors such as familiarity and the presence of other peers can ameliorate many of the effects that the race of the interviewer might have" (p. 266).

In congruence with Ochs above, to a certain extent, one's success in expressing identity depends on participants or interlocutors sharing a similar or the same cultural background. This is in spite of the potential of the observer's paradox, where participants change their behavior based on who interviews them (Labov, 1972, p. 256). The participants and I, the interviewer, of this research are self-proclaimed members of the African American community. I was born in Norfolk, but was not raised there. Yet, I have close, familial ties to the Tidewater area.

5.2.1 The Interviewer's Shared Membership through Speech and Racial Identity

Through the use of linguistic features based on AAE, membership in the Black community was shown, not only by the participants (see chapter 4) but the interviewer as well. The following table gives one example each of five dominant AAE features (found in this data) uttered by the interviewer.

Table 5.1

Linguistic Features of Interviewer	Example
Copula (Absence)	AAE: you not shy are you MAE: you *are* not shy are you
Agreement (Subject-Verb)	AAE: now it *don't* matter if they come from a wealthy family MAE: now it *doesn't* matter if they come from a wealthy family
Auxiliary (*been*)	AAE: how long you all *been* friends MAE: how long *have* you all *been* friends
Negation	no results from data
Pronouns (use of intensifier "own")	AAE: your *own* self MAE: yourself

Despite not having features of negation, it is evident that I am also a speaker of AAE such that there is an element of familiarity between the interviewees and me.

Yet, in my notes, it was noted that before the recorder was turned on, a couple of the older Black females would give me directives (i.e. "get this", "don't sit there"), but as soon as the "on" button was pushed, these same participants became more passive, asking and worrying about how they sound. The relationship went from older female-younger female, where the older one is in control, to interviewer (younger female)-interviewee (older female) where the power switched. This is reminiscent of the research by Juanita Johnson-Bailey (1999), who is African American, and has conducted interviews with African American participants. Having a doctorate, some of her interviewees equated her to being in a higher socioeconomic class, which was one of the factors that initially caused a barrier between her and her participants (p. 664). Nevertheless, the advantages of having a shared racial and gender background superseded those

barriers and "moved the women on both sides of the tape recorder to greater intimacy and trust and occasionally to tears" (p. 669). Similarly, in the beginning a few of my interviews did not flow well, most likely due to the education difference between me and several of my participants. However, while reviewing the transcripts, the my speech becomes less mainstream. More AAE features are spoken as the interviews progressed even when the participant's speech is more mainstream, which is a form of interdiscursivity. Because of this type of codeswitching, it is apparent that the participants eventually conversed more and spoke more freely, most likely feeling more comfortable, which diminished the power role of the interviewer and subordinate role of the interviewee.

5.2.2   The Necessity of Moving Beyond Linguistic Features and into Metadiscourse

As already seen, my membership in the African American community is highlighted already through linguistic features and the fact that I identify myself as Black. Yet, I do not want to seem as the supreme authority dictating the identities of the participants just because of my linguistic features and self-identification as African American. I want the voices of the participants to be heard allowing the transcripts to speak for themselves, especially since I was not raised in the Tidewater area unlike many of the participants. It is believed that analyzing the data using the method of CDA, which will be discussed below, allows the participants' voices to be heard. In critical research, "the researcher is a participant in the practice researched and the research arises out of and feeds back into emancipatory struggles…[although] they may have longer-term but indirect impact" (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 31). Specifically, critical discourse analysts, "are not afraid to make use of their social knowledge that being black, being a woman, being young or being the boss will most likely be evident from the way people write and talk. In other words, they assume that discourse may reproduce social inequality" (van Dijk

1999, p. 460). Yet, Rymes, Souto-Manning and Brown (2005) consider this role of the researcher as having preconceived assertions and assumptions beforehand as problematic. They remark, "to be a field that takes a stand, critical discourse studies needs to have a theoretical rationale for looking at moral sources – not simply assuming our [the researcher] own, but understanding them within the individuals our research affects" (p. 196). Additionally,

> The field cannot take a stand all by itself, distinct from the lifeworlds of those it purports to help. Critical discourse studies must resist asserting an a priori moral stance for humanity. Instead, we envision the role of critical discourse studies as one of inquiry into the unique personal commitments of individuals situated within and subject to complex social discourses. Ultimately, rather than taking a stand, critical discourse studies informs theory and research and, ultimately, praxis, based on developing understandings of those uniquely situated commitments of individuals. (p. 198)

All the while, I am admitting to having pre-conceived ideas, notions and assumptions about society and in particular with what is taking place in the lives of this study's participants. It is believed that every form of research is subjective, some more than others, and that every researcher brings in his or her biases that they need to be aware of (Peshkin, 1998). It is with this in mind that this research will try, as much as possible, to let the data (the participants) gathered inform me versus the other way around because a listing of linguistic features by the researcher is only part of the picture. Being aware of this in its entirety, CDA is employed to gather a full picture of linguistic identity while investigating the metadiscourse from the participants and their use of the narrative to show identity(ies) and agency.

Thus, one concept of CDA is looking at speech as social action, as seen above in 5.2 (p.101). Claiming membership through speech is one way of social action. Not only is membership in the Black community expressed via AAE, but also through what Fairclough (2003) terms the inclusive "we"- community and exclusive "we"-community. According to him, "identification in texts[27] is both a matter of individuality and collectivity, an 'I' and a 'we', or rather potentially multiple 'I's and/or 'we's" (p. 162). The inclusive "we"-community is expressed by the interviewer to the participants using the subject, object, and demonstrative pronouns 'we', 'us', and 'our' as a matter of showing membership in the African American community. In addition, the interviewer is showing kinship with the participant. These are just two of many examples:

Interviewer: if you all could give advice to *Black people* or uh not only advice but I guess a word what would you say to *us*

Interviewer: um you know you read things especially about *Black people* where you know *we*'re creative *we* know how to do things but *we* didn't know the business aspect of it so

The exclusive 'we' community is expressed in this data by the participants with the use of 'we, 'my', 'they', 'them', and 'us' showing differentiation between Blacks and Whites. Below are five examples:

Antonio: you know and it's it's kind of hard for me to talk about *my own people* like that

Yvette: …I really passed the test. See, you got to answer those questions like you are a *Caucasian person…* she said sit down and think about what would *they* say, what answer would *they* give (see section 5.3.6 for full passage).

Marguerite: I do remember it, you know, I mean, like I said when *we* used to do the boycott thing, and *we* used to go to the *White school,* and of course *they* didn't want *us* there.

---

[27] Fairclough (2003) considers texts as written and printed texts including shopping lists, newspaper articles, (spoken) conversations and interviews, TV programs and webpages; text is not limited to visual images and sound (p. 3).

James: So, in the midst of all this, *we* still survived, and *we* were still able to have uh enough, and the main thing *we* did have among the *Blacks families* that *we* had love one for the other and *we* were able to help one another.

Lela: [laughs] …and my Dad always had this thing of being able to compete in the world like out there with *them people.*
Interviewer: You talking about *White people?*
Lela: Yeah. [laughs]

In the example above between Lela and the interviewer, the interviewer gets Lela to clarify who

is "them". The exclusive 'we' community is not only showing exclusive membership

interracially, between Blacks versus non-Blacks, but also between Blacks who profess to be part

of the community versus Blacks who do not, i.e. "tokens" or "sell-outs".

Alex: I personally believe that when they do find somebody usually *a Black person* when *they* get up there, when *they* start succeeding like that, other cultures especially White people try to find ways to associate *them* that they're not the Black guy, they're not that *token* that they're not like *us.*

In this example above, Alex states that there are some "other cultures", e.g. White people, who

"tokenize" a successful Black person and deem them as non-Blacks. Those Black people are

considered different from him and others, which are the "us" he refers to in the passage, who

associate themselves with Blacks and not as a special "other". Likewise, below Antonio

discusses those who have received a higher education and other types of success, but do not want

to be associated with Black culture nor labeled as Black either. "They" are called "sell-outs"

Antonio: What I think about *sellout* is I think that if you know there's a lot what we call *sellouts… they* just separate *theyself* from their whole race altogether. Yeah I'm a Black man but I'm Puerto Rican Latin White whatever that you want me to be today, and and in order for me to show you that I'm not I will do whatever I got to do to show you that I don't care about *Black people* if if *they* ain't on my level I ain't got to deal with *them.* (see section 5.5.1 for full passage)

Furthermore, this intra-racial distinction extends to racial terminology, African-American versus

Black American, and socioeconomic class for some participants:

Vanessa: I think as a *Black American* and I don't necessarily use the term *African American* because I'm not from Africa nor do I know any Africans that would probably claim me as a relative…

Vanessa makes a difference based on origin of nationality. Thus, in spite of similar physical characteristics, she creates a distinction between Blacks born in Africa versus Blacks who are descendants of slaves in the US. She also makes a distinction between the use of the terms African American and Black, preferring the latter over the former. L.J. makes a distinction based on socioeconomic class.

L.J.: For me it was kind of different 'cause like right out of Montessori like happy go lucky bunch of like just White kids around us like a few *Black kids they* were kind of like *me,* kind of like privileged, kind of like lived in like the better neighborhoods and stuff…then they put me into Middlewood Academy [Lela makes "ugh" noise] which is this all *Black* private school…and comes with like a *whole different array of kids* and stuff.

L. J. makes a distinction between him and the other privileged Black children in the Montessori school versus the other Black children at the all Black Middlewood Academy who were "different". His sister corroborates this difference by verbalizing disgust, "ugh".

English grammatical features reveal the participants' membership in the Black community. It is done by the use of subject and object pronouns, for example "we" or "us", referring to Black people, which is an example of the concept of the inclusive 'we' community. While using these pronouns in the interviews, the participants and I identify each other as members of the same community. Using the pronouns "them" and "they", for example, show exclusive 'we' community, distinguishing those who the participants consider a part of the Black community and those who are not. As seen above, to some participants just because someone is racially Black, does not mean they are accepted in their Black community.

5.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Social Realist Theory

In the section above, passages from the interviewer and participants were demonstrated in order to show how one's speech can be a form of a social act. In those instances, the social

action is the display of racial identity, revealing membership in the Black community. CDA methodology is one way to analyze social action through speech. Social realist theory is a framework used to hypothesize how agency is manifested by people through language. Both CDA and Social realist theory are used in analyzing the discourse of the participants.

5.3.1   A Description of CDA

A definition of CDA is necessary, firstly dissecting it beginning with an understanding of discourse. Fairclough (2003) explains that discourse is "the particular view of [verbal] language as an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements" (p. 3) and "can be used in a particular or general, abstract way" (p. 4). Gee (2005) separates discourse, which he defines as ways of representing actions and identities, into big-D discourse and little-D discourse. Little-D discourse is simply language-in-use while big-D discourse is little-D discourse including actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity. Big-D discourse builds actions and identities; through it others can recognize you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in a particular type of what (activity). Relating to metadiscourse, big-D discourse reveals the perceptions and attitudes of the speakers concerning linguistic and social identities.

Going further, discourse analysis is described by Johnstone (2000) as a methodology, not a sub-discipline, that is a "relatively new branch of Linguistics" used to study language-in-use (p. 103). According to Rymes (in press), discourse analysis "involves investigating how *discourse* (language in use) and *context* affect each other " (p. 19). While looking at classroom discourse analysis, she characterizes the critical aspect of CDA as "once aware[ness] of how contexts affects discourse, we can work to change those features of talk that reinforce oppressive patterns,

and help our students [and others] do so as well" (p. 20). Fairclough (2003) also compares and explains the difference between discourse analysis and CDA. He

>see[s] discourse analysis 'oscillating' between a focus on specific texts
>and a focus on what I call the 'order of discourse' the relatively durable
>social structuring of language which is itself one element of the
>relatively durable structuring and networking of social practices. Critical
>discourse analysis is concerned with continuity and change at this more
>abstract, more structural, level, as well as with what happens in particular
>texts. (p. 3)

In isolation from discourse analysis, CDA in more simple terms, is defined by van Dijk (1999) as a tool to "be used to discuss more loosely, but also more freely, the many ways power, dominance and inequality are expressed, enacted and reproduced in discourse, both in its structure and its contents" (p. 460).

Critical theory and methodology come from a more subjectivist epistemology seeking to bring about social justice. In accordance with this, Crotty (2003) explains that, "Critical forms of research call current ideology into question, and initiate action, in the cause of social justice" (p. 157). What is different between critical theory and traditional theory is that the former does not just reflect the current situation but seeks to change the current situation (Crotty, 2003, p. 130). According to Chouliarki and Fairclough (1999), critical research in "theoretical practice has a variety of 'knowledge interests' in other practices, and that what distinguishes critical social science is an emancipatory knowledge interest-an interest in emancipation from 'ideologically-frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed" (p. 29).

The use of CDA and critical theory is appropriate in investigating the research questions for several reasons. By employing this methodology and theory, the analyses and findings from this study can be used toward corroborating other studies on the existence of AAE as a linguistically sound and legitimate dialect. In addition, it can be used toward expanding the definition of AAE speakers and showing how well-established mainstream institutions, such as the educational system, have wrongfully discriminated against AAE speakers, which has in turn affected their lives.

5.3.2 *Incorporating Social Theory with CDA*

Simply stated, Sociolinguistics as a whole is based on the interaction of language and society, examining how social factors, such as race, socioeconomic class, and gender affect language. Although there are sociolinguists (e.g. Smitherman, Labov, Wolfram, Rickford, Baugh) who have espoused and used their research to promote linguistic awareness and to help with social change, as a whole the field has not done much or enough of this (Rickford 1999, p. 297). Yet, critical theory in social science, more specifically, Critical Linguistics, which was brought to the US via Europe, has been around since the 1970s (Smitherman, 2001, p. 7). Duranti (1997) observes that Sociolinguistics unlike Linguistic Anthropology, which is the closest related discipline to Sociolinguistics, does not concern itself with "maintaining a dialogue with the social sciences in general and the other subfields of anthropology in particular" (p. 22)[28].

Expanding on Duranti's argument, Carter and Sealey (2000) have proposed that "sociolinguistics, whether broadly or narrowly conceived, has not yet developed an adequate theory of social action which accounts for the phenomena with which it is concerned[29]" (p. 3).

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[28] Although Duranti (1997) does acknowledge that "other areas of study, such as speech register, language and gender, speech acts, and discourse, have been more often shared with linguistic anthropologists and have thus provided opportunities for crossfertilization between the two disciplines" (p. 14).
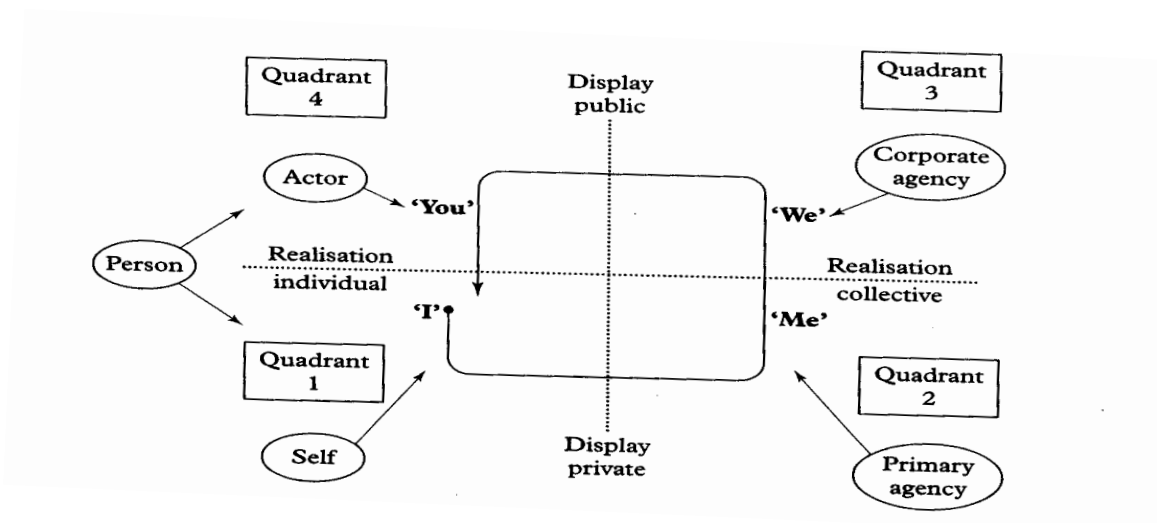[29] Rickford (1999, p. 119) and Milroy and Gordon (2003, p. 95) discuss this as well.

They continue by supplementing their argument with the familiar criticism that the field lacks a unified theory (p. 4). Carter and Sealey (2000) identify that the risks of sociolinguistic research are "reducing language to the sum of individual utterances or endowing it with the ability to construct social reality" (p. 11). Therefore, they propose realist social theory to be used because "only a stratified theory of the social world provides an answer, one in which both structure [society] and agency are accounted for "(p. 11). More explicitly, structures are "long-term background conditions for social life which are indeed also transformed by it, but *slowly*" (Chouliarki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 22). Agency is only in people and not society; it is what actors do and experience (Archer, 2000, 2003). So, that structure and agency are not conflated, where 1) structure would be given the greatest importance, as is usual the case in sociolinguistic and variationist studies, 2) agency would be given the greatest importance, or 3) both agency and structure are mutually dependent upon each other (p. 11-16). One of the works that Carter & Sealey deem influential to their proposition of the use of social realist theory in sociolinguistics is that of Margaret Archer. Her work and espoused theory, along with Fairclough's (2003), are also relied upon, as seen in later sections of this chapter.

Archer (2000) discusses the analytical dualism between structure and agency. She points out that "the structures into which we are born and the cultures which we inherit mean that we are involuntarily situated beings" (p. 262). Consequently, for example, being born to African American parents who speak AAE in a society that stigmatizes that dialect is not something that a person has any control over. Yet, it is too simplistic to say that people are only influenced by and subjected to society. According to her, "society does indeed contribute 'something' rather than 'nothing' to making us what we are, but that this 'something' falls a good deal short of that 'everything', which would make all that we are a gift to society" (p. 253). There is a sense of self or agency that is manifested or enacted by people, some more than others.

There are four levels of emergent property and powers (PEP): the self, realized early on in life, which is reflexive and ever evolving (p. 255); the person, realized at maturity once the reflective self has surveyed the natural, practical and social orders of reality (p. 257); the agent (always plural, the collective); and the actor (singular). Thus, "the emergence of our 'social selves' [the agent and the actor] is something which occurs at the interface of structure and agency" (p. 255). Simply stated, the cycle goes from birth (personal identity) to maturity (social identity)[30]. It starts with the self (person), which is the individual 'I', followed by primary agency, which is the collective 'me' where "collectivities share the same life chances" (p. 263). Through primary agents actively and strategically getting together with other primary agents, corporate agency is created, which is the 'we'. Then, through corporate agency, the actor (person) comes about, which is the 'you'. We become agents before we become actors (p. 284); thus, it is corporate agency that invents new rules for new games which contain more roles in which social actors can be themselves (p. 287). Since the self is reflexive and constantly evolving, the chain goes right back to the self, but not in the same position as before. Below is Figure 9.1 (*The acquisition of Social Identity* from Archer (2000) illustrating this concept (p. 295).

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[30] More on personal identity and social identity is seen later on in section 5.5.

Quadrant 4   Display public   Quadrant 3

Actor   'You'   'We'   Corporate agency

Person   Realisation individual   Realisation collective

'I'   'Me'

Quadrant 1   Quadrant 2

Self   Display private   Primary agency

(Archer, 2000, p. 295)

Putting this socialist realist theory in practical terms, concerning this research, using the example given above of a person does not having any control of being born of African American parents who speak AAE (self), but they can either embrace and/or reject it forming bonds with others who do the same (primary agent). If they reject it, they are pro status quo being that AAE is a stigmatized dialect. Thus, with other like-minded people they can espouse MAE, which is already the dominant and prestige dialect, upholding or maintaining MAE's position via the educational system, employment arena, etc. (corporate/social agent). Thus, pronouncing and identifying themselves as a speaker of MAE (social actor). The same can be applied to those who reject MAE and speak AAE only or those who speak both, AAE in one context while speaking MAE in another. In her book *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*, Morgan (2002) states that "because the social and political context outside of the African American community stigmatizes AAE, how members of all social classes exercise their language choices is interpreted in terms of cultural and class value, advantages and educational privilege" (p. 67). Keeping this in mind, the data of the participants will be used as a way of

looking at agency through speech and how it can be used to bring about social change or social action, i.e. linguistic awareness and the destigmatization and legitimatization of AAE.

<div style="text-align:center">5.4   Metadiscourse of the Participants</div>

Metadiscourse allows us to make intentional (and internal) decisions to speak a particular way and to view others' dialect or language in a certain way. This, in turn, means that it is not just society that is doing it or dictating to us what to do. Thus, we are or can be active agents. Relating that to this research, the analysis examines awareness and the choices the participants make through speech concerning whether or not to speak AAE or MAE and how that translates into their identity(ies). According to Morgan (2002),

> since social reality is constructed via language, two perspectives emerge.
> The first concerns whether AAE signifies the resistance to an imposed definition of self and identity that constructs African Americans as dependent "Others" who rely on those of European ancestry for recognition and existence. The second focuses on whether AAE represents acquiescence and participation in the imposed definition. (p. 66).

The first perspective sees AAE as a way its speakers use language to create an identity counter to and in defiance of the dominant mainstream one. The second perspective devalues AAE and African American culture viewing MAE as the means of progression and success. Yet, regardless of the perspective it is clear that both AAE and MAE "symbolize ideologies regarding African American cultural practices" and "in the African American speech community, both AAE and GE [General English or MAE] function as the language of home, community, history and culture" (p. 66).

This section contains the six themes derived from the formulated questions on metadiscourse and agency. The six themes inform the research by answering the formulated questions which gives insight to the proposed, main research questions. They are again as follows: *Perceptions of Their Idiolect*, *Society's Metasdiscourse*, *Speech in Different Contexts, Black Speech vs. White Speech, African American Identity,* and *Blacks in Education and Employment.* Examples from the interviews will be given with the purpose of illustrating those themes.

5.4.1 *Perceptions of Their Idiolect*

Finding out how one views his/her speech is important in discovering his/her (linguistic) identity. This identity can be further segmented into personal and social identities, which is manifested by their choice of certain linguistic and discourse features that signify individuality or group membership. Their perceptions of their own idiolect reveals their ideas/beliefs/attitudes on their personal identity and who they are as an individual but also how they identify with a collective(s), which is their social identity.

Vanessa is very agentive in reference to assessing her speech. She expresses the following:

> **Vanessa:** As a a um Black professional woman I'm really judged heavily a lot on what I say and what I do, and even though I can relax with my language sometimes um pretty much it's always at the same level or the same height. I, you know, tend to cognitively think about whom I'm around, and so I engage the person according to their ability to receive what it is that I am saying. So, if I were in a group who I know cognitively is not on my level in terms of ability to speak than I will change it because it would do me no good to speak where I am because they will miss the message. So, I have found out in my time on this earth you have to change your spoken language even if it is English. Always you have to change the context of the words that you use depending on the crowd you're in, and when I occasionally it's not it's about dialect but when I speak to over the phone to some people when they meet me they would've never thought that I were uh Black they would always assume that I was White.

She makes a decision and takes full responsibility for that choice, duly noting that she has to do so because she is "judged heavily" by what she says and do because she is a "Black, professional woman". Her awareness of what she is doing is clearly defined because she actively says, "I you know tend to cognitively think about who I am around and so I engage the person according to their ability to receive what it is that I am saying". By saying this, she makes a judgment call against others by deliberately changing her speech because if she does not "they will miss the message". She knowingly speaks certain ways "depending on the crowd you're [she's] in" so that the listener can fully understand the conversation and what she is talking about. Vanessa is an active agent because she is deciding what kind of social actor she should be. Regardless if others have characterized her as sounding "White", which is usually seen as "proper" or mainstream, she changes her speech depending on the context and with whom she is speaking.

Like Vanessa, L.J. is also an active agent, but it came about through someone else's metadiscursive commentary of his speech. He shares a narrative about someone mistaking him from England because of his speech. British speech is seen as a prestige dialect, especially by those in the US. People tend to think of it as "proper". He is from Norfolk, and that city is stereotyped for being more inner city or urban and less mainstream. Hence, the surprise from the person who comments on his speech.

> **L J:** Yeah, people are like where are you from. I'm like Norfolk. They're like what. So, I was like like I I just pronounce my letters [S,L, L.J. laugh] no different [sarcasm]… oh yeah like with me like I remember that one time I was like I was over at the Get Food Mart [convenience store] and uh this guy asked me if I was like from London or England, just like some random Black guy that hangs out in there, and I'm just like what [L slightly laughs] are you serious. England [laughs]? Do I sound like that proper or something? Like I don't know whenever people joke me I'm just like whatever. So, I I can pronounce my words. I don't really see it as a joke for me. Like I don't know it could be worse I might, you know, speak with a lot of slang and no one understands what I am trying to say.

As seen in section 5.2.2 above in the section on exclusive 'we' community, L.J. is used to being around Blacks and Whites who are like him, which he deems as "privileged". It seems initially that he was not aware of his speech until the man at the convenience store asks him if he is from London, England. He seemed surprise by the man's perception of his (L.J.'s) speech because he says and later laughs, "I'm just like what are you serious England do I sound like that proper or something". The man's perception of speech, at the convenience store, is equivalent to society's attitudes towards speech. Being Black American and sounding "proper" cannot be one in the same. Thus, L.J. must be a Black person from London. However, L.J. rejects this category that the man places him into because he says that "I don't really see it [speaking MAE] as a joke for me". This rejection of "slang" or non-mainstream English so that others can understand what he is saying is an active form of agency.

In total contrast to Vanessa, who is very agentive, and L.J., Linda is less agentive. She says she learned to "enunciate clearly", and because of that people tend to tell her that her speech is proper.

> **Linda:** I like the way I speak. Sometimes I don't because my pitch goes up at times. When I'm speaking to my students sometimes my southern drawl comes in, and I will say a word like the i-n-g [ŋ] um for instance I won't say completing I may say completin' sometimes, and that may not be as I guess as audible or whatever that students can understand, but most of the time they can hear [hɪjə] and understand what I say because I usually take my time to enunciate clearly … in my own experience, when I talk to some of my friends who are not in education they say oh you speak so proper. It's not that I speak proper, I have learned how to speak correct English, and even though I practice speaking correct English sometimes it may slip I guess because of my innate tongue of speaking language, and it's not something we learned directly, but it's something innate from us that comes from our heritage.

Starting from the beginning of the passage, Linda states, "I like the way I speak sometimes I don't" showing indecisiveness and a lack of ownership or appreciation of her speech. Linda says she has trained herself to speak "correct English" through practice. Her lack of agency is further

revealed when she declares that "sometimes it [her speech] may slip" and she speaks non-mainstream English due to an "innate tongue of speaking language…that comes from our heritage". She is placing responsibility of "slipping up" and speaking AAE and/or Southern American English (SAE) on having an African heritage. "Our heritage" is meant to be African heritage due to other parts of our interview, which speak about her grandmother's Gullah background and her "broken English", and of parts that were not recorded, where she discusses Black Americans and their African history. Later, in the recorded interview, she does state that, "speaking correct English for African Americans is almost like learning English as a second language because we're from the descendants of Africans". In a sense, Linda is saying that it is "genetic[31]" or natural that Blacks speak "incorrect" English. She is not the only participant that implied this. Esther did as well when she talked about her grandmother who, "went to the sixth grade but she spoke well she wrote well she read well" because she was the "product of a White man". Therefore, once again, according to a few participants, "genetics" can play a role in how one speaks, whether it is "correct" or not. This is counter to linguistic fact and thought that says "sounding Black is not influenced by genetics or physiology" (Rickford & Rickford, 2000, p. 102).

Although only a few responses are recorded, the other participants' answers to this theme are similar. All of them show an awareness of their speech, some being more aware than others. Just like Linda, there are those who like and dislike the way they speak simultaneously. If they realize that they are speaking AAE, they will change it, oftentimes, immediately to MAE. Then, some of them have been accused of talking "proper" or sounding "White". Those, like L.J. take pride in that while others like Vanessa reveal that she can change her speech depending on with

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[31] The word *genetic* is in quotes to indicate that this is a view of a few of the participants and not of mine.

whom she is conversing. She claims to speak both AAE and MAE using both dialects to her advantage.

5.4.2 Society's Metadiscourse

Many of the participants said that people, society in general, automatically stereotype a person by the way s/he looks, which carries over to their judgment of that person's speech. For example, Tony says dressing in a mainstream fashion, "a suit" as he says, which symbolizes "professional", does not equate to mainstream speech either,

> **Tony:** It [judging or stereotyping] can be go positively and negatively, you know. You cannot be that bright, but he could speak great, and people could be like oh wow he's awesome when that's not necessarily so true or you know or he could be in the best suit and not speaking proper English and looking at you like uh uh nah.

According to Tony people hear someone's speech, which is "great" meaning "proper" or MAE, and assume that a person is "bright" or "awesome", which can be a misassumption. In addition, someone may wear a suit and speak improper, "uh uh nah".

These stereotypes lead to misjudgments and negative attitudes towards others that many times are not true. Going further, Alex says,

> **Alex:** I'm guessing they associate your speech, they say this is America. Anyway, I guess they put that in your education, in your success, and everything goes all into that little bucket. So, that's why I guess America looks down on people that can't speak English so well I guess…the thing about that in my opinion is that you might be able to speak English very well, but at the same time someone who's from another country speaks another language may be very educated, very smart in their language in their country but just because they come over here, you know, they're not so well doesn't mean they're not as smart as you or that they can't do the same thing as you. It's just a total different different, oh what's the word, yeah, it's just a variant in there.

Associating one's intelligence through their speech has been going on for a long time, as is seen above in the Literature Review chapter in section 2.2.1b, the *Deficit Theory*. America, meaning the US and moreso mainstream US, is very agentive according to Alex. Mainstream America associates people with their speech automatically placing them "into that little bucket" which

pours out your education level, your success and everything else that one perceives about a person. Yet, Alex counteracts Mainstream US's pre-judgment, by taking full responsibility and actively rebutting society's stereotype. He notes that a person who may speak English as a Second Language (ESL) may not speak English very well, but that "doesn't mean they're not as smart as you or that they can't do the same thing as you". This passage ends with "it's just a variant in there", most likely referring to the fact that humans are varied, diverse and no one fits neatly into a category or better yet, stereotype.

Still yet, on the contrary, Antonio asserts that one's first impression is important. People will take notice of your speech and judge you accordingly. In another part of his interview, he relayed that society puts people in categories and some people basically accept it as reality. Thus, it is important to speak properly especially if one is to advance job-wise, although to Antonio that does not exclude AAE because he actively speaks AAE, as seen below.

> **Antonio:** You have what you call formal English, and you have what you call slang. Now, I may be I I mean will go into a job interview and say good morning sir how are you doing, or will I go into an interview in the morning say fo shizzle my nizzle [S laughs]. He has no idea what I'm talking about now being that speaking in my own language. I may be representing myself but what what picture am I painting for this man? Is he a ignorant young man? Is I may be a man that come in come in on time everyday happy smile and going to treat the customers the way they're supposed to be treated, but because I'm say foshizzle my nizzle or what up dog he don't he don't know that because he his ears are only prone to what he knows is right. So, you have to kind of mold yourself to what is what is known to be right so that you can get ahead in life because yes sir and yes ma'am has always done it for a lot of people, but you're young and you're a little more urban so to speak so you wanna be yeah [jɛə] nah [na:] what up dog [da:əg], you know. Then, you give them an impression okay all they have in they mind is drop it like it's hot [from a rap song by Snoop Dogg and Pharell] [S laughs] you know.

Antonio emphasizes the importance of being aware of the context one is placed and using appropriate language, according to society's norms, for that particular setting. He believes that there is nothing wrong with "representing" one's self, being, or speaking in this case, who

you are. Nevertheless, it is important to be able to "mold yourself" to acquire different types of speech, and know what situations to use and not to use those types of speech. This will allow you to "get ahead in life" so that you will not be judged as "ignorant" or one who does not take your life seriously as if all you want to do is dance, i.e. the reference to the rap song "drop it like it's hot".

Linguistic attitudes fuel stereotypes equating those stereotypes to the characterization of a person. As Tony comments, people perceive intelligence even by the type of clothing one wears; however, the perception that professional attire equals intelligence and MAE can be erroneous. Alex goes beyond American English dialects and gives a firsthand account of people wrongfully stereotyping and discriminating against someone because s/he has a foreign accent, assuming the person lacks intelligence. On the other hand, Antonio suggests, without complete mainstream conformity or loss of oneself, you have to be able to speak "proper" or "formal English" in certain contexts because that is what society expects of you if you want to "get ahead in life". It is in this regard, language in context, that the next topic focuses on speech acts in different contexts.

5.4.3   *Speech Acts in Different Contexts*

In my research, all of the participants believed that one's speech changes and/or is somewhat different depending on the situation a person is in or to whom s/he is talking. Linda advocates MAE for the majority of contexts one is in; however, she does say that there are certain times when non-mainstream English is permissible, e.g. in informal settings and in certain genres of writing, like poetry.

> **Linda**: Yes, I think that most people feel more comfortable speaking to family members or friends, close friends um as oppose to speaking to a professional on on a professional level, and I've noticed that with my colleagues in other department and even in my department we usually try to speak on a professional level at all times. Now if we're

having lunch together, if we're having an informal setting then sometimes we may say something, and most females usually call each other girl [gɜ˞:l]. Uh, that's an affectionate way of being friendly towards each other… [smacks lips, pause] I would say there is but it's at a different place and different time. If a person wants to talk about poetry or perhaps read stories about uh people in their language or in their dialect then they could perhaps use nonstandard English, but any other time we should always use standard English.

Linda believes that people tend to be at ease with those that are "family members" or "close friends". This view is an example of familiarity, which was discussed earlier in this chapter, and how it can bring about trust and allow conversation to flow freely. Linda says that she and her female colleagues in an informal setting may call each other "girl", elongating the word when addressing each other, which is a sign of friendship and camaraderie. Yet, besides the familiar, her complete approval with the use of non-mainstream language stops there because she remarks that a person "could *perhaps* use nonstandard English" in poetry or stories. The emphasis is on "perhaps" because that is not definite. This passage ends with her reiterating, which she does throughout her interview, that "we should always use standard English", definitely upholding mainstream mores and ideologies concerning language. MAE is a dialect of power advocated by mainstream institutions such as the educational system, and it is taken as a given that it is "good" English, "proper", and "correct"; in addition, positive assumptions, such as being successful, are made about those who speak it and negative perceptions are made on those who do not (Fairclough, 2003; Lippi-Green, 1997). Linda is agentive in that she supports the linguistic values and power discourse of the corporate agent, the educational system.

In certain contextual situations, people change registers, speaking more or less profane. Angel discusses how church brings about a more mainstream or higher register of language. However, she thinks that that language is contrived. People speak one way in the church and the complete opposite outside of it. Angel gives the following example,

> **Angel:** If they if they at school they talk the way they want to talk. If they at church [mocks church folk] oh holy Jesus [S laughs] oh God is good. mmhmmm. When they at school, oh you B-F- ing this you better get out my face and this uh this uh this. When they at church oh he how ya doing sister. Women, really really, the person, they really want to say get out of my face most of time. I just be sitting in church. I don't even be in choir because I try not to say what I really want to say to people that look at you that way.

Angel says that people purposely make a choice on what to say and how to say it. She mocks the people in church with a voice sounding pious or self-righteous. When she says "mmhmmm", it seems as if she is condemning them for this false act because she goes on to say that in school they curse, which is totally opposite of their church speech. She claims that she knows how they really feel despite the church act, "they really want to say get out of my face". Thus, she makes a choice not to be involved in church activities, like the choir, so as to not have to voice her true opinion of those types of people.

The employment arena, which has come up in previous represented passages, more specifically Linda's and Antonio's, will be dealt with more in a later section; it is also deemed a place where MAE is preferable. Vanessa discusses that because she is a professional, she has to be careful of her speech, which means always speaking MAE. In addition, she states that being a double minority, Black and female, it is even more so necessary to speak MAE so that others respect her.

> **Vanessa:** Yes, [laughs] so language is very important, but again my take on it is it has to be appropriate to the wor-to the audience. So, where I can speak with any particular crowd, I can change it over to make it whatever it needs to be. I think it takes time to learn to do that, and some people, you know, speak the same way when they're with everybody. I've learned that when I am in the room with physicians, I'm a Black female, I'm educated, and I'm already stepping on toes, and I haven't even opened my mouth. So, I have to talk their lingo. If I'm not speaking where they are than they would respect me even less because as a nurse practitioner you have to know, you know, physicians are afraid that we're going to take their business.

Vanessa begins with stating that language "has to be appropriate to the audience". As she did in the earlier passage above on *Perceptions of Their Idiolect*, she reiterates the fact that she knows how to "speak with any particular crowd" and that "it takes time to learn to do that". That shows that she believes that she is an effective communicator and because of her experience, she has full authority to say what she is saying. Although her speech is more mainstream and it is not as evident that she is Black via it, she fully professes who she is through her discourse, "I'm a Black female I'm educated". She realizes that being a double minority and educated is not the norm in society. Plus, she is a nurse practitioner, so in her field she has to be on par and gain respect with those who feel threatened by her, which means speaking "their lingo" and "where they are", which the majority of the time means MAE.

Socially speaking, certain types of language or dialects are expected depending on the context. AAE is more acceptable in literary genres, such as poetry, and in settings among family, friends, and/or those with whom you are very familiar, according to the participants. However, Linda declares that "any other time we should always" speak MAE espousing power discourse on American English. According to Angel, people consciously change their speech by speaking politely in church and profanely in school. Vanessa notes that she uses MAE in order to demand respect from those in the workplace who are threatened by her because she is an educated, Black woman. Thus, language can be employed to show advocacy of power discourse and/or can be used to benefit one's self based on the social norms of the mainstream or other linguistic communities of practice.

5.4.4   *Black Speech vs. White Speech*

Race, and issues surrounding it, is an important topic in this research and not just because the informants are members of a minority group and the topic is on a stigmatized and racialized

dialect. Without having to ask the formulated research questions concerning race, the majority

of the participants willingly expressed their ideas on language differences and similarities among

Blacks and Whites, as said earlier. Lela, who attended predominantly White private schools,

talks about how she had to do the "umph thing", which was to let others know through her

speech that she is educated and to not assume otherwise. She says,

> **Lela:** I was like yeah there are times when I will, you know, when you do the umph thing… excuse me I graduated from Dogwood Academy in ninety five don't talk to me like an idiot, and that's when I have to do the little okay fine this is how I need to speak so that you can talk to me then fine I can play your game, but you be like hey, what's up, how ya been duh-duh-duh, you know, then we're cool, and I have White friends that do the same thing.

It was necessary for her to do the "umph thing" because there were people who assumed that

because she is Black, she was on a lower level than them. She does not appreciate that

misassumption especially due to the fact that she is proud to have attended her prestigious alma

mater, Dogwood Academy. She wants people to realize that she is on their level; she is not "an

idiot" so she "plays the game", learning mainstream culture and using it to her advantage. By

speaking MAE she is showing agency in accordance with power discourse and mainstream

linguistic belief that MAE is equated to intelligence and (formal) education. Moreover, Lela

claims that the White people she knows, who are her friends so she is familiar with what they do,

also "play the game", speaking MAE to let people know that they are educated but use less

formal speech once they are comfortable and have gotten to know the person.

Yvette notes that there are not much differences between the speech of Blacks and

Whites, "it depends on what they were taught". This seems somewhat equivalent to Lela's

discourse on "playing the game". However, some participants think that there are differences.

As a professor, Linda notices differences in her students' speech,

> **Linda**: Caucasian students tend to talk flat sometimes, or they mispronounce words, or they will try to blend in with the African American students and talk the same lingo as they talk.

She matter-of-factly describes her White students as talking "flat", which could mean plain or monotone. She reveals that it is not just her Black students that mispronounce words but so do her White students. Furthermore, she has also noticed that her White students tend to speak like the African American students, who are the majority of the population in the college. She gives the following illustration, which is of AAE, of their speech,

> **Linda:** The things that I hear my students say all the time using the word *they* t-h-e-y [for the possessive] rather than *their*, and they will say sometimes say [mocks her students] I'm going to over they house rather than I'm going to over their house, or the word seen s-e-e-n seen uh they would say I seen her rather than I saw her so in the past tense. So those are similar phrases I hear a lot in the English class.

Angel and Tamika make note of a similar occurrence in their majority Black high school. Angel says there are "not anymore" differences between the speech of Blacks and Whites,

> **Angel:** [slight laugh] …'cause some some White people say they they be thinking they're down and stuff they be talk the same way we talk.

Angel indicates that the White students try to fit in by speaking like the Black students, hence "they be thinking they're down". Yet, Tamika takes this further, looking at the other side, and says that she has experienced Blacks who "act White". In "acting White", it is assumed speech is included because she mentions this directly after her sister speaks about this subject.

> **Tamika:** mm yeah because they're [White people] trying to act like they're um they're Black, but they're not, and then some [Black people] trying to act like they're White, but they're Black.

Blacks "acting White" is reminiscent of Ogbu's research (1997), mentioned above in the Literature Review, of Black students not wanting to speak MAE because they do not want to be accused of "acting White". By equating MAE with "acting White", it can be viewed as a way of disassociating or alienating yourself from the Black community and aligning yourself with

mainstream culture. This is frowned upon by many in the Black community, including some of the participants in this research. Alienating yourself from the African American community by speaking MAE or "acting White" does not necessarily signify success, although institutional discourse says the contrary. This conveniently segues into the next section on African American identity.

5.4.5   African American Identity

The Black community is a large and diverse community. There are some who identify with it more than others, depending on how they were raised. These upcoming excerpts show personal narratives and examples of others who associate or distance themselves from the African American community. Many of the participants talk about this display of solidarity or the lack thereof through language use. Continuing with her students, Linda notes that many of her students purposely choose to speak AAE all the while knowing MAE.

> **Linda**: They [her students] know correct English, but they choose to be more comfortable with their friends and using the nonstandard English or sometimes Ebonics or sometimes, and they don't really realize they are codeswitching, which is what the African Americans used to do, and I remember when I was in school we used codeswitching. We would say something and switch it a around so it would not be understood as correct English.

She asserts that her students knowingly speak "nonstandard English" or "Ebonics" in order to affirm their membership in the Black community, "to be more comfortable with their friends". However, there are some students who are not cognizant that they codeswitch. Still yet, Linda even looks at this as an act of agency among her students because she goes on to recount a short personal narrative that when she and her friends were in school they used to codeswitch in order to "not be understood". That is a sign of the exclusive 'we' community, which is discussed earlier in section 5.2.2.

Not all the participants completely identify with the Black community as a whole nor share solidarity with other African Americans through speech. This is openly acknowledged by Lela.

>**Lela:** Daddy always wanted us to be more around White people so we wouldn't feel like we're inferior, and that's why he pushed us to to go to pri-private school because I begged and pleaded with them to go to Wilson High. I can walk to Wilson High School, and Wilson is a good school but they said no.

Her father made her attend a predominantly White private school so that she can acquire and be familiar with mainstream culture norms. Lela does not take responsibility for her upbringing; she gives it to her father. In addition, she makes it known that she did try to attend a public school by begging and pleading, which would mean that she would be around more Blacks. She further reveals in a later passage that she has never really been comfortable in a majority Black environment because "we [she and her brother L. J.] haven't been around Black people", due to her father's insistence that she and her brother "be more around White people". While talking about growing up in a majority White neighborhood, she mistakenly calls herself White. Her brother corrects her thereafter and they laugh about that. Lela further comments that she is "not as Black as she thought" because she is unfamiliar with African American slang,

>**Lela:** I was really upset when I read in the Essence magazine [Black Women's magazine] that "crunk" [slang meaning crazy and drunk; originating with Atlanta hip hop scene] is now in the dictionary. I was like what the, when did that happen, and they defined it as a noun, and I was like I guess I'm not as Black as I thought because I thought it was a adjective [laughs]. I'm like um oops.

Yet, it seems that when she says that she is "not as Black as she thought", it is not as if she fully regrets not being a total member of the community. This is assumed because she first discusses how she was "upset" that a slang word, originating in the Black community, is now included in the dictionary. Just like her brother L.J., which is seen above, Lela prides herself in speaking MAE. Her identity and agency were shaped by well-established power discourses and structures

in place. This passage and the one where her brother talks about being raised as privilege,

encourages me to assume that the African American community that they profess to belong to

not only looks at race but socioeconomic class, which can be connected to your education level,

as well.

Although a person may show racial identity through their speech, what happens when

non-verbal language reveals your racial identity and you are judged before you utter a sound?

Naming practices have given away the race of person many times, where a person was not

selected for a job due to their perceived racial identity. Regardless of the fact that Yvette was the

only participant who spoke about this, it is an important sub-topic on language and identity

nonetheless. She states,

> **Yvette:** uh like now they're saying what you name your child, okay, if you name your
> child Mary and you go out and fill out a job application, they going to look at that and say
> oh huh this could be a White person or a Black person, but if you name your person okay
> um like DayShawn oh this is a Black person so they may not look at your application
> after they look and see what you're name is or Shaniqua or Shanaqua or something like
> that, you know, they may not look at your application. So, they're already they're judging
> you before they even meet you, and they may be able to, you may be able to perform that
> job better than um the Caucasian.

Parents have the power to show their child's identity by what they name their children, which is

a sign of agency on the part of the parents racially socializing their children at birth. However,

this goes against mainstream society's naming practices. A name that is racially or ethnically

identifiable as minority, as in the Black American name of "DayShawn" or "Shaniqua" can

hinder a person in the future, especially when they are seeking employment. Seeing such a name

on an application or resume allows others to misjudge the applicant based on the stereotypes

associated with that particular race. Although it is illegal to not employ someone based on race,

it is done covertly by associating names with race. Despite the fact that this is a social injustice,

Yvette's account is proof that discrimination based on naming practice is real and an accepted

form of discrimination, which is what Rymes et al. (2005) espoused the researcher to do when

employing CDA, which is to listen to the participants in order to inform theory and research,

which can lead to positive social change. In reference to language and racial identity impeding

on one's employment, this relates to the next section on Blacks in education and employment.

5.4.6   Blacks in Education and Employment

The theme of education and employment is a constant throughout the data collected.

This is not too surprising being that many of the participants gave numerous accounts and shared

their personal opinions of how speech can be positively and negatively linked to educational and

employment opportunities. James, the eldest participant, recounts his memory of education.

Despite, the lack of resources, education was appreciated, teachers were respected, and students

had discipline,

> **James:** We were, they were disciplined in they own. We were taught respect in they own.
> we respected the teachers… three type of grades of students in the classroom, the second
> third and fourth grade, and we'd all be in that one classroom. Yet, there was discipline in
> the classroom nobody was would interrupt the other classes.

Emphasis along with the active voice is shown through the use of repetition and rhythm, "*we*

were they were disciplined *in they own we were* taught respect *in they own we* respected the

teachers". The use of tonal semantics, where key words and sounds are repeated in succession

for emphasis and effect, is characteristic of Black Christian preachers like James (Smitherman,

1977, p. 142).

Although Virginia, who is about the same age as James, agrees that when she was

growing up younger Blacks valued education more, she believes that is not the case now. She

discusses a White American family that she works for and how the parents promote education to

their children.

Virginia: Their dad, they Mom make sure that they reads even if they go to camp or whatever. They make sure they reads them books. They take them books with them and read them. So, we as a Black people need to teach our children more. We need to read not sit in front of front of the TV too much… so, you know you got to be positive about the things that your children do because I learned a lot since I I've been working for this Whi-White family. I say that's why we're so far behind because we don't think that we supposed to do some of the stuff that we see them do, and some of that stuff you need to be doing because it helps you, it helps you get ahead in life.

Similarly, Yvette, who is Virginia's daughter, talks about emulating White people or acting in ways that is perceived as actions of White people, but in a slightly different way. She declares that the educational system is geared towards White people. Just as Lela talks about "playing the game" in the section on *Black Speech vs. White Speech,* so does Yvette. She tells a story about how her daughter does this when she takes a standardized test in her marketing class.

Yvette: …and they make these tests [tɛsəs] that when they make, when they make them up I think they really make them up to see if African Americans can pass them, and [smile slightly laugh] because she [her daughter] took this test in her I think it was a marketing class, it was a marketing class that she took, and so, she passed it, and I forget one of the questions that she said it was, but she was telling her friend. He said oh this is like and he passed, he failed the test he said you, oh you failed. She said, oh I was just playing when you when I said I failed the test. I really passed the test. See, you got to answer those questions like you are a Caucasian person… she said sit down and think about what would they say, what answer would they give, and then answer the question, and she said she passed the test. She said and I I think that's how they make most of these questions if you sit there and you really think about hmm how would they [White people] answer this question for a question you don't know the answer to… how would they answer it. She said you'll pass the test. I said hmm that's a good way of looking at it.

Yvette portrays her daughter as an active agent. For one, her daughter thinks that standardized tests are created with White people in mind, "I think that's how they make most of these questions". Secondly, she claims to know or understand how White people think and uses that to her advantage. Yvette's daughter told her friend that she passed the test and that he could do so too if he would "sit down and think about what would they say what answer would they give and

then answer the question", especially if you do not know the answer to a question. This example ends with Yvette's support of her daughter's thought process and the action taken thereof. Thus, Yvette is aware of some of the structural constraints enacted by institutional discourses that curtail the agency of African Americans.

The acquisition of mainstream culture, or White culture as it is commonly referred to by the participants, is considered not only necessary in education but in employment as well. In fact, many tie these two areas, education and employment, together. Esther insists, in another part of the interview, that this is a "White man's world"; consequently, you have to be able to navigate it, especially through the means of communication.

> **Esther:** In particularly, Black people because we, you know, you have to think back we're in slavery two hundred years, and now we're out, and we have to and to be honest we have to impress the White man, the one with money. He's the one that's going to employ you, and it's all about communication, how well you or I communicate if you can.

Linda corroborates this, stressing the importance of MAE,

> **Linda:** It can either be detrimental to a person's well being, sometimes, or it may not. It just depends, and also when we have students who go out to apply in the business world if they do not speak standard English, then they will not obtain the job.

Antonio also believes that, "the way you speak and talk and carry yourself is going to determine whether that you get that hundred thousand dollar job or that fifteen thousand dollar job a year". However, on the other hand, he somewhat disagrees with many of the above-mentioned participants, saying it is not necessarily a "White or Black man thing", concerning life improvement. It is about speaking well and educating yourself. This type of education does not necessarily mean high end formal education, as in going to Harvard, as he says. This type of education includes informal education that is taught throughout life, hence him referring to it as "long" education. Education is one of the factors of socioeconomic status, but it refers to formal

education, such as degrees and certifications. However, if Antonio's view of informal or life-learned education, i.e. helping one to be successful in employment, is taken into account, than it expands the traditional view of education allowing those who are not highly and formally educated, who may or may not earn high incomes, to be members of higher socioeconomic brackets.   This view alone is agentive, although it counters the mainstream belief on success and socioeconomic status.

5.4.7 Summary

Sections 5.4.1 through 5.4.6 extend from answering the formulated metadiscourse questions of linguistic perceptions and language in context to including other themes of African American identity and education and employment opportunities. Some participants are pro MAE while others just find it as a tool for advancement and actively speak AAE. Others are experiencing conflict concerning Black identity based on mainstream power discourse and the discourse of their community. Yet, overall, everyone espouses the importance of education, advancement or "getting ahead", and speaking "well", which carries different meanings depending on the person. The next topic will examine social identity and personal identity through narratives from the data while highlighting specific concepts of critical discourse analysis, which are agency, as was seen in this section, and the moral and epistemic stances.

5.5   Metadiscourse Through Narratives

Identity is manifested through language. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), "…we tend to think of our linguistic variety or varieties a**s** fundamental to who we are…" and that from the variety of a speaker, the listener can gather social information regarding class, ethnicity, age, gender and a range of local groups and types (p. 269). Many people are on an identity continuum where they pull out different aspects of their identity depending on the

context. Along with that, many people also are on a linguistic continuum where they extract a

certain variety which is deemed appropriate by them depending on the situation. A person who

can speak multiple varieties is linguistically savvy[32]-meaning that s/he can communicate with

any person; s/he is capable of using multiple varieties and registers from the non-mainstream to

the mainstream. Subsequently, a linguistic continuum is in conjunction with the identity

continuum. These two continua parallel each other and intersect each other joining together

allowing the speaker to have the power to extract whatever linguistic variety and identity s/he

wants to express or manifest at that particular time or in that particular contextual situation.

In further examination of identity, it is made up of two components-social identity and

personal identity (Fairclough, 2003, p. 160). Going further, Archer makes the point that "social

identity is only assumed in society: personal identity regulates the subject's relations with reality

as a whole" (Archer, 2000, p. 257). The internal conversations, that each and every one of us

has, are very important in the formation of our personal and social identities, which in turn shows

our success (or lack thereof) in how we get along in society. And, how we get along in society is

very important as social beings where society heavily influences our lives. For the most part, the

internal conversations are taken for granted and deemed as insignificant. Archer looks at internal

conversation as the major link to (or creator of) personal and social identities.

According to Archer (2000), "the internal conversation is fundamentally a process of

forging personal identity" (p. 241) and it allows us to "remain active subjects in our own lives

and do not become passive objects to which things happen-this is our human power of personal

integrity" (p. 249). Returning to the idea of being on an identity continuum, no matter what

(social) identity you are extracting at a given moment in time, personal identity is ever-present

and always in existence. Archer says that social identity is a "subset" of personal identity (p.

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[32] What Baugh calls a linguistic chameleon, I term "linguistically savvy".

294). Because society's rules dictate what is appropriate and what is not, it can quiet down

personal identity (not erase it though) and manifest itself (usually by what is deemed appropriate)

through social identity. Following these concepts created by Archer[33], Fairclough (2003)

mentions that this is "a socially constrained process-part of the dialectic between social identity

and personal identity or personality is that the former constrains the latter" (p. 161).   With more

of a profound explanation, Archer (2000) invites us "to accept the existence of a dialectal

relationship between personal and social identities…[and] that both personal and social identities

are emergent and distinct, although they contributed to one another's emergence and

distinctiveness" (p. 288).

Social identity is easily revealed rather than personal identity. This is explained by Ochs

(1993) due to the fact that "speakers actively construct their social identity rather than passively

live out some cultural prescription for social identity" (p. 296). Besides the fact that those who

participated in the interview wrote "Black" or "African American" on the background

questionnaire given to them pre-interview, Black identity is also shown through their use of

AAE, as seen in Chapter 4 and section 5.4. The manifestation of personal identity is not so

readily detectable due to the restrictions put on it by social identity; however, it can be seen

through the display of emotions, "commentaries upon our concerns". Emotions, along with

thoughts, are among the main constituents of our inner lives and are the fuel of our internal

conversation; thus, this is why they matter (p. 194). This study seeks to uncover personal

identity in order to discover who the participants are as individuals and how that contributes to

their social identity(ies).

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[33] Fairclough (2003) admits that he follows the concepts created by Archer (p. 160). This particular concept is specifically discussed in Archer, 2000, p. 257.

In the data collected, personal identity, along with social identity, is recognizable through the narratives. There is a concept of *narrativizing* in African American culture. According to Smitherman (2000) it is "Black rhetorical strategy to explain a point, to persuade holders of opposing views to one's own point of view, and to create world pictures about general, abstract observations, about life, love and survival" (p. 275). The narratives in this data include "embedded nonlinear narratives" (Ochs & Capps, 2001). Many of these narratives are personal narratives, which are "ubiquitous" (1) and a "way of using language or another symbolic system to imbue life events with a temporal and logical order, to demystify them and establish coherence across past, present, and as yet unrealized experience" (2). Ochs and Capps (2001) continue this by saying that, "embedded narratives have a distinct turn-taking format; they are relevant to a topic already in discussion or underway" (p. 37). Also, narratives are "…tied to thematic and rhetorical integration with surrounding conversation; narratives can be initiated abruptly, can be interwoven with what interlocutors are thinking and doing, can be used to further a point made in the surrounding discourse" (p. 39).   Through narratives, the participants are able to speak freely allowing the listener to gain insight on their perceptions, ideas, attitudes, and opinions on the subjects of language, race, and education.

Through these narratives two stances, which are "displays of socially recognized points of view or attitudes", are revealed: moral stance and epistemic stance[34] (Ochs, 1993). According to Ochs and Capps (2001), moral stance is central to narrative, rooted in community and tradition and showing what is good, valuable, and how one should live (p. 45). The epistemic stance is simply how it is someone knows what they know and how they situate themselves to know what

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[34] The affective stance is also another stance commonly analyzed but because these interviews are audio-recorded it is difficult to capture and then relate to the reader this particular stance. The affective stance demonstrates your emotions. It is synonymous with mood, attitude, feeling, disposition, emotional intensity, and degree of intensity.

they know. It is the judgment of the speaker as an authority to what s/he considers as reality or the truth. It is synonymous with one's knowledge, belief, and the truth.

5.5.1 Analysis of Narratives

The following are passages of narratives from the data. Because the narratives tend to be long, only five selected narratives will be showcased. The narratives were chosen because they are each representative of one of the following topics in this research: African American identity, educational malpractices, Black-White relations, or linguistic attitudes. Each narrative will analyze moral stance, epistemic stance, and agency together with personal and social identities revealed through them.

Narrative 1: Correlation of Black people and education

> **Antonio:** There's a lot what we call sellouts… they mainly come from a lot of them don't come from decent homes. A lot of them, uh some of them, come from broken down homes, and they're so they're so adamant about not going back to that that they just separate theyself from their whole race altogether. Yeah I'm a Black man, but I'm Puerto Rican, Latin, White, whatever that you want me to be today, and and in order for me to show you that I'm not, I will do whatever I got to do to show you that I don't care about Black people. If if they ain't on my level, I ain't got to deal with them, and those I feel are [pause] the most pains in the butts because you have what every other young Black man needs, and you won't share it. You won't give it to them. Why won't you go back and help the ones that can't help themselves or help the ones who do it so that they won't go down the road that you went down? But, you so selfish that now you have it. What's the use of having it if you not willing to give it to get to share it with anybody? That's just lost information.

When Antonio describes sellouts, Black people who have made it but do not want to associate themselves with the Black community, he talks as if they are actually speaking. It is as if he can read their mind. For instance, he starts off describing them as people who "separate theyself from their whole race altogether". Then, he continues by speaking as if he is the sellout, "I will do whatever I got to do to show you that I don't care about Black people". By Antonio speaking

as if he is the sellout, this is a portrayal of his epistemic stance. By doing this, he has given himself the authority to know what sellouts are thinking.

Antonio's moral stance is evident. He does not think highly of sellouts calling them "pains in the butts" and "selfish".   He resumes with this part of the conversation with an explanation of why he thinks that. According to him, sellouts do not share their knowledge with other men in the Black community. This shared knowledge would help those after him[35] to navigate life with less obstacles, "so that they won't go down the road that you went down". Yet, because the sellouts do not share their experience, it is considered "lost information".

Through both his moral stance and epistemic stance, Antonio is an active agent. The passage shows that he socially identifies himself as a Black man and does not identify with sellouts. As mentioned above, personal identity is created from our internal conversations. Antonio's rather lengthy and detailed opinion of sellouts seems as if previously he has thought about it. Thus, personally, it is presumed that he does not like sellouts or people who disassociate themselves with Blacks who may not be successful or on their "level". Plus, the sharing of knowledge is empowerment and helpful for those in the community who have not become successful yet.

Narrative 2: Stereotyping based on race in the educational system

> **Yvette:** They're [White people] judging you before they even meet you, and they may be able to, you may be able to perform that job better than um the Caucasian. It's like let let let me give you a a good a better example. A couple of years ago, I guess it's been three years now, when they rebuilt National High School [clears throat] my daughter [the youngest daughter] was going to Apple Middle they had said they was trying to make National High school a magnet school. They had said that any child that does not pass the S-O-L's [Standards of Learning standardized test for the Commonwealth of Virginia] could not come to National High School, but what they were trying to do they they was trying to wean out the Black kids versus the White kids, but then once what they found

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[35] I am assuming that the sellout is a man because he specifically refers to those who potentially could learn from the sellout's knowledge as "every other young Black *man*".

out was that more of African Americans were passing the SOL's than the Caucasians were so they they threw that out the window… [laughs]

Before sharing the narrative, Yvette straightforwardly says that White people prejudge Black people "before they even meet you" and that judgment has the potential to be incorrect. Therefore, she is claiming that she knows how White people in the school system think; this is her epistemic stance. By saying "let me give you a good a better example", her epistemic stance is further authorized by her narrative as proof that what she says is true, which challenges institutional discourse.

Yvette's moral stance is tied up with her epistemic stance. Her view that "they [White people] was trying to wean out the Black kids versus the White kids" in order to make the school predominantly White is a moral judgment on her part. It shows that she believes White people in the school system are capable of doing such an act of racism. Yet, she ends the narrative with the fact that the school was not turned into a magnet school. According to her, this is because more Black students passed the SOL test than what the administration originally conceived. This is the misjudgment that is considered part of Yvette's epistemic stance. Her laughter at the end is also an example of her moral stance because it conveys that she thinks the plan of weaning out a particular group of students based on race as ridiculous.

The Black students are the ones who are agentive in this passage because they disproved the school system and passed the SOLs. Although it is not explicit in this passage, Yvette socially identifies herself as Black. Her personal identity is difficult to pinpoint. I assume that it is reflected through her laughter. It is a moral judgment as aforementioned but it also a nonverbal display of her thoughts and feelings, which is part of the internal conversations. The laughter transmits not only ridiculousness but also annoyance. She does not agree with racist actions nor does she believe that they will be successful.

Narrative 3: Childhood experience of racial discrimination in the educational system

> **Carla:** …'cause I, you know, when I was coming up in like Winston [town where she is from] and the school system was predominantly White, and a lot of times they try to keep Black children down and in lower levels of reading, and so when I started out in school they had me in the lowest reading level, you know, and of course I'm sitting here like this is just so boring. Are we reading, you know, we're reading a story, I be already finished the story and they still on the first page. I'm talking about all the other kids that are reading, and I'm already done and the teacher would look at me and say [she mocks teacher] Carla what are you doing and I'm already finished, you know, 'cause I dealt with this for five years until I had a teacher in sixth grade and she realized that I was about that level, and so she gave me some tests a series of test and I ended up testing out all the way to the top level in two days, mmhmm, that's just because the school system was so bad.

Carla's personal narrative is her epistemic stance because it is one that she has experienced. Thus, that gives her full authority to say that what she believes is true that "the school system was predominantly White and a lot of times they try to keep Black children down and in lower levels of reading". She goes on to narrate that she was one of those children who were kept "down". Furthermore, she was one of the students who were actually more advanced than the other children because she was bored but also the other would still be on the first page while she is already finished. She even mocks the way the teacher spoke to her, changing her voice to match the one of her teacher, who obviously did not believe she was finished with her reading assignment. This is more proof that her stance is the truth.

Her moral stance comes about when she talks about how she was redeemed in the sixth grade by another teacher, who recognized her ability, tested her and placed her in the correct reading level. Through an affective utterance of "mmhmm" her moral stance is more so realized. She is not just "saying" that the school system is racist and unfair, but actually "saying" shame upon the school administration for their misjudgment. Although they kept her in lower level reading classes for five years, she still won in the end.

She definitely socially identifies as Black because she is one of the Black kids whose advanced abilities were not acknowledged by the school system. Her personal identity is shown through her commitment and determination to prove that she did not belong in the lower level reading classes. Earlier in the interview, which is not represented in the above passage, Carla states that she taught herself how to speak MAE through reading books constantly, which in turn helped to improve her reading and comprehension skills. Since she was young, she has been very proactive in her educational career. That makes her very agentive.

Narrative 4: Imparting the importance of education and lessons on race relations

> **Rose Marie:** Sticks and stones many break my bones but names will never hurt me. I know one incidence that Marvin [her son] was on the bus, and he came home and he said Mama this little [White] boy keep calling me a nigger everyday, said I'm going to hurt him, he keep calling me a nigger everyday. I said, Marvin don't do that but what you do is you turn around and say I've been learning about you for years and now I'm so glad that you learn about me, and the little boy never bothered him again. So what you get in your head they can't take it… it's good that that you get a good education you have a good foundation to stay on.

By saying "I know one incidence" as the preface to the narrative she recounts, she makes it clear to the listener that she is certified to say what she does, which is similar to what Yvette does above. Rose Marie's advice to her son to tell the little boy who was harassing him, "I've been learning about you for years and now I'm so glad that you learn about me" is an explicit statement of epistemic knowledge. This selection of the passage means that "you do not know yourself nor me, and I know myself better than you know me". Rose Marie tells her son to claim how much he knows or to realize that he is very knowledgeable. She wants him to use that knowledge against his adversaries instead of "hurting" them physically. By doing that it communicates that "I know myself well enough to not get in a fight with you".

This is another passage where the epistemic stance and moral stance are one in the same or closely linked. Rose Marie's moral stance is just as she says, "what you get in your head they can't take it". What is in your head is a "good education" or "good foundation". That "good education" overrides and nullifies name-calling, such as "nigger", that is unsound or lacks validity.

By advising her son not to do anything negative towards the little boy but to let him know that he is the ignorant one and her son is not, she empowered her son making him agentive in a positive way. Just like the other participants she socially identifies herself and her son as Black. In the beginning of the passage, Rose Marie recites the children's rhyme "sticks and stones". This introductory nursery rhyme is appropriate to the lesson she teaches her son and the message she is sending to the listener about the importance of education. Through the recitation of the children's rhyme, that she most likely learned when she was a child, it appears that Rose Marie personally believes that education is the way to get ahead "so you don't have work hard" and can "be independent". Additionally, a person is more than words and what others think about you. Thus, she teaches her children this moral, "my main thing was to instill into them is to be polite to uh get an education".

Narrative 5: Discrimination based on one's language or speech

> **Alex:** I have a girlfriend, and she's Filipino, and her main language is Tagalog, but um well I go with her Mom sometimes, and she's really she's not very Americanized, but anyway people talk down to her and stuff, and act like she's not, you know, good as them. So, when I see that I'm like wow that that's real that really happens.

In an earlier passage stated above (*5.4.2 Society's Metadiscourse*), Alex states that the US associates one's intelligence with the way a person speaks, and if they are from another country people assume that they are not that intelligent. He further shares that that kind of association is without merit and not true (moral stance). Thus, this narrative of his girlfriend's mother

substantiates his belief. His epistemic stance is shown when he says "I'm like wow that that's real that really happens". It is as if he has come to terms or realization with how people misjudge others who are ESL speakers.

Alex's moral stance mainly is revealed in the passage from 5.4.2 and seen in the paragraph above. Still yet, it is also made known through him saying "wow", which connotes ridiculousness. This is akin to Yvette laughing and Carla saying "mmhmm" at the end of their narratives.

Alex socially identifies himself as Black although it is not quite evident in his speech, through linguistic features and his discourse in this particular passage. It seems as if he was talking to himself, which is an internal conversation, when he says, "I'm like wow that that's real that really happens". Therefore, part of his personal integrity is revealed through an emotional thought and moral stance of the absurdity of judging one's intelligence based on their language.

5.6 Summary

The narratives in section 5.5 are based on interracial personal experiences of the participants or of the interracial experiences of people close to them. The only exception, which is intra-racial, is that of Antonio, who discloses his personal opinions on sellouts and shares his dislike for them because they lack solidarity with Blacks as a whole. Through these narratives agency is shown through the interviewees' epistemic and moral stances. Additionally, what is revealed is with whom and with what they do and do not identify. Their social identity is easier to detect through linguistic features and discourse. However, their personal identity is not so readily divulged. Their discourse and what is construed as their internal conversation and verbal and nonverbal commentary are assumed as a window to part of their personal identity. This reasoning revisits and is based on Archer's thought, which is mentioned earlier in 5.5, that social

identity is a subset of personal identity. Therefore, it is believed that personal identity, which controls a person's reality as a whole, can be revealed through social identity. Through these narratives discussed in this chapter, the participants' personal feelings, emotions, and beliefs are revealed concerning the main topics of language, race and education. Sequentially, these personal feelings, emotions, and beliefs on the main topics impact how they portray themselves socially. For instance, throughout the analyses chapters, passages from Antonio's interview have been included showing his personal and social identities. Antonio personally dislikes Black people who are "sellouts". He believes that Black people who are successful should share their knowledge. He likes the way he speaks and considers it "proper"; he considers "bad" English as slang[36], and that type of language should not be used in formal settings, as in a job interview. Also, he views being educated and successful as not necessarily meaning formal education but life's lessons, which he calls "long education" as well. Thus, as a social being Antonio socially identifies himself as Black and others who he perceives as like him as Black too, he speaks AAE and limits slang use, and espouses "long" education and teaches that to his children, nieces, and nephews.

The analyses of chapters 4 and 5 together have given more complete and comprehensive evidence of how identity(ies) is manifested through linguistic features, speech acts and metadiscourse alike. The next chapter looks at overall findings from these analyses based on the social factors of race, gender, socioeconomic class and education. Comparisons are made and showcased. This allows for a brief discussion of future improvements and works or analyses that can arise from this research.

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[36] Antonio's meaning of slang is similar to that of Linguistics, which is lexicon that changes rapidly, and in African American lexicon, many slang words usually are derived from music (Green, 2002) as in Antonio's previous reference to "drop it like it's hot" (section 5.4.2, p. 120).

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

6.1   Introduction

The previous two chapters are analyses of the transcribed interviews collected in this research. Chapter 4 looks at major linguistic features such as the copula, negation, and agreement. Chapter 5 examines the metadiscourse of the participants through the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This chapter synthesizes the findings from both chapters 4 and 5.

Section 6.2 presents the findings from the linguistic features. Comparisons will be made based on the participants, their family affiliation, and the social factors of age, gender, education level and socioeconomic class. Section 6.3 displays the findings from the metadiscourse data gathered. Section 6.4 seeks to respond to the three main research questions posed in Chapter 1. Those questions are the following: 1) What perceptions and attitudes do African American speakers have on AAE? 2) How do the perceptions and attitudes of the educational system (teachers, administration and fellow students) affect the perceptions and attitudes of AAE by African American speakers (AAE)? What impact (i.e. alienation, achievement/success, drop-out rate, segregation, codeswitching) does/did the educational system have on African American speakers of AAE? 3) How well does the socioeconomic status model[37] concerning non-mainstream language use, perceptions and attitudes work with the two African American communities of different socioeconomic classes studied in this research?

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[37] This model consists of "sub-elements of social class [which] include education, occupation, income and type of housing" (Chambers , 2003, p. 7).

6.2   Findings from Linguistic Features

The participants are divided by family affiliation: spouses, siblings, parents and children, and extended family (see Table 6.1 below). Additionally, there are three participants who are considered singles because one of their family members was not available to be interviewed. Yet, their interviews are included anyway because they helped the data to be more diverse.

Table 6.1: Family Affiliation

Parents and Children	**Spouses**	**Siblings**
Vanessa and Alex	Tony and Carla	Tamika and Angel
Virginia and Yvette	Rose Marie and James	Lela and L. J.
Yvette and Antonio		

Singles	**Extended Family**
Linda	Marguerite (aunt) and Tamika and Angel (nieces)
Esther	
Terri	

6.2.1   Overview of the Participants' AAE Features

Each AAE grammatical feature of the participant was individually counted. The following chart shows the amount of AAE features counted for all the participants:

Figure 6.1

Members of a family unit are beside each other. For example Angel, Tamika and Marguerite are

participants 1, 2 and 3, and they are a part of the 'extended family' family unit. Additionally,

Angel and Tamika are sisters and are a part of the 'siblings' family unit. The family with the

largest amount of AAE features is the three generational parent-child family of Virginia, Yvette

and Antonio with a total of 240 features. The family with the smallest amount of AAE features

is the parent-child family of Vanessa and Alex. As individuals, Alex, Tony and Terri have the

lowest amount of AAE features, which is one, while Virginia has the highest amount of AAE

features, which are 120.

It should be noted that all of the participants in the family units were interviewed together

except for Virginia, Yvette, Antonio and Marguerite who were interviewed separately. More

than likely, that accounts for the high count of AAE grammatical features for Virginia, Yvette

and Antonio. Even if they were interviewed together (the first interview with Virginia and

Yvette and the second interview with Yvette and Antonio), it seems as if they still would have

the highest amount of AAE features. In regards to other family units, several points should be

made. Angel talked more than Tamika. Carla talked more than Tony. James talked more than Rose Marie. Lela and L. J. talked about the same amount of time interrupting each other throughout their interview.

Linda had a total of five AAE features, but she corrected herself on two of those features. That is why she is listed as having only three AAE features. Esther's interview was the longest, about an hour and forty-five minutes long.   She was very careful with her speech for about the first half of her interview. She thought about what to say before she said something, and her voice was softer and had a higher pitch. She also wanted reassurance, asking if she was sounding okay. However, pre-recording Esther was louder, talked faster, and was giving me directives. It was not until the second half that she was more like herself, which was exactly how she was before the interview was recorded. Just like Esther, James was also very conscience about how he sounded. The recorder was stopped several times per his request so that he could think about what to say; although, it was told to him that he would not be judged on what he says. Topics on language, race, and education can be very sensitive subjects. When a person knows that s/he is being taped, s/he becomes hyper-vigilant of their speech because they know that the listener has the potential to misjudge them based on their speech. Additionally, once the tape recorder begins I change from the young person, who is subordinate to them, and become the Ph.D. student, which is a power role-reversal that led to some discomfort on both sides at times, especially in the beginning of the interviews.

Gender-wise, the women conversed more than the men regardless of the fact that there are more women represented in the data than men. Antonio and Rose Marie are the exceptions. Antonio's interview was only about forty-five minutes long; he was very talkative and did not

need any urging to talk. On the other hand, as aforementioned, Rose Marie did not talk much,

and it was not until the end of the interview with her husband that she talked more.

The data in regards to socioeconomic class is noteworthy and to some extent more

complex and ironic. Below Figure 6.2 has the same information as Figure 6.1, but it also

includes the household income range of the participants (see Appendix B or Chapter 3 for age
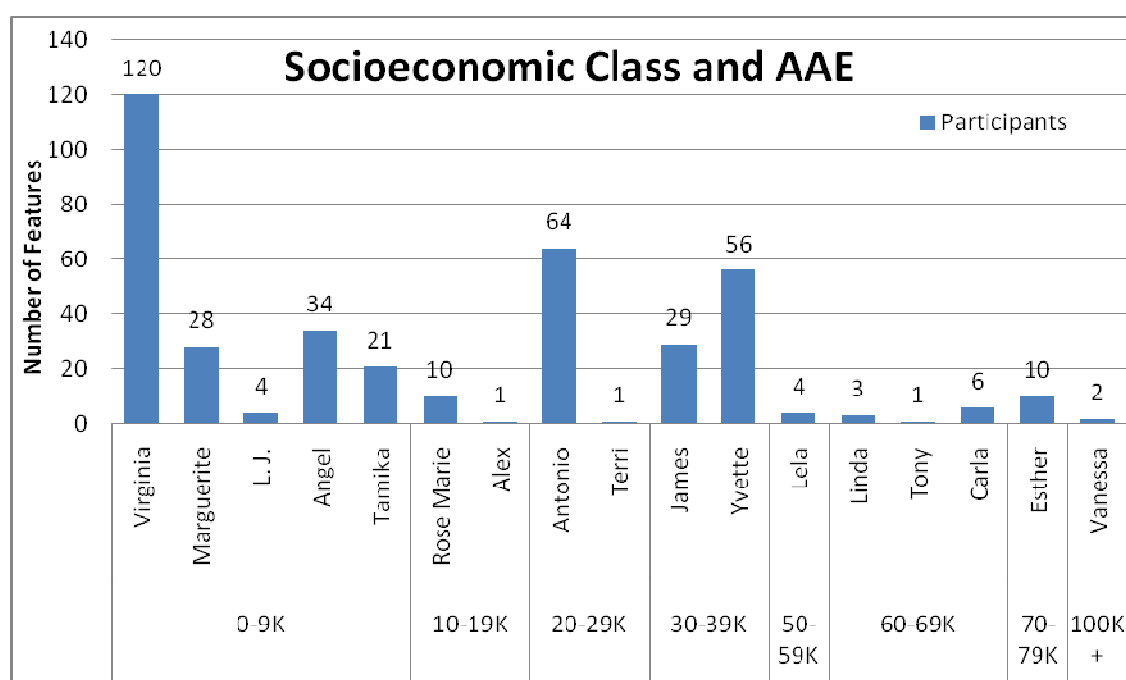
and education information).

Figure 6.2

Vanessa and Virginia would be considered the socioeconomic status model prototypes. Vanessa,

who is a Ph.D. candidate, has the highest income and only has two AAE features throughout her

interview while Virginia, who has a high school diploma, has the lowest income and the most

AAE features. Yet, there are others who do not fit neatly into that box. L.J. is one of the

participants whose income is currently in the lowest range along with Virginia, Marguerite,

Angel, and Tamika. He is the only one working towards a Bachelor's degree in that income

range. The others have a high school diploma or less. Yet, L.J.'s socioeconomic class

background is much higher. His and Lela's parents have made and still make $100,000 plus.

L.J.'s attitudes on language and community reflect his upper-class upbringing. Like L.J., Alex

also has a lower income range, but his Mother, Vanessa, makes six-figures plus, and he is also

working toward a Bachelor's degree. Yvette and James are a part of the same income category,

but Yvette has almost twice as many AAE features than James. James did not finish high school

and Yvette has an Associate's degree. Terri's and Antonio's AAE count are drastically different

despite the similar income range. Terri has more education than him and was raised in an upper

class family[38]. Esther and Rose Marie, who are approximately the same age, have the same

amount of AAE features represented in their interviews, but they have totally different income

levels.

The data from this research shows that the use of socioeconomic status in conjunction

with language use is complex. There are several participants that illustrate this. The following

are a few examples of this. Linda has the highest education, but makes less money than Esther

and Vanessa, who are working towards their B.A. and Ph.D. respectively. Linda and Vanessa

each have very little AAE linguistic tokens in their speech. However, Linda makes somewhat

less than half of Vanessa, and Vanessa professes to change her speech, MAE to AAE, depending

on the context. In addition, the income level of Alex and L.J. is low, but they are still in college

and have more education than some who make more money than they do plus their parents make

more than $100,000. They also have lower tokens of AAE features.

6.2.2 Specific Look at Certain AAE Features

Chapter 4 begins with a brief literature review on three well-researched features in AAE.

As aforementioned, these features are the copula, negation, and agreement.

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[38] In her interview, Terri recalls that people used to call her family "The Cosbys" after the fictitious family on the sitcom, "The Cosby Show". The parents were professionals, a medical doctor and lawyer, and the family lived in a large brownstone in New York City.
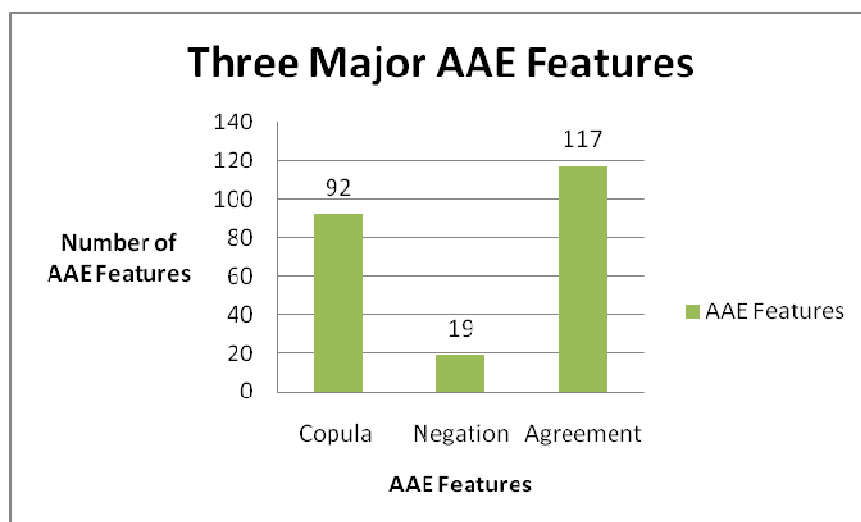
Figure 6.3

Out of these three features, agreement has the highest count followed by the copula, which is a close second. It makes sense that negation, which is an actual account of multiple negation, has the lowest count due to the fact that it is a highly stigmatized feature of AAE, as stated in 4.2.3. Virginia has the most uses of multiple negation. The copula and agreement are broken up into sub parts. The findings on these two features are seen below.

6.2.2a The Copula. The copula is further divided into copula absence depending on the predicate type it precedes, habitual *be*, and remote BIN. These features and their corresponding token count are seen below in Figure 6.4.
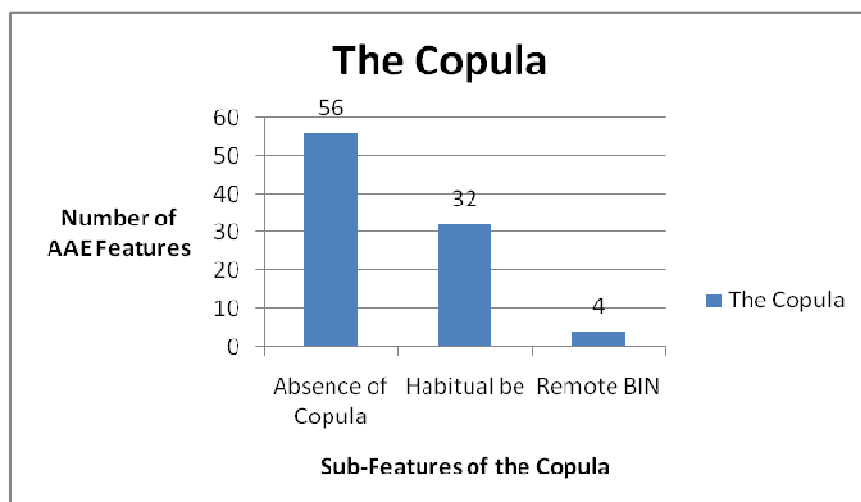
Figure 6.4

Copula absence has the highest representation out of any of the other sub-features of the copula. The chart below further separates copula absence by the predicate that follows it: locative, verbal, adverbial, adjectival, and nominal.
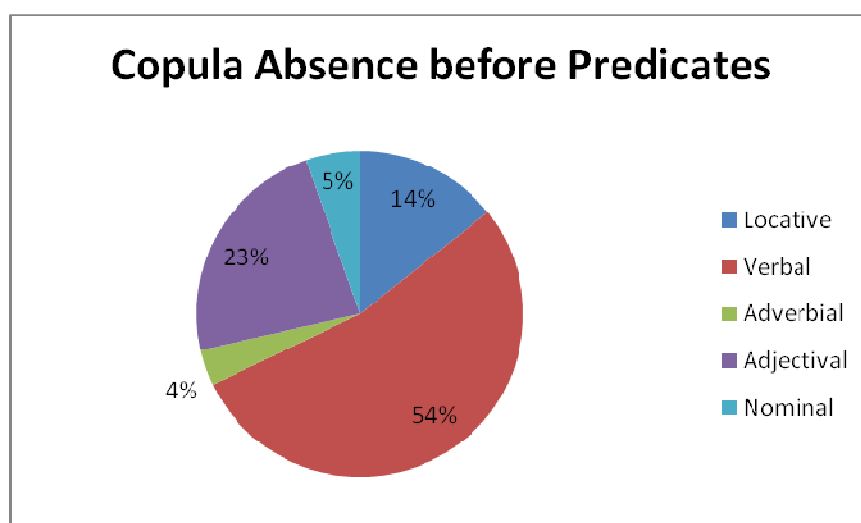

Figure 6.5

The verbal predicate has the highest percentage at 54% because most of its examples are the missing auxiliary *be*. Yvette and Virginia have the highest amount, nine each, of copula absence in the verbal predicate. Only Yvette, Virginia, Antonio, Angel, Tamika, Marguerite, and James

display the copula absence in the verbal predicate; all the other participants do not have this feature represented in their interviews. Additionally, it should be mentioned that copula absence in the third person plural is 45%, in third person singular is 30%, and in second person singular is 25%. As noted in 4.2.1, *are*-absence is common not only in AAE but also in White American English (WAE) as well. What makes AAE more unique is that a great amount of *is*-absence also occurs, and this data shows only a 15% difference between the third person singular and third person plural absence.

      6.2.2b Agreement. Agreement is sub-divided into subject-verb agreement, adjective-noun agreement, and article agreement. As is seen below, subject-verb agreement by far has the highest count. It appears almost seven times more in the data than the adjective-noun agreement, which has the lowest percentage of 11%.
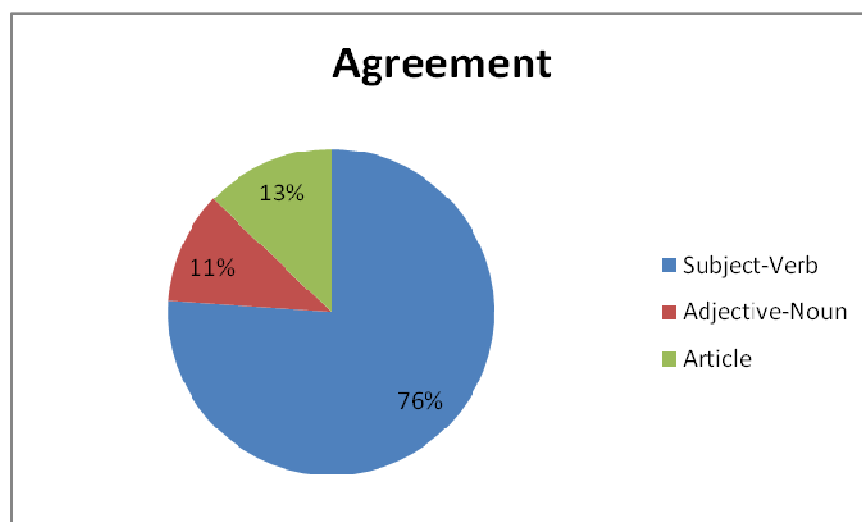

Figure 6.6

Subject-Verb agreement is further broken up into first and third person singular, second person singular, and first and third person plural. There are only three examples of the second person singular, all from the same family unit:

Virginia: if *you is* any type of man

MAE: if *you are* any type of man

Yvette: *you wasn't* listening

MAE: *you weren't* listening

Antonio: *you* just *was* talking

MAE: *you* just *were* talking

The first and third person singular have the most tokens of lack of agreement at 52 followed by a

35- count lack of agreement in the first and third person plural.
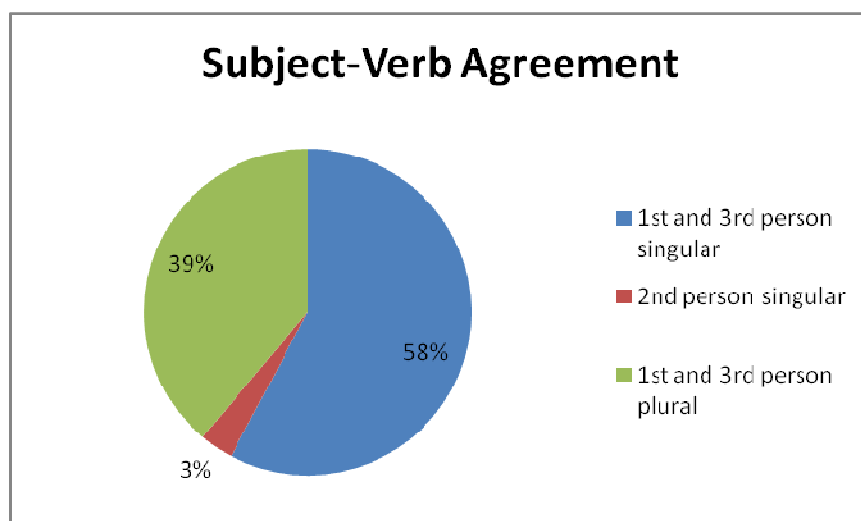
Figure 6.7

Overall, Virginia has the highest calculations for subject-verb lack of agreement. James has the

highest count for adjective-noun lack of agreement. Antonio has the highest amount of lack of

agreement with articles and the noun that follows.

    6.2.2c Summary. The findings of three major linguistic features are showcased above.

Tokens from the copula are highest in copula absence followed by habitual *be*. There are only

four counts of remote BIN. Three out of four of the tokens are spoken by Antonio, Angel, and

Tamika, who are all less than 30 years old. The fourth example of remote BIN is by Rose Marie,

who is one of the oldest participants. Multiple negation in this data follows the trends in other contemporary studies on AAE where it is not used by the participants much because of the stigma attached to it. Virginia and James, who have nine and four tokens respectively, have the highest amount of this feature. They are also two of the oldest participants. Angel and Tamika, who are two of the youngest, have only one count each of multiple negation. Agreement, or the lack thereof when comparing AAE to MAE, has the largest amount of tokens out of the three features. Subject-verb agreement has the highest amount of tokens at 119, where 89 of those tokens are first and third person singular subject-verb agreement.

There are two other interesting features, pronouns and contractions, which have a large amount of tokens as well, which is typical of other studies on AAE. Pronouns are divided into appositive, possessive, reflexive, demonstrative, and expletive.
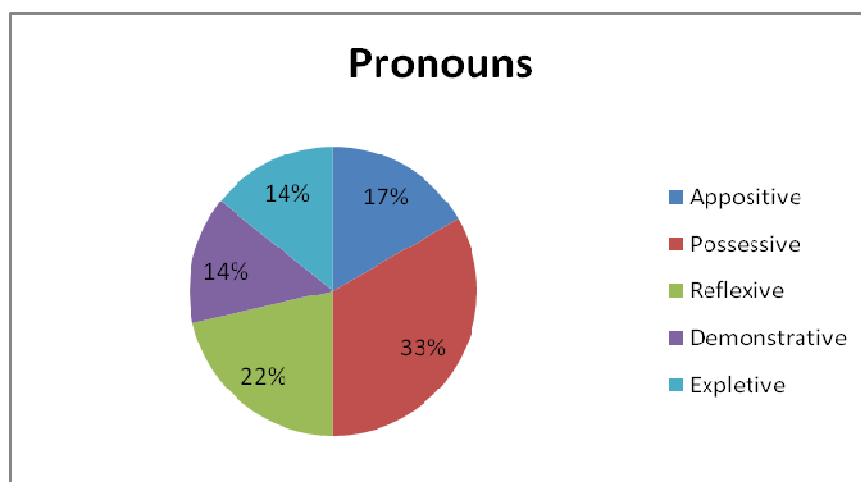

Figure 6.8

A total of 42 tokens are pronouns where the possessive pronoun has the highest amount at 33% while the demonstrative and expletive pronouns have the lowest amounts at 14%.

There are two types of contractions examined in this data, one which consists of the *subject* plus *would have* and the *subject* plus *will/going to,* for example:

James: if *I'd-a* went during the time that I built this house

MAE: if *I would have* gone during the time that I built this house

Tamika: she be trying to act like *she-a* cry

MAE: she always tries to act like *she is going to* cry

The other type of contraction is what is called negative contraction in this data. It is the negative

contraction, which can be in the past or present, which is discussed in this section. The negative

contractions of *ain't* and *won't* are analyzed. Both forms of the contraction take the place of the

copula plus the negator *not.* Yet, *ain't* also includes the forms of *have* plus *not* and *do* plus *not.*
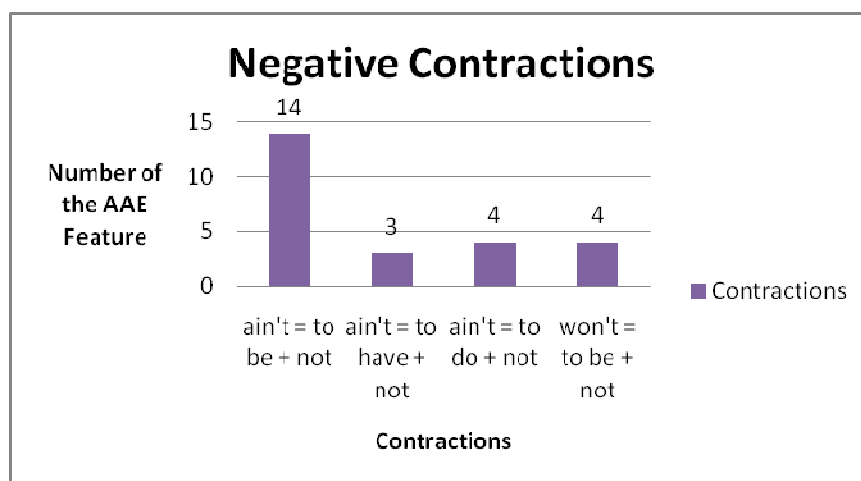
Figure 6.9

As is mentioned in Chapter 4, *won't* is particularly special in this data because it has not been

mentioned in any previous literature on AAE, at least to my knowledge. Although it only has a

few tokens, spoken by Antonio (3 tokens) and Virginia (1 token), it is quite commonly heard

from the relatives and acquaintances of mine, who live in the Tidewater area, and is also used by

me as well.

The findings from the linguistic analysis illustrate social identity through the presentation

of linguistic features represented in the speech of the interviewees. By the participants' use of

AAE features, it shows their identification and membership in the Black community. The next section displays the findings from the metadiscourse analysis. It portrays the interviewees' ideas and views on language.

<div align="center">6.3 Findings from Metadiscourse</div>

In addition to the analysis of linguistic features, an examination of metadiscourse leads us toward a better understanding of how identity is manifested through language. Furthermore, it gives us incite to people's attitudes and perceptions on language, personally and socially. The metadiscourse data gathered in this research answered the twelve prearranged questions (see Appendix A) specifically formulated for this part of the study. The following prose is a synopsis of the interviewees' answers to the questions.

6.3.1 Overview of the Metadiscourse

Many of the participants notice the nonmainstream American English (NAE) features in their speech; however, they strive not to speak that way, constantly correcting themselves and advocating MAE to others, as in the case of Linda who demonstrates this throughout her interview. On the opposite end, there are those, like Antonio, who do not consider themselves "proper" and think that others may not view them that way either. It is not even certain if Antonio realizes that he speaks AAE. He speaks AAE throughout the interview and equates mainstream speech to polite speech, e.g. as "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am", making it a part of his linguistic repertoire as he has gotten older realizing the benefits thereof.

While growing up, many of the interviewees said their speech was corrected by teachers (James, Yvette, and Tony), parents (Antonio, Alex, Tamika and Angel), or both (Linda). A few learned MAE outside of the home through teachers, on their jobs from professionals (Esther), or by constantly reading (Carla). Although their Father purposefully had them around White

mainstream culture and the acquisition of MAE was expected in their household, Lela and L.J. maintain that their Mother emphasized mainstream written English over mainstream speech. Other parents in this research, such as Vanessa, Esther and Linda, admit to correcting their children's speech.

There are also discussions on other people's views of their speech. Alex is the only one who says that he does not think anyone has commented on his speech and told him their opinion of it. Antonio has been labeled "polite" and "respectable" by his former drill sergeant and his Mother's acquaintances. Several participants have been accused of sounding like a White person. Vanessa tells a story of some of her clients being shocked that she was Black after talking with her on the phone. Lela was called "some White girl" by her former boyfriend's roommate when she called on the phone to speak to that boyfriend. L.J. has been called "the Whitest Black guy" by his friends and others.

Many participants believe that people make judgments on the way a person speaks but those judgments are not always correct. Some participants have seen firsthand how associating intelligence (Alex) and clothing or the way one looks (Tony and Antonio) with speech is a fallacy. Additionally, being highly educated or wealthy does not always signify that the person speaks MAE neither (Yvette, Vanessa, and Linda). However, many of the same participants agree that not being able to speak MAE can lead to a lack of educational and employment opportunities (Antonio, Linda, Esther, Yvette, Vanessa, Rose Marie, and Alex). All of the participants declare having an education, formal or informal, is the key to success or "making a better life for yourself". This belief is especially emphasized by Virginia, Rose Marie, James, Marguerite, Yvette, and Alex. Still yet, a person should not disassociate him/herself from their

community because of their higher education and/or through their speech (Virginia and Antonio).

"Talking proper" or speaking MAE can alienate you from others, especially in contexts where it is socially incorrect (Alex, Antonio, Yvette, and Virginia). Therefore, every contextual situation has an acceptable form of speech. In church, MAE is mostly spoken with elements of AAE (Linda). The speech of church members can be too pious and superficial according to Tamika and Angel. Yvette says, for the most part, that "church lingo" does not belong in the workplace. Although Alex only has one AAE feature in the interview, he confesses that his speech is "less standard" at the barbershop or when hanging out with friends because if it is not, "the men will look at you funny". However, his speech is "more formal" when he is on his college's campus in the classroom or in the lab. Antonio says it is okay to "speak your own language" and "represent yourself" but not during a job interview because the employer could misconstrue you as "ignorant".

While many of the participants think that people have been misjudged by their speech, some of them agree that you can infer a great deal from the way a person speaks. For instance, your speech reveals where one is geographically from in the US and abroad which is an example of social identity. One participant even said that it is wrong to judge others by the way they speak, and later in the interview she admitted to "shutting down" and not listening to a person if that person has a foreign accent. Alex and his mother Vanessa discuss the difference between the speech of those in Norfolk and Virginia Beach. The speech and culture is deemed more mainstream in Virginia Beach than Norfolk. L.J., who is more of an MAE speaker than not, says that people are surprised to find out that he is from Norfolk because of the way he speaks.

There are a few of the interviewees who compare the speech of Blacks and Whites. Yvette does not think that there are Black-White speech differences; the way you are raised makes the difference in how you speak. She notes that there are White people who do not speak MAE as well. Linda also says that some of her White students also do not speak MAE, and a few of them try to speak like her African American students, who tend to speak "Ebonics" as a means of solidarity. Still yet, when AAE is spoken in the classroom, i.e. during a presentation, her Black students tend to laugh and make fun of that person; thus showing that many of her students do have some command of MAE whether they speak it or not. Lela says that the White people that she knows change their speech, which is what she says she does, depending on with whom they are talking. Both Lela and Antonio talk about the use of slang in the Black community. Antonio talks about young, urban Blacks using slang during job interviews. Lela says that she guesses that she is not as Black as she thought because she is not familiar with the newer slang.

All of the participants in this study identify with being Black or African American. Vanessa is outspoken about making a distinction between the labels African American and Black, preferring the latter over the former. Others were not as forthright, but the majority of the speakers referred themselves and others in the community as Black instead of African American. Antonio and Virginia discuss at length their dislike for those Blacks who do not want to claim nor help the African American community. Alex talks about how some Blacks who are educated, successful, and wealthy are tokenized by White people and perceived and accepted by them as non Blacks. L.J. makes an overt distinction between Blacks who are well-to-do and "privileged", like himself, and those of lower socioeconomic statuses.

6.3.2   Summary

Although all of the pre-formulated metadiscourse questions are answered in the data collected, not every question was answered by each participant. Some participants were not as comfortable in sharing their views and perceptions on language. In fact, a couple of them refused to do so and averted the conversation to what they wanted to discuss.   At first it seemed that they were digressing from the topic, but eventually it was realized that these tangents, such as their childhood or their views on racism and education, did complement the topic of language and identity without specifically speaking on the subject. Whether the participant was on target or tangential, all of the interviews contributed to the metadiscourse analysis. The upcoming and final section brings the study full circle by attempting to answer the major research questions.

6.4   Main Research Questions

Both Chapters 4 and 5 answer the main research questions. However, the metadiscourse analysis mostly answers questions 1 and 2 while question 3 is mostly answered by the linguistic analysis. Nevertheless, in conjunction, each of the analyses supplements and gives more insight to the other.

6.4.1   Responses to the Main Research Questions

Before responding the main research questions, they should be briefly restated:

1) What perceptions and attitudes do African American speakers have on AAE?

2) How do the perceptions and attitudes of the educational system affect the perceptions and attitudes of AAE by African American speakers (AAE)? What impact does/did the educational system have on African American speakers of AAE?

3) How well does the socioeconomic status model concerning non-mainstream language use, perceptions and attitudes work with the two African American communities of different socioeconomic classes studied in this research?

6.4.1a   Question 1. The answer to question 1 varies. Every participant in this research has at least one feature of AAE noted in their interview. However, one participant does not believe that AAE exists. She believes that those who say there is such a dialect exists is stating that Black speech is inferior. Conversely, another one thinks that AAE does exist, and it is something that Blacks "genetically" inherit from being descendants of African slaves. She, along with several others, promotes MAE while still finding AAE acceptable specifically in informal contexts (codeswitching). To many, speaking AAE is an act of solidarity among those in the Black community. Yet, there are a few interviewees who do not espouse AAE for any speech situation.

6.4.1b   Question 2. Many of the participants say that they were corrected by their teachers. Linda, a professor of English, talks about how her students have laughed at those who speak AAE in the classroom and called those who spoke AAE negative names, such as "stupid". She makes a point to communicate to me that she reprimands them for the name-calling. Several participants recount specific events, personal experiences and those of others, where teachers have mislabeled students and placed them into lower level classes because of perceived linguistic deficiencies. Interviewees also share accounts of people being stereotyped because of their speech and missing employment opportunities because of their speech. All of the interviewees, in their own way, believe that how you speak will determine your success.

6.4.1c   Question 3. Generally speaking, the socioeconomic status model states that the higher the socioeconomic class, the less vernacular the speech and the more standard or

mainstream is the speech. The data in this study corroborates this to a certain extent. However, several of the most mainstream speaking participants admit to speaking non mainstream or AAE in certain contexts, particularly around family, friends, and others with whom they are familiar. The participants who are Virginia Beach residents are more MAE speakers than the ones from Norfolk. Nonetheless, the interviewees from Norfolk whose socioeconomic class background is relatively higher than the others speak MAE most of the time and proudly announce that they do so.

6.4.2 Summary

The main research questions have been thoroughly answered in chapters 4 and 5 through analyses of linguistic features and metadiscourse. A general overview, understanding, and explanation to these questions are given above. The findings of this study, including the responses to the main research questions, lead to some interesting questions for future research. These conclusions and more will be expanded in the forthcoming and final chapter.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The main point throughout this study is to analyze African American English and identity intra-racially, through the main topic of education, among various socioeconomic classes in two very different cities which are geographically adjacent to each other. A generally recognized assumption in Sociolinguistics is that the higher the socioeconomic class the more mainstream the speech. AAE is considered a nonmainstream dialect. Thus, for the majority of previous studies on AAE, the participants have been members of the working class or the poor, as if they were the only ones who speak AAE or have the better command of it. However, people and language are too complex to be situated in such simplistic terms, as that theory proposes. As an African American who speaks AAE and a linguist who has done previous research on AAE, I have seen firsthand codeswitching between AAE and MAE. I also have witnessed disgust for AAE and a love for MAE or vice versa. In addition, I know that just because you may speak the dialect does not mean you are an advocate of it. Many times those are the ones who do not even realize they actually speak it; they are just feeding off the stigma and stereotypes associated with it. Nevertheless, research like this one questions general linguistic thought and theory and forces the discipline to re-evaluate previous and current ideas and take more into account the complexities that language presents. It should be noted that all of the previous researches on AAE are not taken lightly nor discounted. It is through those groundbreaking studies that the data on AAE is as rich and plentiful.

However, it is time for more change, incorporating newer ideas within Sociolinguistics and from other fields of the social sciences, without abandoning older schools of thought. This study makes an attempt to do all of this by somewhat "stepping out of the box" or going beyond what typifies current and past research. It shows the diversity within the African American race rather than diversity between Whites and Blacks, which is commonly done. It also shows diversity among those in the same socioeconomic class. As seen in this study, not everyone in the same socioeconomic bracket has the same amount of AAE features in their speech. Despite the fact there are features in this data that are typical of AAE in general, this research specifically looks at a geographic location and does not try to make great or absolute generalizations for the African American community and AAE-speaking persons at-large. More importantly, this research does not only count tokens of AAE features and then I, as the researcher, create labels and make assumptions from there. It seeks to give credence and authority to the interviewees instead of merely using them as a means to an end. One of the goals is to allow the voices of the participants to be heard and to validate and examine their perceptions, ideas, beliefs, and experiences.

Another goal for this research is to seek ways to contribute to changing social conditions for those who are in a minority status and have been discriminated against. There are a few sociolinguists who have used their studies to help in the educational and employment arenas and have encouraged more research to do so, but collectively, in regards to the discipline, not much has been done beyond that. One of the major themes from the interviewees throughout this study that kept recurring is how language and speech has helped or hurt educational and employment opportunities. Many of the participants shared (personal) narratives on this particular subject. These narratives could be useful in the cause of adding "language" to the

Non-Discrimination Policy[39] in these two arenas, for instance. Yet, just like numerous other investigations before it, there is always room for improvement which would only enhance, supplement, and go beyond what has already been analyzed. There are new research questions that arise based on the findings in this dissertation. They are as follows:

1) It is politically correct to call someone of African descent in the US, African American. However, this study has shown that some people use both African American and Black or just prefer one over the other when they racially identify themselves. Through people's characterization of themselves (Black v. African American), do researchers have the right to term the dialect they speak African American English instead of Black English? Should it be labeled according to what the majority of the participants in their study label it?

2) (When) is it acceptable for the researcher to label a dialect, as AAE, and pronounce or declare the participant a speaker of that dialect after analyzing the data of the speaker, even if that particular speaker claims that s/he does not speak that dialect and/or does not think that the dialect exists?

3) Is AAE really "not proper" or "not correct" when there are those who speak it (like Antonio in this study) all the time and consider "improper speech" as slang and "proper speech" as "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am"? What are people's perceptions on different registers of speech versus different dialects of a language?

4) According to social realist theory, a person becomes a social actor after they become agentive. Can you be a social actor and show agency linguistically without being

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[39] This policy was created in 1964 as part of Civil Rights Act (Title VII). In subsequent years age, disability, political affiliation, and marital status were added. Currently there is a drive to add sexual orientation. Many employers have this as part of their non discrimination policy, stating that they do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, or marital status. Yet, language is still not one of the areas that is protected by this law.

consciously aware of what you speak? For instance if a person speaks AAE but does not think or believe that s/he speaks it or codeswitches between AAE and MAE, is s/he still a social actor who shows agency? Does awareness have to be a requirement for agency?

 Besides the questions stimulated from the research findings, there are also further recommendations for future research on this particular study or other similar works. The interviewer could be more acquainted with the participants for a longer period of time doing more of an ethnography. This way, the people would be more willing to be interviewed individually rather than with someone else. More AAE features from those of higher socioeconomic classes might be gathered if those participants are taped in a more natural setting, e.g. at church, at work, at a family reunion, at home, in school, etc. Many studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics[40] attempt to do this by analyzing participants in group settings. Also, it would be interesting to not only gather data in a more natural setting where other people are around but also interview each participant individually and making comparisons from there.

It would also be beneficial and more insightful to collaborate with a phonologist or phonetician to look at AAE's sound system. Perception tests could be created, specifically analyzing standard AAE where people have MAE grammar but an AAE sound.   That could aid in the explanation of standard AAE, which is still disputed by some, and placing it on the AAE linguistic continuum.

In terms of dialectology, more lexicon should be gathered. This lexicon from the region could be compared to other regional AAE lexicon and supra-regional AAE lexicon. It could also

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[40] See Rampton, B. (2006). Language in Late Modernity: Interaction in an Urban School. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

go beyond the lexicon of AAE and look at how it has influenced or has been influenced by lexicon from other English dialects, African languages, and more. This could possibly contribute to the research on the origins of AAE.

Despite the shortcomings and limitations, it is evident that this research study contributes to Linguistics as a whole and more specifically Sociolinguistics. As stated above, it gives AAE and its speakers more dimension. Plus, by examining the dialect in different ways, it brings AAE back to life rekindling interest in it. This dialect has been the most studied (and exhausted) dialect of all in US Sociolinguistics!

Furthermore, it is relevant to many fields within academia and beyond. In (Language) Education this research helps to bridge the gap between MAE and AAE. Many African Americans find MAE as a valuable tool in society. By learning AAE grammar, one can teach MAE by translating AAE into MAE, which could possibly lead to increase literacy rates. In the field of English, studies on AAE can help composition and rhetoric teachers who are trying to teach prescriptive written English to students who write using AAE grammar. In addition, to those who teach multicultural literature or African American literature will be able to explain and understand the literary works that contains some AAE in it, as in the works of Zora Neale Hurston.   In (African) American Studies, works on AAE contributes to the history and knowledge of the US while understanding the country's complexities. AAE is a dialect born of African slaves brought to the US. It is a dialect created mainly from the interaction of the Africans and the British along with other linguistic influences. In addition, it contributes to the literature on African American families and the importance of kinship on their survival and preservation in the US. At first glance, it seems that Sociolinguistics and Sociology are closely related to each other, sharing similar theories and concepts, but that is not always the case. This

research tries to bridge that gap by showing how social theory can help and complement Linguistics research.

Research is just research if it only stays within academia and it is not available or of any value to society. For the last eight years, I have presented my research on AAE in conferences and given lectures on it in high school and college classroom settings and in church platforms such as Black History month programs. I have also created brochures on linguistic awareness with another colleague. This study adds to the body of work on critical research by being beneficial to society-at-large in doing away with linguistic stereotypes and discriminatory practices through linguistic awareness. Linguistic discrimination has taken place and continues to take place in multiple social domains, such as the workplace, in organizations, and in schools. As seen in the Literature Review, the educational system has a history of mislabeling students as linguistically deficient and placing them in special education, speech pathology and/or lower reading classes. Foremost, it is with this in mind, that this research hopefully makes a difference and encourages future researches in all fields of study to do the same.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Pre-Formulated Questions

1. Tell me about the way you speak. Do you like it? What makes your speech different from the way mainstream English speakers speak?

2. Were there attempts to correct your speech?

3. Who speaks like you do (family, friends, etc.)?

4. Tell me how people speak where you live.

5. Has a teacher (principal or any school official) ever corrected your speech? Tell me what happened. How did you react?

6. Give me an example of "correct" or "proper" English.

7. Describe how people should speak at school, church, home, etc.

8. What can you tell about a person from the way s/he speaks?

9. How do Black people speak?

10. Tell me what people say about the speech of Black people.

11. How do you think White people speak?

12. How do people judge the way others speak?

Appendix B: Background Information of the Participants

PARTICIPANTS					
NAME	**AGE**	**GENDER**	**CITY**	**EDUCATION**	**HOUSE-HOLD INCOME**
Angel	18	Female	Norfolk	in high school	$0-9K
Tamika	21	Female	Norfolk	high school	$0-9K
Lela	30	Female	Norfolk	B.A.	$50-59K
L.J.	20	Male	Norfolk	working on B.A.	$0-9K
Tony	34	Male	VA Beach	B.A.	$60-69K
Carla	33	Female	VA Beach	B.A.	$60-69K
Rose Marie	66	Female	Norfolk	high school	$10-19K
James	68	Male	Norfolk	some high school	$30-39K
Virginia	66	Female	Norfolk	high school	$0-9K
Yvette	45	Female	Norfolk	A.A.	$30-39K
Antonio	29	Male	Norfolk	working on A.A.	$20-29K
Vanessa	47	Female	VA Beach	working on Ph.D.	$100K +
Alex	21	Male	VA Beach	working on B.A.	$10-19K
Marguerite	46	Female	VA Beach	working on GED	$0-9K
Esther	62	Female	Norfolk	working on B.A.	$70-79K
Terri	38	Female	VA Beach	working on B.A.	$20-29K
Linda	54	Female	VA Beach	Ph.D.	$60-69K

Appendix C: Background Questionnaire

Background Questionnaire-*Acknowledging the Voices of Families*

Please answer the following:

Race/Ethnicity: _____

Age:_____

Gender: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Married: yes   no   Children: yes   no   If, children, how many? _____

Where did you grow up? _____

City/County/Town of Residence? _____

Schools and Colleges Attended:

_____

_____

Highest Level of Education (circle one):   High School   GED   Community College

4-yr College   Graduate/Professional College

Occupation:_____

Approximate Family Income (circle one):

| $0-9999 | $10,000-19,999 | $20,000-29,999 | $30,000-39,999 |

| $40,000-49,999 | $50,000-59,999 | $60,000-69,999 | $70,000-79,999 |

| $80,000-89,999 | $90,000-99,999 | $100,000+ |

Anything you would like to say about yourself (for example, where you have traveled, hobbies, etc.):