AFRICAN-AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH (AAVE)

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Table of Contents

- Historical Review
- Words and Phrases
- Sentence Patterns
- Sound Patterns
- Bibliography
HISTORICAL REVIEW
First of all...

- Who speaks African-American Vernacular English?
- Negro dialect; Negro Non-Standard English
- American Negro speech
- Black communications
- Black dialect
- Black street speech
- Black English
- African American Language
- African American English (AAE)
- Black English Vernacular
- Ebonics
- African American Vernacular English (AAVE)
Is AAVE “just a dialect” or “a separate language”?
Origins of AAVE

- Substratist view
- Creolist view
- Anglicist/dialectologist view
- Founder principle view
- Settler principle view
WORDS AND PHRASES
“African American Vernacular English Is Not Standard English With Mistakes” (Pullum)

- Slang

- Examples:
  - *ashy*: That lotion is good for *ashy* skin.
  - *call__self*: He *call hisself* cooking.

- Verbal markers
Slang

Examples:

- *get my praise on*: I’m going to early morning service where I can *get my praise on*.
- *off the chain*: That party was *off the chain*. 
No third person singular present tense {-S}

- 3rd person singular present tense {-S} is absent
- She look, he go, he do
- He don’t eat.
- *be* as an inflected form
- I + am

- You
- He/She/It
- We + is
- Y’all
- They

- Present Progressive: They is running.
Non-finite or habitual *Be*

- *Be* functions as a habitual marker of aspect
- indicates a recurring activity or state

- I be running.
  StE: I am usually running.

- He be eating.
  StE: He is usually eating.

- I think those buses be blue.
  StE: I think those buses are usually blue.
Stressed *Béen / Bín*

- A marker of the remote past
- Indicates that something happened in the more distant past

- Bruce béen a teacher.
  StE: Bruce has been a teacher for a long time.

- Although the time period is not explicitly stated listeners have an idea about the length of time the speaker has in mind.
- The man been married.
  StE: The man has been married for a long time.

- They been washed the dishes.
  StE: They washed the dishes a long time ago.
Perfective *Done*

- Expresses completive or perfective aspect
- Indicates that an event is completed or finished and is in its resultant state

- She done ran.
  StE: She has already run.

- Look! I done cooked a turkey!
  StE: I just cooked a turkey!
I done saw him today.
   StE: I have seen him today.
   → perfect meaning, includes the present

They done washed the dishes.
   StE: They have already washed the dishes.
SOUND PATTERNS
Noticeable features of the consonant system

- Non-rhoticity
  - AAVE has long been regarded as a non-rhotic accent within AmE
  - however, present-day AAVE has turned much more rhotic
  - while younger AAVE speakers are likely to be rhotic, older AAVE speakers generally tend to continue to be non-rhotic
Substitution of /d/ for /ð/ initially

- When speakers of AAVE produce the voiced dental fricative /ð/ at the beginning of words, they often replace it by the voiced alveolar plosive /d/.
- to be found in words like
  - dese [diːz] for these [ðiːz];
  - dose [douz] for those [ðouz]
Substitution of /f, v/ for /θ, ð/ medially and finally

- In some instances, speakers of AAVE produce a /f/ or /v/ sound in words in which the -th sound occurs in mainstream varieties.
- Both the labio-dental fricative sound /f/ and its voiced counterpart /v/ occur either in the middle or at the end of a word:
  - /f/ in word-medial position:
    as in *birfday* ['bɜːfdeɪ] for *birthday* ['bɜðdeɪ]
  - /f/ in word-final position:
    as in *baʃ* [baːʃ] for *bath* [baːθ]; *mouʃ* [maʊʃ] for *mouth* [maʊθ]
  - /v/ in word-medial position:
    as in *broʊvə* ['brʌvə] for *brother* ['brʌðə]; *muʊvə* ['mʌvə] for *mother* ['mʌðə]
  - /v/ in word-final position:
    as in *smoʊv* [smuːv] for *smooth* [smuːð]
Loss of final consonant/
Final consonant cluster reduction

This restriction is, for example, placed on words ending in:

- **pt**: prompt [praːmpt] → *promp*_ [praːmp]
- **st**: *lost* [lɔːst] → *los*_ [lɔːs]
- **ld**: *cold* [kəʊld] → *col*_ [kəʊl]
- **ct**: *fact* [fækt] → *fac*_ [fæk]
- **ft**: *gift* [ɡɪft] → *gif*_ [ɡɪf]
- **nd**: *hand* [hænd] → *han*_ [hæn]
- **sk**: *risk* [rɪsk] → *ris*_ [rɪs]
- **Loss of initial and medial unstressed syllable**
  - to be found in words like:
    - *about* [ə 'bɔːt] → 'bout [ 'bɔːt]
    - *government* ['gʌvnmənt] → gov_ment [ 'gʌvnmənt]

- **Loss of palatal /j/ after consonants**
  - to be found in words like:
    - *computer* [kəm'pjuːtə] → [kəm'puːtə];
    - *Houston* [hjuːstn] → [huːstn]
Noticeable features of the vowel system

- Diphthongal variants of /e:/ and /o:/ have begun to replace monophthongs
  - diphthongal variants of /e:/ \(\rightarrow\) /eɪ/, as in gate [get];
  - diphthongal variants of /o:/ \(\rightarrow\) /ɔɪ/, as in boy [bɔɪ] and boil [bɔɪl]

- The raising of /æ:/ to mid-front position

- Non-fronted onsets of /aʊ/
  - the onset of /aʊ/ remains a central vowel
  - to be found in words like mouth [mɔʊθ] and mountain [ˈmaʊntɪn]
Fully backed vowels /u:/ and /ʊ/

- the rounded back long vowel /u:/ in words like goose [guːs], confuse [kən'fjuːz]
- the rounded back steady-state short vowel /ʊ/ in words like good [gʊd], put [pʊt], foot [fʊt]

Glide reduction of /aɪ/ before voiced obstruents and finally

- The shortening of the glide in /aɪ/ before the voiced plosives /b/, /d/, /g/ and voiced fricatives /v/, /ð/, /z/, /ʒ/ to a short glide or monophthongal /aː/ → [aɪ → aː]
- to be found in words like ride [raɪd] → [raːd],
  tied [taɪd] → [taːd] and
  rise [raɪz] → [raːz]
A series of conditioned vowel mergers:

- the merger of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ before nasals (m, n, ɳ)
  - in words like pen [pen] → [pɛn], Wednesday ['wenzdrɪ] → [wɛnzdrɪ]

- the merger of tense and lax front vowels before /l/
  - in words like bale [beɪl] → [bɛəl], feel [fiːl] → [fiəl]
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Thank you very much for your attention!