



AFRICAN- AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH (AAVE)

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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*.



SENTENCE PATTERNS



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

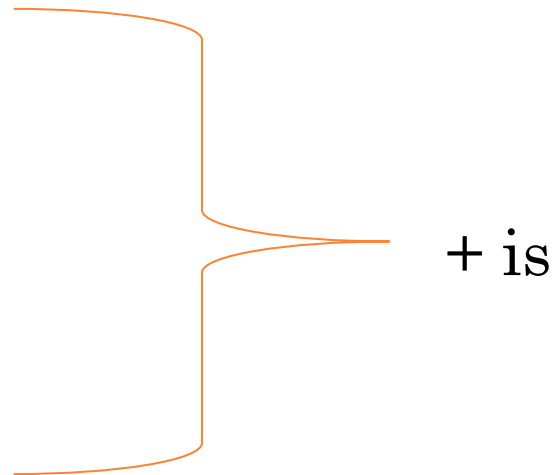
- You

- He/She/It

- We

- 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 *béen* married.

StE: The man has been married for a long time.

- They *béen* 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* [di:z] for *these* [ði:z];
 - *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* ['bɜ:fdeɪ] for *birthday* ['bɜ:θdeɪ]
 - /f/ in word-final position:
as in *baf* [ba:f] for *bath* [ba:θ]; *mouf* [maʊf] for *mouth* [maʊθ]
 - /v/ in word-medial position:
as in *brover* ['brʌvə] for *brother* ['brʌðə]; *muver* ['mʌvə] for *mother* ['mʌðə]
 - /v/ in word-final position:
as in *smoov* [smu:v] for *smooth* [smu:ð]



○ Loss of final consonant/ Final consonant cluster reduction

- This restriction is, for example, placed on words ending in:
 - **pt**: *prompt* [pra:mpt] → *promp_* [pra:mp]
 - **st**: *lost* [lɔ:st] → *los_* [lɔ:s]
 - **ld**: *cold* [kould] → *col_* [koul]
 - **ct**: *fact* [fækt] → *fac_* [fæk]
 - **ft**: *gift* [gift] → *gif_* [gif]
 - **nd**: *hand* [hænd] → *han_* [hæn]
 - **sk**: *risk* [risk] → *ris_* [ris]



○ **Loss of initial and medial unstressed syllable**


- to be found in words like:
 - *about* [ə 'baʊt] → 'bout ['baʊt]
 - *government* ['gʌvnmənt] → gov_ment ['gʌvmənt]

○ **Loss of palatal /j/ after consonants**

- to be found in words like:
 - *computer* [kəm'pjʊ:tə] → [kəm'pu:tə];
 - *Houston* [hju:stn] → [hu:stn]



Noticeable features of the vowel system

- **Diphthongal variants of /e:/ and /o:/ have begun to replace monophthongs**
 - diphthongal variants of /e:/ → /eɪ/, as in *gate* [geɪt];
 - diphthongal variants of /o:/ → /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* [maʊθ] and *mountain* ['maʊntɪn]
- 

○ Fully backed vowels /u:/ and /ʊ/

- the rounded back long vowel /u:/ in words like *goose* [gu:s], *confuse* [kən'fju:z]
- 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 /a:/ → [aɪ → a:]
- to be found in words like *ride* [raɪd] → [ra:d],
tied [taɪd] → [ta:d] and
rise [raɪz] → [ra:z]



- **A series of conditioned vowel mergers:**
 - **the merger of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ before nasals (m, n, ŋ)**
 - in words like *pen* [pen] → [pɪn], *Wednesday* ['wenzdɪ] → [wɪnzdɪ]
 - **the merger of tense and lax front vowels before /l/**
 - in words like *bale* [beɪl] → [bɛəɫ], *feel* [fi:l] → [fiəɫ]



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**Thank you very much for your
attention!**

