

GENDER AND REGIONAL PECULIARITIES OF AAE SPEAKERS

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The topic of Black English is very actual in terms of sociolinguistics and language interaction development, in racial relations and ethnic cultures. Black English is a social dialect of American English, originated and formed as a result of language interaction in the process of historical development. Black English is a term going back to 1969. It is used almost exclusively as the name for a dialect of American English spoken by many black Americans.

Black English is a variety of English, used in America and it is the subject of many controversies, the problem being that of whether considering it a language, a dialect or simply a slang talk. This language variety, also known as Ebonics, is nearly as old as Standard American English, but it has often been misinterpreted as defective, it has never been standardized and has always had lower status compared to Standard American English.

African American English (AAE), African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Ebonics (literally Black sounds) etc. has many names. Simply put it is the language spoken by most African Americans in the United States. (Peterson, 2006)

From the 1960's to the present, African American English has increasingly become also acceptable term for Black English, and the corresponding official name for the language variety used by African Americans is thus African American English or African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

*The present research is **actual** as it deals with the phonetic peculiarities of Afro – American English, whose phonological status has not been investigated thoroughly, especially its intonation.*

*The **object of investigation** is Afro – American English.*

*The **subject of the present research** is gender and regional peculiarities of AAE speakers.*

*The **aim of the present** research is to analyze the intonational peculiarities of Black English. The main task of the work is to study how gender and regional belonging influences intonational means of the speech.*

The present research was based on the speech of two Afro – American native speakers; Akili Lee and Temple Hemphill, taken from American talk show.

Black English Vernacular (BEV) as coined by William Labov in 1972 defines the variety of American English spoken by Black People. Its pronunciation is in some respects common to Southern American English, which is spoken by many African Americans in the United States and by many non-African American [5].

Ebonics is a recent and controversial neologism, coined by Robert L. Williams during a 1973 conference in St. Louis, Missouri, "cognitive and Language Development of the Black Child". It is a blend of ebony (a synonym for

black that lacks its pejorative connotations) and phonics (pertaining to speech sounds) and by definition it refers specifically to an African-language-based Creole (from an earlier pidgin) that has been relexified by borrowing from English, resulting in what African Americans now speak in the United States [10].

There are three main suggestions for the origin of African American Vernacular English (Peterson, 2006).

Historical discussions about the origin of AAE often start at the point at which African slaves were thrust into a linguistic situation in which they had to learn English. Some historical accounts of the development of AAE have taken the position that the distinctive patterns of AAE are those which also occur in Niger-Congo languages such as Kikongo, Mande and Kwa [8].

According to Bailey (2001) this is the “Ebonics” view, which also suggests that AAVE is a separate language.

The Creole-origin hypothesis for AAVE has received support of one kind or another from several studies. However, it has been strongly disputed by dialectologists, who affirm that many of the morphemes and morphosyntactic patterns associated with Creoles are well attested in British folk speech. There have been studies that claim that AAVE is a semi-Creole, suggesting that it did not undergo the full restructuring that result in Creole varieties.

Several facts could suggest the AAVE developed from a Creole. Such facts include the initial setting of South Carolina by colonists and slaves from Barbados and the importation of the first Georgia slaves from South Carolina.

Proponents of the Creolist view note that it is quite possible that slaves from Africa and those imported from the West Indies brought established creoles with them [8].

On the other hand, quantitative sociolinguists have focused on accounting for similarities between AAVE and white non-standard varieties of American English. While conceding that AAVE may have started as a Creole, Fasold and Labov argue that its present grammar is essentially English, the normal outcome of the decreolisation hypothesis. Labov states the following position as a consensus: the Black English vernacular is a subsystem of English with a distinct set of phonological and syntactic rules that are now aligned in many ways with rules of other dialects.

It incorporates many features of southern phonology, morphology and syntax; blacks in turn have exerted influence on the dialects of the south where they have lived.

It shows evidence of derivation from an earlier Creole that was closer to the present-day Creoles of the Caribbean.

It has a highly developed aspect system, quite different from other dialects of English, which shows a continuing development of its semantic structure.

The reason why linguists have been unable to clearly specify the origin of the language is because not enough adequate data exists of black speech from the years of slavery (Bailey, 2001). However, scholars have been able to collect enough information to know that AAE has a strong connection to the Southern White Vernacular English (SWVE) (Bailey, 2001). They accept the decreolisation

hypothesis, and also believe in the influence of AAE on the speech of whites who have interacted regularly with African-American, especially in the rural south, thus making possible both options.

Black English is complex, controversial, and only partly understood. Records of the early speech forms are sparse. It is unclear, how much influence black speech has had on the pronunciation of southern whites; according to some linguists, generation of close contact resulted in the families of the slaves owners picking up some of the speech habits of their servants, which gradually developed into the distinctive southern 'drawl'. Slave labor in the south gave birth to diverse linguistic norms; former indentured servants from all parts of the British Isles, who often became overseers on plantations, variously influenced the foundation of Black English. First the industrial revolution then the Civil War disrupted slavery and promoted African-American migration within the U.S., as result of which slave dialects were transplanted from Southern plantation to the factories of the North and Midwest. There was a widespread exodus to the industrial cities of the northern states, and black culture became known throughout the country for its music and dance.

Many historical events have had an effect on Black English. One of this was the early use of English-based pidgins and creoles among slave populations, as almost all Africans originally were brought to the United States as slaves. Pidgin is a variety of a language which developed for some practical purpose, such as trading, among groups of people who did not know each other's language. Creole is a pidgin which has become the first language of a social community. [7]

Black English was investigated in the USA by D. Crystal ("The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language ", "English Language") [6], by C. Baugh and T. Cable ("History of the English Language") [4] , in Russia by R.V. Reznic, T.S. Sookina, ("A History of The English Language") [1], by A.D. Schweitzer ("The Social Differentiation of English in The USA.") [2], but there are no monographic research of B.E. in our country.

The construct of AAE is complex and variable. AAE varies by the age, gender, region, and social class of the speaker. Most sociolinguistic studies do not examine every given feature of a dialect, and it is difficult to make cross study comparisons of feature use over space, time, and demographic group. [5]

The present research is based on gender and regional peculiarities of the analyzed speakers. The first one is Akali Lee, mail, founder of Digital Youth Network, from Country Club Hills, Illinois. The second is Temple Hemphill, female, associate professor of Kennedy King College, Chicago.

The analyzed spontaneous speech of the representatives of Afro – American English allows us to state that melodic characteristics of the female speech vary. Sliding Scale prevails in her speech thus making it rather emphatic. The tempo is rather fast. There are a lot of syntagmatic pauses in her speech combined with pauses of hesitation. The length of pauses varies from short to rather long proving the fact that in spontaneous speech pauses of different length occur.

The speech of the male representative shows quite contrary melodic and temporal characteristics to the female speech. It is not so emotional, rather

monotones where Low and Mid Level Scale prevails. Low and High Fall are main terminal tones; the voice range is narrow thus proving the fact that the female speech is more emotional than male speech with the variety of emphatic Scales, terminal tones and wide range. The tempo of Mr. Lee's speech who is the representative of Afro – American English is not as fast as with the previous speaker. The range of pauses varies from ultra short to short with the occurrence of pauses of hesitation.

Table 1
Results of the analyzed material

Speaker	Residence	Tempo	Scale	Pause
Akali Lee	Illinois	fast	Low and Mid level + Low / High Fall	Ultra short + pauses of hesitation
Temple Hemphill	Chicago	fast	Sliding Scale + Broken Descending Scale	short + pauses of hesitation +sense pauses

The conducted experiment made it possible to conclude that Afro - American speech is characterized by emphatic melodic characteristics, fast tempo and short pauses which differs it from Standard American English, which is characterized by neutral characteristics, both melodic and temporal.

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Резюме

Данное научное исследование посвящено проблеме изучения истории возникновения афроамериканского варианта английского языка, гендерных и региональных особенностей его носителей.

ZUR PROBLEMATIK DER VERBEN ALS TERMINI

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Die ansteigende Bedeutung der Terminologie in der Gegenwartssprache reflektiert die immer wichtiger werdende Bedeutung der Wissenschaft in der heutigen Gesellschaft. Das höhere Augenmerk, das der Fachterminologie gewidmet wird, ist im Einklang mit der objektiv existierenden soziolinguistischen Erscheinung, mit der Expansion der fachlichen Ausdrucksweise auch hinter die durch den eigenen Fachbereich des sprachlichen Ausdrucks limitierten Grenzen. Die Terminologie als Summe spezieller Benennungen in allen Fachgebieten wird als der grundlegende, zentrale und meist informative Teil der Lexik einer selbstständigen Funktionsschicht angesehen, der die Sprachbasis eines Fachstiles bildet.

Die grundlegenden Funktionen der Fachsprache sind die gnoseologische (kognitive) – Fachsprache ist ein Mittel zum Kennenlernen der Realität und die informativ-kommunikative – Fachsprache ist ein Mittel zum Festhalten, Weitergeben und Verarbeiten von wissenschaftlichen Informationen. Die Summe der materiellen Spracheinheiten der Wissenschaft wird nicht nur durch die Sprachmittel einer Schriftsprache ausgeschöpft. Sie ist so umfassend, dass sie nicht nur über die Grenzen einer Schriftsprache, sondern auch über die einer Nationalsprache hinausgeht. Unter den Termini sind alle Wortbildungsformen, alle Wortbildungsstrukturtypen für die jeweilige Nationalsprache vertreten. Die