

A BRIEF SOCIOCULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
ENGLISH

by

Zykkiah Monique Renee Silver

Honors Thesis

Appalachian State University

Submitted to the Department of
Communication Sciences and Disorders
and The Honors College

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science

May, 2021

Approved By:

Jennifer Buff, Ph.D., Thesis Director

Louis Gallien, Ph.D., Second Reader

Stefan Frisch, Ph.D., Departmental Honors Director

Jefford Vahlbusch, Ph.D., Dean, The Honors College

Abstract

The present literature review explores the concept of African American English (AAE) by analyzing the historical and cultural factors that contribute to language as a tool of systemic racism and marginalization of Black Americans, especially in regard to education and speech language pathology. Five main questions were posed: 1) What is African American history? 2) What is the origin of AAE? 3) How is AAE perceived? 4) What are the implications for using AAE? 5) What are the implications for AAE use in regard to speech language pathology? The conclusion of the literature review is that while the analysis and implications of AAE is progressing to be more inclusive, in society and in the field of speech language pathology, further research is needed to have a more representative and in-depth understanding of speech and language patterns of AAE speakers. It is also imperative that clinicians are familiar with ethical and mindful practices related to working with culturally and linguistically diverse clients.

Introduction

As one of the largest minority groups in the country, African Americans contribute greatly to the cultural and linguistic richness of the United States, especially with their use of African American English (AAE), one of the most common dialects of English in the United States (Stockman, 2010 and Gillam, Marquardt & Martin, 2011). Unfortunately, there is a very minimal understanding of what AAE is and the ways it has been used against the African American community. It is difficult, however, to discuss AAE without addressing the cultural and historical context. In this literature review, I will be providing a brief overview of the history of African American people and African American English in the United States; analyzing the linguistic characteristics of African American English especially as it relates to language differences and language disorders; and addressing the implications of African American English, in order to explain how language has been used as a tool to marginalize Black Americans in the United States.

Brief History of African Americans

African Americans or Black people are identified as American people with African ancestry. Prior to directly addressing AAE, it is essential to discuss slavery and racism as it is the foundation of African American Language. The first Africans that were brought to what is now the United States arrived in Virginia in 1619 to meet the labor demands of wealthy English colonists and the growing territory (History.Com Editors, 2009). The industrial cultivation of tobacco in the 1660s led to the growth of the African population in the United States and marked the beginning of chattel slavery (Mufwene, 2015). Captured and chained African people were forced onto ships for their voyage along the Middle Passage to the “New World” (Lynch,

2020). Awaiting those who did not die from shock, disease or suicide were plantations of tobacco, indigo, rice and eventually sugar and cotton. With this new system also came increased belief in the notion that African people and their descendants were the “inferior” race making it easier for people to rationalize the enslavement of Black people. *The Willie Lynch Letter*, which provided explicit and chilling instructions for decimating the identity of African people and creating slaves inspired “slave codes”. These codes were laws which regulated the slave system and encouraged the dynamic of absolute control and submission between the enslaver and the enslaved. In this system, the enslaved were merely pieces of property and sources of labor prohibited from receiving basic human rights. Furthermore, a key component of the letter and these codes, specifically address language describing that an enslaved person’s understanding of the “new language” should be limited in order to keep them vulnerable and compliant. Those who did not abide by this code in any way were subject to brutal punishment or even death.

In the eighteenth century, when the colonists decided they wanted their independence from Great Britain, more than five thousand Black soldiers fought along their side. Although this historical event could have been an opportunity for educational, linguistic, cultural and societal change – it was not. The American Revolution, while it granted the United States independence, did not provide freedom for those that were enslaved. In fact, the Constitution that followed this independence provided the means for slavery to thrive in the South. Its ratification determined that enslaved people would be counted as three-fifths of a person in regard to taxation and representation in Congress which allowed for slave states to have more representation; it prolonged access to the African trade of enslaved people until 1808; and allowed fugitive slaves to be returned to their enslavers (History.Com Editors, 2009). Previously enslaved people had not only escaped imprisonment, but they also escaped conditions where they were whipped,

beaten, hung, burned, mutilated, starved, verbally abused, degraded and subject to rape and sexual abuse. Conditions which made it nearly impossible for there to be a successful slave revolt, however, so many enslaved people found other ways to resist the system. Those that worked in the fields destroyed machinery or crops; mothers killed their newborn children; and others ran away, many with support and guidance from the Underground Railroad. Soon, there were communities of free Black people consisting of those that were considered “fugitive”, descendants of indentured servants and those freed by their individual enslaver. These people were limited in their freedom, they had no rights and were still at risk of being kidnapped and enslaved. This risk fueled many to become activists and leaders in the movement for abolition.

The election of President Abraham Lincoln intensified a period of unrest within the country. After forty years of division within the Union, his antislavery platform and plans for gradual emancipation only deepened the divide. On December 20, 1860, the Southern states decided to secede from the Union, thus starting the Civil War (History.Com Editors, 2009). In 1862, President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and in the following eight years the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were all ratified. This not only marked the end of slavery but also granted Black people citizenship and the right to vote (Lynch, 2020). These changes did not, however, give Black Americans freedom. While the Reconstruction period allowed for an increase in Black leadership and representation in various sectors of the government, any progress made during this time regressed. The Reconstruction period triggered a surge in white supremacy, racial segregation and discrimination that was enforced by violent groups such as the Kul Klux Klan. Jim Crow laws prohibited interracial marriage, segregated schools and limited opportunities for Black Americans. In search of a new experience, Black Americans in the South moved to the North.

The migration of Black Americans to the North in the 1920's sparked a cultural revival known as the Harlem Renaissance which led to the emergence of many trailblazers. People such as Duke Ellington and Zora Neale Hurston who created space for Black people in literature, music and politics so that they could showcase the intellectual and creative genius that exists within the Black community (History.Com Editors, 2009). The influence of this era persisted, and others soon recognized the benefits of such talent not only in literature and music, but also later in sports and television. The integration of Black culture into mainstream culture and the benefits that accompanied it, however, was not reflected in the Black community. Many African Americans were prohibited from attending performances by Black artists and many of the artists died in poverty despite their fame. Even more so, aspects of Black culture, shared with those outside of the community, presented opportunities for stereotypes to be created. More-often-than-not these stereotypes included language. Soon there became decreased acceptance for the idea of "separate but equal".

The movement for equality continued to be a struggle despite any protests for change. It wasn't until the start of the Civil Rights Movement around the 1940's that disruptions to the social system were truly noticed. Black Americans decided it was time to confront Jim Crow laws and did so through bus boycotts, sit-ins, and marches which eventually led to the desegregation of public schools and public transportation systems (Lynch, 2020). The passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 should've ensured that Black Americans would have equal access to all the opportunities they'd been denied in the previous years, but it did not. The discrimination and prejudice ingrained in the social and institutional systems of the United States could not be undone with the ratification of a few laws. Despite the progress made by individuals such as

Dorothy Height, Shirley Chisolm, and John Lewis, Black Americans still struggled for equality.

They are still struggling for equality more than seventy years later.

Remnants of the horrid truths of slavery and the Jim Crow era still exist through systemic racism. Systemic racism can be defined as the “intersecting, overlapping, and codependent racist institutions, policies, practices, ideas, and behaviors that give an unjust amount of resources, rights, and power to White people while denying them to people of color” (Cole, 2021) .

Systemic racism accounts for racism in all forms - institutional, structural and individual and the concept supports the claim that the United States was founded as a racist society with such practices embedded into its foundation. While some people may not agree with this theory, the truth is, many more Americans are impacted by this as a reality. Whether it be in its overt or explicit form, distinguished by blatant actions such as the use of racial slurs or violence or in its covert form. Covert racism is subtle but has been demonstrated through racial profiling, tokenism, and cultural appropriation. For Black children, this is often apparent in the “pipeline to prison” which refers to policies and practices used to restrict them from access to learning opportunities and resources and instead put them on a pathway to prison. These practices often refer to disciplinary actions but can also be demonstrated through unfair assessment practices, including language assessments that lead Black children to be overrepresented in special needs classes and underrepresented in gifted classes (Probationinfo, 2021).

Evolution of African American English

There has been much controversy on the emergence and evolution of African American English which derives from questions on the extent that other languages have contributed to this language variety (Mufwene, 2015). These controversies have resulted in the uniqueness and

origin of African American English being challenged. Two of the primary hypotheses regarding the origin and development of AAE are the *Neo-Anglicist hypothesis* and the *Substrate hypothesis* (Wolfram & Thomas, 2008). The *Neo-Anglicist hypothesis* asserts that the early origins of AAE are linked directly to British dialects brought to the United States during the colonial period. Although this hypothesis acknowledges that AAE has diverged so that there are now distinctions from European-American English (EAE), it maintains that earlier AAE was nearly identical to earlier EAE. Researchers that support this theory not only suggest that AAE is not significantly different from any other European American vernaculars but that is now also getting increasingly similar to Mainstream American English (MAE) (Thomas, 2007). Others that challenge this perspective question the nature of earlier language contact between Africans and Europeans. The *Substrate hypothesis* greatly differs in that it suggests that there were only subtle influences from the early contact between Africans and Europeans and that while many of the regional dialectal features may have been incorporated into early AAE, there are now features that are consistently distinguishable from other varieties of current American English (Wolfram & Thomas, 2008). Another commonly accepted belief is that AAE is a pidgin-creole whose patterns were influenced by African and English languages as a means for slaves, who were stripped of their identity and forced to interact with people who spoke other languages, to communicate (Stockman, 2010). Those that believe in this “plantation creole” theory believe that the language pattern was acquired by slaves and influenced by a combination of languages spoken by plantation overseers and West African languages. The first Africans that were imported as indentured servants often later worked as domestic servants. In these roles, they were more often exposed to the vernacular of the colonists and likely developed interlanguages. Interlanguage describes a point in which someone is in the process of learning and understanding

a new language (Nordquist, 2020). This is different from a pidgin or a creole in that it is more so a point of observation than summation. While there is evidence of plantation vernaculars or creoles, such as Gullah, these varieties are regional and did not so much occur prior to the early emergence of AAE as it did along-side it (Lanehart, 2001). Similar to what was mentioned in the two primary hypotheses, it may be that AAE is a result of contact with a creole (in addition to EAE) as opposed to being the creole itself.

Discussions about and explorations of these controversies often involve analysis of phonological and phonetic variables of AAE and other American English dialects. Researchers, such as Thomas (2007) have addressed some of these controversial stances with their findings. Some of these variations included r-lessness in unstressed syllables, the medial deletion of /f/ and /v/, and consonant cluster simplification. The emergence of information of formerly enslaved people, including narratives and letters, along with interviews conducted with Black practitioners of Voodoo in the 1930's has been analyzed to provide greater clarity. In analyzing the language of the enslaved population in Virginia, it is understood that the evolution of English was not consistent among the enslaved people as the exposure to the various languages differed based on the size of the plantation and the origin of the people that were there. With some enslaved people being imported from the Caribbean, some imported directly from Africa and others born in the United States, there was no single variety or dialect to describe the language among the enslaved people (Mufwene, 2015). There were, however, influences of African languages and English that were either adopted or modified to be a part of the African American language system (Mufwene, 2015). Despite careful study of the AAE, there is debate about the exclusivity of some of the features and structures of the dialect because of their presence in other English dialects. Further research is needed to truly determine a conclusion. That is why it is important

to understand that even from the very beginning there was variation within the dialect and that region, socioeconomic status and other sociocultural factors are integral to understanding those varieties (Wolfram & Thomas, 2008).

The contemporary development of AAE has also become increasingly controversial because of the differing views on whether the dialect is diverging from or converging with MAE. Regardless of the conclusions made regarding the early origins of the dialect, research has concluded that AAE is actually diverging from other English varieties as opposed to converging with them. The speech and language patterns of AAE are dynamic and constantly changing in relation to itself and MAE (Lanehart, 2001). The differences are not only based on region and SES but also age and education level which means that there can be differences even within the same community. Educators and professionals who work with African Americans cannot rely only on descriptions of older AAE speakers of that community to identify AAE features in younger children. Some structures, such as the use of the habitual “be”, are intensifying while other, new structures are emerging. Most of these trends are credited to the growing sense of identity associated with the use of the AAE and the cultural affiliations to the dialect. This is often demonstrated by African American youth who not only emphasize using features associated with AAE, but who also intentionally avoid using linguistic features that are considered “talking White”. The future trajectory of the dialect will rely heavily on the symbolic role it has a key component of African American culture (Wolfram & Thomas, 2008).

AAE and Communication Sciences and Disorders

African American English has undergone several name changes that often reflect changes in the social and political trends of the time (Wolfram & Thomas, 2008). Some common

terms used have been *Nonstandard Negro English*, *Black English*, *African American Vernacular English* and *Ebonics*. Many scholars make distinctions between African American English and Mainstream American English (MAE) that imply AAE is a vernacular or nonstandard and often use the word dialect with connotations that it is “less” than other standard English varieties especially when referring to it as “Ebonics” or “Black English” (Spears, 2015). This is because the descriptions of AAE have not only relied on the comparison between the distinguishable linguistic features of the dialect to that of the features of an idealized Mainstream American English, but also have been influenced by prejudices of the group that uses it (Wolfram, 2015). Some commonly accepted distinguishing features of African American English include habitual “be”, use of the word “been” as a way to describe something that has happened a while and use of /f/ for final “th” (Wolfram & Thomas, 2008). African American English, in the context of this literature review, is defined as the range of varieties of American English spoken by individuals of African descent in the United States. It includes, but is not limited to, the standard and vernacular varieties of the dialect (Lanehart, 2001).

African American Standard English (AASE), however, is a standard language variety of American English that includes features distinct to Black Americans. While AASE is a variety of AAE, it also includes many subvarieties in and of itself. AASE differs in that it includes features that are not typically stigmatized, that are found in the lexicon, prosody and that are often only identifiable by those that use or specialize in the study of African American Language. The use of double negatives, for example, would be a stigmatized feature of AAE and therefore would not be considered African American Standard English. In understanding AASE, it is essential to understand the concept of double consciousness described by W.E.B Dubois; the idea that there is an internal conflict between Eurocentric and African American-centric norms. Double

consciousness is based on survival and derived from the sociohistorical foundations of the United States. This provides some indications as to why AASE can be perceived as almost the opposite of African American Vernacular English. In its origin, it was primarily used by the Black elite, particularly those that were raised and educated during the Jim Crow era. For them, the use of AASE was and still is a necessity (Spears, 2015).

Speech that audibly “sounds Black”, may not always present features that are absolute distinctions of African American English. This is because many of the segmental variables that are considered features of AAE are also found in other dialects of English (Thomas & Bailey, 2015). Many researchers have focused their research on the morphosyntactic features of the dialect to provide conclusions about the distinct features, while others believe that the most revealing features of AAE are vocalic. Because earlier research has been limited due to the lack of acoustic analysis equipment that could accurately analyze differences in consonants and vowels, there are few segmental features that are identified as distinguishing features of AAE. Some of these features include consonant cluster simplification, non-rhoticity, and glide weakened /ai/. Despite the increasing research contributions to segmental phonology of AAE, further research is needed in order to establish definitive conclusions (Thomas & Bailey, 2015). There are also various possible other components for understanding and approaching AAE such as through comparing current speech patterns to that of African languages, examples being absence of diphthong and consonant cluster reduction or analyzing regional slang as a means for further distinction. Varying approaches and factors are why it is also essential to understand the culture of the speakers.

To ensure best practices most professions provide guidelines for not only how to describe language differences and disorders, but also what factors are most important for diagnoses. For

Speech- Language Pathologists. A speech disorder is any oral or verbal communication that is so noticeably different from the norm that it interferes with communication (Bauman-Waengler, 2016, p. 393). A language disorder occurs when there is an impairment in the understanding or use of spoken, written, or other forms of symbol systems (Kuder, 2003, 302). There are many factors that contribute to speech and language impairment in children, such as autoimmune disease, gender, and prenatal care. The strongest factor, however, is the family history of impairment. The influence of family history is not only apparent for congenital disorders that affect cognitive abilities, but also specific language impairment (SLI). Research on the family history of African Americans as it pertains to language impairment is limited because many patterns of African American English are similar to symptoms of SLI in Mainstream American English. Pruitt, Garrity, and Oetting (2010) explored the prevalence of a family history of speech and language impairment in African American children. Their results concluded that African American children from low socioeconomic status (SES) presented a higher occurrence of positive family history of language impairment than African American children from middle SES. The researchers suggest making family history a risk factor and a point of consideration for children from all backgrounds (Pruitt, Garrity, & Oetting, 2010). In addition to the lack of research on the prevalence of family history of speech and language impairment, there are also many issues with the early research on the language development of speakers that use AAE. Many of the studies focused on the language behaviors of adolescent and adult speakers which then lead to many incorrect implications and expectations for the child speakers. Research that has been conducted on African American children has focused on how they differ from other groups of children instead of answering basic questions about their typical language development and use (Stockman, 2010). These studies also use models and test norms that were based on

comparisons to White middle-class children that use MAE, making the information not completely representative of the language used by speakers of AAE (Wyatt, 1995). Wyatt examined the current research on the speech and language development of child speakers of AAE and provided implications for assessing, treating and instructing AAE speaking children with speech and language disorders. What was concluded was that generally, prior to the age of three, AAE speaking children acquire speech and language in the same manner as children who speak MAE. After the age of three, AAE speaking children begin to demonstrate the use of features distinct to AAE. Some of these features include nonstandard copula variants, zero copula production, and increased final consonant deletion. After the age of four, children from lower-class families tend to use more marked and stigmatized features of AAE than children from middle-class families (Wyatt, 1995). Craig, Thompson, Washington, and Potter (2003) designed a study to investigate and characterize phonological and morphosyntactic features of typically developing African American English speakers. Some of those features included postvocalic consonant reduction, syllable addition, preterite “had”, and multiple negation. Their research led to the conclusion that while more research needs to be conducted, the phonological and morphosyntactic feature system explored in this study could be helpful in characterizing AAE production.

Implications for the Use of African American English

Within the Black community, conversations around AAE reveal difficult and painful truths about identity (Lippi-Green, 2011). There are very few African Americans that disagree with the necessity of dual consciousness and bidialectism; they simultaneously believe that AAE is a legitimate language variety that is also unacceptable. There are viable arguments for both

resistance and assimilation to MAE. Children are either taught or learn “the hard way” the importance of code-switching. All of which is supposedly necessary for professional and academic success. On the other hand, there are African Americans that do not believe in AAE, they believe it is a construct created to promote the idea of a Black culture that doesn’t actually exist. Elaborating on any of those perspectives requires conversation participants to address slavery, racism, prejudice, resentment and self-hatred.

Outside of the Black community, there are skewed views about AAE based around the stereotypes about Black people. Stereotypes about African American English and the speakers who use it stem from beliefs that have been engrained in our society since slavery. These beliefs, that Black people are unintelligent and inferior, have only been further emphasized by the entertainment industry. An industry that produces music, films and literature that mock Black culture. The use of language in these contexts often conveys the idea that Black people are uneducated hoodlums or “baby-mamas” with very little representation to contrast this perspective (Lippi-Green, 2011). Sociolinguists also bear responsibility for the stereotypes that exist about the AAE due to the scope of the early and predominant research conducted about AAE speakers. While this has been more recently rectified through increased advocacy and closer evaluations of the wider African American community, implicit biases still exist (Lippi-Green, 2011).

The growing diversity within the United States is most apparent in the school system. However, there are discrepancies between the students and those that educate them. The students are composed of children from various economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, while teachers continue to be predominately White, middle-class, females (Espinosa, 2005). This is also true of professionals from other related fields such as Speech Language Pathology. There are skills, knowledge and attitudes that are essential for being a part of such fields in order to

prevent and even reverse the seemingly indefinite trend of academic underachievement from children of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds.

Scholars across various professions have questioned the legitimacy of AAE as a language system (Harris & Schroeder, 2013). Those who perceive it as a deficit express concerns about how children that use AAE perform on literacy assessments. These professionals argue that the cause of African American children's low performance on standardized literacy tests are largely due to their language pattern. Others contend that AAE is in fact a legitimate, rule-governed, language system. While the research is controversial on where the strengths and deficits occur in regard to assessment, what can be concluded is that AAE and MAE speaking students overall develop language similarly despite the trends in literacy performance that may suggest otherwise. The factor that should be of concern instead is socioeconomic status (SES) (Harris & Schroeder, 2013). The correlation between SES and literacy performance has been thoroughly researched and is well documented. Children from households with a lower SES, regardless of their language pattern, have less language exposure. Considering that more African Americans live in poverty than that of non-African Americans and with the knowledge about language development, it is more likely that poverty as opposed to language pattern is the cause of the lower performance on literacy assessments among African American students. Another potential factor that contributes to the difference in performance may be the ability to code switch. In a clinical study, students identified as being AAE speakers were assessed in multiple contexts in which they demonstrated varying use of AAE and MAE depending on the task. These results suggest that there is an awareness in some children about when the dialect is deemed appropriate, however, not all children have developed this skill (Harris & Schroeder, 2013). Despite our seemingly newfound understanding, African American children are still disproportionately

enrolled in special education classes and referred to support services such as speech-language therapy. Although we know that this is a result of non-inclusive techniques and assessments that do not include culturally and linguistically diverse samples nor that provide cross-cultural comparisons to account for differences, the shift in implementing this knowledge has proven to be difficult. Theories and approaches for assessment have been reexamined, however, a gray area exists when considering intervention (Harris & Schroeder, 2013). At as early as five years old, children begin to understand the social implications of using AAE and implement code-switching (Lanehart, 2001). It may seem that the obvious solution then is to teach children how to code-switch so that they may do so more seamlessly. That approach can actually be harmful because it emphasizes the perspective that AAE is a “nonstandard” language variety that is only appropriate to use at home or in social settings (William-Farrier, 2016). It may be more effective to instead help child AAE speakers understand the similarities and differences between MAE and their variety of AAE within various contexts (Lanehart, 2001). These discussions should be approached as an opportunity to explore and discuss the complexities of language and the influences that each one has on the other. In doing so, it is also important that this topic is addressed in a positive environment. Negative attitudes and explicit biases, whether conscious or unconscious, can cause resistance in the children and families you are working with. Refrain from using words or paralinguistic cues that may indicate that the use of non-MAE is associated with “bad” English (Lanehart, 2001).

There are additional implications specifically for Speech-Language Pathologists working with African American children. Some of the cultural implications include understanding experiences of discrimination, understanding the role of religion and church as a source of support and addressing a child’s needs with a family-focused approach (Roseberry-McKibbin,

2018). Prior to determining the normalcy of a child's speech or language patterns, clinicians should first determine the child's true language patterns (Lanehart, 2001). Thomas (2007) suggests that having an understanding of AAE could help in determining a language difference versus a language disorder. This includes having a thorough understanding of the system and rules associated with the dialect and also focusing on aspects that are less varying when assessing and treating (Wyatt, 1995). Wyatt (1995) suggests using intervention methods that would make the child more proficient in MAE, however, that is not ethical practice as ASHA considers a dialect to be any variety of a language that should be perceived as a rule governed language system. Use of a dialect is not a disorder and should not be treated as one (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [ASHA], n.d.). Because of the frequency in the use of AAE, it is also important for practitioners to have an understanding of the use of AAE in different language and literacy contexts (Craig, Thompson, Washington, and Potter, 2003).

While there has been much progress toward the efforts of educating clinicians so that they understand the error in interpreting a difference as a disorder, there are now calls for reframing the "difference versus disorder" perspective (Oetting, 2018). The purpose in shifting the paradigm is so that clinicians are not only able to distinguish a difference versus a disorder, but so that they are also able to recognize when there are language disorders that occur within the context of the language difference. An article written by Janna Oetting, describes a few clinical studies in which "difference within disorder" was explored (Oetting, 2018). The studies included different types of linguistically diverse school aged children with and without a language disorder and compared their performance on the DELV-ST-I or DELV-ST-II. The conclusion was that across almost all groups the children with language impairments scored lower than the typically developing children. The conclusion may come as no surprise and it shouldn't. The

conclusion of the studies merely demonstrates that when there are further and closer examinations of the linguistic profiles of a community, clinicians are able to provide more accurate and effective services (Oetting, 2018).

Conclusion

No dialect has been more scrutinized and more criticized than that of African American English. Debate over the structures and origins will likely continue especially as the dialect becomes increasingly complex and held in a different regard by the people who use it. Throughout history, Black Americans have struggled with the role of AAE as a part of culture and identity, however, noticeable changes are being made. Progressing protests from advocates and shifts in attitudes of professionals from various fields to change the negative implications associated with using AAE are occurring but it is no easy feat. The effects of such implications are not just a result of personal biases but instead a long-standing strategy first implemented as a means of controlling enslaved people. Moving forward it is essential that professionals and the general public are introduced to the study of cultural and linguistic diversity and allow empathy to guide their work with CLD speakers.

References

- American English Dialects. (n.d.). *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association*. Retrieved from <https://www.asha.org/policy/TR2003-00044/#sec1.2>.
- Bauman-Waengler, J. A. (2016). *Articulation and phonology in speech sound disorders* (pp. 393). New York, NY: Pearson Education.
- Connor, C. M., & Craig, H. K. (2006). African American preschoolers' language, emergent literacy skills, and use of African American English: A complex relation. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 49(4), 771-792.
- Cole, N.L. (2021, February 16). Definition of systemic racism in sociology. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/systemic-racism-3026565>.
- Craig, H. K., Thompson, C. A., Washington, J. A., & Potter, S. L. (2003). Phonological features of child African American English. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 46(3), 623-635.
- Dillard, J. L. (2014). *A history of American English*. Routledge.
- Espinosa, L. M. (2005). Curriculum and assessment considerations for young children from culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse backgrounds. *Psychology in the Schools*, 42(8), 837-853.
- Gillam, R., Marquardt, T., & Martin, F. (2011). *Communication sciences and disorders: From science to clinical practice* (pp. 51-69). Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Harris, Y. R., & Schroeder, V. M. (2013). Language deficits or differences: What we know about African American Vernacular English in the 21st century. *International Education Studies*, 6(4), 194-204.

History.com Editors. (2009, October 14). Black history milestones: Timeline.

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-milestones>.

Kuder, S. J. (2018). *Teaching students with language and communication disabilities* (pp. 302).

Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Laing, S.P. and Kamhi, A. (2003). Alternative assessment of language of literacy in culturally and linguistically diverse populations. *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools, 34*(1), pp. 44-55. [https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461\(2003/005\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461(2003/005))

Lanehart, S. L. (Ed.). (2001). *Sociocultural and historical contexts of African American English*.

John Benjamins Publishing.

Lippi-Green, R. (2011). The real trouble with Black language. In *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States*. Taylor & Francis.

Lynch, H. (2020, August 17). African Americans. Encyclopedia Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/African-American>

Mills, M. (2015). Narrative performance of gifted African American school-aged children from low-income backgrounds. *American Journal of Speech Language Pathology, 24*, 36-46.

https://doi:10.1044/2014_AJSLP-13-0150

Mufwene, S. S. (2015). The emergence of African American English. *The Oxford handbook of African American language, 57-84*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nordquist, R. (2020, August 25). Interlanguage definition and examples. Retrieved from

<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-interlanguage-1691074>

Oetting, J. B. (2018). Prologue: Toward accurate identification of developmental language

disorder within linguistically diverse schools. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 49*(2), 213-217.

- Peabody, A. (2020, September 17). *Overt and covert racism - R-Squared*. R2hub.org.
<https://www.r2hub.org/library/overt-and-covert-racism>.
- Pearson, B. Z., Velleman, S. L., Bryant, T. J., & Charko, T. (2009). Phonological milestones for African American English-speaking children learning mainstream American English as a second dialect. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 40(3), 229-244.
[https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461\(2008/08-0064\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461(2008/08-0064))
- Probationinfo. (2021, March 9). *School to prison pipeline*. Probation Information Network.
<https://www.probationinfo.org/school-to-prison-pipeline/>.
- Pruitt, S. L., Garrity, A. W., & Oetting, J. B. (2010). Family history of speech and language impairment in African American children: Implications for assessment. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 30(2), 154-164.
- Spears, A. K. (2015). African American Standard English. *The Oxford Handbook of African American Language*, 786-799. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thomas, E. R., & Bailey, G. (2015). Segmental phonology of African American English. In *The Oxford Handbook of African American Language* (pp. 403-19). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Williams-Farrier, B. J. (2016). Signifying, narrativizing, and repetition: Radical approaches to theorizing African American language. *Meridians*, 15(1), 218-242.
- Wolfram, W. (2015). The sociolinguistic construction of African American English. *The Oxford Handbook of African American Language*, 338-352. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wolfram, W. (2019). African American English. *The Handbook of World Englishes*, 314-330.
- Wolfram, W., & Thomas, E. (2008). *The development of African American English*. John Wiley & Sons.