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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SOUND AFRICAN AMERICAN?
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATION

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Using a framework of language ideologies, this mixed-methods study examined teachers' perceptions of nonmainstream dialect, specifically looking at African American English (AAE). Eighty-one total teachers from the local school district listened to four different speech stimuli (elementary school-aged) enacted in either African American English or Mainstream American English using a matched-guise design within two different child actors. After listening to the four speech stimuli, teachers provided their first impression of each child's academic and personality on the Teacher Perception Rating Questionnaire (TPRQ), a 5-point Likert scale. Afterwards, approximately one-fourth of the teachers from three of the sites participated in focus group interviews to discuss their impressions of the stimuli and cultural linguistic differences more broadly. Key findings integrated across data sources revealed that teachers perceive speakers of the AAE v. MAE stimuli differently *if* the paralinguistics of the presented dialects differed. Second, teachers continue to privilege MAE within the academic setting, in part because they see it as their job to prepare children for success on standardized assessments and in society at large. Whether intentional or otherwise, school currently serves as a vehicle for perpetuating standard language ideologies that denigrate AAE.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

African American children are faring poorer in the American public school system than their White peers. Educational and psychological research studies continue to show the disparities of African American achievement at various levels and infrastructures in the educational system. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, while Blacks¹ have made some gains in standardized testing, they continually rank lower in writing, reading, and math standardized test scores in comparison to their White, Asian, and sometimes Hispanic peers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012b). The NAEP reading scores for eighth-graders in the 2010-2011 school year were reported as follows: Blacks - 86% below proficiency,² 1% advanced; Whites - 59% below proficiency, 4% advanced; Asians - 54% below proficiency, 8% advanced; Hispanics 82% below proficiency, 1% advanced; and low-income - 82% below proficiency, 1% advanced (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012).

As these values suggest, the term “disproportionality” plagues African Americans in the public school system. On average, African Americans make up about 16% of the public school population, but disproportionately attend low performing schools in higher poverty neighborhoods (AEE, 2012, Ladner & Hammons, 2001). Moreover, African American students account for 32% of students in certain special education programs

¹ It is often unclear what working definition references are using for the categories “Black” and “African American.” However, in my own writing, I use the term Black to reference the race of people (i.e., collection of physical features) who encompass a variety of ethnicities and nationalities and the term African American in reference to those born in America from parents of Black race with African, Caribbean, or Central and South American heritage (cf. Lopez, 1994).

² NAEP defines “proficient” as “at grade level.”

(Ladner & Hammons, 2001). In relation to the academic achievement gap there also exists a discipline gap (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010), where 35% of Black children in grades 7 through 12 have been suspended or expelled at some point in their school careers (NAACP, 2013). This compares to only 20% of Hispanics and 15% of Whites (NAACP, 2013). In addition, there is evidence to suggest that the nature of disciplinary infractions differ between groups, whereby Black children receive stricter penalties at a more frequent rate (cf. Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002).

Not, surprisingly, based on such statistics, American public school teachers have expressed challenges when working with African American children (Causey, Thomas & Armento, 1988). Many of these teachers are from White middle-class cultural-linguistic backgrounds and have limited experience with individuals from differing ethnic, racial, social class, or linguistic backgrounds (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 1988). However, while the percentage of White middle-class teachers continues to hold around 80% (NCES, 2013), the diversity of their students continues to increase. It is projected that by 2021 the percentage of enrollment by race will be 48% for Whites, 27% for Hispanics, 16% for Blacks, and an increase for Asians from 5% (2010) to 6% (cf. KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007; NCES, 2012a). Differences between the race of the children in the classroom and the race of the teachers who instruct them creates a potential for misunderstanding that may contribute to the achievement gap and disciplinary discrepancies associated with African American children, an idea referred to as Mismatch theory. Although mismatch theory encompasses multiple aspects of cultural-linguistic differences, the proposed project focuses primarily on dialect. In particular, the dialect of many White middle class teachers and the materials they use in

the US classroom is generally consistent with Mainstream American English (MAE) (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007; Goodman, 1969; Green, 2007; LeMoine & Hollie, 2007), the dialect privileged through social-historical context. The privileging of MAE is consistent with the concept of a standard language ideology. Language ideologies in general are a person's set of beliefs and attitudes around language (Ahearn, 2012). However, standard language ideology (Milroy & Milroy, 2012), a concept held by many teachers (Lippi-Green, 1994) aligns with this privileging of MAE. Teachers' standard language ideology, particularly the belief that "standard" English is the one "correct" way to speak, has the potential to lead to negative perceptions of their non-standard speaking students. As an example, many African American children, particularly from low-income communities, speak African American English (AAE), a dialect with influences from the African and English languages, thought to be the remnant of a pidgin-creole (Stockman, 2010). Children who speak this nonstandard American dialect³ may be at a disadvantage in the classroom where the standard language ideology of their teachers may be limiting the access AAE-speaking children have to academic practices and leading to negative teacher perceptions. Previous studies have linked use of AAE to lower academic achievement (Rist, 1970; Taylor, 1983) and found that teachers demonstrate inherent biases against students who speak AAE (Bowie & Bond, 1994; Cecil, 1988; Crowl & MacGintie, 1974; DeMeis and Turner, 1978; LeMoine & Hollie, 2007; Taylor, 1983, Taylor, 1973). Despite legislation and scholarly recognition of AAE as a sophisticated and rule-governed dialect (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007; Alim &

³ Although the author is aware that there are other races and ethnicities who speak AAE, for the purposes of this paper, "speakers of AAE" will be noted as African American ethnicity.

Smitherman, 2012; Smitherman & Baugh, 2002; Stockman, 2010). Such findings highlight the critical need for further exploration of how cultural-linguistic differences may be influencing the classroom environment for AAE-speaking children in the 21st century, and what role the field of communication sciences and disorders (CSD) may be able to play in easing racial inequalities, particularly as related to communication differences. As speech-language pathologists (SLPs), we have unique training in the distinctions between language difference and disorder and are well positioned to support successful communication practices in the classroom for all children. Diminishing the academic achievement gap would not just appear to be about better teaching of African American children, but also about acknowledging, understanding, and accepting their cultural-linguistic differences. There may be an important balance between increasing their access to the mainstream cultural artifacts (e.g., MAE, literacy skills in MAE), necessary for social upward mobility in today's American society, and respecting their unique and valuable cultural identities.

In order to better understand this balance in the current educational climate, the present study seeks to explore teachers' perceptions of AAE and to investigate which aspects of AAE may be more salient in contributing to teachers' perceptions. To this end, the following literature review offers a brief overview of AAE and applies mismatch theory and language ideologies to the experience of many African American children in today's schools, both in terms of access to materials/practices and through differential teacher perceptions. In addition, the use of mixed methods is highlighted as a way to examine teacher perceptions, through use of a listener judgment task comparable to past

studies, while also using qualitative methods to reveal the complexity underlying such perceptions.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

African American English. African American English, the current term prominently used within the field of communication sciences and disorders, is a rule-governed, systematic, recognized dialect of American English (Pearson, Conner, & Jackson, 2012; Stockman, 2010). Other terms used, both historically and throughout other disciplines and researchers, include: Negro English, Black English, Black Vernacular English, Black Language, Ebonics, African American Vernacular English, and African American Language (Baugh, 2004; Champion, Coob-Roberts, Bland-Stewart, 2012; Goodman, 1969, Green, 2002; Smitherman & Baugh, 2002). Consistent with standard language ideology, there are still many people among the masses, of all races, who believe that AAE is synonymous with “improper English” or “poor grammar” (see Lippi-Green, 1994). However, scholars in fields such as, linguistics, sociolinguistics, and communication sciences and disorders recognize that AAE is a rich dialect (or language) filled with the history of a people brought from West Africa, with influences from African and English languages thought to be the emergent product of a pidgin-creole (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007; Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Green, 2002; Stockman, 2010).

AAE gained public prominence in the schools during the famous ruling in the 1979 *Ann Arbor trial*, whereby the judge legally declared AAE to be a “legitimate form of speech” (Smitherman and Baugh, 2002). Despite this ruling nearly forty years ago, school policies and procedures often subscribe to a standard language ideology, presenting AAE through a deficit perspective (Alim & Smitherman, 2012; DeBose, 2007;

Pearson, Conner, & Jackson; Stockman, 2010) and privileging MAE in the instruction and materials of the classroom (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007; Goodman, 1969; Hamilton, 2014; Lippi-Green, 1994). For example, there are new academic state standards that have been implemented in kindergarten through 12th grade classrooms in 43 states (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2015), known as the Common Core. Definitions of Common Core's English Language Arts standards include the ability to, "Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). It is evident that in order to meet these standards the burden is put on the AAE-speaking children to speak, read, and write in a dialect unfamiliar to them, unlike their MAE-speaking peers and to demonstrate it through standardized assessments that also privilege MAE (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007; Goodman, 1969; Seymour, 2004). As an example, my early research ethnographic study (Hamilton, 2014) provides a descriptive excerpt of an AAE-speaking kindergartner observed during a literacy lesson with his European American teacher and several other students. During the lesson, a book was being read by the group, and the written sentence "*Dan and I hear two buses*" was read/spoken by some of the African American students as "*Dan and I hear two bus.*" In response, the teacher stopped the reading temporarily to provide a mini-grammar lesson on the correct way to use the plural-s that was consistent with MAE. Even though the plural -s marker would not be obligatory in this sentence according to AAE, she explains that, "If there's one bus we say bus, but if there's more than one bus, we say buses, right?" Following this mini-lesson, the young AAE-speaking child was observed quietly repeating to himself, "If

there's more than one bus, I say 'buses,'" even through this rule was in contrast to his observed language use at home.

To summarize, AAE is a dialect with its origins based in the rich and complex history of the people who speak it. Although the existence of AAE as a legitimate dialect has found its place in certain academic disciplines, standard language ideology continues to dictate many academic practices (Ahearn, 2012; Lippi-Green, 1994). Many African American children are faced with a complex clash of language rules and expectations upon entry to public school with very little direct guidance in how to recognize and appreciate cultural-linguistic diversity.

Linguistic features of African American English. In order to discuss features of a dialect, it is difficult to do so without having another dialect as a reference point. Not surprisingly, the reference point often used to describe AAE features is MAE, also known in the United States as "standard" English. However, the term "standard" is often times synonymous with "better", which thereby perpetuates the deficit perspective of AAE. While every effort will be made to speak about AAE features without reference to what it is "not" in comparison to MAE (e.g., "reduction" or "addition") such terms are sometimes employed in order to connect the reader to past literature.

From years of research, prior studies have compiled lists of at least 40 different morphosyntactic and phonological characteristics displayed in AAE (see Oetting & McDonald, 2001; Washington & Craig, 1994, 2002). As an example, speakers of AAE oftentimes mark events in the past through a variety of different patterns. The following markers have been observed and classified as AAE past tense markers: the completive *done* (e.g., *I done told you to clean up your room*), preterite *had* (e.g., *She had left the*

room already), remote past *been* (e.g., *I been had dem shoes*), and zero past tense (e.g., *She start yesterday*). Other morphosyntactic features of AAE include use of multiple negative elements (e.g., *I don't have no cat*), questions structured as declaratives (e.g., *You hungry?*), and variable use of subject-verb agreement (e.g., *My cousin run real fast*). As with all dialects, AAE features also differ based on geographical regions. For example, the phrases *finna* and *fitna* (meaning *fixing to* or *getting ready to* in MAE) have been observed in certain AAE-speaking regions (Green, 2011). Some phonological features of AAE include differences in consonant cluster production (i.e., consonant cluster reduction; e.g., *acking* for *acting*; Green, 2011) and *r*-vocalization whereby the 'r' is pronounced more like a vowel sound than a consonant (e.g., *scaed* for *scared*).

In addition to the morphosyntactic and phonological characteristics, AAE also is portrayed by semantic patterns that involve lexical items or word meaning. Lexical items include examples such as *dis*, which is used to mean *disrespect*; *aight*, which means *all right*; and *we straight* which means *all is okay* (Shade, 2012). Sometimes lexical choices may differ altogether. For example, children who speak AAE have been reported to use the word *icebox*, for the MAE term, *refrigerator* (Green, 2011). Similarly, words with the same phonological form may have a separate meaning altogether. In AAE, to use the word *cut*, does not necessarily mean to slice something (e.g., *cut the paper*) or to stop doing something (e.g., “*cut it out*”) as in MAE: *cut* could also mean “to turn something,” as in *cut it up* (in reference to turning the volume up on the television).

Paralinguistic features of African American English. Though less researched than linguistic properties, paralinguistic aspects of AAE, such as variations in prosody, pitch, intonation, rhythm, quality of voice, speech rate, volume, response latency, pause

length, pause frequency, have been documented as early as the 1970s (James, 1974; Tarone, 1973). Specifically, there are some studies (Tarone, 1973; Green, 2002; Wolfram and Thomas, 2002) that have found intonation differences between AAE and MAE that associate AAE with a greater tendency to exhibit different stress patterns, presence of falsetto and/or wider key, less consistency in high and low pitch accents, inclination to use final level tones in yes/no questions (versus MAE's final rising tones), and a greater variation in usage of boundary tones. A seminal study by Tarone (1973) found that AAE-speakers used intonation in place of the *if* in *if*-clauses, marked by use of a rising or level final contour or a non-final contour. In addition, when compared to European Americans, the voices of African American males have been associated with a lower fundamental frequency, more shimmer, more jitter, and lower harmonics-to-noise ratios, which signifies hoarseness (Hudson and Holbrook, 1981; Morris, 1997; Walton and Orlikoff, 1994).

In sum, AAE is one of many systematic, rule-governed dialects of American English that differs from the MAE dialect both in linguistic and paralinguistic features. The question then that naturally emerges is how much might the use of such features by African American children be impacting their everyday lives in a school environment that has been shown to privilege MAE?

Mismatch and Language Ideologies as Related to African American English-Speaking Children

The present study draws from both mismatch theories and language ideology frameworks.

Mismatch Theories. Mismatch theories have centered on the difficulties that emerge when backgrounds and experiences differ between communication partners.

Mismatch theory is particularly relevant for African American children in the public schools due in part to the fact their cultural-linguistic backgrounds differ from most of their teachers. Data from NCES (2013) reported that for the 2011-2012 school year, 81.9% of the teachers were White, 6.8% were Black, 7.8% were Hispanic, and 1.8% were Asian. This means that while the composition of students in our public schools is increasingly becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, the teachers who serve them are not. There is a similar trend when examining the composition of school-based SLPs, with 92% of SLPs identifying their own race as White (American Speech Language and Hearing Association, ASHA, 2013). Although these statistics reflect racial differences, teacher-student mismatches often emerge in association with differences in the language, culture, socioeconomic status, or teaching/learning styles associated with race (Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; Villegas, 1988). Students who come to school familiar with aspects of culture used by the teacher in the classroom are at an advantage in regard to learning opportunities, while those with greater mismatch are at a disadvantage (Rist, 1970; Villegas, 1988). Language is one area to highlight as a domain for potential mismatch. In particular, for African Americans, studies have shown that African American students often present with distinct language patterns (i.e., AAE), and nonverbal communication that are incongruent with the ‘standard’ language embraced and cultivated by public schools (Bailey & Boykin, 2001, Delpit, 1995; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013).

Critiques of mismatch theories have centered on the tendency to focus on group

differences (rather than similarities), to ignore within group differences, to perpetuate oversimplified racial categorization, and to place the burden of “matching” on the marginalized group (Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006; Losey, 1995). To quote Gutiérrez and Orellana, 2006, “It sustains cultural explanations for the persistent underachievement of non-dominant groups, supporting ideologies that conflate race/ethnicity, social class, and culture, and diverting attention away from the inequitable distributions of resources” (p. 506). Despite such concerns, there appears to be a shifting perspective in mismatch theories to account for some of these concerns, especially the recognition that institutions, especially schools, need to be more accommodating to cultural differences (e.g., Stephens, Fryberg, & Markus, 2011; Stephens, Hamedani, Markus, Bergsieker, & Eloul, 2009; Stephens, Townsend, Markus & Phillips, 2012). Consequently, I propose that there continues to be merit in examining the ways in which AAE-speaking children may or may not be aligning with the expectations of teachers, especially in regard to the teachers’ language ideologies.

Language Ideology. Language ideologies center around people’s ideas about language and how these ideas influence their perception of others and themselves (Ahearn, 2012; Olivio, 2003). However, language ideologies are more than just about language. Language, culture, and social relations are so interconnected that they cannot be taken into consideration without one another (Ahearn, 2012; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998). Such a relationship of linguistic ideas supports more than just language use and form, it also underpins important social institutions (Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998). Schools in particular are critical places for the diffusion and maintenance of standard language ideologies, defined as “a bias toward an abstract,

idealized, non-varying spoken language” (Lippi-Green, 2004; p. 289). Holding a standard language ideology lends one to perceive “correct” language forms versus “incorrect” language forms (Milroy & Milroy, 2012). In the classroom, it is the teachers’ language ideology of what’s “correct” or “incorrect” that is privileged (Lippi-Green, 1994). Teachers’ own language ideologies also have an impact on their perceptions of the students they work with and thus their own teaching practices. Such perceptions, if deemed negative, can lead to negative consequences, particularly for vulnerable populations (e.g., speakers of non-mainstream dialects, children, minorities, people with disabilities). Drawing from both mismatch and language ideology frameworks, three tenets underlie the nature of this study:

- a) language ideologies are rooted in the interests and sociocultural experiences of a specific social position, cultural group, or individual
- b) community members who speak the same language may share norms and values of the language whereas conflicting language ideologies are likely to occur across different cultural-linguistic groups
- c) such challenges are likely to disadvantage those in less powerful positions; in the case of teacher-student relationships, this disadvantages the child

Research supports the hypothesis that cultural-linguistic mismatch and standard language ideologies are contributing to the achievement gap observed between African American and White students in our nation’s schools through two distinct, though not mutually-exclusive, mechanisms: 1) differential access to materials/practices and 2) contrasting teachers’ perceptions of children based on race and dialect. The literature that follows will review evidence for both mechanisms separately, despite the likely

interactive process between the two. However, the bulk of the literature reviewed here will focus on the factor of teachers' perceptions, given its direct application to the current study.

Differential access to materials/practices. The classroom environment embodies cultural-linguistic practices including the oral instruction provided by the teacher, the materials used in the classroom, the assignments given to the students, and the standardized testing administered. Schools are byproducts of the society in which they emerge and consequently reflect the same cultural-linguistic biases (see Lippi-Green, 1994, 2004). As already noted, teachers and SLPs tend to be predominantly White, middle-class, and female (ASHA, 2013; NCES, 2013) and curriculum and assessment materials in the US tend to privilege MAE and associated cultural practices (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007; Alim & Smitherman, 2012). For an AAE-speaker, materials and practices may be more difficult to access as a result of the bias toward MAE. It is important to note that the use of AAE itself is not an obstacle to academic performance; the challenge relates to the mismatch between a child's cultural-linguistic background and the standard language ideologies of the educational institution (Lippi-Green, 1994, 2004) as reflected in the materials and expectations of the environment (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007, p.92; Lippi-Green, 1994; Stewart, 1969). The perspective is analogous in this way to literature and practices on English Language Learning (ELL), in which children are being expected to learn in an educational environment that privileges a language and culture other than their own (Cain, 2005; Stewart, 1969).

Perhaps the most transparent aspect of mismatch is related to accessing the linguistic aspects of MAE. Due to the grammatical, morphosyntactic, and phonological

differences between AAE and MAE, reading and spelling in MAE can be an especially challenging task for the AAE-speaker (Charity, Scarborough, & Griffin, 2004; Craig & Washington, 2004). For example, the mismatch between the home language and school language may cause difficulties when the spelling of a word does not align with the child's mental representation of the word or challenges may exist with some phonological reading skills, such as rhyming abilities (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007; N.P. Terry, 2006). However, studies have shown that when AAE-speakers have familiarity with the grammatical and morphosyntactical structures of MAE or are able to code-switch between AAE and MAE, then their academic reading performance improves.

For example, Charity, Scarborough, and Griffin (2004) explored the relationship between familiarity with MAE and reading achievement in early stages of schooling. The correlational study examined the sentence imitation and reading skills of 217 African American kindergartners, first-graders, and second-graders, who attended low-performing schools in urban settings. Reading achievement was measured using three subtests of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised (i.e., word identification, reading of pseudowords, and comprehension of a short passage provided orally). Sentence imitation was measured by presenting 15 different sentences of varying length and which contained contrastive MAE and AAE features. Quantitative analysis determined that kindergarten through second-graders' reading achievement was positively correlated with their familiarity with MAE; the more familiar with MAE, the higher the reading achievement score. Some children were able to imitate MAE forms during the imitation task a high proportion of the time, while others produced more AAE forms instead of MAE forms. Additionally, researchers found that familiarity with MAE

increased with socioeconomic status (SES), but there were still wide differences among African American children from low-income communities as well as middle-class communities. Understanding the influence that dialect has on standardized tests of literacy skills should help highlight the potential bias of standardized assessments utilized within the school setting.

Accordingly, Craig, Zhang, Hensel, and Quinn (2009) studied the use of dialect shifting in AAE-speaking students and its relation to standardized reading scores. One hundred and sixty-five typically developing, elementary-school-aged African Americans participated in the correlational design. Half the participants were male and one-third were from lower SES communities while the other two-thirds were from middle SES communities. AAE production rates were measured during oral and written narrative samples. Oral language proficiency was measured using 5 indices (i.e., Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, responses to request for information, mean length of communication units, complex syntax production rates, and number of different words) and written language skill (i.e., ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation) was measured using the Beginning Writer's Continuum (BWC; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001). Reading scores were measured using various standardized tests which are designed and presented orally using MAE (i.e., Gray Oral Reading Tests, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Terra Nova, Metropolitan Achievement Test, and two reading subtests from the Michigan Educational Assessment Program). After quantitative analysis, results revealed SES was related to reading scores and that as AAE feature use increased, reading scores decreased. Additionally, while AAE rates in the oral task did not directly predict reading scores,

AAE rates in the written task did predict higher reading scores. Those students who were able to shift toward MAE when writing, performed better on the reading test. Craig and her colleagues' research supported a dialect-shifting reading achievement hypothesis, suggesting that students who use AAE, but learn to use MAE in literacy activities, will perform better than their peers who do not demonstrate this linguistic flexibility. This study states that, "students who adapt to the SAE language of the classroom and curriculum should find classroom learning in general and the acquisition of reading skills in particular to be less of a challenge than do those students who do not make this adaption" (Craig et al., 2009, p. 841). These results suggest that when students learn to use and comprehend the dialect that they are being assessed in, they will perform better. Although the model in the study accounted for 40% of the variance, it is relevant to note that home and school mismatch factors (e.g., prevalence of home literacy materials, culturally different approaches to literacy) were not taken into account during this research.

While these studies show support for the relationship between dialect and achievement, they focus on the linguistic aspect of dialect as opposed to paralinguistic features or broader cultural variables. One particular paralinguistic aspect, intonation, and more specifically, pitch, has been argued to cause interference in learning how to read in the standard dialect. Westbrook (1975) highlighted the influence of intonation on comprehension of written text. Because text is devoid of intonation, the reader must insert his own melody by using cues from his own oral language background (LeFevre, 1965; 1968). For example, in a dialogue written with AAE content (e.g., vocabulary, syntax), but read with a standard MAE intonation, Westbrook and previous researchers

(LeFevre, 1965, 1968; Vogel & McGrady, 1975) claim that an uncertainty in the dialogue's meaning may occur for the AAE-speaker. This can be demonstrated by the AAE paralinguistic features reviewed earlier. To use Tarone's (1973) finding as an example, an AAE-speaker who uses intonation rather than a lexical item (i.e., *if*) to indicate the dependent clause, may be confused at first to read a sentence with the actual lexical item present (Tarone, 1973). Furthermore, teachers often check a student's comprehension via his oral reading skills, but may be unaware that intonation interactions may interfere with that student's comprehension.

While researchers like LeFevre purport that intonation is one of the most significant aspects of comprehension at the sentence level, it may be the least understood (LeFevre, 1965; 1968). In order to further understand this paralinguistic aspect, Vogel and McGrady (1975) investigated the relationship between intonation, syntactic abilities, and reading comprehension. The goal of the research was to explore the recognition of memory pattern (RMPT) abilities and auditory memory skills among MAE-speaking second graders, in hopes of determining characteristics of good readers versus poor readers. Nine different syntactic measures were administered to the participants, including the RMPT, two auditory memory measures (memory for digits and for words), and two silent reading comprehension measures to differentiate "good" readers (met specific criteria including scoring in the 50th percentile or better) versus "poor" readers (met specific criteria including scored below 50th percentile). The RMPT measure was designed to determine whether sentences, which were devoid of semantic meaning, but retained their structure words, consonant and vowel order, the number of syllables, stress, and word order, were either asking a question (interrogative) or making a statement

(declarative). For instance, “Did you go to school today?” was altered into “Mim you po to droll seeway?”. All sentences were written in MAE. Results revealed that poor readers scored lower on the ability to identify interrogative and declarative melody patterns when devoid of semantic cues, than good readers. Additionally, auditory memory did not impact scores on the RMPT. This study is helpful in understanding the critical role that intonation may play in reading comprehension, however oral language intonation patterns of the children, as well as dialect differences, were not taken into account during these measurements.

While access to the written aspects of classroom materials and practices may be difficult for the AAE-speaking child, access to the oral practices is also a challenge. Tarone’s (1973) early research on intonation in AAE not only helped to describe the different paralinguistic features of AAE-speakers when compared to MAE-speakers (i.e., wider pitch range use by AAE-speakers; level, falling, and rising pitch contours; and use of the *if*-clause), but also offered classroom implications for the AAE-speaker. She states that the AAE-speakers’ pattern of falling final intonation when asking yes/no questions would be regarded as rude or demanding by speakers of MAE (e.g., classroom teacher), which could cause consequential/severe misunderstandings in the classroom environment:

If intonation is central to the communication of attitude, and if Black English (BE) uses patterns of intonation which differ systematically from those in Standard English (SE), certain consequences may follow. It is likely, for example, that when a speaker of Black English attempts to communicate with a speaker of Standard English, a great deal of

misinterpretation of attitude and intention may occur. The speaker of SE may misread the intonational patterns being used, and perceive attitudes in the speaker of BE which were not originally there. (Tarone, 1973, p. 2)

These differences in paralinguistic features between AAE and MAE may cause difficulty accessing the materials in the classroom environment, but, also have a greater chance of creating challenges in rapport between the AAE-speaker and the teacher as was demonstrated above.

Another aspect of cultural linguistic mismatch that may cause difficulty accessing MAE materials is of the cultural background/experience and identity of the student. For instance, reading does not just involve a decoding of words, it also involves comprehension and interpretation. Often times there is more than one interpretation of text, but this interpretation is dependent upon a multitude of factors that may be influenced from the reader's background (see Schema Theory; Anderson, 1985; Miller & Stine-Morrow, 1998). Therefore, when a reader's background is not congruent with the text that is written, challenges may arise when attempting to comprehend that text: the knowledge and information possessed by the reader impacts the reader's performance. As an example, consider a written passage about riding the subway. For a child who lives in New York City, understanding the concept of subway and its various connections (e.g., fare card, express stops, limited stops) would be much easier than for a child who lives in a rural setting such as Danville, Virginia. Now, take into consideration the AAE-speaking child reading text that is embedded in mainstream American culture. His ability to access that material may be more challenging than for an MAE-speaker whose culture is more aligned with the mainstream culture.

Identity also plays an important role in accessing classroom materials and learning. Language is a prominent source of one's identity and it holds an intricate place in understanding where one is from, who one's family is, what neighborhood you live in, etc. Therefore, if an AAE-speaking child is being encouraged to speak in a dialect, write in a dialect, and read in a dialect that not only is unfamiliar to him, but also seems to counter or even betray his own identity and-language ideology; this mismatch could make school a difficult place to experience, enjoy, and thrive in learning. Kirkland (2008), an African American male professor reflected on the role of dialect in the postmodern Black experience:

I had an attraction to English early on but was fast realizing that English standards did not look like me, sound like me, or think like me. While they represented English, the standards represented a narrow English, one that did not necessarily include me. (Kirkland, 2008, p .69)

In American society, speaking AAE is a large element of "being Black" and for the many African American children who speak MAE, there may be an explicit tradeoff: while their academic achievement may improve, their cultural identity and social relationships may suffer as they are mocked by their peers for "talking White" and/or "acting White" (cf. Carter, 2003; cf. Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). In accepting another dialect for learning, one in turn may view his own dialect as inferior (Goodman, 1969); in other words, accepting MAE may represent an acceptance of the very culture that has oppressed him and his people. Rejecting MAE could be central in defining one's cultural identity and maintaining one's own language ideology. As a result, an African American

child may be put in the position to choose between self-respect and school acceptance (Goodman, 1969; Stockman, 2010). With this understanding, it begs to question, just what are we asking Black kids to do and what exactly will teachers think of a child who does not readily adopt MAE?

Teachers' perceptions of African American English-speaking children. In addition to inadvertently limiting children's access to classroom practices and materials, the achievement of African American children may be limited by a teacher's standard language ideology that internalizes societal biases against African American dialect and culture. One of the most important people who influence students' social and emotional development as well as their academic success is their teacher. This role is critical as it can determine the academic success and trajectory of a child. However, in many American classrooms, teachers' limited understanding or misunderstanding of children's home languages and culture may cause negative perceptions of their students. Negative perceptions, especially from people in influential positions, such as teachers, can translate into negative outcomes for students. Although there are likely to be many routes through which teacher perceptions shape child outcomes, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1966) utilized the term "expectancy effects" to refer to the tendency of teachers to create more positive learning environments for children they perceive as having greater potential. Fairfield and Edward-Evans (1990) state that "teachers who expect failure, typically demand less, provide less information and feedback, and generally engage in conscious and unconscious behaviors that produce failure" (p.78). Research has found support for teachers being inclined to respond more positively to certain groups of children, such as females, children who are higher achieving, more attractive children, children who

conform, children who sit near the front of the classroom, and children are not a member of a minority group (Cecil, 1988; Champion, Cobb-Roberts, & Bland-Stewart, 2012; DeMeis & Turner, 1978; Rist, 1970). More importantly, teachers seem to make these judgments of expectation only after a brief encounter with their students (Cecil, 1988). Characteristics of children that teachers tend to perceive more negatively are often connected to race and socioeconomic status (Rist, 1970). LeMoine and Hollie (2007) applied this concept directly to children who speak AAE, suggesting that low teacher expectations may set in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy that leads to Black students having lower aspirations for themselves and poorer academic performance. Consequently, understanding how teachers are viewing AAE-speaking children is critical to helping ensure their success (Hollie, 2001).

A prominent research design for studying listeners' perception of communication is through listener judgment tasks. Listener judgment tasks often rely on samples from more than one speaker, but try to control for confounding variables (e.g., sex, age, etc.). Within the field of communication sciences and disorders, such designs have been utilized in recent decades to examine teacher perceptions of children with communication disorders (e.g., DeThorne & Watkins, 2001; Rice, Hadley, & Alexander, 1993), but the bulk of such studies on AAE surfaced in other disciplines, mostly during the 1960s and 1970s, coinciding with key civil rights activity at the time (e.g., the Civil Rights Act of 1964). Throughout the past forty years, researchers have attempted to understand the elements of AAE that may be contributing to teachers' perceptions, using a combination of listener judgment tasks and attitudinal scales. These elements can be grouped into two types of studies: teachers' *attitudes* toward children who speak AAE, and teachers'

perceptions of the *spoken features* of AAE. I focus here on studies that span from the 1970s to the early part of the 21st century in order to capture the flavor of such work⁴.

Attitudes toward African American English-speaking children. Using a longitudinal qualitative study design, Rist (1970) examined the correlation between academic achievement and social class and how schools reinforce the class structure of society. The goal of the study was to analyze the factors that are crucial in the development of teachers' expectations for the different students in the classroom and to analyze the process by which these expectations impact the classroom experience for both the teacher and the students. Beginning in the fall of 1967, Rist entered a school in which the administrators, teachers, staff, and students were all Black. The school was located in an urban area, which the author termed a ghetto. Fifty-five percent of the families in the school were supported by a form of public welfare. Rist spent the first part of his study in a kindergarten classroom with a sample of 30 students. Formal observations were performed throughout the school year and again during the first half of their second grade year. On the eighth day of school, Rist documented the permanent seating assignments of the children in the kindergarten classroom. Of the three different tables in the classroom, four different criteria seemed to set them apart from one another. The first criterion was physical appearance, the second was interactional behavior, the third was use of language, and the fourth was a series of social factors. For example, children assigned to table 1 were well dressed in clean clothes, came to school with heavy

⁴ The studies from the earlier time periods use different terminology regarding dialect. Black English and Standard English are two terms that are used often, however, I have decided to change these terms the current dialect terms used within the discipline of CSD (i.e., AAE and MAE) for the ease of the reader.

coats during the winter season, had short hair cuts and processed hair, interacted with the teacher easily, demonstrated greater use of MAE, and had more parents who were employed, formally educated, part of two-parent homes, and not on welfare. Conversely, the other two tables (referred to as Table 2 and 3) consisted of children who dressed poorly, wore thin coats during the winter months, came to school with body odor, had matted and unprocessed hair, did not interact as easily with the teacher, demonstrated a high frequency of AAE dialect when responding to the teacher, and had fewer parents who were employed, had fewer parents who were formally educated, came from fewer two-parent homes, and had more families on welfare. The teacher labeled the students at Table 1 as “fast learners” versus the other children who “had no idea what was going on in the classroom” (p. 422). Rist noted that the children who fit closely to the teacher’s ideal type of successful student (those seated at Table 1) possessed the normative values of the mixed Black-White educated middle-class and the values of the groups in which the teacher was a member of herself. Throughout the study, the teacher was seen to give preferential treatment and focus her attention on the higher-class students while penalizing the lower-status students. By the end of the school year, the students at Tables 2 and 3 had less communication with their teacher in comparison to their Table 1 peers, were less involved in classroom activities and assignments, and were ridiculed by not only the teacher but the students at Table 1 as well. This trend continued into the children’s first-grade year and second-grade year. Rist observed in the later years (i.e., second grade) that the use of control-oriented behavior by the teacher was directly related to the teachers’ expectations of the skill level and willingness of “slow learners” to learn the concepts being taught. Rist’s study demonstrated a clear distinction between two

groups of children in the classroom. Among those were the students who appeared clean, interacted with adults, and came from homes that valued middle-class norms. In contrast, to these students, there were those who appeared to be dirty, spoke a linguistic dialect different than that of the teacher and “successful” students, and came from poor homes that were on welfare assistance. The structure of the school classroom thereby manifested as a microcosm of the society at large, including a faltering caste system. Although this study did not specifically explore attitudes toward AAE, it did explore AAE-speaking children. The study was consistent with standard language ideology and mismatch theory, suggesting that children who speak AAE may be easily dismissed as incapable within the classroom environment.

More explicitly, Taylor (1973) examined teachers’ attitudes toward AAE and nonstandard dialects as measured by the Language Attitude Scale (LAS). The LAS is a Likert-type scale of 25 items, distributed across four content categories concerning opinions on a set of language-focused statements. Each category contains Pro AAE items and Con AAE items. The goal of the study was to understand what teachers thought about nonstandard dialects, in particular AAE, and to ascertain their views on using this dialect in the classroom. One rural school system and one large urban school system were randomly chosen from each of nine school districts. From these school settings, a sample of 422 teachers was recruited to complete the LAS. In each setting, 10 females and 10 males were chosen in order to reflect the racial and cultural profile of the communities from which they were selected. The LAS was administered to all teachers and scored according to a coding system that assigned numerical values for each type of statement. For example, 2 points were given for mild disagreement with a positive

system, whereas 4 points were given for a mild disagreement with a negative statement. Teachers' responses were analyzed according to the following variables: a) geographical location of teaching assignment, b) sex, c) race, d) field(s) of college degree(s), e) number of years teaching experience, f) grade assignment, g) racial composition of school, and h) parents' education. Results were reported according to content categories. In regard to content category 1, "Structure of Nonstandard and Black English", Black teachers overall responded more positively than negatively on the LAS statements. This trend was also seen with teachers from schools where the population was predominantly Black. Conversely, teachers from schools with a majority White population responded with more negative attitudes toward AAE. Younger teachers with 3-5 years experience also exhibited more positive statements than older teachers with more than 10 years experience. These same patterns concerning school racial composition and years of teaching experience were observed in the content category 2, "Consequences of using and accepting Black English." Content category 3, "Philosophies concerning use and acceptance of Black English", revealed female teachers having significantly more positive responses than male teachers, and teachers from predominantly Black schools reported more positive attitudes than teachers from majority White schools. No significant effects were found for years of teaching experience variable. Finally, for content category 4, "Cognitive and intellectual abilities of speakers of Black English," both Black and White teachers, as well as female and male teachers, responded with more positive statements than negative. Teachers from predominantly Black and mixed schools showed significantly more positive attitudes than teachers from majority White schools. Similar to content categories 1 and 2, teachers with three to five years

experience revealed significantly more positive attitudes in comparison to teachers with 10 or more years of experience. Overall, the LAS revealed that teachers tended to have more positive and neutral attitudes than negative attitudes towards AAE. A significant finding from Taylor's (1973) study seems to be that while teachers' attitudes toward dialect vary depending upon what aspect of dialect is being discussed, there are demographic variables (e.g., years of teaching experience, school racial composition) that lend themselves to these attitudes. An interesting note regarding how the educational climate has changed from the 1970s is concerning the trend found that there were more positive attitudes reported about AAE from teachers who were teaching at predominantly Black schools. Taylor (1973) speculated that this may be due to many of the teachers being Black at these schools. Expanding onto Taylor's speculations, one may consider that Black teachers' language ideologies were more consistent with the norms and values of their community of AAE-speakers. While educational institutions maintain standard language ideologies, Black teachers may be able to utilize a bicultural perspective that values language variation, at least in terms of AAE:-

Thirty years after Taylor's study, Blake and Cutler (2003) used an adapted design of the LAS in order to explore teachers' attitudes toward AAE within the New York City educational system. The study was conducted on the heels of the Oakland School Board Resolution (1997), which acknowledged AAE as the main language of its African American students and stated that AAE should be "taken into account" by teachers when instructing lessons on reading and language arts. A survey was used to assess teachers' attitudes toward AAE dialect and to measure teachers' attitudes toward bilingual education in comparison to bidialectal education. The survey on language attitudes in the

public schools consisted of 19 statements and used a Likert-type scale 5 that ranged from “agree strongly” to “disagree strongly.” Questionnaires were distributed to teachers at five different high schools. The high schools varied with respect to student population demographics, achievement levels, and school philosophies. Bilingualism High (BH), a charter school comprised mostly of immigrant children and only 0.2% Black students, has a school philosophy that emphasizes working with students’ strengths, and maintaining and further developing students’ native languages. Inner-City High (ICH) is a specialized school with an entrance exam and comprised of a variety of ethnic groups. Black students make up 23.7% of the population and only 52 English Language Learners (ELL) were enrolled in 2000. ICH’s philosophy is to encourage academic achievement of students with superior scholastic aptitudes and to prepare them for leadership roles in society. Self-Choice High (SCH) is a specialized public school, known for its strong academic standards, with a student population that is majority Black (47%) and Hispanic (49.6%), and a diverse teaching staff (unlike the other schools’ majority European American staff). Upperside High (UH) has a predominantly Black (33.9%) and Hispanic (63%) student population, where the majority of the students qualified for free lunch within the federal guidelines for poverty level families. UH’s philosophy highlights that the school meet the diverse needs and interests of their students. The final school, West Indian High (WIH) has the largest make-up of Blacks students (91.8%), mostly West Indian. WIH’s philosophy is to encourage a school and home environment that promotes “individual achievement of high standards, academic excellence, and creative, social and civic growth” (p. 173). At each school, the teachers were informed that the questionnaire was intended to find out what public school teachers think about issues concerning

language. A total of 88 completed surveys were used for data analysis. Results showed that the majority of teachers (95%) recognize language variations, agree (90%) that children who do not speak MAE may endure academic difficulties, and agree (93%) that one of the purposes of school is to ensure that students are proficient in MAE. Fourteen percent of teachers view AAE as a “lazy form of English”, although more than half of the teachers (55%) acknowledge AAE as having its own grammatical rules. Teachers at BH and WIH, the schools with language programs, had strong feelings of support for bilingual education, while most teachers did not demonstrate support for bidialectal education. Overall, the researchers indicated that teachers’ attitudes tended to be influenced by their schools’ philosophies. Teachers from BH had the most positive and sensitive responses to AAE as a viable dialect. Results suggest that while much progress has been made regarding teachers’ attitudes toward AAE since the 60s, 70s, and 80s, there is still more room for improvement. While Blake and Cutler found that it was the schools’ philosophies that influenced teachers’ attitudes, perhaps a closer look at teachers’ language ideologies would have been beneficial. Involving teachers in a conversation regarding the aspects of AAE and the role AAE plays in the school environment might help to reveal their own language ideologies and assist in understanding the reasons why many teachers support bilingual education, but do not exhibit support for bidialectal education.

Teachers’ perceptions of spoken African American English. Shifting to teachers’ perceptions of spoken AAE, DeMeis and Turner (1978) investigated the effects of students’ race, physical attractiveness, and *dialect* on teachers’ evaluations. This adapted listener judgment study assessed both the formation of teachers’ expectations and

their evaluation of academic performance via a measurement scale that rated the speakers' personality traits, quality of responses, current academic abilities, and future academic abilities. To collect the speech stimuli, the researchers recruited fifth grade boys to respond to the question, "What happened on your favorite TV show the last time you watched it?" All responses were audio-recorded and classified as AAE or MAE, based on the child's grammar, intonation, and pronunciation. Selection of the speech stimuli controlled for qualitative differences in content based on description of important characters and description of plot. The final speech stimuli for the study consisted of six AAE and six MAE responses. The picture stimuli were chosen from a sample of 30 photographs of fifth grade males. The pictures were rated for physical attractiveness on a five-point scale, resulting in three different levels of attractiveness: low, middle, and high. As a result, 2 pictures of Black males were paired for each attractiveness level and at each level, one photo was paired with AAE and the other with MAE. For example, one complete stimulus consisted of a Black male in the low physical attractiveness group, speaking AAE paired with another stimulus of a Black male in the low physical attractiveness group, speaking MAE. The same procedures were done for the White males, resulting in 12 total stimuli. A sample of 68 White, female teachers from seven different elementary schools was recruited for the study. The mean age was 33 years old, each had earned a B.A. degree, and their teaching experience ranged from 0 to 32 years. Teachers were instructed to "validate previous ratings given to each student by his classroom teacher" (p.80). The teachers then listened to and rated 12 different stimuli, evaluating the student on his personality, quality of response, current academic abilities, and future academic abilities. Overall, teachers rated Black students more negatively

than White students and AAE-speaking students as having less academic ability than MAE-speaking students. Low attractive students were rated lower as well. Additionally, MAE-speaking Black students were rated lower than MAE-speaking White students, but higher than AAE-speaking White students. Consistent with standard language ideology, results suggest that the dialect of AAE overall is evaluated lower than MAE, even when taking race into account. A hypothesized expectation for this finding may be that, regardless of race, teachers perceive dialect as a proxy for academic ability, and more specifically AAE as synonymous with poor academic ability. Of particular interest for the present investigation, this early study failed to take into account the paralinguistics of a dialect by automatically pairing Black photos with MAE recordings and vice versa.

Cross, DeVaney, and Jones (2001) provide more recent support that the standard language ideology in education persists; students who speak non-mainstream dialects are viewed as less favorably than those who use MAE. Cross et al. (2001) explored pre-service teachers' attitudes towards dialects that are common to the Deep South of the United States. They looked at dialect along the lines of race, gender, and SES. The goal of the study was three-fold: (1) to determine if dialect plays a role in perception of speakers' intelligence, honesty, friendliness, social status, and level of education, (2) to determine if the race of the rater impacts perceptions of dialect, and (3) to determine if the demographic factors of age, gender, race, academic major, and family influence pre-service teachers' perception of dialect. As with the studies previously mentioned, audio-recorded stimuli (145-word passage) were first developed in order to present to the participants. Five readers were selected to create the stimuli. They were all male, age 19 to 27, scored 22-23 on the American College Test, and were chosen due to their

representation of High “educated” White Southern, Low “uneducated” White Southern, High “educated” Black, Low “uneducated” Black, and Northeast (Network or mainstream) dialects. Readers were asked to read a passage taken from *The Smithsonian*. The listener sample consisted of 303 undergraduate and graduate students, 111 from the College of Education, and ranged in age from 17 to 25. Fifty-nine percent of the listeners were White and 68 percent were female. The majority of the listeners were from low to middle income communities and 71 percent of the sample reported their hometowns were in the Southeast. Using a 4-point Likert scale, listeners rated each of the five speakers on eight personality characteristics. Results showed that pre-service teachers were willing and able to make judgments of speakers’ qualities based on a short oral reading. Significant differences were found in each characteristic except honesty. Low White speakers were rated significantly lower on measures of intelligence and education than all other speakers. Both categories of Black speakers were rated lower than Northeast and High White speakers on measures of intelligence and education. Consideration, trustworthiness, and friendliness were rated significantly higher for the High White speaker than for both Black speakers and the Low White speaker. Results also demonstrated that race did indeed influence the raters’ responses; White raters gave high ratings to White speakers and low ratings to Black speakers, and conversely, Black raters gave high ratings to Black speakers and low ratings to White speakers. Finally, there were no statistically significant effects for gender, academic status, or family income of raters. While this study looked at pre-service teachers’ perceptions of dialect, the investigators chose readers who were of college age. To better understand issues related to the achievement gap for African American children, it would be helpful to study

teachers' perceptions of school-age children and collect qualitative data to better understand the nature of such judgments, including the potential role of paralinguistic features.

Cecil (1988) examined whether the expectations that teachers hold for Black children who speak AAE differ from those for Black children who speak MAE. Related to the direct examination of language ideology, three major questions were asked for this experimental design: 1) Do teachers hold greater academic expectations for Black children who speak MAE than for Black children who speak AAE? 2) Do teachers think that Black children who speak MAE are more intelligent than Black children who speak AAE? and 3) Do teachers think that the reading performance of Black children who speak MAE will be higher than the performance of Black children who speak AAE? To develop the speech excerpt stimuli, second-grade teachers and their principal identified a pool of twenty-seven Black AAE-speaking children from a school in Southeastern Missouri. The study also references a second pool of Black children, this group speaking MAE, but it was not specifically stated how they were obtained. The sample of Black children was then divided into two groups of five children for each dialect (i.e., AAE and MAE), comprising three girls and two boys for each group. The children were matched on age (varying no more than four months in age) and tested intelligence (varying no more than 8 points, as reported from the Stanford-Binet). All children were from similar lower-middle-class backgrounds. To create the speech excerpts, each child was asked the same questions about a stuffed animal. The questions and answers lasted about five minutes each and were taped. The subjects consisted of 52 White, second-grade teachers from rural Central Illinois. All teachers had an average of 8.7 years of teaching

experience. Teachers were asked to listen to randomly assigned tapes and respond using a 5-point Likert scale to the following questions: 1) What do you think this child's chances are of successfully completing the second grade, 2) What would you imagine to be the IQ of this child, and 3) How do you predict this child might perform in reading? A *t*-test was performed to analyze the significant difference between the means. Consistent with standard language ideology, results showed that teachers held greater overall expectation for Black children who spoke MAE than for the children who spoke AAE. In addition, the teachers thought that the children who spoke MAE were more intelligent than the children in the AAE group, and the teachers had greater expectations for reading success for the MAE children than the children who spoke AAE. These results show that dialect (with all of its elements) was a significant factor in determining the expectations of Black children's academic performance. However, it is difficult to tell from this study exactly what were the elements that distinguished AAE-speakers from MAE-speakers and how this distinction was made by the researchers. Perhaps further probing into what factors were used to help the teachers distinguish between the two dialects would help gain further insight into what elements of dialect are most salient to teachers and which of these elements gain the most negative perceptions, leading to poorer expectations.

In one of the few studies of paralinguistic features of AAE, Crowl and MacGintie (1974) designed a study to explicitly examine the speech characteristics (i.e., paralinguistics) of speakers of different home dialects. Using a listener judgment task, the researchers explored the influence of students' speech characteristics on teachers' evaluations of oral answers. The goal of the study was to determine if differences in students' speech characteristics (i.e., paralinguistics), not linguistics, lead to different

teacher perceptions about a student's academic performance and if so, can the specific character traits of the teachers who are most inclined to vocal stereotyping be identified. Speech samples of two groups of ninth grade boys were collected. One group consisted of six White students from an upper-middle SES background and the other group consisted of six Black students from a lower SES background. To control for content, 12 predetermined answers, worded in MAE, were used from two questions:

1) Why do we celebrate Thanksgiving? and 2) What is the difference between a discovery and an invention? Predetermined answers were based on the answers of other groups of White upper-middle SES students. The two groups of students were given an unlimited amount of time to practice reciting their answers and to ask for clarification on pronunciation and meaning. All students were recorded speaking all answers.

Recordings were made until both the experimenter and the student felt that the excerpt was spoken in a natural sounding manner. A sample of 62 White teachers, the majority of whom were female, was recruited for the study. The teachers ranged in age from 25-34 years old; their teaching experience ranged from 1 – 5 years, and the students they taught were predominantly White. Because the study was presented as a guise, teachers were asked to rate the speech samples in order to establish how oral answers are graded. Teachers listened in small groups or individually to either Tape A (Thanksgiving responses preceded "discovery" responses) or Tape B ("discovery" responses preceded Thanksgiving responses). Each tape included the 24 answers occurring only once, half of the responses spoken by White students and half spoken by Black students. The investigators concluded that White teachers' evaluations of student's oral responses were impacted by the speech characteristics of students whose ethnic group could be identified

by their speech. Teachers' ratings of the answers depended upon which tape was listened to by the teacher. In order to determine if the inherent quality of an answer was a factor in teachers' ratings, evaluation of the written form of responses was performed.

Researchers found that the answers assigned to White students on Tape A received significantly higher ratings than answers assigned to Black students on Tape A. This meant that the answers assigned to the Black students on Tape B were rated higher (in their written form) than answers assigned to White students on Tape B. However, the results also indicated that although the White students did receive higher ratings on Tape A, the Black students did not receive higher ratings on the same content responses on Tape B. Therefore, higher ratings were given to the White students than the Black students, even though the content was the same. No specific differences were found in determining character traits of the teachers who were most susceptible to vocal stereotyping. This study highlights that the teachers' perceptions of the paralinguistics of AAE spoken with MAE content influenced the way they graded their student on oral performance. Follow-up information regarding teachers' rationale and attitudes was not provided.

Consistent with standard language ideologies, these studies provide consistent evidence that teachers perceive AAE-speaking children more negatively than MAE-speaking children across domains of academic performance/potential and personality. While the bulk of the previously reported studies highlight the negative perceptions teachers have of AAE-speakers, they confound whether the teachers are responding to linguistic aspects of AAE, and if so, what specific features; responding to paralinguistic aspects of AAE; or responding to something altogether different. In contrast, Crowl and

MacGintie's study (1974) is unique in the fact that it explicitly tried to measure teachers' perceptions of the paralinguistic aspects of AAE-speaking children by controlling the spoken content within the speech samples. None of the studies included a focus group follow-up with the teachers to discuss their perceptions.

The greater part of this work on perceptions of AAE was conducted in the 60s and 70s, and understandably so. Taking a historical perspective, we can speculate that much of this research began as a response to historical court decisions regarding race and education (e.g., *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* 1954) and language and education (e.g., *Martin Luther King Elementary School Children, et al., v. Ann Arbor School District Board*, 1979, aka the "Black English case"; Alim & Baugh, 2007).

Additionally, historical legislation on equality and civil rights was also taking place during our turbulent societal climate. For instance, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 called for school desegregation and equal educational opportunities for all students (The Leadership Conference, 2015). The past studies have clearly demonstrated, via listener judgment tasks, that many teachers exhibit negative perceptions of African American English-speaking children. However, since this pivotal time in history, the frequency of work on teachers' perceptions of dialect has waned. Perhaps the thought was that new knowledge would automatically translate into new practices or an influential generation of scientists in sociolinguistics was replaced by investigators with different academic interests. Regardless, more recent studies (e.g., Blake & Culter, 2003; Champion, Cobb-Roberts, & Bland-Stewart, 2012) have suggested that the standard language ideologies that shape school practices and teacher perceptions may not have changed.

The purpose of the present research study is to examine teachers' perceptions of AAE-speaking children. This work builds on prior literature in three key ways:

- 1) Examining whether or not teacher perceptions of AAE have changed in recent years given the knowledge learned in prior decades,
- 2) Addressing the paralinguistic aspects of AAE more explicitly, and
- 3) Combining quantitative and qualitative data in order to gain a richer understanding of teachers' perceptions—the how and why behind their ratings.

Mixed Methods Research

A prominent research design for studying listeners' perception of dialect is the matched-guise design (see Lambert, Frankel, & Tucker, 1966 for example). The key element of the matched-guise design is that one person (or more than one) portrays two different ways of speaking with the intent of examining perceptions of specific speech-language features and then rating the speaker on aspects of personality, intellect, education etc. While this design has been criticized for the listener's ability to determine the speakers' guise of race in bidialectal studies, this does not take away from the fact that matched-guise designs assist in controlling for certain paralinguistic variables that are difficult to match (e.g., pitch).

Most of the studies previously reviewed use mainly quantitative research methods (i.e., listener judgment tasks and surveys) to examine teachers' perceptions of and attitudes toward AAE, with the exception of Rist's ethnographic study. While there are some that use qualitative portions of the design (e.g., comments section of a Likert scale), few studies have had a conversation with teachers regarding their perceptions of AAE. By using mixed methods, not only will this study design use quantitative analyses (i.e.,

matched-guise design and listener judgment tasks) to understand how teachers' perceptions of dialect compare across speech stimuli, but by incorporating a focus group interview with several of the teachers, this design allows for the teachers to engage in a conversation about AAE and to explain their ratings. This will allow the researcher to gain further knowledge as to what potential biases exist, as well as the information that may be needed and/or misinformation that may need to be repaired in order for any remaining biases associated with standard language ideologies to change.

The intent of the research will be to gather information about teachers' perceptions of children's personal and academic potential based on dialect variation (i.e., AAE and MAE). The following questions will be addressed:

1. After listening to a brief audio sample, do teachers perceive children's personal and academic potential differently based on dialect variation, specifically AAE v. MAE?
2. Within the context of AAE and MAE, what aspects of dialect variation are most salient to teachers and how are they viewed?

Chapter 3:

METHOD

The present mixed method study combined elements of experimental group comparison (specifically matched-guise) and qualitative analysis of focus group data. Specific to the present study, the first research question, regarding teachers' perceptions of language variation, was addressed through an experimental comparison of teachers' ratings (dependent variable) in response to four total speech sample stimuli (independent variable); two samples per child. More specifically, teachers listened to stimuli from an African-American child acting out a script in MAE and AAE and teachers listened to stimuli from a White child acting out a script in MAE and AAE. The two samples from the same child, MAE versus AAE, are what served as the matched-guise experimental element of the design. In addition, the second question, related to building a deeper understanding of what aspects of dialect variation are most salient to listeners and how they are perceived, was addressed through qualitative analysis of focus group data from teacher participants. This mixed methods design implemented complementarity and initiation purposes as asserted by Green, Caracelli, and Graham (1989).

Complementarity was used to assess the overlapping yet different facets of dialect perception as demonstrated by two methods: 1) listening to and rating brief audio stimuli of differing dialects and 2) semi-structured focus group interviews aimed at revealing salient features of dialect along with teachers' attitudes and beliefs about dialect and users of the dialects. This combination of quantitative and qualitative measures generated *initiation* of new interpretations of teachers' perceptions of MAE and AAE dialect and their perceptions of school-age MAE- and AAE-speaking children.

Research Team

As the primary author of this study, I bring a professional background in educational speech-language pathology. I worked as a speech-language pathologist (SLP) in New York City schools for 10 years where my caseload/students consisted primarily of African American and Latino boys. It was during this time that I became interested in gaining a deeper understanding of communication disorders and differences (e.g., language variations) with a particular interest in African American English-speaking children and their experiences in the classroom.

Other members of the research team consisted of three associate professors of SHS (Drs. DeThorne, Hengst, and Johnson,); one professor from Human and Community Development (Dr. Jarrett); one associate professor from the department of Speech and Hearing Science at The Ohio State University (Dr. Mills); two masters' students from SHS; nine undergraduate students from SHS; and two PhD students, one from SHS the other from Educational Psychology. Given the focus on cultural-linguistic variation, efforts were made to achieve cultural-linguistic variation on the research team, particularly in regard to African American representation. As a result, both masters' students identified as African American, while one undergraduate student identified herself as Mexican American. All other undergraduate research team members identified as Caucasian/White. Dr. DeThorne offers expertise in child language disability and experience working with linguistically diverse populations within educational settings. Dr. Hengst brings additional expertise in language disorders, clinical practice, and ethnographic research methodology, while Dr. Johnson provides specialization in school-age language and experience working with multi-culturally diverse children. Dr. Jarrett

offers expertise in conducting qualitative research methods with African American families from low-income communities, and the study of neighborhood as cultural context. Dr. Mills brings expertise on language and literacy development of African American English-speaking children from high-need communities.

Participants

This study included 81 total teacher participants⁵ who served as the listeners that provided the questionnaire responses associated with the dependent variables as well as the focus group data that offered outcome data for the qualitative analysis. In addition, I collaborated with child participants to develop the four speech stimuli used as the primary independent variable of interest. Prior to participant recruitment, this project received approval from the University's Internal Review Board (IRB) and the College of Education's Bureau of Research, which oversees research collaborations in the local public schools.

Teacher participants. Teachers were considered eligible to participate if they worked in or were familiar with the local school district; these included pre-service teachers in their last semester of course work who were currently student teaching within the local community. Although not a basis for inclusion in the study, demographic information regarding race, ethnicity, gender, age, grades taught, years, neighborhood residence, and nature of current and prior experience, were collected via questionnaire (see Appendix A). My recruitment of professional teachers from the local school district centered on two elementary schools, Forest Valley and Arnold Elementary, with which I

⁵ When using the term “teachers”, this refers to both professional and pre-service teachers, unless otherwise stated.

already had a working relationship with the principals due to my involvement in afterschool programs, and in the case of Arnold Elementary, prior research as well. In addition to our established relationship, based on the local school district's website, Forest Valley and Arnold Elementary were ideal locations to recruit participants for this particular study due to the high percentage of African American students (43% and 55%, respectively; May, 2015) and low-income students (68% and 76%, respectively; May 2015), which often correlates with the proportion of AAE-speakers (Washington & Craig, 1998). Professional teachers were recruited using two different recruiting methods: in-person meeting with principals and distribution of fliers via email. In addition to classroom teachers, all other regular assisting teachers within the classroom or specialists were invited to participate (such as a teacher's aide, student teacher, or librarian). This process resulted in a total of 29 professional teachers, 16 from Forest Valley and 13 from Arnold Elementary. Half of the teachers from Forest Valley opted to also participate in the follow-up focus group.

Pre-service teachers were recruited through the faculty teaching associated coursework within the College of Education at the University of Illinois. Specifically two course instructors, one in Curriculum and Instruction and one in Special Education, agreed to complete the initial part of our study, which included listening to stimuli and completing questionnaires, during one of their class periods. It was emphasized that study participation was not required for the course. A total of 52 pre-service teachers elected to participate in this study: 30 from the special education class and 22 from the class in curriculum and instruction. All the pre-service teachers from the course in curriculum and instruction identified as pre-service *English* teachers specifically. We held a follow-up

focus group for each class of pre-service teachers that was scheduled at a separate time via email. Specifically, six pre-service teachers participated from the special education class and four from curriculum and instruction class.

Characteristics of both the professional and pre-service teachers, collected through a demographic questionnaire administered during data collection, are summarized in Table 1. Teachers in the current study, combining the professional and pre-service samples, self-identified mostly as White ($n=67$ of 87 teachers), female ($n=71$), and monolingual English-speaking ($n=62$) teachers. Although the questionnaire asked participants to list their spoken dialect(s), the majority did not answer this question. For those that did, “Midwest” dialect ($n=27$) was the most popular, followed by “American” dialect ($n=7$), “American and Midwest” dialect ($n=5$), and “English” dialect ($n=4$). Other dialects listed ($n=6$) included Chinese, the local town, a neighboring state, a nearby metropolitan city, and ‘SAE’. A large number of the teachers ($n=36$) in the sample reported teaching at least one grade or subject in elementary education, while the majority of teachers ($n=59$) had zero to five years of teaching experience.

To get a sense of how representative the sample was of all teachers in the local school district, Table 2 provides a comparison between the teacher participants and all teachers in the district in regard to racial identification and gender. Specifically, the demographic representation of White professional teachers and White pre-service teachers in our sample closely matched the demographic representation of White teachers based on the local school district’s website (May, 2015). However, the demographic representation for other races of teachers was not as comparable (See Table 2).

Furthermore, our sample had a smaller representation of male teachers when compared to the representation of male teachers in the local school district.

Child speaker participant. Child participants were recruited solely for assistance in developing the four speech samples that served as listener stimuli. To be as authentic as possible and control for content (cf. Crowl and MacGintie procedures, 1974), the development of the speech stimuli began through the recruitment of one child speaker. Given the study's focus on boys who speak AAE, inclusionary criteria for the child speaker were as follows: a) male, monolingual, born in the United States, and identified as African American, by parent report or school record; b) a speaker of AAE as measured by my own listener judgment (cf. Oetting & McDonald, 2002) and the Diagnostic Evaluation of Language Variation – Screener (DELV; Seymour, Roeper, & de Villiers, 2003); c) not enrolled in special education services based on caregiver and/or teacher report, and d) in K-2nd grade. The early grade requirement was intended to help ensure that a transcription of the derived speech sample could be read by child actors from middle grade school, a point which will soon become relevant. The intersection of “African American” and “male” criteria was chosen due to several factors including: a) the overrepresentation of African American males in special education (Harry & Anderson, 1994), b) the disproportionate number of African American male students who receive disciplinary referrals and expulsions (Townsend, 2000), and c) the role that cultural factors may have on the academic performance of African American males in the classroom (Noguera, 2003). To help identify key recruitment criteria, parents/caregivers of each potential child speaker participant were asked to fill out a questionnaire (see Appendix B).

Recruitment included talking with teachers and parents from an elementary school and a local Boys and Girls Club. Based on the assessment of four different children, LeBron was selected as a child who met all the inclusionary criteria. Specifically, LeBron's mother reported that LeBron was monolingual, born in the United States, African American, and was not enrolled in special education services. Via listener perception of his mother and himself, I perceived LeBron to be an AAE-speaker. LeBron's dialect density based on spontaneous speech samples will be discussed in more detail under procedures. At the time of testing, LeBron was a first grader aged six years, seven months and his results on the DELV for dialect variation and degree of risk for a language disorder demonstrated "Strong Variation from MAE" and "Lowest Risk for Language disorder," respectively. Of all the potential child speakers assessed, LeBron was the only one who was categorized by the DELV as the lowest risk of language disorders.

Child actor participants. Consistent with procedures from Crowl and MacGintie (1974), two child actor participants were also recruited in order to act out two scripts derived from the child speaker participant (procedural details to follow); the speech sample of the child actors were audio-recorded and used to derive the final stimuli for the listeners. Given the interest in comparing perceptions of AAE and MAE within boys who were each native speakers of one of the two dialects, the criteria were as follows: a) male, monolingual, born in the United States and identified as African American or White, by parent report or school record; b) a speaker of AAE or MAE, respectively, as measured by the DELV; c) not enrolled in special education services based on caregiver and/or teacher report; and d) elementary school-age between 3rd and

5th grade. In addition, given the need for the child actors to read prepared scripts with relative accuracy, additional inclusionary criteria included no articulation errors as determined by the Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation (GFTA-2; Goldman, R. & Fristoe, M., 2000)⁶, average or above reading proficiency (e.g., fluency, comprehension, rate) based on the Gray Oral Reading Test – Fifth Edition (GORT-5; Weiderholt, J. L., & Bryant, B. R., 2001), and the scores on the DELV screening for risk of language disorder must demonstrate “lowest risk” for language disorders. Measures of non-verbal intelligence were also collected using the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence – Third Edition (TONI-3; Brown, L., Sherbenou, R. J., & Johnsen, S. K., 1997), but scores were not used as inclusionary criteria. Assessments were conducted across two sessions and were conducted at the child’s home or school.

Recruitment focused on talking to staff, distributing fliers, and approaching parents across two different local elementary schools and a local Boys and Girls Club. Of the nine children assessed, Marshawn and Volder were selected as the best match with the inclusionary criteria and had the added benefit of being able to most fluently read the scripts in both presented dialects when practiced.

Marshawn. Marshawn was a 4th grade African American boy who spoke AAE based on my own listener perception of his mother and himself. At the time of testing, Marshawn appeared to be an energetic and inquisitive young boy who stated that he loved to read. He said that he especially enjoyed reading the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series and he liked to play games. I focused on building a rapport with Marshawn through talking about his likes, school, and playing tic-tac-toe. He was categorized as “strong

⁶ excluding predetermined phonological differences associated with dialect difference

variation from MAE” and “lowest risk for disorder” based on the DELV. His scores on the GFTA-2, GORT-5, and TONI-3 were all within the typical range with no noted articulation errors. He was not receiving any special education services based on parent report. See Table 3 for a summary of his assessment results.

Volder. Volder was a 5th grade White boy, who speaks MAE based on my own listener perception of his mother and himself. At the time of testing, Volder appeared to be a curious/verbose young boy who claimed that he loved *Star Wars*. His mother reported that Volder was a very gifted reader, but that this had not always been the case. Volder stated that he also liked to play games. I focused on building rapport with Volder through talking about movies he wished he could watch and playing tic-tac-toe. He was categorized as “speaking MAE” and “lowest risk for disorder” based on the DELV. His scores on the GFTA-2, GORT-5, and TONI-3 were all within or above the typical range with no noted articulation errors, though his reading in particular fell within the range of “Very Superior.” He was not receiving any special education services based on parent report. See Table 3 for a summary of his assessment results. Though the study was not focused on direct experimental comparison between the two child reader participants, it was notable that Volder was one year ahead of Marshawn in school and likely to be recognized as a stronger reader based on standardized assessments.

Procedures

Experimental stimuli. The fundamental component of the Lambert “matched-guise” methodology is that listeners are naïve to the fact that they are listening to different stimuli from the same individual. Given the focus of the present study on perceptions of AAE versus MAE, the intent was to collect speech samples of both

dialects from the same individuals—specifically Marshawn and Volder. In order to control the content of the samples, both boys were asked to enact specific analogous scripts—one written in MAE and one written in AAE. The script in AAE was derived directly from LeBron, the child speaker, and then translated into MAE. The four steps involved in creating the speech sample stimuli are summarized in Figure 1.

Step 1: Eliciting child speaker sample. Language samples were elicited from the child speaker, LeBron, using two cartoon videos available on YouTube, one entitled “Larva in New York” and the other “Larva House Full.” These videos are computer-animated comedies about two larvae that live in New York created by Tuba Entertainment in South Korea. This cartoon series was selected given its short nonverbal action-packed narratives and the inclusion of main characters without clear racial identification: Red and Yellow are larvae, aptly-named for their color, with a cast of regular friends. After presentation of the videos (approximately 1 ½ and 3 minutes, respectively), LeBron was asked to describe the videos; this was done using two different prompts: tell me about your favorite part of the story and tell the story back to me in your own words. Both samples were audio and video recorded using a Sony mini cassette recorder with an external microphone and a Canon Power Shot S750 Digital Elph camera.

Step 2: Creating the scripts. Research team members transcribed LeBron’s two speech samples orthographically into Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT; Miller & Iglesias, 2010). I conducted consensus passes with each transcriber to ensure that the transcriptions were accurate and aligned with LeBron’s use of AAE. The two speech samples were 328 and 259 number of total words in length for the New York

and House Full transcripts respectively. From these transcriptions, I selected a sub-sample from each transcript that I felt contained the most key story elements (e.g., character names, setting, plot); the two sub-samples were 126 and 190 number of total words in length for the New York and House Full transcripts respectively. Next, myself and two other self-identified bidialectal (speakers of AAE and MAE) African American female graduate/masters students in SHS met to determine which of the two sub-samples contained the highest density of African American English features, both linguistic and paralinguistic. We independently reviewed the two sub-samples for morphological, syntactical, grammatical, and phonological features of AAE (see Washington and Craig, 1994) in order to determine linguistic dialect density. To determine dialect density, the number of AAE tokens in each sub-sample was divided by the total number of words in that sub-sample (see Oetting & McDonald, 2002). The final calculations were then averaged across the three of us. The calculations for AAE dialect density measures (DDM) for the New York and House Full sub-samples were 42% and 57%, respectively.

Next, we reviewed pitch, stress/intonation, prosody (e.g., rhythm), and phonology (cf. Ohala, Dunn & Sprouse, 2004) features of AAE to determine paralinguistic dialect density (cf. Oetting & McDonald, 2002; Wyatt, 1996). The graduate students and I independently listened to the sub-samples through Koss R/80 headphones and rated them on an adapted density-use Likert-scale (Wyatt, 1996, p.103) from 1 to 7 (i.e., from “no evidence of AAE use” to “heavy use of AAE on 3-4 dimensions”). See Appendix C for an example of the rating sheet. The final scores were averaged across the three of us. The scores for the New York and House Full sub-samples were 4.5 and 5.67, respectively. The “House Full” sub-sample had the highest number of AAE features, both

linguistically and paralinguistically. Consequently, this selected sub-sample was selected and then translated into the MAE sub-sample using consensus, again across the three bidialectal reviewers. This process resulted in two linguistically equivalent scripts: one in AAE and one in MAE.

Step 3. Deriving speech samples from the child actors. Once the two scripts had been developed, they were presented to the two child actors, Volder and Marshawn, to act out. Specifically, the scripts were typed in large red font and printed onto cardstock and slipped into see-thru plastic covers, creating a sort of sub-samples notebook, for easy handling. Repeated trials of this task led to the realization that the children needed substantial support to take on the less familiar identity. Consequently, each script was paired with a visual “avatar” to help the child actors “get in character.” Specifically, the script written in MAE was paired with a fictitious 7-yr-old White boy who the child actors were told, “liked to play baseball and video games and go camping in the summer.” In comparison, the script written in AAE was paired with a fictitious boy who the child actors were told, “liked to play basketball and video games and go to church with his grandma in the summer.” The scripts and associated avatars are included in Appendix D. In addition to the visual support, the child actors were also presented with an audio example of the two scripts—specifically the original sub-sample as spoken in AAE by LeBron and an example of the MAE translation being spoken a 7-yr-old White boy and friend of the first author, whose home dialect is MAE. Consistent with Crowl and MacGintie (1974) procedures, the child actor participants had the option to read the samples until they felt comfortable, and all trials were audio taped. In sum, this process

resulted in multiple samples of each of the two child actors reading the scripts in both AAE and MAE.

Step 4: Selecting the four specific sub-sample stimuli. All practice recordings from Marshawn and Volder were reviewed to select a specific section of the script that served as the best reflection of AAE and MAE available from each child. Considerations included: a) how closely the child actors stuck to the script; b) the amount of background noise; c) how much practice each child reader had; and d) how fluent/natural the child's speech sounded. From this review, a 51-54 word segment was selected. It was difficult to find a longer segment that was not compromised by background noise or by the child going off script, most often by reverting to linguistic features of their home dialect. For instance, although the MAE sub-sample was written as, "And *then*..." Marshawn would often say, "And *den*..." Conversely, when the AAE sub-sample was written as "And *den*..." Volder sometimes pronounced it as, "And *then*..." Though short, previous studies have noted significant listener differences using stimuli as short as 12-17 words (see O'Connor et al., 2014; Eadie, Doyle, Hansen, & Beaudin, 2008).

Given that the speakers did not always adhere precisely to the script, especially when it came to using their non-native dialect, dialect density was calculated on the four final speech stimuli to ensure they remained representative of the targeted dialects, at least linguistically. Specifically, we wanted to ensure that Marshawn's and Volder's AAE stimuli contained more AAE features than did their MAE stimuli. Dialect density was calculated the same way specified previously⁷, consistent with Oetting and

⁷ These numbers were averaged between two, myself included, bidialectal graduate students instead of the three who were used previously.

MacDonald (2002) and Wyatt (1996). In both cases, the AAE stimuli demonstrated a higher density of the linguistic features associated with AAE (59.9% in the case of Marshawn and 49.5% in the case of Volder) than did the two MAE stimuli (11.5% in the case of Marshawn and 0% in the case of Volder). See Appendix E for the specific section of the script associated with the final speech stimuli that listeners heard. In sum, this 4-step procedure resulted in four final speech stimuli, an AAE and MAE sample from Volder and an AAE and MAE sample from Marshawn that were all roughly equivalent in linguistic content.

Listening task/Teacher perception rating questionnaire. Consistent with prior procedures (Cecil, 1988; Crowl & MacGintie, 1974; DeThorne & Watkins, 2001; Rice et al., 1993), listener groups were played each of the four final speech stimuli in succession. Each stimulus lasted approximately 20 seconds, and the teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire immediately following each recording. Using a Likert scale adapted from prior studies (DeThorne & Watkins, 2001; Rice et al., 1993), the Teacher Perception Rating Questionnaire (TPRQ) included questions that directly related to the academic and personal characteristics of the speaker (see Appendix F). Given that prior studies have found that the order of presentation can impact ratings (e.g., Crowl & MacGintie, 1974; DeThorne & Watkins, 2001), approximately one-half of teachers received Order A and the other half received Order B. See Table 4 for the two different orders of stimuli presentation.

For each listener group, the listening procedures consisted of similar protocol. Listener groups ranged in size from 8 to 15 and everyone within a group began in the same location, which was either a library or classroom. TPRQ packets were pre-arranged

and distributed one per seat. The packets consisted of the consent form, a demographic sheet, and four different rating sheets, one for each stimulus. The rating sheets were arranged in the order in which the stimuli would be presented. Half the packets, marked A, had questionnaires arranged in Order A and half the packets, marked B, had questionnaires arranged in Order B.

The packet was reviewed carefully with all participants, this included providing any clarifications concerning the consent form and expounding upon information regarding the listening task. Time was allowed for questions. After reviewing the packet and filling out the consent and demographic forms, the short video clip (30 seconds) used to elicit the original speech samples, Larva Full House, was shown to give context to the upcoming stimuli. After viewing the video, the teachers within a group were divided into two subgroups, A or B, based on the order of different stimuli to be presented⁸. This order was marked on their packets accordingly, so that each teacher knew which group to join for presentation of the stimuli, which was divided across two rooms. In each location, the stimuli were presented aurally via QuickTime, a computer program on a MacBook Air and with accompanying speakers. Participants were given directions to listen to each sample carefully and then to fill out the questions for the associated child. Teachers were told that the children were fourth and fifth graders who were retelling the narrative from the video. They were asked to wait to ask questions about the children until questionnaires associated with all four stimuli were completed.

⁸ Note that one teacher group, specifically the pre-service teachers from the special education class divided prior to viewing the video; consequently, the video was shown separately to Groups A and B before listening to the speech stimuli.

Teacher focus group interviews. Following completion of the questionnaire packets, listeners were invited to participate in a related focus group. Three focus group interviews were conducted with three different groups of listeners: 8 Forest Valley teachers, 4 pre-service English teachers (from the course in Curriculum and Instruction), and 6 pre-service Special Education teachers. Due to logistical differences across settings, the protocol for scheduling the focus group interviews varied. At Forest Valley Elementary, teachers were invited to participate in the focus group directly following the presentation of the stimuli. However, due to time constraints for the pre-service teachers, email addresses were collected at the time of the listening task and participants were contacted a few days after. Pre-service English teachers' focus group took place within a week of the listening task. Pre-service Special Education teachers' focus group took place within three weeks of the listening task.

Focus group interview conditions. The purpose of the focus group interview was: a) to gather more detailed information about the participants' background and experience with language differences/dialects; b) to observe firsthand the participants' understanding of AAE features and the differentiation from MAE features; and c) to collect any additional comments regarding the perception of speakers of AAE and MAE. The investigator began with asking interviewees about the stimuli that they had heard. Later, the topic of language and language differences in the classroom was introduced (See Appendix G for Focus Group Interview protocol). During this time, I continued to facilitate and monitor the discussion. I specifically facilitated the teachers' discussions of race and dialect first by asking teachers to talk about their English language learners. I started with this subject because language can be a more tangible topic to discuss than

dialect. Then I continued to facilitate by posing questions that involved discussing other dialects of English such as Australian English or British English and then comparing these dialects to AAE. I also posed questions that encouraged teachers to reflect upon the similarities and differences between MAE-speaking African American children and AAE-speaking African American children. Scenarios like these appeared to ignite a more robust and honest conversation about a topic that is often challenging to discuss. All focus group interviews were audio-recorded for later transcription.

In order to give participants an opportunity to review information for accuracy, clarify any statements, and provide additional information, member checks were performed throughout the interview by reformulating key ideas with prompts such as: “So, what I hear you saying is...” During the focus group interviews the investigator highlighted key takeaway points to see if the participants agreed. The focus group interviews lasted from 30 to 50 minutes.

In addition, I also interviewed the principal from Forest Valley. The interview was audio-recorded, conducted in the principal’s office at a time convenient for her, and lasted approximately 37 minutes. This interview was used primarily to guide interpretation of the Forest Valley focus group interview.

In summary, analyses for the present data focused primarily on data collected from the TPRQ and focus group interviews. See Table 5 for a summary of participant information and raw data.

Data Analyses

Quantitative analysis. The TPRQ ratings and open-ended responses were first entered into an Excel spreadsheet for ease of management and organization. The data

were then entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program for statistical analyses. All data entries were entered by an undergraduate research team member and double-checked for accuracy by another research team member. Preliminary analyses included descriptive summaries of each questionnaire items, followed by mean comparisons to determine whether the ratings differed based on the order in which the stimuli were presented (Order A v. Order B) or based on the status of the teacher (Professional v. Pre-Service). The written responses to the open-ended questions were reviewed to provide contextual information about teachers' perceptions and to guide our interpretations of the quantitative and qualitative data.

To address the initial study question regarding whether or not teachers' perceptions of children's personality and academic potential differently based on dialect variation, specifically MAE v. AAE, we completed mean comparisons of teacher ratings between MAE and AAE stimuli within each child actor using paired sample t-tests. The open-ended TRPQ responses and qualitative analyses of the focus group interviews were also utilized to guide interpretation (see next section). For the White child, it was predicted that he would be rated higher in both personality and academic performance based on an initial impression of his MAE stimulus when compared to his AAE stimulus. To my knowledge, no prior study has reported results specifically comparing impressions of MAE and AAE in a White native speaker of MAE; however I based this impression on the documented privileging of MAE linguistic features within educational settings (Alim, 2007; Alim 2010; Cross, DeVaney & Jones, 2001; DeMeis & Turner, 1978; Hollie, 2001; LeMoine & Hollie, 2007; Lippi-Green, 1994) and the presumption that Volder's unfamiliarity with AAE would make him sound less "natural" in this dialect (e.g., less

fluent, less likely to emulate the associated paralinguistic features). For the African American child, these predictions were less clear given the potential conflict between comfort/fluency (preference goes to home dialect of AAE) and privileged linguistic features (preference goes to MAE). However, prior literature would suggest a listener preference for MAE (Baugh, 2004; Baugh, 2007; Cecil, 1988).

Qualitative analysis. To address our second set of questions regarding teachers' perceptions of dialect variation, MAE and AAE particularly, we transcribed the principal interview and all three focus group interviews. We anticipated that both linguistic and paralinguistic features would be salient to listeners, with paralinguistic features in particular being important for global impressions of dialect and identity. In addition, we anticipated the AAE would be associated with more negative student attributes and be perceived as a less valued variation of English relative to MAE. All recorded interviews were orthographically transcribed by undergraduate members of the research team. As the primary investigator, I reviewed all transcriptions with the original transcribers and resolved any discrepancies through consensus. The three focus group transcripts were the focus of categorical coding, while the principal interview transcript was reviewed for relevant background information on Forest Valley's school community and culture.

Specific to analysis of the focus group transcripts, the research team conducted and discussed preliminary passes through one of the focus group transcripts in order to define two categorical codes consistent with our second study questions (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). During this process, we met to compare notes, ask questions, provide feedback, discuss the codes, and revise the codes as needed. With feedback from the research team, we defined the categorical codes as follows: a) Salient Features of the

Stimuli, defined as *any utterance where a teacher has commented about a specific linguistic or paralinguistic feature of a child participants' speech sample/stimulus, including: articulation, grammar, syntax, vocabulary, tone, pitch, intonation, volume, rate, fluency or emotion/personality trait* and b) General Perceptions of MAE or AAE Dialect, defined as *any utterance when a teacher has commented on the perception of MAE or AAE dialect itself or commented on the perception of the user of the dialect.*

Coding focused on text for the teachers only, not the investigator, and not all text had to be coded. In addition, double-coding of the text was allowed.

After development of the two initial codes and related guidelines, each transcript was independently coded by three team members who then met to review and discuss the coding before the results were entered into Atlas.ti QDA software (ATLAS.ti, 1999). This initial pass captured 46% (437/942 lines) of the Forest Valley interview transcript, 23% (132/562 lines) of the Pre-service English teachers' transcript, and 51% (37/ 726) of the Pre-service special Education teachers' transcripts.

I conducted a second pass on all coded text using written memos and summary displays via Atlas.ti to assist with organizing and summarizing the data (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2002). Specifically, I reread all the Salient Features and the General Perceptions codes to develop more focused coding categories to narrow the scope of analysis. Focused codes were generated by either splitting larger codes into smaller codes or by designating the larger code as a more focused code itself, however the data best fit the code. A meeting with Dr. DeThorne and a peer debriefer helped challenge and clarify the emergent categories. Throughout this iterative process, I further explored the data and its connection to existing literature and theories (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) while

also remaining open to new theoretical perspectives on perceptions of dialect, consistent with grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). Specifically, Salient Features was further delineated into 3 focused coding categories: Linguistic, Paralinguistic, and Global Aspects. Similarly, General Perceptions was further delineated into 6 focused coding categories: (1) Dialect Description, (2) Personal Reflections, (3) Personality & Behavior, (4) Experience of AAE-speaking Kids, (5) Role of Teacher, and (6) Societal Views. See Appendix H for definitions and examples of codes.

After the second pass was completed to focus codes, all data were reviewed iteratively to identify relevant themes triangulated across focus group transcript coding categories, TPRQ ratings, TPRQ open-ended responses, and comments from the principal interview. During this process, Dr. DeThorne along with two peer debriefers (Guba & Lincoln, 1985), a PhD student in SHS and a PhD student from the department of Educational Psychology, served as critical listeners questioning my thought processes, revealing my biases, and helping me shape the patterns of data into tangible themes related to my study questions. This iterative process of analysis led to two emergent themes: a) Prominence of Paralinguistics and b) Maintenance of the linguistic status quo.

Managing data quality. Multiple techniques were used to enhance trustworthiness for my study (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The aforementioned member checks were used during the interview process in order to give participants an opportunity to react and respond to my data, interpretations, and/or conclusions. Peer debriefing occurred each week via lab meetings and was used to establish credibility. Debriefings also occurred with fellow PhD students and Dr. DeThorne. The purpose of using disinterested peers to debrief the researcher was to “keep me honest.” These

individuals served as peers and mentor and probed with questions regarding my positionality with accompanying biases, methodological issues, ethical matters, working hypotheses, and research design. As was mentioned previously, three research team members independently coded all interview transcripts during the first cycle. Codes were compared until consensus was met. Finally, to assess confirmability, following Halpern's (1983) guidelines, I maintained an accurate audit trail by keeping and organizing: a) my IRB approval notice, b) my proposal for research, c) all of my signed letters of consent, d) my protocols for interviews, e) my transcribed interviews along with my audio tapes of the interviews, f) any testing, evaluations, or documents I completed with participants with pseudonyms provided, g) my video tapes in electronic files, h) dated notes from my peer debriefings, i) memos of my emerging themes, j) my survey protocols along with the results, k) and any referential adequacy materials (see Akkerman, Admiraal, Brekelmans, & Oost, 2008).

Figures and Tables

Table 1.
Demographic data across both professional and pre-service teachers

	Professional Teachers (N=29)	Pre-Service Teachers (N=52)
Race		
White	24	43
African American	1	2
Asian	3	4
Hispanic/Latin@	0	2
2 or more races	0	1
n/a	1	0
Gender		
Female	26	45
Male	3	6
Not specified	0	1
Years Teaching		
0-5	15	44
6-10	7	0
11-15	2	0
16+	5	1
n/a	0	7
Grade Level Teaches		
Elementary School	28	7
Middle School	0	23
High School	0	8
Other/Mixed	1	14

Table 2.
Demographic comparisons between teachers in the present study and teachers from the entire local school district

	Local School District's Teacher Demographics	Teachers' Demographics
Race		
	White 84%	82.7%
	Black 7.8%	3.7%
	Asian 4.7%	8.6%
	Hispanic 3.1%	2.5%
	Other .4%	2.5%
Gender		
	Male 27%	11.1%
	Female 73%	87.7%

Table 3.
Child actor participant profiles

	Marshawn	Volder
Grade	4 th	5 th
Age (start)	9;11	10;10
Gender	Male	Male
Race/Ethnicity	African American	White
DELV – Variation from MAE/Risk for language disorder	Strong variation from MAE/lowest risk for disorder	MAE/lowest risk for disorder
GFTA-2	within norms	within norms
GORT-5	“Average” (34%ile)	“Very superior” (98%ile)
TONI-3	85 (16%ile)	97 (42 %ile)

Note. DELV = Diagnostic Evaluation for Language Variation – Screener. GFTA-2 = Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation – 2nd edition. GORT-5 = Gray Oral Reading Test – 5th edition. TONI-3 = Test of Nonverbal Intelligence – 3rd edition.

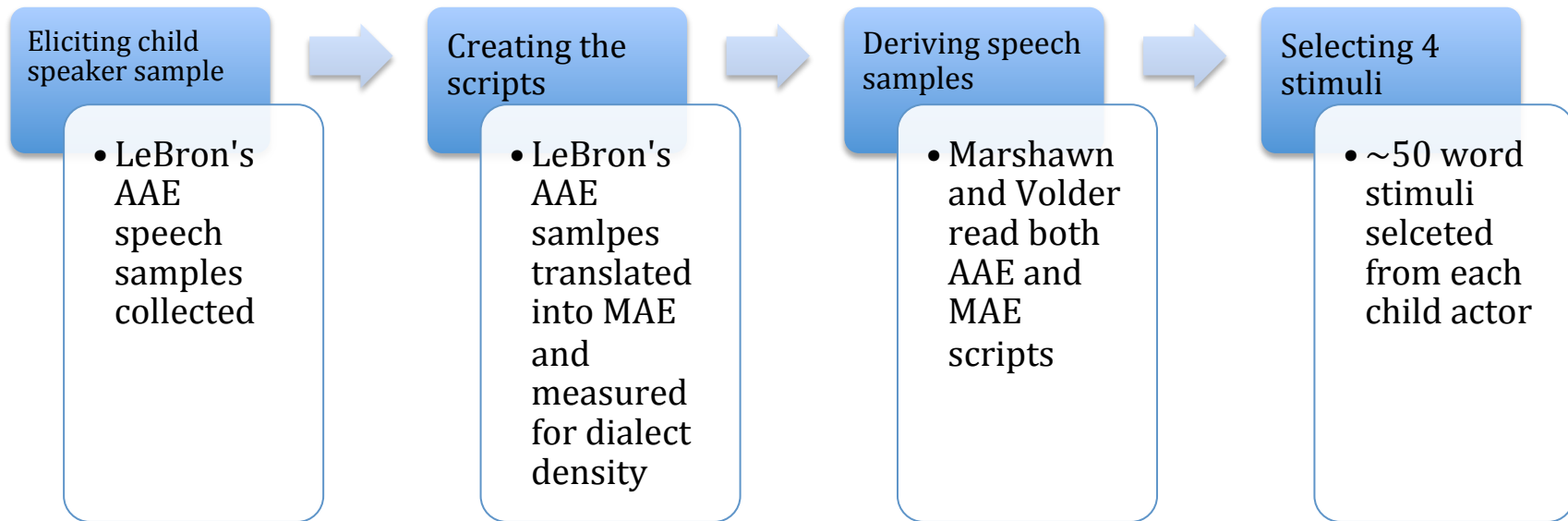


Figure 1. Four-step procedure for developing the experimental stimuli.

Table 4.
Stimuli order for teachers' listening task

	Stimuli Order			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Order A	Marshawn ^{AAE}	Volder ^{AAE}	Marshawn ^{MAE}	Volder ^{MAE}
Order B	Volder ^{MAE}	Marshawn ^{MAE}	Volder ^{AAE}	Marshawn ^{AAE}

Table 5

Summary of all raw data captured for the present study and separate by site/teacher group

	Forest Valley teachers	Arnold teachers	Pre-service English teachers	Pre-service Special Education teachers	Totals
Demographic forms	16	13	22	30	81
Total number of TPRQs distributed	64	52	88	120	324
Total number of TPRQs completed					
Likert-scale	56	51	84	120	311
Open-ended	59	52	79	116	306
Principal interview	37:10min	-	-	-	37:10min
Focus group interviews	48:08 min	-	36:18 min	48:22 min	132:48 min

Note. Four Teacher Perception Rating Questionnaires (TPRQs) were distributed to each teacher participant, one for each stimulus. Likert-scale portions of the ratings questionnaire were counted as “completed” if at least one rating (certain/uncertain or neither) was made in the academic section *and* at least one rating was made in the personality section. Open-ended portion of the TPRQ was considered “completed” if at least one of the two questions had been answered.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Data from Teacher Perception Rating Questionnaire

Descriptives. The Teacher Perception Rating Questionnaire (TPRQ) included ten questions, five focused on academic performance (items #1-5 of five questions) and five focused on personality (items #6-10). The academic portion of the TPRQ was formulated to create an overall perception of how this child would do academically in a classroom setting. The personality portion of the TPRQ was developed to create an overall perception of how likable/non-threatening this child would be in a classroom, to both peers and teachers. Each question was associated with a Likert scale response, 1 to 5, with 5 representing the most desirable end of the scale (e.g., highest academic success, most likeable), and each item was associated with the opportunity to circle “Uncertain” or “Certain” in association with the rating. Although the Uncertain/Certain option associated with each item was intended to accompany the numeric rating, fewer than half of all teacher responses were rated this way. Specifically, this project generated a total of 3,240 TPRQ responses (81 teachers x 4 stimuli x 10 items). Of those 3,240 responses, 20% (651) were rated with a paired judgment of certain/uncertain, 73% (2,349) were rated without providing any judgment of certain/uncertain, and 7% (240) were unrated. Of the 651 responses that included both ratings and certainty judgments, 82% (513) were delineated as “Uncertain” and 27% (138) were delineated as “Certain;” Table 7 provides a summary of these responses by questionnaire item. It is clear from Table 7 that listeners utilized Uncertain more often than Certain, and this pattern held across items. All rated responses, regardless of whether or not an indication of certainty was provided

(651+2,349 =3,000), were included in the quantitative analyses to address study question #1. In contrast, the 240 unrated responses had to be excluded from the analysis. However, Table 8 provides a summary of the number of unrated responses by item, which ranged from 6% (21/324) to 10% (31/324). See Figure 2 for a visual representation of how responses were categorized for analysis.

To begin exploring teachers' perceptions, Table 9 provides a summary of teachers' rated responses for each stimulus by item. Taking the first item related to Intelligence as an example, Marshawn's mean score for this item was 3.21 when acting out the MAE stimulus and 3.19 when acting out the AAE stimulus—both roughly corresponded with “Average” on the Likert scale provided. Mean differences favored the AAE stimulus in 8 of the 10 items but mean differences were relatively small, ranging from .01 on the High Grades item to .16 for the Not Sent Out of Class item. In comparison, Volder's mean differences ranged from .15 on Not a Behavior Problem to 1.1 on Intelligence and favored his MAE stimulus in all but the Not a Behavior Problem item. In particular, the mean differences for the Academic items appear to be consistently larger than the mean differences on the Personality items.

Based on prior literature (Boone & Boone, 2012) and the goal of increasing the stability of measurement, composite scores for both Academics and Personality were created for each child based on the available scores for all relevant items. Specifically, a child's Academic Composite was an average of all available ratings for items #1-5, and the Personality Composite was an average of all available ratings for items #6-10. To maximize the number of cases, a composite score was derived from each listener/teacher who provided a rating for at least one of the five questions in a composite. Final

Academic and Personality Composite scores per stimulus were calculated by averaging all individual teachers' composites included in the analyses. A summary of the Academic and Personality Composites is displayed in Table 9.

Preliminary analyses. Prior to analyses aimed at directly addressing mean comparisons of Academic and Personality Composites associated with the MAE and AAE samples, preliminary analyses examined whether the Academic and Personality Composites for the four stimuli differed based on the order in which they were presented (Order A v. Order B) or based on the teacher status of the listener (Professional v. Pre-service Teacher).

Testing for order effects. Two 2-way repeated measure ANOVAs were run to test for order effects, specifically to evaluate whether or not the order in which the samples were presented affected the mean ratings for the Academic and Personality Composites. In both models the independent variables consisted of the stimuli (Marshawn^{MAE}, Marshawn^{AAE}, Volder^{MAE}, and Volder^{AAE}) and order (A v. B), but the dependent variable was the Academic Composite in one model and the Personality Composite in the other. Based on prior studies, we anticipated significant main effects for both Stimuli and Order, but without a significant interaction (Crowl & MacGintie, 1974; DeThorne & Watkins, 2001). In other words, we anticipated that order would impact the absolute value of ratings but not the relative ranking across the four stimuli, which was indeed the finding. Specifically, for Order A, in which Marshawn^{AAE} was presented first, followed by Volder^{AAE}, Marshawn^{MAE}, and Volder^{MAE}, higher ratings occurred for all four stimuli. Conversely, for Order B, in which Volder^{MAE} was presented first, followed by Marshawn^{MAE}, Volder^{AAE}, and Marshawn^{AAE}, ratings were relatively

lower for all four stimuli. This trend was seen for both Academic and Personality Composites. See Figures 3 and 4 for graphs presenting the order effects. The main effects for Order bordered on statistical significance in both cases: $F_{(1, 75)} = 5.890$, $p = .018$ for the Academic Composite and $F_{(1, 75)} = 4.809$, $p = .031$ for the Personality Composite. However there were no statistically significant two-way interactions between Stimuli and Order: $F_{1, 75} = 2.299$, $p = .134$ for the Academic Composite and $F_{1, 75} = 1.093$, $p = .299$ for the Personality Composite⁹.

Testing for teacher status effects. Similar to statistical analyses for Order effects, two 2-way repeated measure ANOVAs were run to test for Teacher Status effects, specifically whether or not the status of the teacher (Pre-service v. Professional) was associated with different mean ratings for the Academic and Personality Composites across the four stimuli. No prior studies informed my predictions, but I anticipated that even if there was a main effect for Teacher Status, there would not be a significant interaction between Stimuli and Teacher Status. There were no significant main effects for Teacher Status for either the Academic ($F_{1, 75} = .309$, $p = .580$) or Personality Composites ($F_{1, 75} = .474$, $p = .493$). See Figures 5 and 6 for visual representation of means. Similar to the order effects, there were no statistically significant two-way interactions between Stimuli and Teacher Status for either the Academic Composite ($F_{1, 75} = .592$, $p = .44$) or the Personality Composite ($F_{1, 75} = .060$, $p = .807$).

⁹ Main effects for stimuli are not reported here given our experimental comparison was focused within child (reported later via t-test) rather than across all four stimuli.”

Given that the relative rankings of the four stimuli did not differ as a function of either order or teacher status, data were collapsed across these variables leading to a total of 81 teachers that could be used for the primary analyses.

Primary Analyses.

Q1: Based on a brief audio sample, do teachers perceive children's personal and academic potential differently based on dialect variation, specifically AAE v. MAE?

One goal of this study was to determine if, after listening to brief audio stimuli, teachers perceived academic and personality potential of school-age children differently based on dialect differences, specifically MAE and AAE. Paired-samples t-tests were used to determine whether there were statistically significant mean differences between the Academic and Personality composites of Marshawn acting out a script in MAE and AAE and the Academic and Personality composites of Volder acting out a script in MAE and AAE.

Mean differences between MAE and AAE stimuli within Child Actor

Marshawn. Marshawn^{MAE}'s Academic Composite received a mean score of 3.21. This score correlates with a Likert-scale rating of "average." Similarly, Marshawn^{AAE} received a mean score of 3.28, which again correlates to a Likert-scale rating of "average." The Academic composites for Marshawn revealed a mean difference of .07 ($SD = .57$), which favored Marshawn^{AAE}. This mean difference was not statistically significant ($t_{77} = 1.07, p = .29$). Comparison of the means for Personality Composite ratings for Marshawn revealed similar results. Marshawn^{MAE} garnered a mean score 3.60, correlating to a Likert-scale rating of "average," but closer to a rating of

“above average” than his Academic Composite scores. Marshawn^{AAE} obtained a mean score of 3.70, presenting a similar Likert-scale rating. An “average” rating for personality can be deduced from the ratings questionnaire as a child who is in the middle for traits such as likability, behavior problem, and maturity. A mean difference of .097 ($SD = .47$) was revealed, which favored Marshawn^{AAE}. As with his Academic Composite ratings, this difference was not statistically significant ($t_{76} = 1.83, p = .07$). Overall, teachers rated Marshawn’s Academic and Personality Composite scores in the “average” range with no statistically significant differences found between his MAE and his AAE stimuli.

Volder. Volder^{MAE}’s Academic Composite received a mean score of 3.55. This score correlates with a Likert-scale rating of “average.” The mean score for Academic Composite for Volder^{AAE} was 2.55, which translates to a “below average” rating on the Likert-scale. The Academic Composite ratings for Volder exhibited a mean difference of 1.00 ($SD = .72$), favoring Volder^{MAE}. This difference is statistically significant ($t_{77} = 12.32, p < .0005$). Likewise, Personality Composite ratings for Volder^{MAE} elicited a mean score of 3.76, a score that correlates to the higher continuum of “average,” while Volder^{AAE} received a mean score of 3.51, associated with a Likert-score rating of “average.” The mean difference between the two scores is .25 ($SD = .52$), favoring Volder^{MAE}. As with the Academic Composite ratings for Volder, this difference was statistically significant ($t_{(77)} = 4.24, p < .0005$). Overall, teachers favored Volder’s MAE stimulus over his AAE stimulus for both Academic and Personality Composite ratings.

Qualitative Analysis

Q2: Part 1: What aspects of dialect variation are most salient to teachers?

The second study question was addressed via two coding passes through the data and triangulation across data sources in search of common themes. This first coding pass revealed a total of 89 codes for Salient Features of Stimuli (from here on referred to as ‘Salient Features’) and 194 codes for General Perceptions of AAE/MAE Dialect/Dialect Users (from here on to be called ‘General Perceptions’), each of which will be discussed in more detail below.

Salient Features. The second pass of the Salient Features category led to three mutually exclusive focused coding categories summarized in Table 11: Linguistic, Paralinguistic, and General Aspects of Communication. Given that the stimuli were designed to control linguistic features, a priori interests led to the distinction between Linguistic versus Paralinguistic aspects of dialect, which led to 31 versus 16 focused codes respectively. The remaining 46 focused codes fell under Global Aspects of Communication. Examples of each are provided in the text that follows.

Linguistic Aspects: “Sometimes struggled with pronunciation.” The category of Linguistic Aspects had a variety of different salient features regarding *what* words were said. Teachers reported features from the linguistic domains of pronunciation, articulation, grammar, phonology and vocabulary.

Among these salient features, teachers commented on the different ways children pronounced words. Concerning articulation, a pre-service special education teacher, spoke about Marshawn’s two stimuli and stated, “...; well two of the samples had, um, I dunno from what I could tell, little tiny speech impediments like ‘then’ was ‘den’ ‘they’ was ‘dey’.” Another participant, studying to become an English teacher, noted the same feature, “One of the ones that I remember noting was um, using like a ‘d’ sound for ‘th’.”

For some teachers, AAE phonological features were viewed as misarticulations rather than dialect features. Alternatively, when commenting about Volder^{MAE}, one teacher felt that “he enunciated really well. Like it wasn’t perfect. He was obviously young, but his syllables were very clear.”

Comments about grammar mostly referred to verb tense issues. One Forest Valley teacher spoke about Volder^{AAE}, “It’s the second one, the one that said ‘stick-ed’ and he also said ‘ran instead of ‘run.’” Adding to remarks about Volder’s AAE stimulus, one teacher noted, “you know he was using the wrong verbs at times. The wrong verb tense.” Another teacher made similar comments, but in regard to Marshawn’s AAE stimulus, “I think it was the third child that I thought used the wrong verb tense.” Similar to the remarks made regarding articulation, some teachers did not recognize that these salient “wrong” grammatical features are in actuality AAE dialect features.

Phonology features were noted entirely by a pre-service English teacher who had taken a linguistic class. When commenting on Volder’s acting out of the AAE script, she felt that “those phonetics might have been unfamiliar.” Forest Valley teachers made the majority of remarks when it came to the children’s vocabulary. When asked to make an overall comment about the stimuli, one teacher reported:

I paid attention to the fact that they called the chameleon an iguana and then like I was kinda thinking about their ability to recognize the animal and things like this like based off of how much they know about the animal.

Overall, the coding revealed that teachers commented on a variety of the linguistics aspects of the stimuli, including articulation, grammar, and vocabulary.

Paralinguistic Aspects: “Fast pace of talking, huskier voice.” The category of Paralinguistic Aspects included a variety of features related to *how* the words were spoken, such as fluency, intonation, rate, and voice.

The aspect of fluency was a paralinguistic feature noted by teachers. Teachers felt that Volder^{MAE} was spoken very fluently. One teacher commented, “I think it was more about the way he spoke and the way he did it with fluency and with like very proper English and I don’t know....” There were also teachers who felt that Marshawn^{AAE} was reading fluently as well, as one teacher stated, “The second boy [Volder^{AAE}] because he was struggling to read it as fluently as the first one [Marshawn^{AAE}] maybe that’s why we thought that he was an ESL learner...” Fluency appeared to be a significant salient feature for many teachers.

Teachers reported that intonation and rate were also as a feature of interest, though not as frequently, when listening to the stimuli. One teacher noted, “I think part of it for me was the intonation, like some of them sounded like they were emphasizing certain words and that makes it sound different each time” while another simply stated, “I noticed speed.”

When commenting on how teachers discerned that Marshawn’s stimuli were from an African American child, two teachers reported that it was the voice that they were most paying attention to: “It was almost like a common voice quality, like his actual like tone, like his voice, like if he was just humming – it’s like soft” and “The first and last boys, um, had voices like they were African American that I recognized.” This aspect of an “African American” voice was difficult to articulate for many teachers. However,

what didn't seem difficult to distinguish is that Marshawn, whether acting in MAE or AAE, was African American.

Global Aspects of Communication: “First impression is he might be an ESL student.” The final characteristics category, Global Aspects of Communication, included any response that commented about features such as accent, emotion, dialect use (without delineating specific dialectal features), content, or race. This category had the largest number of coded quotations from the participants. Teachers' comments in this category seemed to be guided by their overall understanding of a child's speech patterns or demographic type qualities of the child. For example, four quotations were coded as noting one of the children [Volder^{AAE}] as an English Language Learner (ELL). One teacher stated, “One of them sounded like ESL kid for sure.” While another teacher, who agreed with this statement, explained why she felt this way:

I remember noting that um, one of them kind of like stumbled over the like reading or the speaking and so I thought maybe they were a language learner or had difficulties with language, um, just as like an assumption based on the like, few stumbles or like they were talking more slowly than some of the other ones.

Other coded quotations that mentioned global aspects included the association of accent and dialect when listening to the stimuli. A pre-service special education teacher felt that “the accent could have been like from a Latino language, like maybe a Spanish-speaking student.” One participant from Forest Valley stated, “...I don't wanna connect being articulate to necessarily a certain ethnicity, but um, I felt like there was a difference in the dialect there.” Another teacher used dialect alone as a feature to distinguish differences between the stimuli. This teacher used Marshawn's dialect as a point of reference:

And I was definitely paying attention to the dialect in the, uh, like the audio-clips we listened to, as well. That was like one of the main things I think I was using to discern between the different kids. Um, so there was one, and maybe two I think, um, that I thought might've been African American dialect, um, and most've the variation in the placements we're in is African American dialect or Caucasian.

Conversely, another teacher used Volder's MAE stimulus as a point of reference, "I mean I disagree with the way that it is described but I think the first child [Volder^{MAE}] if I remember was like pretty standard...." During the focus group interview with the pre-service special education teachers, a relationship emerged between the coded quotations of use of dialect and comfort. One teacher reported:

In my opinion he [Marshawn^{AAE}] was reading his own dialect so it was something he was comfortable with. And then the second student [Volder^{AAE}], I mean by no means was he reading a foreign language, but it was something that he wasn't used to.

Others noted similar instances such as, "the African American sounded way more comfortable," or "[Volder^{AAE} is] not used to it." There were other teachers who commented on the speech patterns of the children as well, but they spoke about the patterns in terms of style of talking (i.e., "sounded kinda like street talking" or "informal, conversational type"). As yet another way to speak of children's overall speech, some teachers commented on how "articulate" the children were. One teacher in particular from Forest Valley reported a hierarchy of the degree of articulation for the different stimuli, "Cause I feel like...that was the difference, was like a lot of them were fairly

articulate, somewhat articulate, and like really articulate, but they-the ones that were most articulate I felt had the least amount of detail.”

Other quotations coded for global aspects of communication included features of age (e.g., “...they sounded young...”), content (e.g., “...talking about the food more than they needed to...”), code-switching (e.g., “...there’s a good chance that one of the kids is code-switching between like home and peer groups possibly...”), emotion (e.g., “The last child [Volder MAE] was happy to talk about it. Started giggling.”), and race (e.g., “I got a different vibe, I would’ve guessed probably Caucasian or Asian...”). While these global aspects of communication may seem to be the most challenging to specify, they were the largest category under Salient Features when teachers were discussing the stimuli they heard.

General Perceptions of AAE/MAE Dialect. Focused coding for General Perceptions of AAE/MAE Dialect and Users of the Dialect across all three focus group interviews led to five different categories, each of which will be exemplified in the following text. Table 12 provides an overall summary of the mutually exclusive focused coding categories and their frequency in the data set.

Description of Dialect: *“It’s the way they speak naturally.”* Teachers described dialect in a variety of ways, be this implicitly or explicitly, for a total of 97 codes. Dialect descriptors were often offered indirectly while making a statement about another topic. For example, a student studying to become a special education teacher remarked about code-switching in the classroom, “When you’re joking around it’s alright to use, ya know, improper grammar.” However, there were other times when a description of a dialect or how teachers view a certain dialect was made directly. When speaking about

AAE-speaking children, one pre-service special education teacher stated, “It’s like a dialect. I mean it’s their way of talking within their culture.”

During the focus group interview, some participants began to comment on AAE dialect as a language. A third grade Forest Valley teacher, who admittedly had never heard of AAE, began to exhibit her own understanding of the dialect. While making a statement about the parents who speak AAE, she implicitly remarks on her own perceptions:

I can probably bet that most of our parents have never even heard that word AAVE before. You know what I mean? So, if they are speaking that way, they probably don’t even know that that’s another language they’re speaking.

In agreement with the previous teacher, one Forest Valley participant felt that AAE, “[is] another layer of ESL, that maybe we don’t always see.”

Focus group participants didn’t always agree on how to describe dialect. A fifth grade teacher from Forest Valley commented on AAE while demonstrating his own perceptions of the dialect:

Most older African Americans that I know have said ‘no’ that’s not a language, that’s people that didn’t study in school and didn’t learn how to talk right. That’s what it is. And now they’re kids don’t talk right because they don’t talk right.

Notably, the teacher seems to understand the socialization of languages and dialect within his own statement, but does not reveal the understanding that this socialization is rule-governed and systematic.

Other descriptions of AAE overlapped with characteristics of the dialect. Teachers mentioned features of AAE that they noticed, such as “wrong verb tenses,” “dropping endings,” “[use of] pronouns.”

While much of the conversation in the focus group interviews surrounded AAE, MAE dialect was also mentioned and participants expressed their understanding of this dialect as well. A pre-service English teacher remarked on her perception of the “standard” dialect, although with a bit of remorse, “I don’t know, cause I hate the way that it’s like described as standard, but I feel like it was, like a standard dialect, what you would expect maybe a Caucasian, middle-class child would speak.”

Teachers exhibited a variety of ways to describe dialect. While some teachers viewed AAE as a dialect and even a language, others seemed to perceive the dialect as a “wrong” way of speaking. Even when many pre-service teachers were able to specifically state that they learned about the dialect in their classes and they understood that AAE dialect exists, the connection to understanding how the dialect actually manifests in a child who speaks it seemed lost.

Personality and Behavioral Description: “There’s a higher amount of African American kids receiving discipline referrals....” The focus group interviews delved into areas of AAE-speaking children’s personality and behavior for a total of 66 codes. The majority of the codes came from the Forest Valley and pre-service special education teachers, which may be because the pre-service English teachers hadn’t had as much direct experience working with students as the other two groups. Many of the comments within this category concerned AAE-speaking children’s behavior in the classroom in

comparison to ELLs, in comparison to MAE-speaking African American students, and specific behaviors that teachers have witnessed.

One pre-service special education teacher talked about what she had observed in the classroom, “Just like from my observations, there were other students in the classroom who happened to be African American that had really deceptive behaviors...the students from the Congo were just overall kind of more well behaved.” Teachers from Forest Valley also made comparisons to ELLs. One reading teacher felt that her AAE-speaking students were less “reserved” and less “nervous” in comparison to her ELL students. Overall, she felt that her African American students were “confident and they’re kinda nudging them [ELLs] along, and encouraging them.” Comparisons of AAE-speaking students to other students continued to be revealed when the conversation turned to the value of education, as one fifth grade teacher stated:

Well, culturally, overall, now I know this is like painting everything with a wide brush, but culturally...the ESL kids, education is more important to them than I think the African American kids.... I had African American kids in my class when other African American kids were doing their work and participating and trying, they...would literally look at them and say, ‘Why are you acting so White?’

When asked to talk about any differences between AAE-speaking children to African American MAE-speaking children, the same fifth grade teacher from above remarked that children who “have parents who are more educated, a more educated background, have less attitude problems than the other ones [AAE-speaking children].” A librarian from Forest Valley attempted to describe her perception of these differences

by stating that, “the kids who are African American and speak more standardized English, um...they are more reserved and less-...than the kids who speak more of, um AAVE, we’ll say – there’s a, I think there’s a bravado to it.” This comment from the librarian began a ripple effect in the focus group interview and sparked teachers to reveal their own reflections about AAE-speaking children’s personalities. Teachers comments included phrases like, “something more brave about it,” “they’re more boisterous,” “it seems to be something *in* the language,” “cuz they’re loud, I mean they’re just loud,” “they’re almost just trying to – not show off...establish themselves,” “confident,” “need to have a voice in the room,” and “they want attention.” One teacher’s comment seemed to capture the overall implication being made:

Like I think when people have a diverse opinion or mindset based on Ebonics or based on AAVE, then that’s when you get into, then when you hear a student or child speak, well they’re probably a problem in the classroom.

Interestingly, one pre-service English teacher seemed to have a different perspective when it came to AAE-speaking children, “I think an African American dialect for a young girl can often like be perceived as like a personality or attitude difference, when it’s really just like linguistic.”

During the pre-service special education focus group, the conversation gradually led to the types of behaviors exhibited by AAE-speaking children that often lead to discipline referrals (DR). One pre-service special education participant offered her observations:

A lot of times the kids that were sent out or that were disruptive were the African American students, and a lot of times when I would walk past the in-school

suspension it was always African American students...just seemed like a trend that I constantly noticed.

Other members of the focus group agreed. One participant noted:

From my experience at a middle school and elementary school, um, the students that I would...consistently see in the referral room...were the same kids I would see like hanging out together in the hallway...and it was like who could do the most ridiculous thing to like get in x-amount of trouble....”

When asked if she was referring to African American children, she confirmed, yes.

Specific behaviors that pre-service teachers mentioned included: “disrespect,” “swearing,” “refusals to do whatever you’re asking them to do,” “F-yous,” and “escalating very quickly.” Forest Valley teachers also commented on specific behaviors of African American children. One teacher compared their behavior to that of a recent Super Bowl quarterback who lost the game: “If they can’t voice themselves and get the attention in that thing, then they completely do what Cam Newtown does, and shut it down and walk away from the situation....So, it’s either I vocalize to the extreme or I shut down.”

Regardless of whether these statements about AAE-speaking children’s personality and behaviors seem to be positive or negative in nature, they seem to align with a comment made by one pre-service special education teacher, “their behavior is not up to the standards we want in the classroom, there’s a reason they’re sent out of the classroom.”

Reflecting on Experiences of AAE-speaking Children: “Just like you go home and speak a certain way, they go home and speak a certain way.” Teachers remarked on both the classroom and home experiences of AAE-speaking children for a total of 67

codes. In regard to the classroom, teachers again noted comparisons of AAE-speaking students with ELLs. In regard to their home experiences, teachers commented on family structure and lifestyle circumstances.

Teachers reflected upon specific home experiences in an attempt to understand/describe what AAE-speaking children's lives are like at home. One teacher noted that students were academically frustrated because "at home, it's [education] not necessarily something that's super valued. It might be basically valued." However, she went on to explain that this may be the case because "they're [African Americans] dealing with a lot of other things." A third grade teacher partly agreed while also expanding on this notion:

I don't even think it's a value of education or not. I think they value it and I think they know that it's important, But they have so many other things like paying the bill, and getting the heat on and doin all that. That they – it's kinda just goes by the wayside.

Other issues of home life were spoken about, but more specifically surrounding language. Focus group members commented on the different ways that language manifests in the homes of AAE-speaking children. A pre-service special education teacher stated, "Just like you go home and speak a certain way, they go home and speak a certain way. Um, and that doesn't mean it's wrong to use in school, but there's also a way we speak in school. It's just different." Understanding that there is a different way that AAE-children speak at home, there was also a reflection by a pre-service English teacher as to how they are *spoken to*. He commented on his experience working with a teacher and her African American students:

[W]hen she first started teaching, having really little success with some of her students, um, particularly the African American ones...she'd say, oh 'Can you do this?' Can you work on this now?' Uh. Versus her saying, 'Work on this now.'....Which she was saying could be a cultural thing.... But that, you know, in the home life, their parents might be saying, 'Do this now.' Versus, 'Can you do this now.'

This statement highlights perceived differences between the home and school lives of some African American children. Related to the perceived disconnect between the way they speak and what the classroom expectations are for African American children, one pre-service special education teacher commented that, "they're [African American English-speaking children] seeing words written...but you can't spell like 'den' for 'then'....writing and learning how to read would be super confusing for some of my students who are already struggling to read." A Forest Valley teacher tried to put into words the challenges of learning to read for an AAE-speaking student, "They heard it [words] decoded differently at their house." While another followed-up by stating that this decoding challenge was not only "in reading, but in writing as well." Building upon this link to literacy, a pre-service English teacher spoke about how she is being taught on how to teach writing to students. She explained why this may be a problem for some children:

[W]hen explaining why something may be right, and like the idea that well it just sounds right and like 'oh say it out loud,' and like, 'if it sounds right to you, then it's right.' So, I think, hmm, that can be an issue too then if it does sound right to you because you have a different type of dialect. And then you use that, but then

you lose points for it whereas a different student who has a different dialect doesn't lose points for it 'cuz they're used to that.

Teachers discussed many of the challenges facing AAE-speaking children, from their home life to the connection or disconnect between their home life and school life. Whereas these challenges seem evident, the solution did not appear to be as clear.

Role of the Teacher: “My job is to get them ready for the world that’s out there.” Teachers remarked on their role and responsibilities in relationship to educating AAE-speaking children. Many of the comments from the Forest Valley focus group were made directly in association with their attitudes and feelings when teaching. The pre-service focus groups spoke mainly about how they are being prepared to work with students in the classroom, with specific ideas related to writing, and noted some of the observations they have made in the classrooms in which they are currently working. Teachers commented directly on their roles not only in the classroom, but also in preparation for the future, and how it is the standard forms that we should be teaching children.

One role that the teacher plays in the lives of educating AAE-speaking children is teaching them how to write. A pre-service English teacher recalled, “I can’t think of any teacher correcting a student’s spoken language in the class – Black or White....But in writing, I think there’s more – sort of an expectation that there is a standard way- like an expectation of there being one way to write.” One of his classmates agreed with him, “I guess non-standard dialect is more acceptable in like creative-writing. Where creative writing, you’re allowed to write words and sentences pretty much any way that you like. But in academic writing, it has to be standard.” Simply put by a pre-service special

education teacher, “[Y]ou have to know how to write with the right grammar.” Another pre-service teacher, also studying to become an English teacher explained how they are being taught to teach writing:

We’re being taught a lot about what’s appropriate to evaluate...like what you should be grading students on...like the moreso like the content than maybe their like grammatical errors and I think that also speaks to like – we need to pay more attention to the overall message instead of maybe the way the student is like saying it or pronouncing the words....

These views of how to teach and grade writing seems to be clear-cut for these pre-service teachers, however no matter how much AAE dialect is understood and validated, teachers still seem to be in the role of correcting. A pre-service special education teacher demonstrated her conflicted position, “...sometimes he’ll say- the grammar will be off. Like he’ll start speaking his slang if he’s just talking quickly to me and stuff. I’ll have to correct him or um, but he’s really a great learner.” One pre-service special education student remarked on how this dual role looks in the classroom:

She [the teacher] will speak to them in their vernacular. Like when it’s something formal, like writing, she corrects their grammar. But if it’s, ya know, a common phrase or like, she won’t correct them. Like a lot of them say, “finna” which means “going to” um, that’s not something that she would pick on cause it’s...the way they speak naturally. But, like writing, you wouldn’t write “finna”, they would write “going to.” And that's what she would, ya know, grade that.

While pre-service teachers are learning that their role in the classroom should be

to teach the standard while also validating overall language differences and communication, professional teachers' views of their roles were more varied. As was stated above, when speaking about AAE-speaking children, many teachers compared them to other groups of students (i.e., ELL and MAE-speaking African American students). This comparison made by a Forest Valley participant, demonstrated a unique understanding of her role as a teacher:

[L]ike our ELL students and our African American students- are still learning the same types of skills. They're still all coming to the same classrooms to learn formal English, formal ways of decoding reading, formal ways of navigating the English language. And so even though they may speak English...they're still learning the context formal structures to our written tongue and our language style.

Her comment demonstrated a unique perspective of placing AAE-speaking children in the same linguistic position as ELL students. However, the common notion/ideology of teaching the "standard", be this written or oral, ran rampant through out all the focus group interviews. One fifth grade teacher from Forest Valley described in his own words the many different ways as to why these ideologies may exist. In one comment, he reflected on what a former African American professor told him about working with AAE-speaking children:

She pretty much said you can't tell these kids that you're not allowed to speak that way because that is the language of their culture. What you have to inform the kids is that they can't speak that way all the time. That it's okay to talk that way in the proper setting, when you are outside of work of your academic setting,

that's 100% okay. But when you're at a work setting or in school, in a school setting that you need to try to use correct grammar and correct English because that is the system that this country runs under.

Again, we see the dual role where on one side of the coin, there is an attempt to acknowledge the cultural-linguistic differences that children bring with them, but then on the flip side of the coin, to remember the role of teacher is to teach the "correct" way of speaking. And the "correct" side seems to win out. This fifth grade teacher explained that his views exist because it is his "job to get these kids ready for middle school and beyond..." And further explained, "my job is to get you ready for the world that's out there. Not the world that we all want to be out there."

Another Forest Valley participant agreed with the teacher, but used a different perspective to explain herself:

They're doing what they know. But, it's also like we know what environments that need to change when they code-switch, and what that's gonna look like in their future career, you know in high school, in you know college and what not. And so we try to prepare them for that, but I think it's also kind of sending the wrong message too that what they're speaking isn't, isn't right or isn't socially acceptable....So I have a kind of internal conundrum on that. Like do we fix or do we...refine?

The issues facing teachers and the role they play in the classroom seem to be summed up in that last quote. There is a conundrum amongst teachers. Do they accept the cultural-linguistic differences that their AAE-speaking children bring to school with them and feel as though they are setting them up to fail in their futures? Or do they teach

them the standard and feel as though they are neglecting an important part of who they are in the present?

Societal Reflections: “Everybody knows what language this planet runs on.”

Often related to their role as teachers, many reflected on the influence of society when it comes to the lives of AAE-speaking children, as was captured in 41 codes.

Two teachers commented on how AAE-speakers sound to society at large. In response to talking about the term Ebonics, one third grade teacher noted why she felt that term was not taken seriously, she simply remarked that, “[Y]ou sounded unintelligent if you spoke that way.” In agreement with her, another Forest Valley participant explained how an AAE-speaker would be portrayed in an interview, “They are going to hear you using the wrong verb tenses and syntax that is incorrect and they’re going to assume that you’re less intelligent than you are.”

Teachers from the pre-service English group remarked on how socio-economic status influences the lives of AAE-speaking children. After noting that Marshawn’s stimuli may have been spoken by a boy who code-switches, one teacher explained, “...there’s a good chance that one of the kids is code-switching between like home and peer groups...so depending on what the majority of the peer group is speaking, whether it’s more reflective of that higher income or lower income level and how it differentiates between what they speak at home....” She acknowledges the role that society has on language by delineating that speaking patterns may differ according not only to peer group, but also to the income level of a group. Her classmate also noticed this link when he exclaimed, “[J]ust that like economic status can cut- or can change speaking patterns....” Using the role of socioeconomic status from a different perspective, one pre-

service teacher felt that poverty was an explanation to some of the previously described behaviors exhibited by AAE-speaking children, "...when it's hard to break the poverty cycle generationally, you get strings of families in this same culture and same inner city environment that are routinely um, exhibiting the same behaviors and then having poor life outcomes."

Unlike other participants, one pre-service special education teacher described a counter perspective regarding the influence of society and provides some notion as to why it should change:

[W]hat is presented in the media I think makes a really big difference, and ya know, I can't think of the last time that I saw something on TV where they were like 'this African American student is in ALL AP (advanced placement) classes and is going off to Harvard and this is the norm' whereas the norm that I think everyone sees now is African American students getting DRs (discipline referrals) and getting in fights and ya know especially with like [major city public school system] and gang violence and all this stuff that's going on in [major metropolitan city] that's what people see so that's what people associate and I think that a lot of teachers as much as they don't want to, make those associations maybe even subconsciously and then generalize that across their students and maybe that's why there's an overrepresentation of students who are Black that are getting DRs and are ya know getting in trouble at school and maybe it's not solely based on their behavior but also the stereotypes that are associated with what they look like and who they're friends with and stuff like that.

Although there were few, some teachers related a personal experience that intersected with their view of society. As an example, the librarian from Forest Valley recalled her experiences of living in the south, “I think we’re a little more forgiving...if you watch on TV southern characters are generally thought of as less intelligent, just because of the accent, and I lived in the south for quite a long time...but nobody is really out there trying to correct....” Here she makes a connection to how society views people who speak in a nonmainstream dialect. She continues to think out loud, working through some of the similarities and differences between AAE and southern dialect, but still unable to pinpoint these concepts:

Yeah, southern dialect because southerners are very proud of it of course....But I think also, maybe the transition from southern English to written mainstream English, is maybe easier, an easier conversion. But we’re talking about dropping off endings, so if we’re dropping off the ending, we’re *fixin* to do something in southern dialect then...let’s just throw in a ‘g’, but I don’t know, I guess I’m making a connection, but I’m not sure where it’s going.

It is evident that her statement attempts to make some connection between southern dialect and AAE, however, she is just not sure how to solidify the link/relationship.

Overall, teachers reported how society plays a role in how they personally work with AAE-speaking children. Teachers made comments about teaching children to be “socially acceptable,” “societally acceptable,” and “appropriate.” These findings indicate that society, and more specifically, a teacher’s perspective of society, has a strong influence on how teachers educate their students.

Themes. Informed by the study questions and a constant comparison across all data sources, two themes emerged: a) Prominence of Paralinguistics and b) Maintenance of the Linguistic Status Quo. Specifically, both themes were supported by results from the TPRQ ratings, TPRQ open-ended responses, and at least three focused coding categories from the focus group interviews. I review each of the two overarching themes here, providing examples of support from multiple sources.

Prominence of Paralinguistics: “He sounded African American.” The Prominence of Paralinguistics theme was triangulated across three different data sources. First, across the focused coding categories of Paralinguistic, Global Aspects of Communication, and Description of Dialect, the majority of teachers’ comments about dialects variation focused on *how* (i.e., paralinguistic aspects) children spoke. For those teachers who found the words to explain *how*, words such as, “speed”, “fluent”, “inflection” “slowly”, and “tone” were reported in the focus group interviews. For those teachers who seemed to have a more difficult time expressing a salient feature of a child’s speaking pattern, they remarked on a personality trait or a perceived race. It can be argued that these aspects also relate to *how* a child is speaking, encompassing a global concept of a child’s speaking pattern, particularly when related to the audio stimuli. As an example, personality traits mentioned for Marshawn^{MAE} included “comfortable,” while Volder^{MAE} included “eager” and “excited”. Such traits, when based solely on speech stimuli, suggest qualities of fluency, intonation, and loudness. For some teachers, it was evident that there was a perception of race that was difficult to specify. To understand this phenomenon, a pre-service special education teacher may have said it best when asked how she knew Marshawn^{AAE} and Marshawn^{MAE} were African American, she

remarked, “[they] had voices like they were African Americans that I recognized.” Such traits may be indicative of pitch, volume, or even tone. Teachers also had a racial perception of Volder, especially in the MAE stimulus where his paralinguistic and linguistic features were better aligned, remarking that the Volder^{MAE} voice sounded, “White” or “Caucasian.” In addition to comments about the stimuli, focus group participants also made remarks about AAE-speaking children in general. These remarks either directly reflected the prominence of paralinguistics with comments such as, “they’re just loud” or indirectly reflected a paralinguistic feature such as, “They’re boisterous.” Though not necessarily drawing exclusively on speech in this case, such comments are certainly consistent with the prominence of paralinguistic features such as volume.

The second form of support for the Prominence of Paralinguistics came from the TPRQ open-ended responses. In these comments, teachers remarked on the perceived dialect of Marshawn and Volder. A review of the TPRQ responses showed that while there were 15 teachers who commented on Marshawn’s use of AAE¹⁰ in his AAE stimulus, 19 teachers commented on his use of AAE in his MAE stimulus. Teachers perceived Marshawn as an AAE-speaker in *both* of his stimuli despite the fact that his AAE stimulus contained 59.9% AAE linguistic features compared to 11.5% in his MAE stimulus. Consistent with his dialect density of AAE linguistic features, his AAE stimulus was rated higher for AAE paralinguistics than his MAE stimulus. However, the TPRQ ratings were closely matched: Marshawn^{AAE} was rated 6.5 on the 7-point Likert-

¹⁰ this includes comments referring to dialect, improper English, accent or home language.

scale, while Marshawn^{MAE} was rated a 5. This suggests that Marshawn's paralinguistics were salient in both stimuli and consistent with AAE. Relative to the Marshawn^{MAE} stimulus, the Volder^{MAE} stimulus was perceived by teachers as a "common American accent" or "standard." Of particular interest, Volder^{AAE} rarely evoked a perception of AAE or being African American despite the fact that it included 49.5% AAE linguistic features. Only one out of 81 teachers noted in their open-ended responses that Volder^{AAE} sounded African American, presumably because his stimulus did not reflect the paralinguistics of AAE. In contrast to the one teacher who speculated that the speaker of the Volder^{AAE} stimulus might be African American, 24 teachers in the TPRQ open-ended responses remarked in some fashion that Volder^{AAE} was an English language learner. Accordingly, the TPRQ responses for the Volder^{AAE} stimulus included "learning to speak English," disfluent, "uncertain," or has "slower speech". In sum, the open-ended responses from the TPRQ suggested that teachers were basing their impressions largely on the paralinguistic features of the stimuli, rather than the linguistic features, which were largely constrained across the child stimuli.

The third form of support for the Prominence of Paralinguistics comes from the TPRQ ratings themselves. The Marshawn^{MAE} and Marshawn^{AAE} stimuli, which differed in terms of linguistic features but received similar Academic and Personality Composite ratings. As was mentioned above, in both of Marshawn's stimuli, teachers perceived him as an AAE-speaker; this perhaps explains in part why his Academic and Personality Composite scores across both stimuli were so similar. While the grammar, vocabulary, and some articulation may have differed, Marshawn's paralinguistics were similar across both his AAE and MAE stimuli. Consequently, it seems likely that his paralinguistic

rather than linguistic features were most salient in shaping listener perceptions within the present study. Consistently, the Volder^{AAE} was rated lower on both the Academic and Personality Composites, compared to his Volder^{MAE} stimulus. Although this could have been due to his use of linguistic features from AAE, we know from the open-ended responses that Volder was not generally viewed as an AAE-speaker. Consequently, it seems unlikely that teacher perceptions were being driven solely by his linguistic features. It seems more likely his lower ratings in the Volder^{AAE} stimulus were due to paralinguistic features.

In sum, although paralinguistic features may be difficult to pinpoint, there is evidence to support the prominence of such features as voice, intonation, and prosody in teachers' perceptions of children's racial identity, personality, and academic potential.

Maintaining the linguistic status quo. The second emergent theme, Maintaining the Linguistic Status Quo, was triangulated across four different data sources. First, results from the focus group coding categories, specifically the focused codes of Role of Teacher, Societal Reflections, and Reflecting on Experiences of AAE-speaking Children, highlighted the teachers' role, intentional or otherwise, in maintaining the linguistic status quo. These 'whats' and 'whys' of their teaching the "standard" demonstrated a strong link to their own view of the world we all live in. Teachers (n = 12) reported that they needed to "correct" their students who speak "informally," that is to say the speaking style of AAE. When a student speaks in AAE, teachers commented that they often "correct" the child to speak the "standard" because, according to one pre-service English teacher, that is what is "socially acceptable." Teachers further rationalized this act of "correcting" AAE because their perception of the child's speaking pattern was "street

language,” “informal,” “improper,” or “whatever you wanna call it.” By correcting their students’ AAE, teachers believe they are preparing them for the “world that’s out there.” Furthermore, when commenting on the speakers of AAE, two teachers from Forest Valley recalled the Ebonics debate and remarked how if you spoke that way you seemed “unintelligent” and “uneducated.” By pushing their students away from using a speaking pattern viewed negatively in mainstream society, teachers are helping to maintain the linguistic status quo.

A second data source, specifically the interview transcript from the principal of Forest Valley, herself African American, similarly discussed the speaking patterns of AAE-speaking children, using the terminology “street slang”. When asked what her role was in educating AAE-speaking children, she remarked:

I think my role for those kids are helping them understand that there’s a place and a time for that type of language. Like, here in this environment, the expectation is different. You know they can talk like that in social situations, but in school and written language, it needs to be Standard English you know. I’m very honest with kids about understanding what it means to code-switch. You have to know when to use standard grammar versus when you can just talk like you know like you’re just shooting the breeze. There’s a time and place for that.

Notably, the principal is one who believes in culturally relevant pedagogy, as was evidenced by her remarks:

One of the things I’m working on with teachers now is umm understanding what it means to be a culturally responsive educator....So, how do we make that happen right? How do you select materials? What things are you going to display

in your classroom? How are you selecting materials to help kids feel like they are a part of this community? You know, culture is not just what we see on the surface. You know culture is much deeper, so we're still working on that.

While it is evident that she believes in promoting a culturally sensitive pedagogy, to not recognize that language, and specifically AAE, is a form of one's culture is to contribute to the maintenance of the linguistic status quo.

Third, data from the TPRQ open-ended responses revealed that only 22 out of 81 teachers used some fashion of the academic term "African American dialect" when referencing African American English. More commonly (n=43) it was referred to as "slang," "improper English," or informal English" or described as a child "mispronouncing," "having trouble with endings," or producing "artic errors." Use of these terms appears consistent with the perception of AAE as socially and linguistically inferior. Conversely, speaking MAE appears to be perceived as the "standard" that is considered most "socially acceptable" and perceived most likely to make students socially mobile. Teachers (n=41) responded positively about the use of language in Volder's MAE stimulus, remarking how he "seemed to have a lot of language", "...spoke in complete sentences" and was "well spoken" and "articulate." A few teachers (n= 3) made note of his dialect (e.g., "speech aligned more with Standard English. Spoke well" and "speech seems to be a common American accent") while others (n=4) commented on his race (e.g., "He is a young White boy").

It is interesting to consider the role that standardized testing may play in shaping the pressures on teachers to maintain the status quo. It was noted in the TPRQ open-ended responses from two different teachers that speaking AAE does not align with

performing well on standardized tests. Specifically, a pre-service English teacher commented about Marshawn's AAE stimulus, first writing "[his dialect] seems to have AAV" and then adding, "S/He is soft spoken, but in the dialect they use...standardized tests were not designed to accommodate them [unhappy face]." Similarly, a teacher from Arnold also commented on Marshawn^{MAE}'s standardized testing potential: "They said that the chameleon was an iguana and based off that I think that [Marshawn^{MAE}] may struggle academically, especially on standardized tests." To the extent these written comments reflect broader teacher perceptions, it appears that teachers feel MAE is consistent with better standardized test performance, and in today's academic climate, test scores have significant consequences for both child and potentially teacher (No Child Left Behind, 2001). Consequently, it is not difficult to see why teachers may feel pressure to maintain the linguistic status quo by "correcting" AAE and offering the message that it is not appropriate in school or other mainstream societal institutions.

Fourth, the TPRQ academic ratings also speak to this theme. As was mentioned previously, teachers perceived Volder^{MAE} as an MAE-speaker who spoke the "standard" way of speaking and used "proper English." Volder's MAE Academic and Personality Composites were rated higher than his AAE Academic and Personality Composites. In addition, although no experimental comparisons were specifically performed, it is notable that Volder^{MAE}, the only stimulus perceived as an MAE-speaker, was rated consistently highest of all four stimuli across both composites.

In sum, converging data suggest that the majority of teachers believe it is their job to make sure students learn the standard, privileged form of English in order to be successful in the "real world". Two ways teachers are maintaining the linguistic status

quo are pushing students away from using AAE, at least in the educational setting, and by pulling students towards using MAE. Teachers are teaching their AAE-speaking students a “standard” way to speak and write because that is what the world expects of them; ‘them’ meaning the students *and* the teachers. While there were a few teachers who reported feeling a conundrum between validating the student for the cultural language they bring to school or eradicating this cultural language through systematic “correction” of their errors, the majority of the teachers did not directly express this conundrum. Although teachers did not explicitly define their role as maintaining the linguistic status quo when it comes to the role of AAE-speaking children and education, it is notable that no one commented directly or indirectly that they should be challenging or dismantling it.

Figures and Tables

Table 6.

Frequency of 'Certain' and 'Uncertain' ratings for the TPRQ by item

TPRQ Item	"Certain" Responses from Teachers	"Uncertain" and rated responses from Teachers	Total
Academic			
#1 Intelligence	16	45	61
#2 – High Grades	14	54	68
#3 – Standardized Tests	13	54	67
#4 – Need for Special Education	16	49	65
#5 – Middle School future	15	48	63
Personality			
#6 –Likable	13	50	63
#7 - Maturity	16	47	63
#8 – Not a Bully	13	53	66
#9 – Not a Behavior Problem	11	56	67
#10 – Not Sent out of Classroom	11	57	68
TOTAL:	138	513	651

Table 7.
Frequency of unrated responses by TPRQ item

TPRQ Item	#Unrated Responses from Teachers
Academic	
#1 –Intelligence	23
#2 – High Grades	21
#3 – Standardized Tests	23
#4 – Need for Special Education	25
#5 – Middle School future	24
Personality	
#6 Likable	20
#7 Maturity	20
#8 Not a bully	27
#9 Not a behavior problem	26
#10 Not sent out of the classroom	31
TOTAL:	240

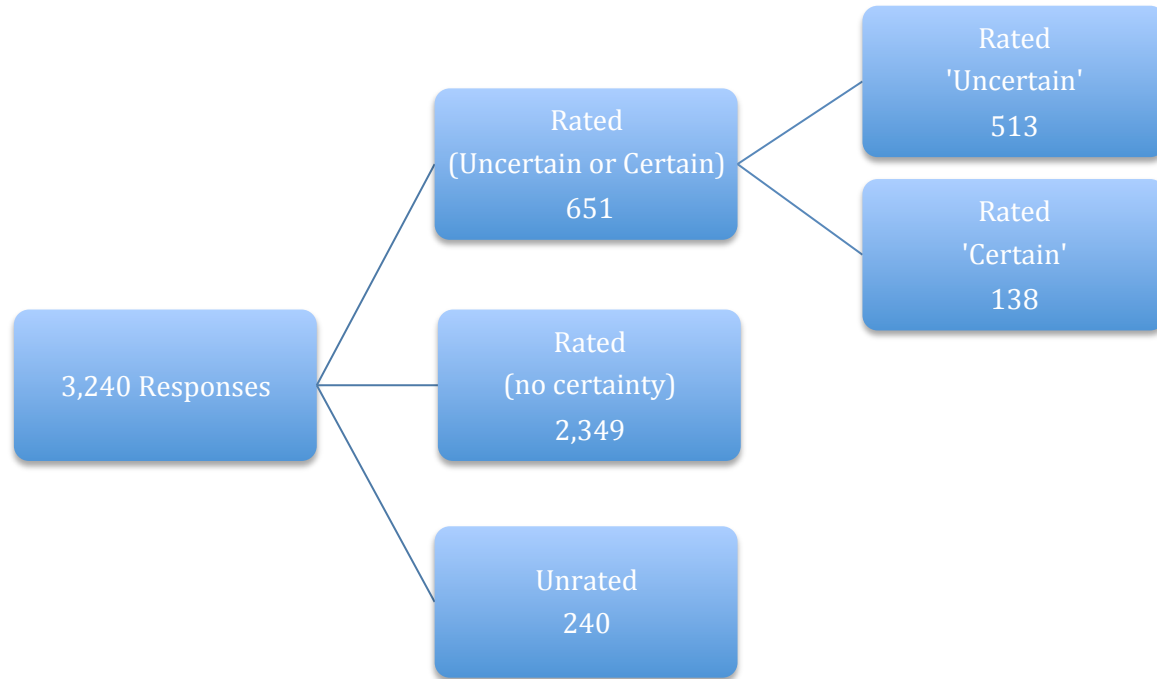


Figure 2. Summary of responses on the TPRQ collapsed across items and differentiated by rated/unrated and Certain/Uncertain.

Table 8.
TPRQ Means and (SD) by item for each of the four stimuli

TPRQ Items	Marshawn ^{MAE}	Marshawn ^{AAE}	Volder ^{MAE}	Volder ^{AAE}
Academic				
#1 –Intelligence	3.21 (.65)	3.19 (.54)	3.57 (.70)	2.47 (.64)
#2 – High Grades	3.13 (.58)	3.14 (.56)	3.55 (.66)	2.53 (.58)
#3 – Standardized Tests	2.91 (.66)	3.01 (.56)	3.34 (.68)	2.27 (.65)
#4 – Special Educ. Services	3.47 (.78)	3.54 (.81)	3.77 (.75)	2.64 (.72)
#5 – Middle School future	3.37 (.64)	3.46 (.64)	3.59 (.66)	2.76 (.65)
Personality				
#6 –Likable	3.78 (.70)	3.74 (.68)	3.69 (.74)	3.14 (.60)
#7 - Maturity	3.16 (.63)	3.40 (.57)	3.38 (.71)	2.67 (.71)
#8 – Not a Bully	3.81 (.76)	3.92 (.84)	3.90 (1.02)	4.16 (.81)
#9 – Not a Behavior Problem	3.62 (.77)	3.71 (.77)	3.96 (.84)	3.81 (.86)
#10 – Not sent out of Classroom	3.63 (.73)	3.79 (.78)	3.90 (.82)	3.75 (.79)

Note. Number of responses ranged from 70 to 78.

Table 9.
TPRQ Academic and Personality Composites for each of the four stimuli

Pre-service and Professional Teachers				
	Marshawn ^{MAE}	Marshawn ^{AAE}	Volder ^{MAE}	Volder ^{AAE}
Academic Mean	3.21 (n=79)	3.28 (n=78)	3.56 (n=79)	2.55 (n=78)
Personality Mean	3.60 (n=78)	3.69 (n=78)	3.76 (n=78)	3.51 (n=78)

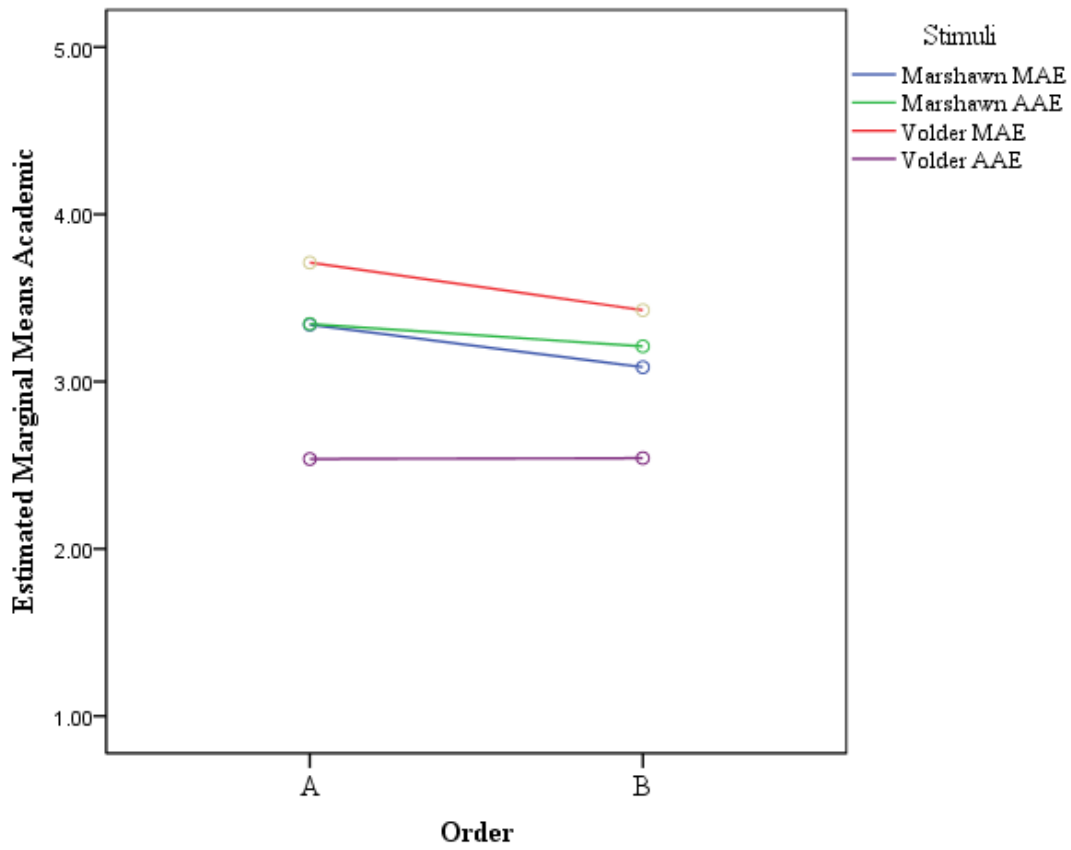


Figure 3. Graph of the TPRQ means for the Academic Composite presented by Stimuli and Order.

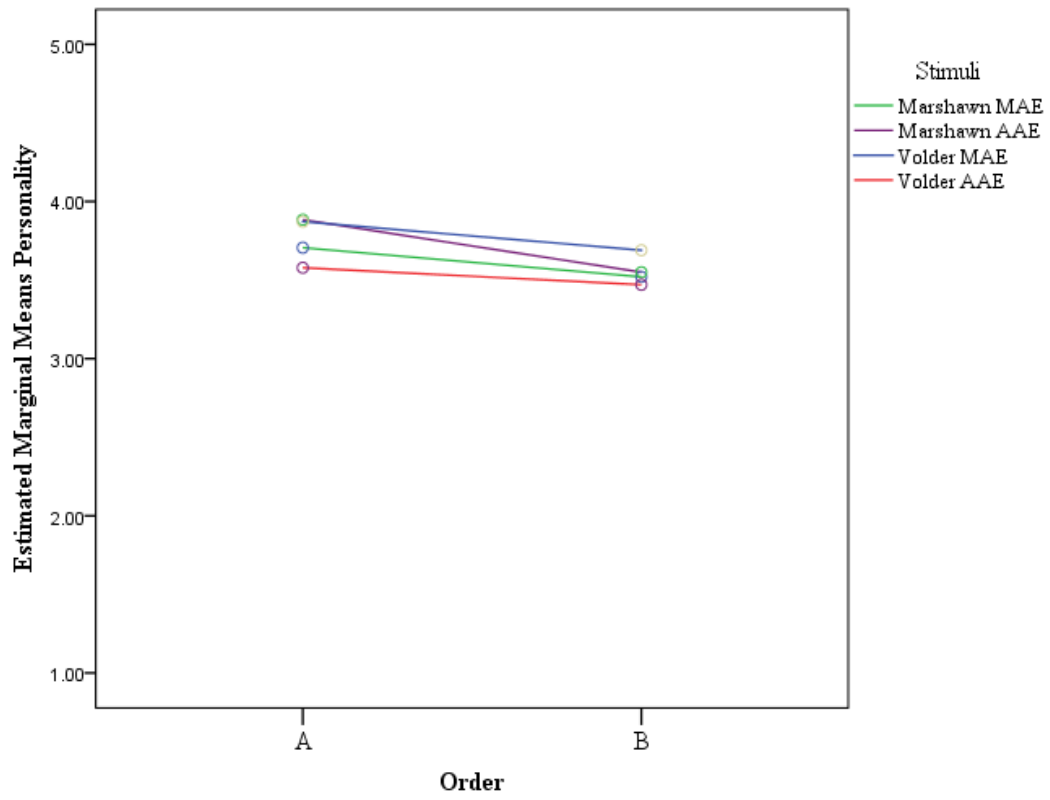


Figure 4. Graph of the TPRQ means for the Personality Composite presented by Stimuli and Order.

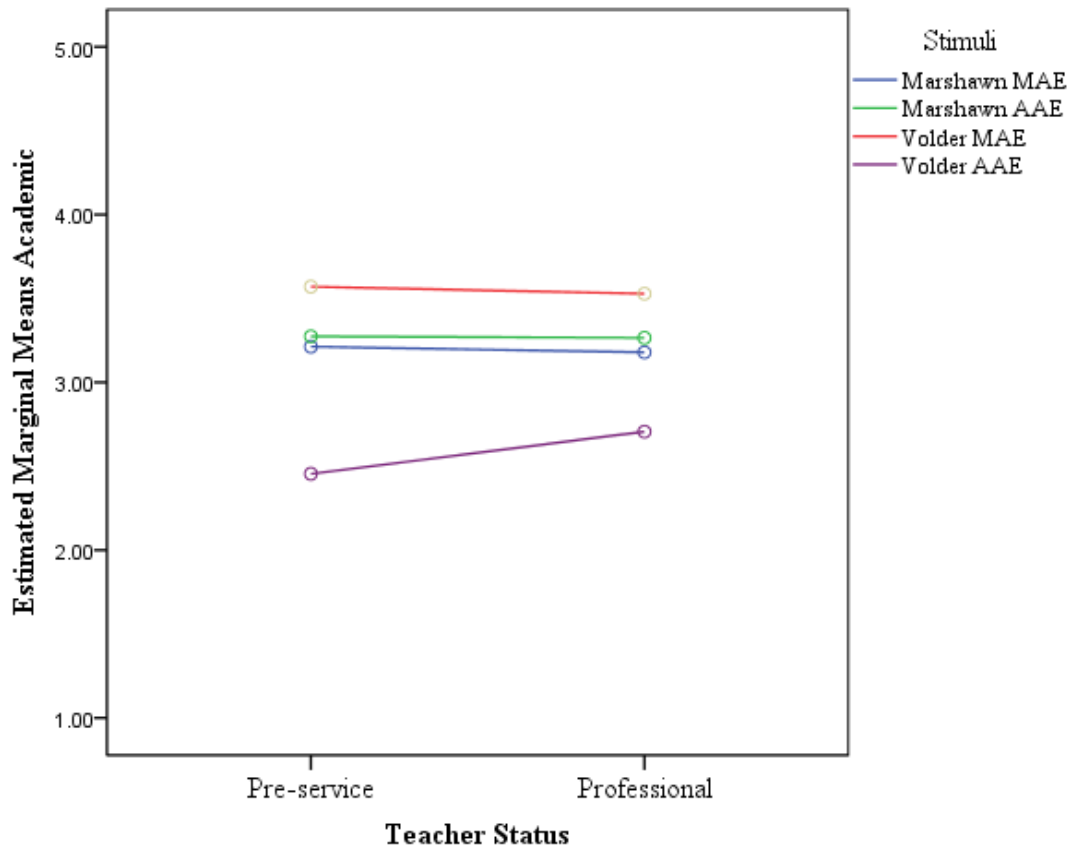


Figure 5. Graph of the TPRQ means for the Academic Composite presented by Stimuli and Teacher Status (pre-service versus professional).

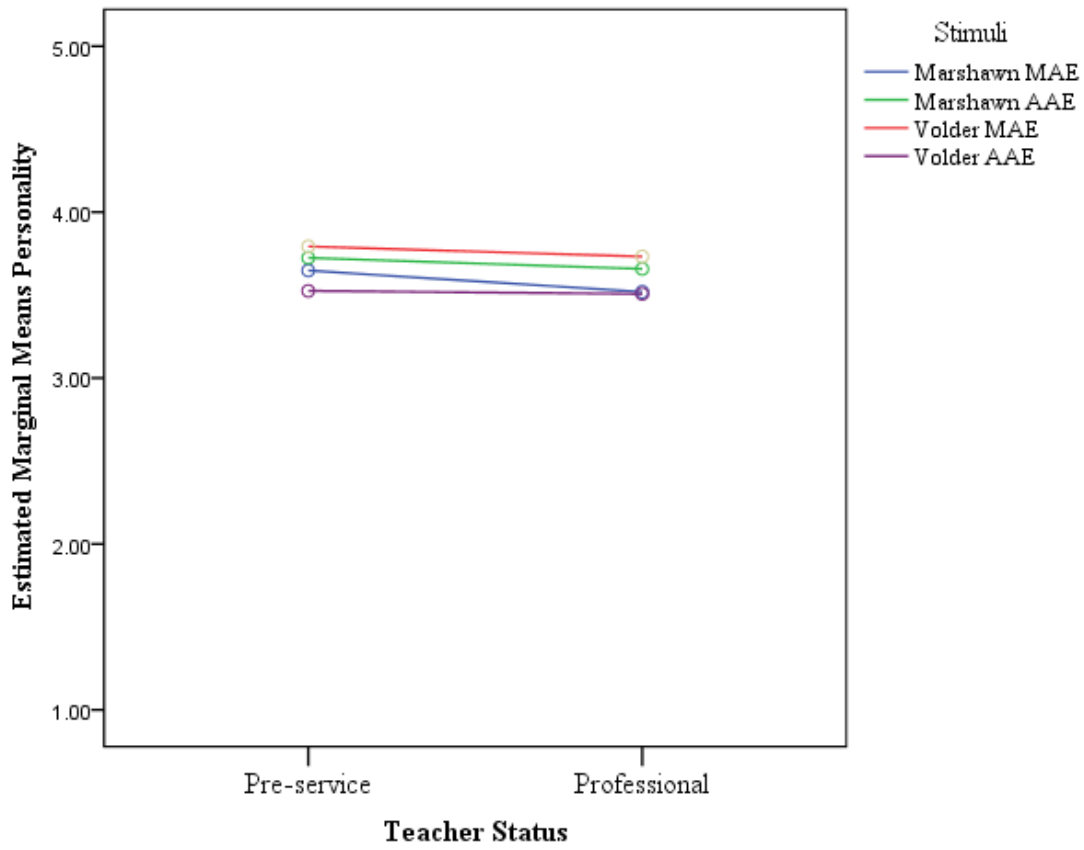


Figure 6. Graph of the TPRQ means for the Personality Composite presented by Stimuli and Teacher Status (pre-service versus professional).

Table 10.

Summary of the frequency of focused coding categories under the primary category of Salient Features organized by each of the three focus groups

Salient Features	Forest Valley Teachers	Pre-service English teachers	Pre-service Special Education teachers	Total
Linguistic Aspects	13	8	10	31
Paralinguistic Aspects	6	3	7	16
Global Aspects of Communication	17	12	17	46
TOTAL:	36	23	34	93^a

^aTotal is higher than the total number of Salient Features codes (n=89) due to splitting of larger codes into smaller focused codes.

Table 11.

Summary of the frequency of focused coding categories under the primary category of General Perceptions organized by each of the three focus groups

General Perceptions of AAE/MAE Dialect and Dialect Users	Forest Valley Teachers	Pre-service English teachers	Pre-service Special Education teachers	Total
Description of Dialect	58	28	11	97
Personality and Behavioral Description	36	1	29	66
Reflecting on experiences of AAE-speaking children	43	9	15	67
Role of the Teacher	9	6	8	23
Societal Reflections	21	10	10	41
TOTAL:	167	54	73	294^a

^aTotal number of focused codes is higher than the total number of General Perception codes (n=194) due to splitting of the larger codes into smaller codes.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Summary of Results

This discussion will provide a brief summary of two key findings followed by comparison to previous studies, implications, and limitations. The first key finding is that teachers appeared to perceive speakers of the AAE vs. MAE stimuli differently *if* the paralinguistics of the presented dialects differed. Specifically, Volder's personality and academic potential were rated more positively in his MAE stimulus than his AAE stimulus. Of particular relevance to the important role of paralinguistics in dialect perception, open-ended TPRQ responses and qualitatively analyses of the focus group data suggested that he was perceived as an MAE-speaker within his MAE stimulus but as an ELL in his AAE stimulus, presumably because his paralinguistics were not consistent with AAE even though his linguistic features were. In contrast, teachers rated Marshawn's personality and academic performance similarly across both the MAE and AAE stimuli and data from the open-ended TPRQ responses and focus groups revealed that Marshawn was perceived as an AAE-speaker across both stimuli. The finding that Marshawn was perceived as an AAE-speaker across both stimuli despite the fact that his AAE stimuli contained 48.4% more linguistic features of AAE than did his MAE stimulus highlights the influence of paralinguistics on teachers' perceptions. The focus group interviews offered insight into how the specific paralinguistic features of AAE are perceived. Teachers reported that AAE-speaking children come with a certain "bravado" about them, a "boisterousness", a "loudness", traits that correlate with paralinguistic features of tone, inflection, intonation, and volume.

A second key finding to emerge from this study is that teachers continue to privilege MAE, within the academic setting and beyond. Although not compared experimentally, it is interesting to note that the one stimulus perceived as an MAE-speaker (Volder^{MAE}) received the highest academic and personality composite ratings across all four of the stimuli. MAE was referred to frequently as “proper” and “standard,” whereas AAE was commonly referred to as “improper,” “nonstandard,” and “slang.” Accordingly, when discussing similarities and differences between African American MAE-speaking children and AAE-speaking children, a few teachers commented that MAE-speakers come from homes where education is valued, parents are “more educated”, and children have “more background with the written word.” It appears in part that teachers privilege MAE and MAE-speakers because of MAE’s status inside of school as well as outside of school. Teachers viewed one of their roles in preparing children to be successful inside the school as teaching them how to communicate in “standard” English, both orally and in written form. For outside of school, teachers also felt that knowing how to speak MAE was key, not only because it’s “socially appropriate”, but it will also help with their future success such as knowing how to speak “proper English” in an interview so that they will be able to get a job. Teachers’ language ideologies clearly have a substantial influence on their perceptions of AAE and on their classroom practices.

Comparison to prior literature. The current study builds on prior research in two important ways: a) emphasizing how entrenched educational privileging of MAE appears to be and b) highlighting the integral role of paralinguistics in teachers’ perceptions of dialect. One contribution is the demonstration that AAE continues to be viewed

predominantly as an improper variation of language that needs to be corrected within formal educational settings despite research from more than 50 years ago that highlighted the discrimination inherent in this view (Blake & Cutler, 2001; Cecil, 1988; Champion, Cobb-Roberts, & Bland-Stewart, 2012; DeMeis & Turner, 1978). As an early example, in 1978, DeMeis and Turner's investigation found that teachers perceived and evaluated the dialect of AAE as lower than MAE. More specifically, the academic ability of AAE-speaking students was rated less than their MAE-speaking peers, regardless of race (see also Cecil, 1988). More recently, Champion, Cobb-Roberts, and Bland-Stewart (2012) utilized an updated version of the Language Attitude Scale to examine pre-service teachers' perception of AAE. Results showed that overall, a group of racially mixed pre-service teachers had negative attitudes toward AAE, but White pre-service teachers in particular perceived AAE more negatively and more inferior in comparison to their African American and Hispanic peers. Similarly within the present study, Volder's MAE stimuli elicited the highest Academic and Personality Composites across all four stimuli, including his own AAE stimulus. Accordingly, comments from the open-ended responses reveal that both teachers and pre-service teachers characterized Marshawn in his AAE stimulus as using, "improper grammar," having "informal speech", and "[sounding] like from a low income home/slang spoken a lot at home." One teacher from Arnold wrote that he "lacked background knowledge and experience." When commenting about AAE in general, teachers from Forest Valley's focus group agree that one of the largest challenges for AAE-speaking children is their use of "grammar." Prior work, such as Blake and Cutler's study (2003), highlighted not only that teachers felt that students who do not speak MAE will struggle academically but also that their role as a

teacher was to ensure that students learn MAE. This is consistent with the present study's key theme regarding the role of teachers in maintaining the linguistic status quo.

There are undoubtedly multiple influences and pressures that shape how teachers perceive their role, particularly in regard to language use. One factor that emerged in the present study was the role of standardized testing and standardized curriculum (e.g., Common Core). By nature, 'standardized' implies a common yardstick for delivering and evaluating the effects of education, and perhaps it should come as no surprise that standardized materials and instruments are developed in MAE, both in the form of administration (e.g., instructions) and in terms of the expected responses, be this written or oral (see Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2006; Fields, 2011; Green & Griffore, 1980; Seymour, 2004; Wightman, 2003). For example, Hamilton (2014) highlighted how early literacy materials and associated instruction privileged MAE and the current Common Core curriculum presents with English Language Arts goals that require students to, "*Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking*" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers; 2010). In sum, together with over 50 years of research on teacher perceptions of AAE, the present study highlights how entrenched language ideologies can be, particularly when embedded within formalized institutions such as the educational system.

A second important contribution of the present study in relation to prior literature is the emphasis on paralinguistics.-Although other authors have highlighted the role of paralinguistics in AAE (e.g., Tarone, 1973; Mills, 2008) only one prior study focused on teacher perceptions of AAE and MAE, Crowl and MacGintie (1974) using a similar

method of controlling for linguistic content across stimuli within a listener perception task. Consistent with the present study, the authors found higher ratings were given to the White students speaking in MAE than the African American students speaking in MAE, even though the content was the same. However unlike the present study, the researchers did not follow-up with teachers to directly examine which features of dialect were most influential in their ratings. Another novel component of the present study that served to highlight the role of paralinguistics was the inclusion of a White MAE-speaking child enacting both MAE and AAE. Whereas previous studies have included AAE-speaking children using either AAE or MAE (Cecil, 1988; Crowl & MacGintie, 1974) or relied on comparison across different participants using familiar dialects (Cross et al., 2001), this study included both an AAE-speaker and an MAE-speaker acting out scripts written in both dialects. The comparison of Volder's AAE and MAE stimuli elicited insightful information, including the fact the Volder's MAE stimulus was perceived as being from an ELL rather than an AAE-speaker, despite the fact it included a substantial number of AAE linguistic features. Comparatively both Marshawn's stimuli were perceived as consistent with AAE, despite the fact the linguistic features in his MAE stimuli were largely consistent with MAE. Together findings from the present study highlight the key role of paralinguistics in shaping listener perceptions, a topic that has been largely unaddressed in the CSD literature.

Implications. Study findings lead to at least three implications that can inform educational and clinical practice.

First, findings from the present study suggest that change in language ideology will require teachers to reflect on the role of language instruction in maintaining versus

dismantling the status quo. Teachers' appear to believe that by teaching children the "standard" way of speaking, they are teaching children what is "right" without much acknowledgment of teaching children what is just. Working in the 21st century American classroom, children come from many different homes that do not speak the "standard" (NCES, 2015). Instead of viewing these cultural-linguistic differences as deficits (e.g., improper), teachers might consider the richness of these language differences, particularly in regard AAE. Findings suggest that any consideration of dialect, inside or outside of the classroom, should include the more readily defined linguistic features (e.g., grammar, articulation, and vocabulary) as well as paralinguistic features such as tone and inflection. An examination of paralinguistic features of AAE can help shed light onto the nature of the disciplinary infractions that many AAE-speaking children receive from their teachers (cf. Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Given perceptions of AAE such as "bravado" and "boisterousness," perhaps paralinguistic communication differences between AAE and MAE are contributing to the stricter penalties occurring at more frequent rates for African American children (cf. Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Additionally, teachers' education should involve a deeper understanding of the relationship between someone's linguistic background and their identity (cf. Carter, 2003; cf. Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). By maintaining the linguistic status quo, teachers may inadvertently be denigrating their students' own cultural identities. For example, correction of AAE-speaking children's dialect may lead a child to think that his way of speaking, including his parents way of speaking and his cousins and his grandparents, etc. is "wrong", when in fact it is right, it's just not privileged in mainstream society. Perhaps the questions teachers should be exploring along with their students, is *why* MAE is a

privileged form of speaking and what can they do together to highlight the value of other linguistic variations, including AAE.

While it is understandable that teachers want to give AAE-speaking students access to MAE to help them succeed in mainstream society, this can be done in collaboration with dismantling the linguistic status quo, by helping students see value in their way of speaking. As an example, under the direction of Dr. Noma LeMoine, the *Academic English Mastery Program* addresses the language, literacy, and learning needs for African American English-speaking students and other students who are learning to speak MAE (LeMoine & Associates, 2016). LeMoine's program implements methodologies for improving MAE language acquisition and learning in culturally and linguistically diverse students without dismissing the home culture or language. The *Linguistic Affirmation Program*, under the guidance of Dr. Sharroky Hollie, is another program whose instructional strategies facilitates the learning of MAE in oral and written forms, without diminishing the richness of the home language and culture of AAE-speaking students (Hollie, 2001). Most recently, *ToggleTalk* (Ventris Learning, 2016) is a program, created specifically for the early grades, that uses contrastive analysis to teach children to make "situationally-appropriate language choices." The multi-cultural lessons are designed to intersect with the schools' core curriculum. Although such programs may not seek to completely dismantle the linguistic status quo, they are assisting students to reflect upon and value their own ways of speaking from a multicultural framework.

Second, findings from this study demonstrate that educators and researchers, including SLPs, might benefit from recognizing the similarities between ELLs and AAE-speaking children when it comes to issues of language heritage and access to educational

curriculum. As an example from the current study, 24 teachers commented in open-ended responses that Volder^{AAE} was an ELL. Teachers seemed to perceive Volder speaking in AAE as an ELL due to the fact that the dialect was not natural for him. In this context, we were asking him to do what we are asking so many AAE-speaking children to do every day: use a dialect that is not consistent with their current identity. To this point, LeMoine (2001) has referred to African American English-speaking children as Standard English Learners in order to highlight the notion that while AAE-speaking children speak a variation of English, they are still learners of the mainstream variety of English, one that is often inconsistent with their own identity. Instead of seeing the similarities, teachers in the present study tended to contrast their ELL students with their AAE-speaking children, usually to the detriment of the AAE-speaking child. For example, a few teachers from Forest Valley remarked that ELL children come with “more background knowledge” than their AAE-speaking peers. Teachers reported that their ELL students wanted to learn to speak correct English more than their AAE-speaking children. However, perhaps a change of perspective would help teachers to see that both ELL children and AAE-speaking children have a distinctly rich cultural-linguistic background and are both entering school to learn how to speak in MAE. One teacher began to see the relevant parallels as was reflected in her statement about AAE, “maybe it’s another layer of ESL we don’t see.” ELLs are being taught to speak a new language and AAE-speaking children are being taught to speak a new dialect. This change of perspective can perhaps assist in a change of perception. And who shall assist in this change of perspective? SLPs are the experts in language and communication in the schools and consequently can serve as a valuable resource in helping educators

understand the value of dialect variation and the inherent biases of many educational materials and assessments toward MAE. As a resource in the schools, SLPs can educate others, teachers as well as students, about language differences related to AAE and build the bridge to recognizing the similarities between their AAE and ELL students. Many L2 learning strategies used for ELL children can also be used for AAE-speaking children. Oftentimes, communication challenges occur between students and teachers of different cultural-linguistic backgrounds, but SLPs can use their expertise in language and communication to improve these interactions.

Consistent with the concept of viewing AAE-speakers as mainstream dialect learners, the third implication of this study I will highlight here is that AAE-speaking children should have opportunities to learn literacy strategies from their own home dialect. This is not a new idea; in fact it emerged from the *Bridge* cross-cultural reading program in the 1970s (Simpkins, Holt & Simpkins, 1977); however it is not an idea that has been prominent in our field despite the increased emphasis on the connection between spoken language and literacy. As SLPs we understand the relationship between the two more readily than other disciplines. To simply say that literacy is mapping oral language onto a written code is a false assumption. Literacy is being able to map your own oral code onto your written code. However, the connection seems to get lost in regard to the discussion of academic reading achievement in African American children (AEE, 2012; NCES, 2012b), with the emphasis instead focusing on perceived deficits in the linguistic input and pre-literacy activities within the home environment (see review presented in Jarrett, Hamilton, & Coba-Rodriguez, 2015). Alternatively, learning to read and being assessed in a less familiar dialect may be contributing to reported achievement

disparities for AAE-speaking children. As an example, the present study highlighted the potential difficulty in reading an unfamiliar dialect through teachers' perception of Volder's AAE stimulus. To use a verb frequently found in teachers' comments, Volder "struggled" to act out the text in AAE and the ratings of his academic achievement reflected this accordingly. Alternatively, Marshawn was able to read/act out both scripts fluently probably due to his familiarity with the MAE written text from years of formal instruction and the familiarity with the AAE text from his own home dialect, as was suggested by focus group participants. In that way, Volder's AAE stimulus could be seen as parallel to a child's initial attempts at reading an unfamiliar dialect, even though in his case he has already established his identity as a successful reader. Both boys presented as relatively strong readers, but it is interesting to note that according to the standardized test scores, specifically the GORT-5, Volder's score was notably higher. Of course, directly related to the point being made, stimuli from the GORT-5 are written in MAE, Volder's home dialect. Specific suggestions for providing opportunities to learn literacy from the perspective of AAE include providing reading material in AAE, giving names/labels to the different dialects that books are written in, and shifting terminology away from terms such as "incorrect" and "improper." In addition, children and teachers could benefit by instructional strategies that draw attention to differences in tone, voice quality, and rhythm as well as grammar and vocabulary.

Limitations. There were study limitations from both the quantitative and qualitative designs of the project. From a quantitative perspective, it would have been helpful if all teachers would have provided numerical ratings for all TPRQ items, which may have been accomplished if we had provided more explicit instructions for how to use

the Certain/Uncertain option on the questionnaire. Such an approach would have likely rendered a higher percentage of responses across individual items.

Additionally, creating the stimuli posed many challenges, from recruitment to implementation. One specific area of difficulty was getting the child actor participants to act out the script as written, which contributed to the development of shorter audio stimuli than I originally intended. My child participants had a difficult time sticking to the script that was written, particularly in regard to phonology. This may have made it difficult for some teachers to perceive clear differences between the MAE and AAE stimuli, particularly in the case of Marshawn. This “overlap” may have contributed to the lack of significantly different ratings between his two stimuli, even though the two stimuli still differed notably in their inclusion of AAE linguistic features (11.5%, MAE v. 59.5%, AAE). -While it is evident the children’s home dialect was influencing the acting out of the other dialect, this limitation actually led to our insight regarding the likely influence of home dialect on academic reading achievement discussed earlier. A related limitation is the use of very brief 20-second stimuli, which for some teachers, felt that it was too short of a time to make to make a judgment (n = 240). Although there is precedence from previous studies that the amount of words provided for each stimulus was sufficient (O’Connor et al., 2014; Eadie, Doyle, Hansen, & Beaudin, 2008), it is possible that a longer audio stimuli would have encouraged more teachers to provide ratings or to provide different ratings.

Finally, reviewing the transcript with focus group members after the interviews took place may have added additional insight into their perceptions. Although member checking was done throughout the interview, a post-member-check may have enabled

teachers to finish any thoughts that were cut off during the interview or given them more time to process their thoughts so that a clearer idea could be represented.

Future directions. The present study highlights at least two broad areas for future research, specifically within CSD. First, further research is needed to understand the role that paralinguistics plays in teacher perceptions, communication, and literacy. A possible area to explore includes examining more MAE-speaking children as they speak in AAE, a dialect unfamiliar to them, and interviewing teachers about their perceptions of these students. Additionally, after having MAE-speaking children read in AAE, having a focus group with these children to explore their own attitudes and perceptions about how it was to read in AAE. This will hopefully highlight the challenges that many AAE-speaking children appear to be having with accessing MAE literacy materials.

A second broad area for needed research is the development and evaluation of academic programs designed to promote positive bidialectal identities that incorporate a shared common language for talking about AAE. ‘Ebonics’ was unsuccessful for a variety of reasons, however it’s time for research and practice to connect. By developing a common language for SLPs, teachers, and policy makers to speak about AAE-speaking children, perhaps the biases and deficit thinking will be curtailed. Imagine a day when a child is proud to say, “I speak AAE” or “I am bidialectal.”

An additional avenue for creating this common positive language around dialect variation is to work with preschoolers and their families via the public library system. Research studies can be conducted during public library *Storytimes*, adding in cultural-linguistic awareness to not only oral language, but to literacy as well. By focusing on

children at a younger age, perhaps it is their early experiences with a positive language identity that will help shape the perceptions of teachers once they begin formal education.

In final summary, the current study demonstrates that consistent with standard language ideology, teachers continue to privilege MAE in the classroom while harboring negative perceptions of AAE and AAE-speaking children. In the 21st century classroom, teachers are being encouraged to make their classrooms more culturally diverse and pre-service education programs are beginning to include more culturally diverse curriculum, but it seems as though there is something more systemic that needs to be addressed. A teacher can learn all about the rule-governed, systematic linguistic features of AAE along with the characteristically cultural paralinguistic features, but until standard language ideologies are articulated and dismantled, AAE-speaking children will continue to be discriminated against within formal institutions such as education. In 1985, Helen H. Johnson, a junior high school teacher from Detroit, Michigan wrote:

Teachers help tremendously when they allow a child to appreciate his or her own language competencies and capabilities and at the same time rid themselves of misconceptions that a disadvantaged child does not have ideas or does not have a well-developed language (Brooks, 1985, p. 76)

It is this mindset, this shift in language ideology, that will hopefully encourage teachers to make the future educational experiences for AAE-speaking children brighter, better, and a little bit more “boisterous.”

"It is not enough to prepare our children for the world; we also must prepare the world for our children." – Luis J. Rodriguez

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Appendix A

Demographic and Experience Teacher Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire about yourself, your students and your training.

Personal background

1. In order to understand your background better, please answer the following:

Race and/or Ethnicity: _____ Gender: _____
 Language(s) you speak: _____ Accent/Dialect you speak: _____
 Teacher - Grade level(s) I teach: _____ Subjects I teach: _____
 Number of years at this school: _____ Number of years teaching: _____
 Highest degree achieved: _____ Subject area of degree: _____
 Do you live within the school neighborhood?

Students you work with

2. About **how many of your students** can be described with the following characteristics? *Select one response for each row.*

	Few	Less than half	About half	More than half	Most	Don't know
a. Racial/ethnic minority	①	②	③	④	⑤	○
b. Other variation of English (e.g., African American, Spanglish) spoken at home	①	②	③	④	⑤	○
c. Other language spoken at home (e.g., Spanish, French)	①	②	③	④	⑤	○
d. Students' parent(s) were born outside U.S.	①	②	③	④	⑤	○
e. Student was born outside U.S.	①	②	③	④	⑤	○
f. Eligible for free and reduced lunch	①	②	③	④	⑤	○

Appendix B

Parent/Caregiver Questionnaire

Name: _____		Date: _____			
Address: _____					
Relationship to child: _____					
School child attends: _____					
Is the child enrolled in Special Education services?		Yes		No	
Is the child enrolled in English as a second language (ESL) services?		Yes		No	
Race or Ethnicity (Circle one):	Black/African American	White	Hispanic/Latin@	Asian	Other: _____
Race or Ethnicity of child (Circle one):	Black/African American	White	Hispanic/Latin@	Asian	Other: _____
Education (Circle one):	Did not graduate High School	High School diploma/GED	College credit	College Degree	Advanced Education degree
Occupation: _____					
Language(s) spoken: _____					
Language(s) child speaks: _____					
Place of birth: _____					
Other places lived: _____					
Place of birth of child: _____					
Other places lived: _____					
Other adults in child's daily life: _____					

Appendix C

Linguistic and Paralinguistic Rating Scales

Story 1: Larvae in New York

The red guy ate it an den he blew his breaf on em. An den they bo saw da doughnut and den they ranned up an race on em. They raced up there and he ha opened hiz mouf and he wuh jumpin an den he had grabbed it wid his tongue like that. An danced aroun wid it. An den he ha gah stuck in der. An den he had drawped it. Den he ha run. An den dey chased eachother aroun. Red is throwin a tantrum in tha pool. Red is drowwnin. An den he hurry up an eat it. An he get a whole donut siaze. An den it blows off in de back of em. Dats the whole story.

Number of AAE tokens:

Total Number of words counted:

DDM = Number of AAE tokens/Total number of words = _____ =

TRANSLATION TO MAE:

STORY 2: House Full

The bird is carryin Reyd an Yellow. An Red and Yellow made dat stuff come out. An den da bird drawped em. An den dey fell in dat thing. They fell in dat thing and they fell in the nice house. An den dey like (coughcough) and they was coughin an den it woke up. An looked at da foo. Dey was bof lookin at the foo an lookin aroun. Yellow was messin with the iguana. Yellow was messin with the iguana den the iguana stickedit's tongue dow an tried to eat em. Yellow and Reyd ha ran an de iguana was chasin em and den dey had ran behin. An den dey ha fehll. An den de evil bir was playin da piano. Da evil bird ha came. Da evil bird was chasin em. An den da iguana ha caught yellow and reyd. An dey was workin together an catch him. An den da dog was comin. It was yellin. An den gramma wuh li (opens his mouth to imitate grandma). An den she ha spit out her teef. An dey go in da dog mouf.

Number of AAE tokens:

Total Number of words counted:

DDM = Number of AAE tokens/Total number of words = _____ =

TRANSLATION TO MAE:

Adapted from Wyatt (1996)

Subject pseudonym _____ Rater's Initials _____

Speech Sample Title _____

Rating of Paralinguistic AAE Feature Use:

Little
or No AAE

Heavy
AAE

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Possible Dimensions of Feature Use:

Pitch
Stress/intonation
Prosody (e.g., rhythm)
Phonology

Rating Key:

- 1= No evidence of AAE use
- 2 = Little use of AAE on 1-2 dimensions
- 3 = Little use of AAE on 3-4 dimensions
- 4 = Occasional use of AAE on 1-2 dimensions
- 5 = Occasional use of AAE on 3-4 dimensions
- 6 = Heavy use of AAE on 1-2 dimensions
- 7 = Heavy use of AAE on 3-4 dimensions

NOTES:

Appendix D

MAE and AAE Scripts with Avatars

SCENE II

Red and Yellow are at it again. They find themselves on an adventure through the air and land in a stranger's house. The good news is there is food to eat. The bad news is someone wants to eat them!



Meet Connor –7 years old, he also likes to go to camp in the summer and go camping with his family

STORYTELLER: Connor

The bird is carrying Red and Yellow.

And Red and Yellow made that stuff come out.

(Connor says it like he's grossed out/or like it's funny)

And then the bird dropped them.

And then they fell in that thing.

They fell in that thing and they fell in the nice house.

And then they were like...

(Connor fakes cough)

and they were coughing...

and then it woke up and looked at the food.

They were both looking at the food and looking around.

Yellow was messing with the iguana then the iguana stuck it's tongue down and
tried to eat them!!!

Yellow and Red ran and the iguana chased them and then they ran behind.

And then they fell.

And then...the evil bird was playing the piano.

The evil bird came.

The evil bird was chasing them.

And then the iguana caught Yellow and Red!!

(Connor pretends to catch Yellow and Red)

And they were working together and caught him.

And then the dog was coming. It was yelling.

And then grandma was like...

(Connor opens mouth to imitate grandma)

And then she spit out her teeth and they went in the dog's mouth.

SCENE II

Red and Yellow are at it again. They find themselves on an adventure through the air and land in a stranger's house. The good news is there is food to eat. The bad news is someone wants to eat them!



Meet Marquis – 7 years old, in the summer he likes to go down south to visit his gramma and his cousins, sometimes they go to church

STORYTELLER: Marquis

The bird is carryin Reyd an Yellow.

An Reyd and Yellow made dat stuff come out.

(Marquis says it like he's grossed out/or like it's funny)

An den da bird drawped em.

An den dey fell in dat thing.

They fell in dat thing and they fell in the nice house.

An den dey like...

(Marquis fakes cough)

and they was coughin...

an den it woke up an looked at da foo.

Dey was bof lookin at the foo an lookin aroun.

Yellow was messin with the iguana den the iguana stickedits tongue dow

an tried to eat em!!!

Yellow and Reyd ha ran an de iguana was chasin em and den dey had ran behin.

An den dey ha fehll.

An den...de evil bir was playin da piano.

Da evil bird ha came.

Da evil bird was chasin em.

An den da iguana ha caught Yellow and Reyd.

(Marquis pretends to catch Yellow and Red)

An dey was workin together an catch him.

An den da dog was comin. It was yellin.

An den gramma wuh li...

(Marquis opens his mouth to imitate grandma)

An den she ha spit out her teef an dey go in da dog mouf.

Appendix E

Stimuli Used for Listening Task

MAE stimulus used:

and then it woke up and looked at the food.

They were both looking at the food and looking around.

Yellow was messing with the iguana then the iguana stuck it's tongue down and
tried to eat them!!!

Yellow and Red ran and the iguana chased them and then they ran behind.

AAE stimulus used:

an den it woke up an looked at da foo.

Dey was bof lookin at the foo an lookin aroun.

Yellow was messin with the iguana den the iguana stickedits tongue dow
an tried to eat em!!!

Yellow and Reyd ha ran an de iguana was chasin em and den dey had ran behin.

Appendix F

Teacher Perception Rating Questionnaire (TPRQ)

1. How smart do you think this child is?	1 Well below Average	2 Below Average	3 Average	4 Above average	5 well above average	Uncertain or Certain
2. Does this child get high grades in the classroom?	1 Definitely not	2	3 Maybe	4	5 Definitely	Uncertain or Certain
3. Does this child perform well on standardized tests?	1 Definitely not	2	3 Maybe	4	5 Definitely	Uncertain or Certain
4. Would this child do well in the classroom without special education services?	1 Definitely not	2	3 Maybe	4	5 Definitely	Uncertain or Certain
5. Will this child do well academically in middle school?	1 Definitely not	2	3 Maybe	4	5 Definitely	Uncertain or Certain
6. Would other children like this child?	1 Definitely not	2	3 Maybe	4	5 Definitely	Uncertain or Certain
7. Does this child seem socially mature?	1 Not very mature	2	3 Average	4	5 Way above average	Uncertain or Certain
8. Does this child seem like he is a bully?	1 Definitely	2	3 Maybe	4	5 Definitely not	Uncertain or Certain
9. Does this child seem like he is a behavior problem in the classroom?	1 Definitely	2	3 Maybe	4	5 Definitely not	Uncertain or Certain
10. Would this child be sent out of the classroom a lot?	1 Definitely	2	3 Maybe	4	5 Definitely not	Uncertain or Certain
15. What do you think about this child?						
16. Please describe any characteristics of this child's talking that you noticed.						

Appendix G

Focus Group Interview Protocol

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

The Experiences and Perceptions of Teachers Working With Students Who Speak African American English

Good evening and welcome. Thanks for taking the time to talk with me about your experiences here at (name of school). My name is Megan-Brette Hamilton and this interview is being conducted for part of my dissertation research.

You were invited to this session because of your position as a teacher here at (name of school). My purpose in meeting with you today is to learn your thoughts, feelings, and experiences working with students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, particularly those students who speak African American students.

There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. And for the best experience, let's try our best to talk one at a time.

You've probably noticed my tape recorder. I'm tape recording the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. People often say very helpful things in these discussions and I can't write fast enough to get them all down. We will be on a first name basis tonight and I won't use any names in our reports. You may be assured of complete confidentiality. And as a reminder, your participation in this focus group is totally voluntary.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Well, let's begin. Let's find out some more about each other by going around the table. Tell us your names and what your position is here at (name of school).

Background

1. Tell me what you noticed about the samples. What were your perceptions of the kids?
2. As you were listening, what images did you envision of these kids?
3. How would you describe the way Boy 1 speaks, what words would you use to describe the way he speaks. (Continue with other speech samples)
4. Please talk briefly about your experiences working with students from different language backgrounds?

Probe: Where are your students from?

What are the different home languages your students come to school with?

How would you describe the way they speak?

African American English

3. Please talk briefly about what you know about the different ways African American children speak. This could be just from your own personal experience, professional experience, or from what you have been taught.
4. How do you know a child speaks AAE? What are the characteristics that let you know?
5. Describe the students you know who speak AAE?
 Probe: Similarities or differences among themselves
 Similarities or differences compared to MAE peers
 Behavior
 Academic Performance
 Reading
6. Do you know of any African American students who do speak mainly MAE? Please describe these students briefly.

Training and Teaching

7. How do you think your teacher training prepared/is preparing you for understanding students' diverse languages and dialects (Probe AAE)
8. In what ways does your students' linguistic diversity influence or not influence your teaching?
9. Imagine that you have been asked to help develop a new curriculum for teacher education, how would this curriculum look in regard to incorporating information on linguistic diversity, particularly African American English,? What training could have better prepared you for understanding and incorporating students' linguistic diversity?

Do you have any other comments about your experiences with language variations?

Thank you for your time!



Appendix H
A Priori and Emergent Codes.

Code	Definition	Example
<i>Salient features of Stimuli</i>	Any utterances where a teacher is making a statement about a specific linguistic or paralinguistic <i>feature</i> of a child participants' speech sample/stimulus, including: articulation, grammar, syntax, vocabulary, tone, pitch, intonation, volume, rate, fluency or emotion/personality trait.	"Well, I thought that that shows his vocabulary when he used what type of animal it was in my eyes." - FVT
<i>Linguistic</i>	Comments regarding a child's use of semantics, morphology, syntax, or phonology.	"One of the ones that I remember noting was um, using like a "d" sound for t-h..." - PET
<i>Paralinguistic</i>	Comments regarding the fluency, rate, intonation, tone, or voice of a child.	1) "I noticed speed, as well." – PET 2) "...the first and last boys um had voices like they were African Americans that I recognized."- PSET
<i>Global Aspects of Communication</i>	Comments that concern an all-encompassing aspect of the child's communication that does not report a specific discerning feature.	"Yep that's what I thought too. One of them sounded like ESL kid for sure." - FVT
<i>General Perceptions of AAE/MAE dialect/dialect users</i>	Any utterances where a teacher is making a <i>perception</i> on dialect, this can be about the dialect itself or the users of the dialect.	"Sometimes I think my ESL students have more background knowledge than some of my African American students." - FVT
<i>Description of dialect</i>	Comments made that described dialect either implicitly or explicitly.	"Well I have African American kids who want to use their- I don't know street language for a better term. Um, I don't know what else you would call it." - FVT
<i>Personality and behavioral description of AAE-speaking children</i>	Comments made that referred to a personality trait or a behavior associated with an AAE- or MAE-speaker.	"...but I think an African American dialect for a young girl can often like be perceived as like a personality or attitude difference when it's really just like linguistic." - PET
<i>Reflection on</i>	Comments made where a teacher reflected upon the experiences (e.g.,	"So I had a conversation with my

<i>experiences of AAE-speaking children</i>	home life, educational values, classroom moments) of AAE- or MAE-speakers.	cooperating teacher...when she first started teaching, having really little success getting some of her students – um – particularly the African American ones – to like work on a project if she'd say, oh, "Can you do this? Can you work on this now?" Uh. Versus her saying, "Work on this now." Right? Which she was saying could be a cultural thing that like all of this is generalities, so, you know, Take it with lots of pinches of salt. Uh. But that, you know, in the home life, their parents might be saying, "Do this now." Versus, "Can you do this now?" - PSET
<i>Role of teacher</i>	Comments concerning the responsibility that teachers feel they have and/or the associated actions that teachers take when working with AAE/MAE-speakers.	"Well I don't. Because I'm a fifth grade teacher. I'm – my job is to get these kids ready for middle school and beyond, right? And validating their loud, boisterous behavior is not getting them ready for anything unless you're a pro athlete."
<i>Societal views</i>	Comments regarding issues of educational? society and society at large, [?including institutionalized values??]	"...but [Australians are] also like not like widespread oppressed in like North American culture so, it's, I wouldn't feel bad doing it like I would if you told me to do an impression of an African American dialect." - PET

Note: FVT = Forest Valley Teacher, PET = Pre-service English Teacher, PSET = Pre-service Special Education Teacher