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## The Social Construction of Linguistic Reality: A Case Study Exploring the Relationships among Poverty, Race, and Remediation in an Urban Community College

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF LINGUISTIC REALITY:  
A CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG  
POVERTY, RACE, AND REMEDIATION IN AN URBAN  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

BY

ROSEMARY ROBINSON JACKSON

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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To Odell and Mama Dear

Nothing is real unless we make it real.

Nothing can touch us unless we let it touch us.

Earnest Holmes



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## ABSTRACT

The primary problem which this research addresses is that the majority of African American students entering urban community colleges are not equipped with the requisite language skills to perform as expected in their writing classes. The reasons for these high levels of unpreparedness are complex and multifaceted.

Grounded in sociolinguistic theory, this study seeks to explore how these students construct linguistic reality and in so doing manage conflicting language expectations. Thus, the major research question is: How do lower SES African American students at an urban community college manage the competing linguistic expectations of their home environment and the college environment? Because of the widespread association of SE with “acting white” in the BE speech community and because lack of communicative competence in SE has been associated with poor academic achievement among many African American students, the “acting white” phenomenon is a major focal point of this dissertation.

To address the issues raised in this investigation, a case study, naturalistic inquiry approach and a mixed method methodology were used. The quantitative aspect of the study centers upon two surveys. The first is Taylor’s Language Attitude Scale (LAS), a Likert scale type survey designed to measure teacher attitudes toward Standard English and toward Black English/Ebonics and those who speak it. The second instrument is a researcher-developed Student Language Attitude Survey (SLAS). The qualitative aspect

of the study involves analysis of faculty and student interviews. The sample is comprised of 108 predominately African American second tier developmental English students and 14 predominately African American professors.

Findings reveal that most African American students in the community college study do want to learn SE; many are angry that they were not effectively taught SE earlier; and most do seem to believe that using SE does not necessarily equate with “acting white” or trying to be white.

CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION

**Statement of the Problem**

In my first semester of teaching Developmental English at an urban community college, I stood before my class, engaging them in a discussion about the necessity of speaking and writing Standard American English (SE) in college. I defined SE as the language of academic and work place settings. I briefly talked about the beauty, utility, history and “flavor” of Black English, the language spoken in the majority of black homes and communities and designated “the true language of Black folks” (Williams 1975). I also noted the legitimacy of Black English/Ebonics (BE)<sup>1</sup> as a language/dialect but cautioned the students that they would be expected to use SE in their academic writing. The entire class was Black. The class listened courteously. Then, one male student, whom I will refer to as Rab, explained that he felt resistant to using Standard English because doing so felt to him like he was giving up a part of himself, his heritage, so to speak. He said his family and all of his friends spoke Black English; it was part of what he was. He did not want to give that up. His statement has haunted me. At the time I could not understand why, given the way that language is used to categorize, stigmatize and marginalize those who do not demonstrate competence in Standard English, students

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<sup>1</sup>The terms Black English, Ebonics, and Black Vernacular English (BE) are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation. Rickford and Rickford (2000, 169) note that African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is the term currently preferred by linguists.

would be unwilling to learn SE when appropriate. I saw Rab's position as analogous to a black motorist refusing to have a spare tire because white motorists have them. I see Standard English as a linguistic spare tire. I could not understand why, given the current racial, political and economic climate in America, a black student would make a conscious decision not to learn the language of academia and commerce. I could not understand what I considered the implied "self-limiting" concept in Rab's position, that in the "hood" one must either use Black English or disavow his/her heritage by using Standard English. My question was why not use both language options?

The primary problem upon which this research is based is that the majority of African American students entering the urban community college are not equipped with the requisite language skills to perform as expected in their writing classes. According to the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) Office of Research and Evaluation, over the years 2001-2004, virtually 71% of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) high school graduates tested at the Research Site were writing below college level. "This trend continues as test scores are observed for individual feeder high schools within the (Research Site) community area" (Assessment Report 2005). Substantiating these findings, the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago recently released a report, *From High School to the Future* (Roderick, Nagaoka, and Allensworth 2006), which concludes that even though those African American and Hispanic students who graduate from CPS high schools began that phase of their education at or above national norms, they are suffering what might be termed "educational neglect" as they move through high school.

CPS graduates' ACT scores and GPAs suggest that high schools provide few students with the skills, content, and credentials needed for access to four-year colleges and for success once enrolled. This is particularly



disturbing when one considers that these students began high school with relatively high entering achievement test scores and managed to graduate from high school despite high dropout rates in CPS. Thus, the low ACT scores and GPAs are not solely the result of students entering high school poorly prepared. Rather, between eighth grade and graduation, high schools did not provide these students with the content and skills that they need for admission to four-year colleges. (Roderick et al., 42)

The reasons for these high levels of unpreparedness are complex and multifaceted and will be examined more closely in subsequent chapters. However, poverty, race and deeply rooted societal inequities weigh heavily upon the educational life chances of the student population at the College, where most of the students emanate from Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in low-income neighborhoods.

When confronted with the expectation to use Standard English, black students whose home/native language is Black Vernacular English are at a distinct disadvantage. Most are unfamiliar with Standard English, uncomfortable with it, and/or resistant to it. In their home environment, they are stigmatized for using SE, and in the college environment, they are stigmatized for not using it. These students are from a speech community with different language norms and often different values from the members of the more dominant speech community to whom they are accountable (Wardhaugh 2002, 120; Wilson 1987, 8; Lewis, quoted in Wilson, 13).

The students that I have encountered in my community college English classes can be placed into three broad categories. First, there are many like Rab who equate SE with “being proper” or giving up the mother tongue, trying to be or acting white. Such students resist speaking SE and writing it. They identify BE with “being black,” “being real.” They have what resembles Paulo Freire’s (2003) “critical consciousness” but also demonstrate what Gurin and Epps (1975) term “collective identity or collective

consciousness” in that they seem to believe that using BE is a sign and symbol of those who wish to identify with their in-crowd. For this category of students, people who speak SE have to prove themselves as “being real,” that is, having a black cultural identity. These students are the ones, I believe, who exert the most pressure on students in the second category, who might otherwise embrace SE to a greater extent.

The second group of students do not consciously resist SE, but find making the change from BE to SE difficult and uncomfortable. Like Rab, these students have been, for the most part, immersed in BE throughout their lives, in their homes, with their friends, in their communities. They often understand the need for SE but are trying to learn a language system that they did not interact with early enough to facilitate using it now. Often these students do not want to be different from the group. They, too, embody the collective consciousness indicated by Gurin and Epps (1975).

The third category of students recognize SE as necessary for their success in college and in the workplace. These students do not seem to care whether their peers do or do not approve of the students’ use of SE. This third group exhibits an individualistic consciousness according to Gurin and Epps (1975, 8). Their personal goals and aspirations outweigh the pressure to adhere to the language patterns of the BE speech community. Thus, their loyalty to that speech community is more fluid, at least where using SE in certain situations is concerned.

Underlying the responses of each category of students are issues of identity. Lower income blacks, living as they do in isolation from their more prosperous middle and upper middle class brethren, bond with one another (Wardhaugh 2002, 119; Alleyne 1980, 220-21 in Chambers 1983, x). They feel safe with those most like them--members

of their own speech community. Some are often suspicious of middle class blacks, whom they frequently view as “sellouts,” who allegedly feel superior to their less prosperous kindred. Language is construed as evidence of consciousness and identity, and users of SE must prove in other ways that they possess a black cultural identity.

Students entering community college from inner city Chicago Public Schools most often speak Black English (BE) and have little experience writing at all; they tend to write the way that they speak. Once they enter college, their professors, particularly the ones who teach English, expect them to use Standard English (SE). These underprepared students are then quite often placed in remedial/developmental English classes.

How do these students manage the conflicting language expectations? For those who wish to use SE and simply do not know how, what pedagogical approaches do they think would be most effective? For those students who resist SE due to “critical consciousness,” who think using SE is selling out their race—their black identity— what pedagogical approaches, if any, would convince them to use SE in certain situations?

If students are willing to code switch or alternate between two linguistic systems (Delpit 2002)—BE and SE, how do they make decisions about doing so? Do teacher attitudes toward SE and Black English affect student performance in writing classes? These are issues that this research study intends to illuminate.

Within the framework of sociolinguistics is the concept of the “speech community.” Wardhaugh defines sociolinguistics as “the study of language use within or among groups of speakers” (2002, 116). According to Wardhaugh, a group consists of at least two members with no upper limit. The organization of the group may be static or fluid and the perceived value of group membership may vary among members. A

group of speakers becomes a speech community when the speakers share some kind of common feeling about linguistic behavior in the community, that is, observe certain shared norms; when there is a certain shared social cohesiveness within the group, and when its members are cut off from other communities in certain ways. “The factors that bring about cohesion and differentiation will vary considerably from occasion to occasion. Individuals will therefore shift their sense of community as different factors come into play” (Wardhaugh 118, 119).

My study examines the ways students in an urban community college, who are members of one speech community—speakers of Black English, also known as African American Vernacular English, Black Vernacular English or Black Dialect or Ebonics--navigate their way through the academic terrain, which is dominated by members of another speech community—speakers of Standard English. While language defines a community, it also can cut off or isolate a speech community. According to renowned linguist Geneva Smitherman (1977), Black English is “a language mixture, adapted to the conditions of slavery and discrimination, a combination of language and style interwoven with and inextricable from Afro-American culture” (1977, 3). Standard English is the legislated “official” language of America and is recognized around the world as such (Lewis 1998, 3). Smitherman also refers to Standard English as the “language of wider communication.”

The present research is grounded in a sociolinguistic framework based on the concepts of critical consciousness (Freire 2003), *habitus* (Bourdieu, English Translation 1991), identity and achievement (Gurin and Epps 1975; Fordham and Ogbu 1986) and viewed from a speech community (BE/SE language) vantage point. Freire defines

critical consciousness as the capacity to perceive the social, political, and economic forces impinging on one's existence and the courage, knowledge and skill to express one's dissatisfaction and to take action, thus becoming a subject (actor) rather than an object (acted upon) (Freire 2003,35, 36). Can students who exhibit a form of critical consciousness, in choosing not to embrace SE because they feel that it is the embodiment and tool of the dominant culture, use that same mindset to analyze the possible benefits to using SE in certain situations? For Bourdieu (1991), the habitus is a "set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways". These dispositions are transmitted through a process of inculcation in which early childhood experiences are especially important. These dispositions once inculcated "are structured in the sense that they unavoidably reflect the social conditions within which they were acquired" (1991, 12). Then, structured dispositions are also durable since they are ingrained and endure through the life history of the individual functioning on a "pre-conscious" level that resists "conscious reflection and modification." Lastly, the dispositions are generative and transposable as they are able to generate many practices and perceptions in areas "other than those in which they were originally acquired" (Bourdieu 12, 13).

In addition, the habitus equips "individuals with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives. It 'orients' their actions and inclinations without strictly determining them. It gives them a 'feel for the game', a sense of what is appropriate in the circumstances and what is not, a 'practical sense'" (Bourdieu 13). What tools, if any, can be used to mediate the force of linguistic habitus for the African American students researched in this study?

Gurin and Epps (1975) stress the relationship between the individual and the group; citing Erikson (1959, Monograph 1), they note that he emphasized that “personal identity refers to the maintenance of inner solidarity with a group’s ideals and identity, a persistent sameness with oneself (self-sameness), and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others. People learn to be most themselves where they mean the most to others” (Gurin and Epps 3, 4). Can identity factors that limit the achievement of lower SES blacks in college English classes be altered to “legitimize” SE as a means to an end?

Students from all three of the categories described above often mention what their elementary and high school teachers did or did not do to help them become better prepared for college English courses. It is difficult to understand how after twelve years of schooling or its equivalent, such a high percentage of students could come to college not having mastered to a higher degree the basic structures of Standard English grammar, if these structures had been taught. My working hypothesis is that one or more of three factors are mainly responsible for the underpreparedness: first, educational negligence in that the pre-community college education of these students transpired during an era when the systematic teaching of SE grammar was no longer emphasized as an integral part of the language arts curriculum (Kolln 2005); second, *habitus* produced by forces within the students’ speech community, forces such as deeply ingrained language patterns, peer pressure, isolation, distrust of middle class (black and white) values including their outlook on language; and third, a form of critical consciousness creating resistance to SE.

Therefore, an important aspect of the study is to attempt to uncover from the students what took place in their educational experience that, according to their reality,

produced or caused the achievement gap or underpreparedness with which they entered college.

Language has long been a class issue in America. For Blacks, it has been a double-edged sword that has enabled those who demonstrate facility with Standard English to be more readily accepted by the mainstream speech community while severing them, in many instances, from the speech community of the urban Black masses. Living as most urban lower-income Blacks do in economically depressed areas, isolated from middle-class Blacks who are able to use Standard English, isolated for the most part from Whites other than, perhaps, those they encounter in school settings, these inner-city Blacks are likely to cling to their own speech community.<sup>2</sup>

When members of this speech community enter formal school settings, particularly at the college level, they are expected to use Standard English, and this expectation presents several problems for such students, problems of preparedness, identity, self-determination, and teacher attitudes toward their use of non-standard English. Those who are unable or unwilling to adapt to the new speech community and use its language to an acceptable degree will have difficulty succeeding in college composition courses. If students could view SE as a linguistic spare tire, necessary and useful, they might find the conflicting expectations of the home and academic speech communities more manageable.

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<sup>2</sup>The 2005 controversy over Bill Cosby's criticism of lower-income Blacks for not speaking Standard English and Michael Eric Dyson's response in his book *Is Bill Cosby Right or Has the Black Middle Class Lost Its Mind?* spotlighted the deeply-rooted class issues marked by language use in the black community.

Critical consciousness regarding language use requires the capacity to perceive the social, political, and economic forces impinging on one's existence and the courage, knowledge and skill to express one's dissatisfaction and to take action. Far too many inner city students are unaware of the value of using SE as an opportunistic alternative to the home language. Some students like Rab resent the intrusion, the underlying messages that some instructors communicate when they urge their students to learn SE—the message that the student's home language is deficient and defective. So, such students in defense of the home language and all that it represents, the nurture of a familiar and safe speech community, resist SE. However, I am not convinced that the resisters are acting with full knowledge of the potential benefits of taking a bilingual/bidialectal stance regarding their language use. They have not fully grasped the politics of language. Standard English is the expected language of both academia and commerce. It is the language of power in these speech communities.

However, I am not reifying SE. The problem is that as long as SE is in fact the language of power and of "wider communication," why would inner city students not want to learn it and sharpen their abilities to use it when doing so serves their purposes? Standard English is a spare tire. Those who can write and speak the standard dialect are able to travel down more roads and a further distance than those who cannot. Students are limited or propelled by their language skills. Inner city students cannot travel the college and general economic terrain safely and with assurance if they lack the spare tire represented by SE.



### **Purpose of the Study**

There have been many studies indicating that lower-income African American students in general do not have the requisite language arts skills as they enter college. Part of the underpreparedness is associated with the widespread experimentation by urban public school systems with not requiring the systematic teaching of Standard English grammar for many years. Comments by veteran teachers at the elementary and high school levels indicate that the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) abandoned in the 1980s the direct teaching of grammar and composition using specific textbooks for the purpose. The current standards-based teaching policies were adopted in 1995. Since, according to several linguistic scholars (Dillard 1972, Smitherman 1986, Rickford and Rickford 2000, Palacas 2001), the major differences between SE and BE lie in variations within grammatical structures, if students are not taught the SE grammar and expected to demonstrate mastery of some of its basic structures, such as conjugation of the verbs *be*, *have* and *do*, at each and at all levels of formal schooling prior to college, such students are likely to arrive at college without sufficient language arts skills.

The purpose of this study is to examine the ways students in an urban community college, who are members of one speech community—speakers of African American/Black Vernacular English or Black Dialect or Ebonics--navigate their way through the academic terrain, which is dominated by members of another speech community—speakers of Standard English.

It is well documented that a high percentage of these students are placed in developmental English classes when they enter college because their test scores on verbal sections of standardized tests such as the ACT, SAT, and COMPASS, as well as on

college entrance writing sample essays, lag behind college-readiness criteria (Roderick et al 2006; Jencks and Phillips 1998). I wanted to explore and provide insight on this “language achievement gap” from the students’ point of view. I believe that this approach can bring a different level of clarity to complex issues of race, poverty, language, and remediation.

Historically, there has been much discussion about the achievement gap between white students on the one hand and African American and Hispanic students on the other. There has also been a great deal of discussion about the concept of equal educational opportunity, escalating with the recent No Child Left Behind policy and the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954). It seems that lower income or disadvantaged urban minority students have not had much exposure to equal educational opportunity. Jonathan Kozol’s *Savage Inequalities* (1991) documents in poignant detail the extent to which these urban students have been denied what should be a basic, fundamental right for all citizens in a democratic society. Horace Mann Bond’s study, *Negro Education in Alabama: A Study in Cotton and Steel*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (1994), indicates that since the beginning of public education in America, poor Black students have suffered a seemingly systemic “undereducation.” Kozol’s (2005) work, *The Shame of a Nation* elaborates further on the continuing failure of this nation to solve the problems within its power relative to urban education. He graphically depicts the decaying infrastructure, the overcrowding and under-funding; the lack of ancillary important programs and personnel such as art and music teachers, librarians, social support personnel—many of the things that are taken for granted in more prosperous, predominantly white public schools. But the overriding theme of Kozol’s book, the theme

that seems to connect the other disturbing factors, is **race**. Kozol argues that racial segregation in public schools is beyond critical—perhaps as bad as it was three decades ago; public schools are still separate and unequal.

In a related issue, numbers of Blacks have been calling for reparations from the United States for what has been termed the Black Holocaust, slavery. It is clear that black poverty, racial ideology and educational inequity in America share slavery as primary antecedent (Spears 1999; Hilliard in Watkins et al. 2001). One of the most debilitating and divisive residual effects of slavery is the lack of equal educational opportunity, which has produced an educationally underprepared mass of Americans. Reparations earmarked for building and sustaining educational and economic infrastructure in lower income areas might mitigate the social inequities contributing to the uneven access to effective education. In the meantime, there are many theories (Coleman 1966; Chubb and Loveless 2002; Richardson 2003; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Ogbu 2003; Fordham 1996; Jencks and Phillips 1998) concerning the causes and cures of the underpreparedness and its resultant achievement gap. It seems that often these theories assume that the majority of the lower income citizens in question do not see a connection between education and future economic viability for themselves, and so in far too many cases, they are seen as unwilling or unable to take advantage of what academic options, however meager, they do encounter. But how do these underprepared students view the achievement gap? What is their reality? Several experts have cited a conscious and deliberate resistance to Standard English on the part of most lower-income and some other African Americans (Young 2004; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Ogbu 2003; Fordham 1996). These issues raise several crucial questions, such as to what extent, if at all, has

resistance to Standard American English by lower income Blacks impacted the achievement gap evidenced in English language skills? To what extent has lack of exposure to standard American English impacted the underpreparedness of lower income Blacks? Finally, under what circumstances, if any, would lower SES black students willingly adopt Standard English as a good thing for them? In other words, what factors would influence student members of the urban, lower SES speech community to shift their thinking and allow themselves to use the language of the dominant speech community in appropriate situations?

Educator Theresa Mohamed noted in her 2002 dissertation that during her years of teaching at an upstate New York community college, she encountered few African American students who could write in the Standard English format. In her study she found that the faculty, which was predominantly white, had negative perceptions about Black English. She also found that there was little tolerance for the students' lack of facility with Standard English and that students were often frustrated by the writing experience. Mirroring Mohamed, one component of the current study is faculty perceptions and attitudes toward Standard English and Black English. Renowned linguist Geneva Smitherman (1999) states that Black educators are often more negative toward Black-English speaking students than are white educators due to the fear Black educators have "that black speech will prevent blacks from getting a share of the rapidly shrinking pie" (1999, 148). My study compares the responses of the urban faculty to those of Mohamed's faculty and analyzes the implications of the responses. Moreover, I wanted to determine whether faculty had experienced success in mobilizing students to value and employ Standard English.

In contrast to the students in Mohamed's study, my research explores the linguistic experiences of Black students in an urban community college where the faculty is predominantly black. In this city, 74% of the public school graduates entering community college are required to take developmental English courses. I surveyed more than one hundred developmental English students and interviewed twelve for an in-depth analysis of student perceptions and responses regarding their experiences in a "foreign" speech community. Since research and experience have shown that "only those Black English speakers who master code-switching make it through the educational system successfully" (Smitherman 1999, 140), it is my hope that the study will provide insight about what circumstances, if any, would prompt lower-income black students to willingly adopt Standard English as a good thing for them, as a linguistic spare tire. I hope to reveal what factors would influence student members of the urban, lower-income speech community to shift their thinking and allow themselves to use the language of the dominant speech community.

### **Significance of the Study**

The students participating in this study can shed some light, given their unique perspective, on the achievement gap that has been extensively studied. They can provide a degree of insight which might help teachers, trainers of teachers, policy makers and other students of similar background. The interpretations they have about their schooling experiences might lead to breakthroughs in their interactions with the children in their own families and might help other children from similar backgrounds. Educator Joan Wynne, featured in Delpit and Dowdy's *The Skin That We Speak* (2002, 205), laments the way that African American high school students and their parents silenced themselves

from speaking publicly because they “don’t talk right.” In my teaching experience at a community college located in the inner city of Chicago, I have seen some of my own students develop verbal stultification because they felt that they “don’t talk right,” and by extension “they don’t write right.” This study is intended to give such underprepared college students an opportunity to be heard; it is intended to delineate issues that impact the linguistic interactions between a perceived “non-prestigious” speech community and a dominant speech community in an urban community college setting. In doing so, the study exposes deeply-seated attitudes about SE and illuminates possible unanticipated negative consequences of policies such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) *Students Right to Their Own Language* position (1974, 2003) and that same organization’s stance against teaching traditional grammar.

Having established the background assumptions of the study, I will now briefly describe the methodological focus.

### **Research Questions**

The major research question of this study is:

RQ1. How do lower SES African American students at an urban community college manage the competing linguistic expectations of their home environment and the college environment?

Additional research questions of the study are:

RQ2. What are the attitudes of urban community college composition teachers toward Standard English? (Adapted from Mohammed)

RQ3. What are the attitudes of urban community college composition teachers toward Ebonics/BE? (Adapted from Mohammed)

RQ4. What are the attitudes of urban community college students toward Ebonics/BE?

RQ5. What are the attitudes of urban community college students toward SE?

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research project is a case study, a naturalistic study, using a mixed methodology approach. The quantitative aspect utilized surveys while the qualitative interview approach was included to provide more in depth examination and exploration of the research questions. This study is based predominately on naturalistic inquiry, defined as “an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (Van Maanen 1983, 9). The research focuses on possible emergent themes within this specific cultural context.

However, this study is not a description of the characteristics of Black English/Ebonics. Rather, the focus here is on the perceived causes of the SE language achievement gap among black students and on possible ways of engaging inner city students in a critical analysis of the advantages to them of using SE in certain situations. The aim of the study is not to generalize beyond the present scope of the research; nevertheless, the linguistic barriers and conflicts encountered by the participants are common among urban, inner city, lower SES students (Fordham 1996; Fordham and Ogbu; Delpit 1995; Roderick et al. 2006). Furthermore, since students volunteered to participate, some self-selection bias may be present. This limitation may be especially manifest among the interviewees. All but three of the twelve students interviewed were

my former students, and while this factor quite likely led those students to be more forthcoming and amenable to the interview process, it may have also biased them. The remaining three students were completely unknown to me, but the fact that they volunteered may indicate a predisposition in favor of Standard English.

An additional limitation is that the faculty informants in this study are not characterized as representative of other two- or four-year college Communications or English departments.

### **Overview of the Dissertation**

While this first chapter introduces the problem and provides a contextual framework, Chapter II provides a review of relevant literature. Chapter III describes the methodology, and Chapter IV presents the findings. Chapter V provides a summary, implications and recommendations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The present study is concerned with the social construction of linguistic reality for African American students attending community college in a low-income, inner city area that is plagued by crime, violence, drug and gang activity, and by a history of underperforming elementary and high schools. The primary problem upon which this research is based is that the majority of African American students entering the urban community college are not equipped with the requisite language skills to perform as expected in their writing classes. Most of the college's students have emerged from Chicago Public Schools. According to the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) Office of Research and Evaluation, over the years 2001-2004, nearly 71% of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) high school graduates tested at the Research Site were writing below college level. Once these students enter college, they are expected to use standard English (SE) even though SE is not their home/native language. Outside of the academic context, these students are stigmatized for using SE and are expected to use Black English (BE), also termed Ebonics or African American Vernacular English (AAVE). The students must find ways to manage the conflicting expectations in order to meet minimum requirements for passing on to the next levels of English classes.

This study examines how students manage these expectations and what can effectively be done to assist students at this level improve their command of standard

English. In order to better understand the dynamics influencing these phenomena, I needed to examine the social context and other factors which have spawned the underpreparedness with which these students enter college, and because the students themselves are the focus of my study, I needed to examine the social construction of linguistic reality for urban African American college students. I needed to better understand the factors impacting the students' choices, decisions, and options. Therefore, I reviewed the literature in several content areas: social construction theory; sociolinguistics, specifically, the *speech community* and Black English/Ebonics; and pedagogical approaches to teaching SE grammar to nonstandard English speaking students.

Thus, the Review of the Literature is divided into three sections: A Sociolinguistic Overview, focusing on social construction theory, on defining and delineating *speech community*, and on the development and characteristics of the African American/Black Speech Community; the Black English/Ebonics versus standard English Controversy, focusing on its effects on students' prior language arts preparation; and Effective Pedagogy, focusing on concepts, practices, strategies, and techniques proven helpful for non-standard English speaking African American students.

### **A Sociolinguistic Overview**

#### ***Social Construction Theory***

As I worked with a task force attempting to find ways to improve students' knowledge and skill using standard English grammar, a colleague and I discussed the students' lack of familiarity with and the perceived lack of desire to learn standard English. We knew that gaining a level of competence with this tool would give our

particular student populations a wider range of options for success. My colleague remarked, “We know this is good for them, but how do we get the students on our side?”

I have a favorite quote taken from Ernest Holmes’ *Science of Mind* (1938):

*Nothing is real unless we make it real. Nothing can touch us unless we let it touch us* (1938, 07).

This section of the Review of the Literature provides information and insight on how what is real becomes so; it illuminates foundational issues regarding the social construction of reality for lower SES African American students so that we can better understand how “we get them on our side.”

Operating from the assumption that reality is socially constructed, one might wonder, who constructs the reality? Who controls it? How do people come to know it? How does it change? When I extend this notion to the social construction of *linguistic* reality for African Americans, the same questions arise. In order to answer these questions, I begin with social construction theory. In the *Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Luckmann (1966) define reality as “a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot ‘wish them away’)” (1966, 10). Defining knowledge as “the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics,” Berger and Luckmann assert that the man in the street takes his reality and his knowledge for granted (1966, 2). However, “reality” and “knowledge” have “social relativity.” There are multiple realities. They go on to elaborate the ways that the dominant class--through ideology, whereby ideas serve as weapons for social interests (citing Marx); through socialization; and through institutional legitimization-- seek to control what becomes “reality par excellence.” The authors

explain, “Among the multiple realities, there is one that presents itself as the reality par excellence. This is the reality of everyday life. Its privileged position entitles it to the designation of paramount reality.” In order for the institutional world, that of the dominant class, to be experienced as objective reality, it must be legitimized; that is, it requires ways that it may be “explained” and “justified.” These legitimizations are learned by new generations during the socialization process. Socialization is defined as an “ontogenetic” process which is “the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or sector of it.” (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 130). The authors make a distinction between primary and secondary socialization. Primary socialization is the earliest socialization an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he or she becomes a member of society, while secondary socialization is any ensuing process that ushers the already socialized individual into “new sectors of the objective world of his society”. Significant others in a child’s world, those who are in charge of his socialization, impose upon the child their views (and values) as objective reality (1966, 131). Language is the means by which “reality” is transmitted. Berger and Luckmann add that language superimposes fundamental logic on the “objectivated social world. The edifice of [legitimization] is built upon language and uses language as its principal instrumentality”(1966, 64). Thus, the language spoken by significant others in the speech community creates deep and lasting impressions. Brunious (2002), in *Constructing Social Reality: Self-Portraits of Black Children Living in Poverty*, emphasizes that the setting plays a critical role in the social construction of reality. The origins of black linguistic reality arose in a setting of deprivation, brutality, abject poverty, and linguistic dislocation. Frederick Williams (1970) in *Language and Poverty*

notes that one “generalization in sociolinguistic theory is that the normal development of a child’s language must be viewed relative to the demands of his primary speech community (Williams 1970, 7). For African Americans, as Ogbu (1999) asserts, the “realities” being transmitted by and as language, are often conflicting. For example, while members of an inner city speech community might acknowledge the importance of standard English for getting a good job, they might nevertheless, through their words and actions, make a standard English speaker feel uneasy in that community.

***Sociolinguistics Defined and Situated in the Speech Community***

Wardhaugh defines sociolinguistics as “the study of language use within or among groups of speakers”(2002, 116). Fishman (1972) states that sociolinguistics examines the “the interaction between language use and shared norms of behavior.” He adds that “the sociology of language (sociolinguistics) focuses upon the entire gamut of topics related to the social organization of language behavior, including not only language per se but also language attitudes and overt behaviors toward language and towards language users” (1972, 1).

Understanding the speech community concept, a key factor in the social organization of language behavior, helps us to appreciate both the stigma and the value attached to Black English/Ebonics along with its tenacious grip on the “verbal behavior” of many African Americans. In *The Psychology of Black Language* (1973; 1993), black educator Jim Haskins and black psychoanalyst Hugh F. Butts examine “several parameters” that they deem “crucial to any understanding of current verbal behavior in blacks.” These parameters are:

1. The psychology of oppression, and the role of verbal behavior as a tool for dealing with oppression.
2. The African origins of current black verbal behavior and manifestations of those roots in current black language.
3. The development of verbal behavior among blacks during infancy and childhood.
4. The evolution of various dialects among blacks.

Haskins and Butts' "parameters" fit within the sociolinguistics framework and are meaningful for understanding the role of the speech community in establishing and maintaining African American language behavior.

Fishman (1972) further illuminates the role of language in society and within the speech community:

A truism in sociolinguistics is that language is not merely a means of interpersonal communication and influence. It is not merely a carrier of content, whether latent or manifest. Language itself is content, a referent for loyalties and animosities, an indicator of social statuses and personal relationships, a marker of situations and topics as well as of social goals and the large-scale value-laden arenas of interaction that typify every speech community (Fishman 1970, 4).

### ***The Speech Community Defined***

Dell Hymes in *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* defines a speech community as a social rather than a linguistic entity (1974, 47). Hymes is credited with promoting the study of the *speech community* as "an appropriate social unit to study communicative interaction in a society" (Ogbu 1999, 150). Hymes takes exception with Bloomfield (1933) and Chomsky (1965) for what he views as their

having “in effect reduced the notion of speech community to that of a language by equating the two.” For Hymes, defining a speech community in terms of language is inadequate for establishing either external or internal boundaries. He notes that the external “linguistic and communicative boundaries between communities cannot be defined by linguistic features alone.” Hymes describes two different conceptions that have been posited for internal boundaries of a community. “Many have implicitly assumed a ‘natural’ unity among members of a community, in virtue solely of identity, or commonality of linguistic knowledge, but no real community can be accounted for as produced by merely mechanical ‘replication of uniformity’” (1974, 47). In addition, Hymes relates that Bloomfield, and others following him, have advanced a quantitative measure of frequency of interaction as defining a community. However, for Hymes that is insufficient. He agrees with Barth (1969), Gumperz (1962), Labov (1970), LePage (1969), and others that “definition of situations in which, and identities through which, interaction occurs is decisive” . In the African American community, situational and identity factors may polarize those who wish to speak standard English from those who identify that form of speech with whiteness.

Hymes (1974) adds that two forms of knowledge are required for “communicative competence” in a given speech community: knowledge of a form of speech and knowledge of a way of speaking. To illustrate, he asserts that a person can possess grammatical knowledge or recognize the words being spoken in a given speech community because the words may derive from the same source language and yet that person may not have communicative competence because he or she does not know how the words are used in a specific cultural context. For Hymes neither sharing of

grammatical knowledge of a form of speech nor sharing of knowledge of the rules of speaking taken separately is sufficient to define a speech community. Cultural patterns are essential attributes of speech communities (Hymes, 1974, 49). He adds that a person often commands more than one form of speech, and “may command knowledge of more than one set of norms as to speaking.” Hymes terms the range of languages within which a person’s knowledge of forms of speech enables him/her to move his/her *language field*, and the range of communities within which a person’s knowledge of ways of speaking enables him/her to move communicatively, Hymes refers to as that person’s *speech field*. The speech field is a larger sphere encompassing both knowledge of the language(s) as such and knowledge of patterns of use, implicating competence in speaking, hearing, writing, and reading (Hymes 1996, 32). However, a person’s command of a certain language may be specific to one’s local community so that the command does not permit easy access to other communities in which the same language is known. (This supports Labov’s, Rickford and Rickford’s, and Baugh’s positions that miscommunication is a major problem between standard English speaking teachers and their nonstandard speaking inner city students.) Additionally, a still more expansive sphere is the *speech network*, “a specific linkage of persons through shared knowledge of forms of speech and ways of speaking” (Hymes 1974, 50). The speech network, then, is “the sphere of relationships in which the two kinds of knowledge (or command) are joined (1996, 32).

In summary, according to Hymes, a speech community is defined... as a “community sharing knowledge of rules of conduct and interpretations of speech.” Such sharing requires knowledge of at least one common form of speech as well as knowledge of its patterns of use. “Both conditions are necessary. Since both kinds of knowledge



may be shared apart from common membership in a community, an adequate theory of language requires additional notions, such as *language field*, *speech field* and *speech network* and requires the contribution of social science in characterizing the notions of community, and of membership in a community.” Hymes, citing Gumperz (1962, 30-32), defines a community as a local unit characterized for its members by common locality and primary interaction (Hymes 1974, 51). Hymes notes that the term *community* implies some degree of self-re production and support. He suggests, following recent empirical and theoretical work in sociolinguistics, that we think of a community (or any group, or person) in terms, not of a single language, but of a *repertoire*. He states that a repertoire comprises a set of ways of speaking, and “ways of speaking comprise *speech styles*, on the one hand, and *contexts of discourse*, on the other, together with relations of *appropriateness*” pertaining to styles and contexts (Hymes 1996, 32). Social meaning is an integral part of the definition and demarcation of speech communities and is also an integral part of the organization of linguistic features within them (1996, 33).

Gumperz’s commentary on the speech community also focuses on shared knowledge. He states, “To the extent that speakers share knowledge of communicative constraints and options governing a significant number of social situations, they can be said to be members of the same speech community.” Since shared knowledge is dependent upon intensity of contact and on communication networks, speech community parameters tend to coincide with wider social units, such as countries, tribes, religious or ethnic groupings. (Gumperz and Hymes 1972, 16).

One can compare Hymes’ position relative to the linguistic repertoire and social meaning to Bernstein’s concepts of “restricted” and “elaborated” codes. Bernstein posits

that speech communities create social reality by virtue of the methods of transmitting thoughts, ideals, values and the like. He notes that certain environments are not conducive to the development of language skills, negatively affecting “the functional level of general performance and social effectiveness.” Bernstein adds that linguistic differences occur as a normal phenomenon between status groups and that these differences are “most marked where the gap between them is very great.” Furthermore, these differences are revealed in young children almost from the beginnings of speech. Bernstein suggests that:

...the measurable inter-status linguistic differences between lower working-class and the middle-class, rather than reflecting differences in innate capacity, result from entirely different modes of speech which are dominant and typical within these strata. More formally, different social structures place their stress on different possibilities inherent in language use, and once this stress is placed, then the resulting linguistic form is one of the most important means of eliciting and strengthening ways of feeling and thinking which are functionally related to the social group [speech community] (Bernstein 1964, 251) .

In another work Bernstein (1970, 46-47) asserts that in a speech community where children are taught to communicate meaning through a context-bound, implicit, particularistic style of speech whereby one needs to know the context of a statement in order to understand what is meant, that child is learning a restricted code. In contrast, children who are taught to communicate in a non-context bound, explicit, universalistic style of speech are learning an elaborated code. For these children meanings are freed from context and are understandable to a wider audience. Both codes are effective (appropriate) for certain situations; however, the restricted code manner, associated with lower socioeconomic status (SES), is not most suited to school learning and to performing well on standardized tests. In speech communities where restricted codes are

the norm, children emerge with a more limited linguistic repertoire. Restricted codes have been associated with lower SES and working class communities such as the one in the present study.

Hymes, commenting on Bernstein's "twin concepts" contends that Bernstein has hit upon a crucial issue for speakers of Black English and for those who teach such students.

There is difference in command of verbal resources and in access to them, and it is not the case that inequality would be overcome by ending prejudice and discrimination against all forms of speech. Some discrimination among verbal abilities and products is not prejudice, but accurate judgment. The transformation of society to a juster, more equal way of life requires transformation of genuine inequalities in verbal resource (Hymes 1996, 47).

While Hymes acknowledges Bernstein's contribution to sociolinguistics, he finds fault with Bernstein's implication that "a person comes to have essentially one code-orientation or the other." Hymes suggests that people "*in fact have alternative code-orientations, that such indeed is the common state of affairs in modern society, and that the central problem is not that some people have one and others do not* (as most users of Bernstein's ideas have assumed). *The central problem is the management of the relation between the two*" (Hymes 1996, 51). People emerging from either a "restricted code" or an "elaborated code" environment may not be aware of the benefits nor the skills involved in "managing the relation between the two." Those socialized in an elaborated code community, associated with Standard English in this country, tend to think that their code is the superior one and to believe everyone should learn it exclusively. Hymes notes the persistent tendency to interpret the "elaborated" category as more valuable (1996, 49).

(These categories are now referred to as “contextual” and “non-contextual” rather than restricted and elaborated.)

Linguistic inequality is a fact that has particular impact on and implications for subordinated speech communities. This issue will be examined in the Black English versus standard English Controversy section below.

Wardhaugh’s (2002) definition of speech community begins with a “group.” A group consists of at least two members with no upper limit. The organization of the group may be static or fluid and the perceived value of group membership may vary among members. A group of speakers becomes a speech community when the speakers share some kind of common feeling about linguistic behavior in the community, that is, observe certain shared norms; when there is a certain shared social cohesiveness within the group, and when its members are cut off from other communities in certain ways. “The factors that bring about cohesion and differentiation will vary considerably from occasion to occasion. Individuals will therefore shift their sense of community as different factors come into play.” (2002, 118, 119). Wardhaugh’s definition is particularly germane to the present research because it captures several points that are vital to my exploration of the African American Speech Community.

For Fishman a speech community is a neutral societal designation in which all of the members share at least a single speech variety and the norms for its use. The speech community may be large or small (1972, 22). His definition is broad in that he asserts that “a basic definitional property of speech communities is that they are *not* defined as communities of those who ‘speak the same language’.” Fishman takes this stand in opposition to Bloomfield (1933) and adds, following Gumperz (1964), that speech

communities are defined “rather as communities set off by density of communication or/and by symbolic integration with respect to communicative competence *regardless of the number of languages or varieties employed.*” This broader definition would encompass both the standard English speaking and nonstandard English speaking sectors of the African American community. Fishman delineates four categories of speech communities, arising from Ferguson’s *diglossia*. Ferguson (1964) coined the term *diglossia* to refer to two varieties of a language used in the same speech community, but “with each having a definite role,” that is, serving different functions. The two varieties are “nonconflictual” in that the speakers recognize and accept the respective roles, and no stigma is attached to either when used according to the agreed upon roles. Fishman (1972) comments on Ferguson’s differentiated functions:

Whereas one set of behaviors, attitudes, and values supported, and was expressed in, one language, another set of behaviors, attitudes, and values supported and was expressed in the other. Both sets of behaviors, attitudes, and values were fully accepted as culturally legitimate and complementary (i.e., nonconflictual), and indeed little if any conflict was possible in view of the functional separation between them (1972, 92).

One variety, the “superposed variety,” termed High (H) is not the primary, ‘native’ variety for the speakers in question but is usually learned later in formal (school) settings. The H is used for formal situations such as church, government, newspapers, schools and universities, poetry; the other, termed Low (L) refers to a dialect of H. The L is used in informal settings, such as in the home environs, in conversations with friends, in soap operas, in folk literature (Ferguson 1964). Again, it is important that citizens are socialized in such a way that they understand when to use H and when to use L.

Fishman builds upon the diglossia designation and identifies four categories of diglossic speech communities:

- (1) Both diglossia and bilingualism; (2) Bilingualism without diglossia;
- (3) Diglossia without bilingualism; (4) Neither diglossia nor bilingualism.

The significance of Ferguson's and Fishman's research for the present study is that they demonstrate how other cultures have resolved the standard language (H)/nonstandard language (L) issue with little conflict by recognizing the strengths and particular functions of each variety. In contrast, the United States, a category one (1) speech community, characterized by both diglossia and bilingualism, has yet to find a mutually satisfactory resolution to the conflictual relationships between speakers of the standard dialect and certain speakers of subordinated dialects, particularly African Americans. Consequently, students such as those in the present study are burdened internally and externally by these conflictual relationships.

Before turning to a consideration of the African American speech community, one more perspective on *speech community* must be addressed—that of John Ogbu. Ogbu's (1999) definition of speech community is similar to others, particularly Hymes: "A speech community is a population that shares both a *common language* or linguistic codes and a common theory of speaking or cultural rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech acts." He adds that, "A speech community may be characterized by more than one language or dialect;" when that happens each language is associated with its own cultural rules of usage (1999, 150).

Following Hymes, Ogbu (1999) states that someone is thought to be "a competent speaker in a speech community if he or she knows both *the language* (i.e., vocabulary,

grammar and phonology) and *the cultural rules of speaking* –when to speak (speech situations), which speech event is appropriate (e.g., conversation, lecture, or debate), which communicative code (e.g., verbal or finger-pointing), and what style (e.g., confrontational or conciliatory, etc. Ogbu emphasizes that to “become a competent speaker of his or her language, a child during language socialization must learn both the language and the cultural rules of speaking the language of its speech community.”(1999, 150). Thus, black children, as do all others, internalize the language, the rules for using the language, and also the attitudes about language prevalent in the speech community. Once internalized, the language, its rules, and the attitudes associated with the language are culturally transmitted, impinging on the efforts of students, like those in the present study, to adapt to new language expectations.

Ogbu (1999) contends that there are attitudes pervasive in the African American speech community that affect members’ receptivity to learning SE as well as their attitudes toward academic achievement in general. To support his argument, Ogbu adds a fifth category to Fishman’s four branches of diglossia and applies it to an African American speech community: Diglossia, bilingualism, and collective identity (DBC) (1999, 151). I will discuss Ogbu’s argument at the end of the next section.

### ***The African American Speech Community***

The African American speech community is comprised of those people “who define themselves and/or defined by American society as people of African descent, who are U.S. citizens and descendants of Africans enslaved in the U.S.” (Smitherman 1999a, 20) . Taken as a whole, the African American speech community can be characterized as a diglossia. The primary two dialects/languages spoken in this speech community are

Black English, a nonstandard dialect, (also termed Ebonics, Black Dialect, and African American Vernacular English), and standard English (also termed school English, White Vernacular English, proper English, and “the language of wider communication”). Black English is most often used by Blacks with limited or no access to standard English speaking role models. Role models are defined here as those whom others *choose* to emulate. In his 1999 work *Out of the Mouths of Slaves*, Baugh notes that the Black Community is characterized by “linguistic diversity,” ranging from exclusive use of African American Vernacular English, also known as Black English, to exclusive use of standard English.

African Americans who interact primarily with other [Black English speaking] Americans in their living, working, and recreational domains are most likely to speak the nonstandard vernacular, while those [B]lacks with limited or diminishing contact in the vernacular black culture are more likely to use standard speech patterns; these in turn may reflect either regional or national standards. In 1972, J.L. Dillard estimated that 80 percent of African Americans speak only nonstandard English—that is, are not bidialectal. Another 10 percent to 14 percent are bidialectal, and the remainder speaks only standard English. These percentages have probably changed little since then (Baugh 1999a, 74).

Smitherman (1999a) distinguishes four categories of languages and dialects spoken in the African American community:

1. US Ebonics (considered by some a dialect of American English, and by others, a language, distinct and separate from American English;
2. The US Language of Wider Communication (LWC), aka “Standard American English;
3. Nonstandard American English;
4. Arabic, Spanish, Swahili, Creole (and other foreign languages...)

Baugh’s earlier work (1983) describes a particular variety of speech in the African American speech community, which he calls “street speech,” a term he uses to describe the brand of Black English (Ebonics) spoken by the black street culture (and

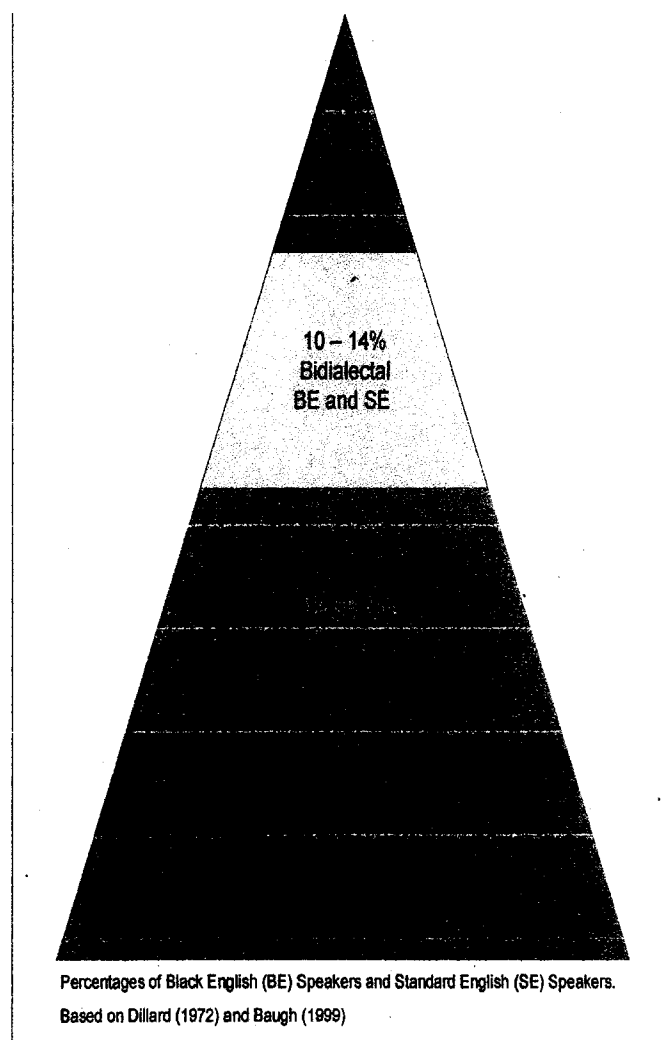


marked by cursing and slang.) This is the form of speech associated with the Hip Hop and gang cultures. According to Baugh (1983),

Street speech is the nonstandard dialect that thrives within the black street culture, and it is constantly fluctuating, as new terminology flows in and out of colloquial vogue... street speech [is] a flexible dialect; [It] survives because there is a population of speakers who use it in their daily lives and know that it is the appropriate style of speaking for their personal needs (Baugh 1983, 6).

Additionally, Pattillo-McCoy (2000) describes two varieties of language used in a Chicago black community: street language, which is quite similar to the street speech Baugh describes, and the Black English spoken by “decent” people, also known as “plain English.” These scholars are representative of the literature confirming the presence of shades of Black English in the African American speech community; students at the college where the present research was conducted demonstrate these gradations. Figure 1 depicts the linguistic diversity within the Black speech community.

**FIGURE 1**  
**LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY WITHIN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN**  
**SPEECH COMMUNITY**



Ebonics is the term given to the language spoken by the majority of African Americans and dubbed “the true language of black folks” by psychologist Robert L. Williams in 1973. For Williams, Ebonics applied to all varieties of English spoken by members of the African Diaspora—those in the Caribbean, in South America and any

other place the descendants of African slaves are found. For the purposes of this study, Black English/Ebonics is applied to the language/dialect spoken by most African Americans, particularly the poor and disadvantaged. Smitherman (1977) defines Black English/Ebonics as

“an Africanized form of English reflecting Black America’s linguistic-cultural African heritage and the conditions of servitude, oppression and life in America... Black English, then, is a language mixture, adapted to the conditions of slavery and discrimination, a combination of language and style intertwined with and inextricable from Afro-American culture”  
 (2-3).

In a later work, Smitherman (1999a) elaborates on that definition:

The Ebonics (BE) spoken in the U.S. is rooted in the Black American Oral Tradition, reflecting the combination of African languages (Niger-Congo) and Euro American English. It is a language forged in the crucible of enslavement, U.S. style apartheid, and the struggle to survive and thrive in the face of domination. Ebonics *is* emphatically *not* ‘broken’ English, nor ‘sloppy’ speech. Nor is it merely ‘slang.’ Nor is it [solely a] form of language spoken by baggy-pants-wearing Black youth. Ebonics (BE) *is* a set of communication patterns and practices resulting from Africans’ appropriation and transformation of a foreign tongue during the African Holocaust (slavery)...[u]sing elements of the white man’s speech, in combination with their own linguistic patterns and practices....(119).

In considering the African American speech community, I reiterate the four parameters presented by Haskins and Butts (1973) as “crucial to any understanding of current verbal behavior in blacks.” The parameters are:

1. The psychology of oppression, and the role of verbal behavior as a tool for dealing with oppression;
2. The African origins of current black verbal behavior and manifestations of those roots in current black language;

3. The development of verbal behavior among blacks during infancy and childhood;
4. The evolution of various dialects among blacks (1973, 1).

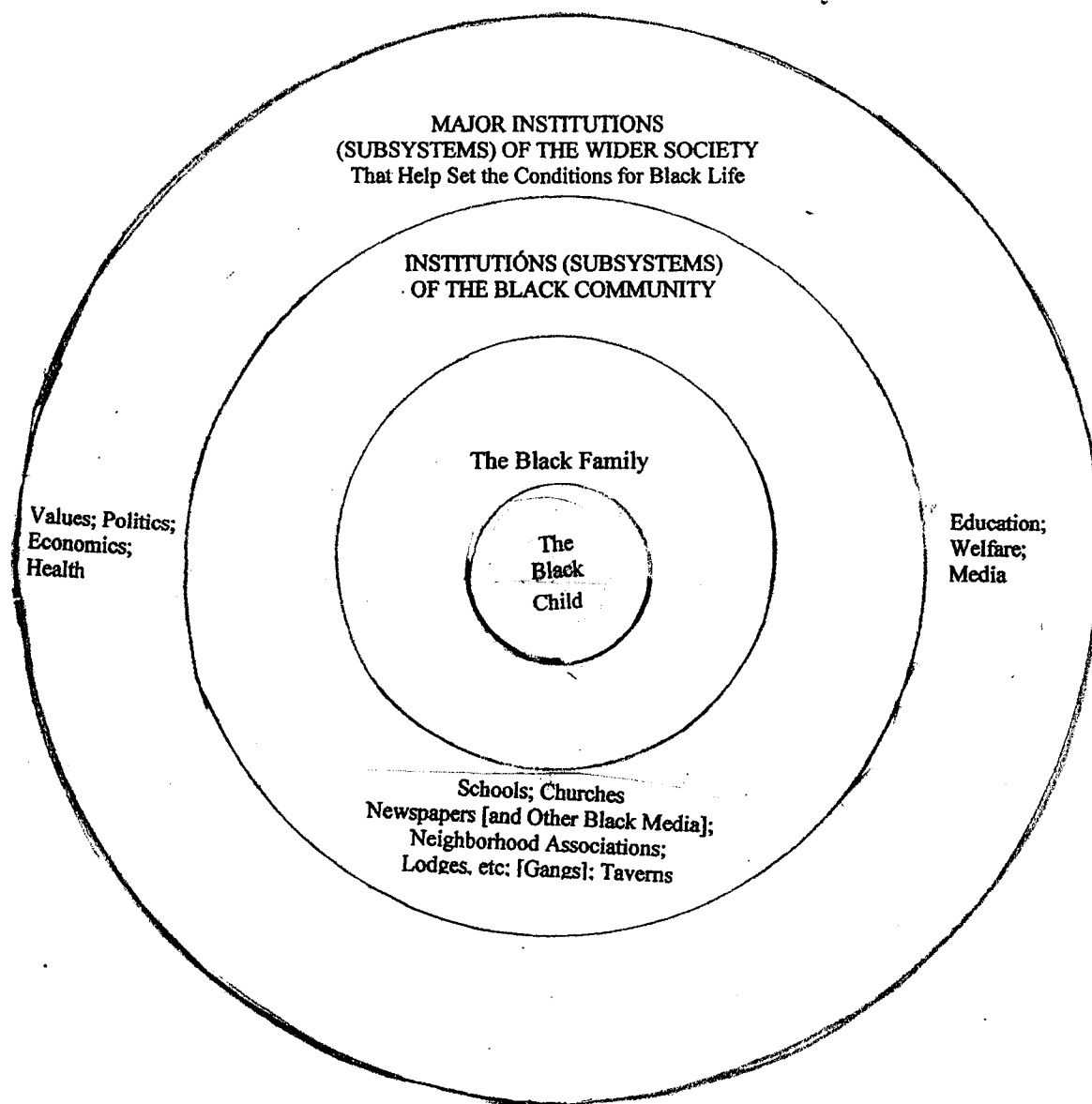
In describing the development of language, Haskins and Butts (1973) assert that language, or verbal behavior is an adaptive technique of all human beings. The acquisition of language is an extremely complicated feat. "In learning language, the baby is not only learning to communicate verbally, but he is also assimilating the culture's system of meanings and its ways of thinking and reasoning" (1973, 4). The authors cite Piaget, noting his emphasis on the "imitative aspect" of language acquisition. They note that Piaget "feels that language is acquired by the child through *meaningful* imitation," and that imitation, "though it might at times seem to be a copy of an external model, is never merely a passive copy; imitation is always linked to an active scheme of knowing, even though the knowing may not be very profound" (Haskins and Butts 1973, 3). Thus, as Hymes also has shown, children are internalizing the language, the ways of using the language, and the perceived attitudes toward the language(s) they are learning.

While children may first learn "verbal behavior" [language] from their family, the family's knowledge and attitudes are impacted by many factors. Approached as a social system, black family interaction portrays the developing infant as the center of a circle of layers: first, the black family; next, the black community; and finally the wider society. Haskins and Butts (1973) state that the black family is enmeshed "in a network of mutually interdependent relationships with the [black] community and the wider society. Included within the [black] community are a number of institutions which may also be viewed as subsystems, for example, schools, churches, taverns, newspapers,

neighborhood associations, lodges, and so on” (1973, 4). Haskins and Butts define the wider society as consisting of “major institutions which help set the conditions for black life. Primary among these are the values, political, economic, education, health, welfare, and communication subsystems.” Figure 2 presents a graphic representation of these inter-relationships. The authors repeat a previous point to underscore its importance in the context of this social systems model: “In learning *language, the baby is not only learning to communicate verbally, but he is also assimilating the culture’s system of meanings and its ways of thinking and reasoning* (4). This point is consistent with Berger and Luckmann’s explanation of the role played by significant others in constructing what becomes the child’s objective reality. It also echoes explications by Hymes, Fishman and Wardhaugh on the impact of the speech community in language development. The point informs the present study by illuminating the impact and power of the speech community and mainstream society as urban students face the challenge of incorporating standard English into their language repertoires. Understanding the development and characteristics of the African American speech community helps us to grasp the social construction of linguistic reality for African Americans. Keeping in mind the various notions about speech communities and Haskins and Butts’ social systems approach to language acquisition, a historical review of the emergence of the African American speech community sheds much light on the current verbal behavior of black Americans.

**FIGURE 2**

**SOCIAL SYSTEMS (INSTITUTIONS) IMPACTING BLACK CHILDREN AS  
THEY ACQUIRE LANGUAGE**



An Illustration of Haskins and Butts' Layers Impacting the Developing Child as He/She Acquires Language (Haskins and Butts, 1993).

For nearly two and a half centuries, formal language skills were withheld from the ancestors of members of today's African American speech community. Those language skills were also withheld from Whites with whom the Blacks in the seventeenth, eighteenth centuries, and early nineteenth centuries had the most contact. In the South, where most of the original Africans entered the country, there was a policy of educating only the acknowledged children of privileged landowners. Thus, the slaves, overseers and other Whites these people of color encountered on a daily basis lacked education and the more advanced language skills it brings. Baugh describes the "linguistic consequences of slavery:

Many native speakers of standard English assume that nonstandard speakers are ignorant, lazy, and less capable intellectually. The common stereotype is that nonstandard speakers, including many blacks, could speak "properly" if only they put forth sufficient effort. This view, while perhaps understandable, is woefully uninformed and simplistic. It fails to recognize the unique status of AAVE (African American Vernacular English) or the linguistic consequences of slavery. While most other immigrants were able to continue to speak their ancestral language in ethnic ghettos, slaves were torn from their native communities and immediately isolated from others who shared their language. The slave traders engaged in this practice to minimize the occurrence of revolt, but the linguistic dimensions of this action continue to have consequences for many black speakers today. Historically it was illegal to teach slaves to read and write, effectively denying them access to literate standard English; this unfortunate fact has also deepened the linguistic abyss between AAVE and standard English (Baugh 1999, 4-5).

Language has been used in America as a tool of both oppression and power. It has been an instrument of institutional and cultural racism. In his 1969 article against bi-dialectalism, the policy of the era for teaching Black students standard English, James Sledd articulates a view of how language is used in this way:

"Because people who rarely talk together will talk differently, differences in speech tell what groups a man belongs to. He uses them to claim and

proclaim his identity, and society uses them to keep him under control. The person who talks right, as we do, is one of us. The person who talks wrong is an outsider, strange and suspicious, and we must make him feel inferior if we can. That is one purpose of education...Upward mobility, it is assumed, is the end of education, but white power will deny upward mobility to speakers of black English, who must therefore be made to talk white English in their contacts with the white world (Sledd 1969, 1307).

Many Blacks have associated standard English with white oppression and view it as an instrument of white power over Blacks. Other African Americans see standard English as the language of the nation and view it as an instrument of personal power which opens doors that might otherwise remain closed. Still others see validity in both positions. Thus the African American speech community is a divided house where language is concerned. The “double-consciousness” and “push-pull” remain active and engaged. As a result, the present study refers to the African American or Black (used interchangeably) speech community as a separate entity, although with some commonality, from the Black English speech community and makes a distinction between both of these and the standard English speech community. Many educated Blacks view themselves as part of the standard English speech community exclusively while others acknowledge simultaneous membership in both. The students in the present study are members of the Black English speech community, even though some are attempting to crossover into the latter group of SE speakers.

Race and language are intimately linked (Spears 1999). Language or verbal behavior in African Americans began as an adaptive behavior in a society which painstakingly sought to create the illusion of the race’s innate inferiority, which deliberately withheld from African Americans the means to learn the standardized language, and then which denigrated the race for not being able to use that language.



That pattern persists into the present day. Spears notes, "...what cannot be said about black people directly—most people do not want to appear racist—can be said about traits that black people have or behavior strongly associated with them. Degrading comments about the language then become fascinating exercises in metonymy" (1999, 71). Spears contends, as do many other scholars, that African-American Vernacular English (Black English) is stigmatized because its speakers are stigmatized. African-Americans whose verbal behavior is less aligned with Black English and more closely aligned with standard English are less stigmatized (Lippi-Green 1997).

According to Haskins and Butts, verbal behavior in blacks may serve several functions: "(1) as a defense against institutionalized racist behavior in Whites; (2) as an aspect of the black life style reflecting healthy group narcissism, cohesive bonds, and affection; (3) as an avenue for the release of rage, fear, guilt, and other affects on an individual basis.

Children learn language and its various functions first from significant others in their speech community and then from those in their speech network and from the wider society. From the beginnings of the African American experience in the United States, the means of mastering the English language were deliberately withheld from black Americans. Haskins and Butts (1973), Bond (1934,1970), DuBois (1911), Rickford and Rickford (2000), Baugh (1999a), and Ogbu (1999) describe the conditions under which black slaves were wrenched from their fellow tribesmen, as a slavery management strategy, to bar them from communicating in languages with which they were familiar. In the words of Haskins and Butts:

The common colonial policy was to mix slaves of various tribal origins, and thus grouped together, the slaves had no choice but to adopt as their form of communication, with each other as well as with their masters, the language form most common to all of them—pidgin English. This kind of English [one that had not existed before] became so well established among blacks slaves in the British colonies that it was passed on to succeeding generations and became their native tongue [a Creole] (Haskins and Butts 1993, 31).

Baugh further encapsulates the practice by comparing the linguistic experience of African Americans to those of other immigrants:

While most other immigrants were able to continue to speak their ancestral language in ethnic ghettos, slaves were torn from their native communities and immediately isolated from others who shared their language. The slave traders engaged in this practice to minimize the occurrence of revolt, but the linguistic dimensions of this action continue to have consequences for many black speakers today. Historically it was illegal to teach slaves to read and write, effectively denying them access to literate standard English; this unfortunate fact has also deepened the linguistic abyss between AAVE [Black English] and standard English (1999a, 5).

Even under the physically, mentally, and psychologically stifling conditions of slavery, these Blacks used their innate intelligence to fashion a language that was a combination of the speech patterns of their African homeland and those of the Whites around them. Psychologist/historian Asa Hilliard citing Winifred Vass' 1974 study asserts:

...the language spoken by African Americans is a fusion of languages *that cannot be understood apart from an appeal to historical origins and to the oppression of slavery*...About 7 percent [of the Africans who were enslaved] went to the United States, Mexico, Canada, and Central America. It is important to know that the 4.5 percent of the total [slave] trade that came to the United States came mostly during the last fifty years of the slave trade, when by the end of the slave trade, West Africa had been heavily depopulated. Therefore, Africans were brought to the United States from Angola, with many coming through Angola from as far away as Mozambique and South East Africa on the coast. Thus, during the heaviest years of African enslavement in the U.S., the primary source of

people was from the core band of Bantu language culture, and the Africans who were brought to the United States were speakers of one or more of the Bantu languages (Hilliard in Delpit and Dowdy 2002, 94-95).

One of the main characteristics of the Bantu family of languages is that they spanned the largest portion of the African continent. The other well-known aspect of Bantu languages, called the “Bantu dynamic,” refers to the way “these languages exert a powerful influence on other languages. They tend to have tenacity and staying power” (Hilliard in Delpit and Dowdy, 95). The Bantu Dynamic may offer an explanation for why after centuries of varying degrees of contact with standard English, Black English speakers still retain “Africanized” language features.

Lorenzo Dow Turner, the first black linguist, documented nearly 4,000 words which he termed *Africanisms* in the Gullah dialect of Blacks living in the Sea Islands of Georgia and South Carolina. Turner traced these words to West Africa. The significance of this seminal work is that it provided concrete evidence of the retention of African language features through slavery and on into the present day speech of American Blacks. An earlier version of Turner’s work also provided Melville J. Herskovits with the documentation that he needed to build in his *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941) “a devastating case against the “degraded dialect” myth which had been the view of black English held by “leading scholars and ignorant bigots” (DeCamp 1974). Vass, a resident of Zaire for more than forty years, used Turner’s work as the foundation for her research with Joseph E. Holloway, wherein she demonstrated that 1,891 of the 3,938 Gullah terms identified as of West African origin by Turner are Bantu words still in use currently in Zaire (The authors note that many words Turner listed have a multiple African etymology.) The purpose of the Holloway and Vass study, *The African Heritage of*

*American English* (1993) was “to correct the mistaken assumption that only West Africans had a linguistic influence on African American culture by showing that both West and Central African languages contributed to the diversity of Africanisms found in American English” (1993, viii). Thus, the West African/Bantu language structure was the foundation upon which slaves layered the form of American English they learned from the white Southerners.

In summary, Blacks, separated from their tribal kinsmen, learned the English of the Whites with whom they came in contact. These Whites for the most part were uneducated speakers of non-standard English. As a result, Black English and its current forms emerged as a blend of African language structures and the non-standard English of unlettered white Southerners.

Similar to Baugh’s observations, Ogbu, a West African anthropologist, compared the linguistic history and experiences of American Blacks, termed *involuntary minorities*, with their immigrant/voluntary minority counterparts (1991). Whereas immigrant/voluntary minorities could and most often did live together in communal settings, retaining their native languages, supporting one another, and enjoying the benefits of a certain “autonomy,” Blacks as involuntary minorities, were deliberately severed from their relatives and tribesmen and thrown into the brutal reality of the slave environment. Here they were forced to use their wits to devise a new means of communication, a new language. Here they witnessed the differential treatment of house slaves and field slaves. Here they saw that house slaves were often sexually favored by the slave master producing children whose skin color erected barriers. Here they witnessed the house slave gaining exposure to what DuBois calls “the master language” and gaining

knowledge deemed important by the slave masters and preserved for only those favored by the slave master. Here they encountered the seeds of present day class conflicts within the black community. Here they sowed the seeds of the “acting white” controversy.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century after the slave population had grown substantially and some slaves had bought their way out of slavery as indentured servants and others had become rebellious, slaveowners instituted the repressive Black Codes (also known as Slave Codes) to control the actions and movement of slaves. Buying one’s way out of slavery was no longer an option. Slaves were severely restricted in their contact with one another and with those from other plantations. Teaching slaves to read and write became illegal. Thus, those slaves who lived and worked in the slavemaster’s house (house slaves) gained exposure vicariously to the standard dialect while those who labored in the fields (field slaves) retained the Pidgin/Creole (more Africanized) speech . “Class distinctions began to be refracted through the linguistic prism of the enslavement community... The “house” slaves had more exposure to Massa’s language and to what writer Langston Hughes once called the ‘ways of white folks’”(Smitherman 1999a, 35).

Over time, as the anti-slavery movement gained momentum, abolitionists pushed for all slaves to be taught standard English as a means of demonstrating that they were prepared to become citizens of the U.S. With more contact with standard English, the process of de-creolization—“the linguistic de-Africanization of Black speech”—spread beyond house slaves and free Blacks. Later during Reconstruction , the Africanized elements in Black English became even less pronounced as Blacks gained more education and more exposure to the standard dialect. However, once Reconstruction ended, the social, political, and educational policies and disparities that plague this

country in general and African Americans in particular were crystallized, and not without linguistic consequences.

...The dream of Black equality and full participation in American life seems to have been deferred indefinitely. Certainly freedom and citizenship did not result from Emancipation and the Civil War. Instead, in 1877 when the Federal Government pulled its troops out of the South and ended Reconstruction, enslavement was re-enacted in another form: laws and policies that created a separate and unequal world for Africans in America. The linguistic effect of the institutionalization of U.S.-style apartheid...was to halt the De-creolization that had begun during the Anti-Slavery Movement...(Smitherman 1999a, 37).

The halting of the de-creolization tended to freeze the language forms in isolated communities where there were few if any models of standard English. Ogbu describes such a speech community, a working class/lower SES African American speech community in Lafayette, CA, as one guided by *diglossia, bilingualism, and collective identity* (DBC). It is a speech community with both diglossia and bilingualism, but Ogbu contends that the frames of reference of the two languages or two dialects are oppositional. In such a situation the members of the speech community accept the co-existing languages or dialects for different functions; however, they are unwilling to or ambivalent towards learning and using one language or dialect, usually the dominant group's dialect, because of its perceived meaning for their collective identity (Ogbu 1999).

Minority status plays a distinctive role in the DBC speech community. Opposition between co-existing dialects or languages depends upon whether a minority group is "voluntary (i.e., immigrant)" or "involuntary (i.e., non-immigrant)." Voluntary minorities choose to come to the United States in hopes of a better future (better jobs, more political or religious freedom), and "they do not interpret their presence in the U.S. as forced on

them, by the U.S. government, by White Americans.” In contrast, nonimmigrant minorities are those such as Native Americans, Alaskan natives, and Mexican Americans in the Southwest--who were all conquered, Puerto Ricans--who were colonized, and Black Americans--who were brought to the U.S. as slaves (Ogbu 1999, 153).

Ogbu explains that while both voluntary and involuntary minorities consider the standard English as “White” and know that in order to succeed in school and to get good jobs, it is necessary to know and use standard or “White English,” the “two minorities differ in their ability and willingness to accommodate the White English” (Ogbu 1999, 153). This he attributes to their collective identity and dialect or language frame of reference. *Collective identity* refers to a minority group’s sense of who they are, of “we-feeling,” or “belongingness.” Members of a group construct their collective identity out of their collective historical experience. The collective identity of minority groups is either *different from* or *oppositional to* the collective identity of White Americans, depending on how and why a group became minorities. Voluntary minorities having brought with them a sense of belongingness have a collective identity that is *different from* that of White Americans. On the other hand, involuntary minorities constructed a collective identity after being forced by White Americans into “minority status and mistreatment” and thus have a collective identity that is *oppositional to* that of White Americans (1999, 154).

Collective identity for minority groups is closely related to dialect or language frames of reference. Ogbu defines a *language frame of reference* as the correct or ideal way to talk by members of a group or community (speech community). Immigrant minorities bring with them a sense of the correct way to speak their native language and

are willing to *add* standard English as a supplementary language. They are predisposed to learning the language so that they can rise in stature. They do not feel as though they are giving up their native language. Their frame of reference is difference. Ogbu contends that immigrant minorities are “more willing and more able to learn standard English or adopt White ways of talking for two reasons”: (1) Before they left their countries of origin, “they *expected* to learn English as the language they would need to succeed” in America; and (2) their viewpoint about “White American speakers of standard English, their frame of reference, is not ‘oppositional’.” They think that “accommodating” white American ways of talking does not threaten their language identity. In contrast, African Americans as nonimmigrant minorities learned the American language after being deprived of their original languages. Ogbu asserts that they are less willing and less able to accommodate white American ways of talking for three reasons: (1) They are not foreigners who expect to learn a new language; (2) after many generations of discrimination, they have come to believe that mastering standard English does not necessarily lead to goals associated with that skill; and (3) the relationship between their dialect and that of standard English is oppositional. Because their language frame of reference is oppositional, accommodating white American ways of talking does threaten their language (collective) identity (1999, 155). This theory may help to explain why some urban college students resist standard English and why others find it difficult to practice SE, factors addressed in the present study.

In the Lafayette speech community study, Ogbu refers to Black English as “slang English” and to standard English as “proper English” to reflect the terminology used by the research participants. (The slang English term is misleading, however, since Black



English/Ebonics is, as Smitherman emphasizes, not “merely slang”.) Ogbu’s study reveals several findings that impact the Black English versus Standard English controversy discussed in the next section:

1. In the inner city Black speech community, slang English and proper English co-exist in a diglossia relationship but in *oppositional* [my emphasis] frames of reference.
2. Dialect beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of Lafayette students at school are the same as those of their parents and other adults and not merely those of the “street.”
3. *Lafayette parents do not and cannot teach* their children standard English because they themselves do not speak it at all or speak it well.
4. The persisting difficulty of Lafayette people with standard English is due, in part, to their incompatible beliefs about proper English. They believe that SE is the white man’s language and using it is the equivalent of “acting white” (Ogbu, 1999).

These findings inform the present study since, based on interviews, some of its student participants share similar ambivalent views about standard English. The students, like the Lafayette residents, express conflicted opinions about both their home language and standard English.

### **Black English/Ebonics versus Standard English Controversy**

Volumes have already been written about the Oakland School Board Ebonics issue and the ensuing debates it created. This study does not presume to add to that body. Of particular interest in the present study is how Black English speaking students adjust to the firm expectation and requirement to speak and especially to write standard English once they enroll in college. Therefore, I focus on the factors creating the ambivalence and opposition described by Ogbu, on the notion equating using standard English with “acting white,” and on other views pitting SE and BE in competition with each other. I

begin with a historical glimpse at Black English and move from there to the eventual staging for ambivalence, opposition and controversy.

David DeCamp in the Foreword to Lorenzo D. Turner's *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* asserted that at the time of Turner's seminal study "leading scholars and ignorant bigots fully agreed that all Black English, including Gullah, is only a deviant and sub-standard dialect, a handicap to its speakers" (DeCamp in Turner 1974, vi). This view about Black English was the predominant one and was grounded in the further predominant opinion that not only was the language inferior, but also its speakers. (Despite abundant evidence to the contrary provided by linguists, this perception has not been obliterated.) The assumption that Black English was a childlike, archaic version of White English learned on the slave plantations and preserved by Blacks even after Whites had abandoned such usage had a longstanding tradition in America and is known as "the dialectal hypothesis." Countering that tradition, Turner's groundbreaking work was the first to document the African influence in the language of Black America. Turner established lexical and structural remnants of African language systems in the language of blacks who had lived in relative isolation along the sea islands of Georgia and South Carolina. Prior to the publication of Turner's painstaking research study on the Gullah language, he had published a preliminary paper in 1941 that provided Melville Herskovits, author of *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941) with concrete evidence, gathered in the U.S., which Herskovits used to build "a devastating case against the 'degraded dialect' myth" (DeCamp in Turner 1974, vii). Turner's work focused mainly on vocabulary and names with African etymologies; words such as *yam*, *gumbo*, *guba/goober* (peanut), and *okra* were included.

Prior to Turner's research and Herskovits' publication, it was widely assumed that African Americans had no linguistic history since the harsh castigation of linguistic ties had been so systemically implemented. These two scholars ignited a second view of the history of Black English, "the Creole hypothesis" which held that pidginization and creolization were the basis for Black English, for the Gullah of the Sea Islands, and also for the distinct language forms of the Caribbean (Burling 1973, 121). This view then emerged to compete "plausibly" with the dialectal view. In the words of Robbins

Burling:

Two views of the history of [B]lack English have been in competition. The first, which can be called the "dialectal hypothesis," rests upon the observation that whenever social groups are divided, their dialects diverge. We know that language is always in a state of flux. The members of a speech community must stay in close, constant contact if their dialects are not to draw apart... The cases of dialectal divergence that we know best have come about as a result of geographical separation..., but other mechanisms can isolate speech communities as effectively as mountains or seas. Surely, the degree of social isolation of American blacks from American whites rivals the isolation imposed by the Atlantic (Burling 1973, 112).

Burling notes that "the dialectal hypothesis accounts nicely for some facts of nonstandard English." For instance, multiple negation and double modals (*may can, may could, might can*), according to Burling, were widely used in Elizabethan English. However, Burling concedes that some of the most distinct features of Black English are very similar to features of Gullah and Jamaican language forms and do not have equivalents or parallels in archaic English. Thus, contact with white Southerners would not account for such features as avoidance of consonant blends, suffix deletion, invariant *be* and the many other features delineated by Burling (1973), following Labov (1968, 1970), Stewart (1970), Cunningham (1970), Dalby (1972), Dillard (1972), Fasold and

Shuy (1970), and later by Smitherman (1977, 1999), Baugh (1985), Rickford and Rickford (2000), and Wheeler (2006). Hence, the “Creole hypothesis” links Gullah, Jamaican and Black English forms through a pattern of evidence that “must allow for some degree of unified tradition, some interweaving of historical ties.” Burling concludes,

Black English is too much like other English dialects to be simply dismissed as a Creole, but at the same time it is too much like the Creoles to be dismissed as a mere dialect. We do not, however, really have to insist that it is only one and not the other. Some elements of creolization have probably gone into the formation of all black dialects, but standard English and other forms of non-Creolized English have had long, persistent influence upon Black speech as well (1973, 121).

Since Turner’s seminal study, Black English has been established by linguists as a rule-governed, systematic language and not simply “bad English” or a “deficient dialect” of standard English. Linguists such as Stewart, Dillard, Labov, Smitherman, Rickford and Rickford, Baugh, Wolfram and others have labored to refute the deficiency notion and to de-stigmatize Black English and its speakers. These linguists, particularly Dillard, Labov, and Smitherman have provided studies analyzing and presenting the structure (grammar and syntax) and phonology of Black English which distinguish it from standard English. [Smitherman in *Talkin That Talk* (1999) also distinguishes Black English/Ebonics from other non-standard varieties.]

As noted earlier, Haskins and Butts assert that for African Americans, language functions in several ways: (1) as a defense against individualized and institutionalized racist behavior in Whites (This might reflect the verbal behavior of Black standard English (SE) speakers); (2) as an aspect of black life style reflecting healthy group

narcissism, cohesive bonds, and affection; and (3) as an avenue for the release of rage, fear, guilt, and other affects on an individual basis (1973; 1993).

It would be helpful at this point to restate the definition of Black English/Ebonics. According to Smitherman, is “an Africanized form of English reflecting Black America’s linguistic-cultural African heritage and the conditions of servitude, oppression and life in America...Black English, then, is a language mixture, adapted to the conditions of slavery and discrimination, a combination of language and style intertwined with and inextricable from Afro-American culture”(1977, 2-3). Smitherman explains that this language involved the substitution of English words for West African (and Bantu words according to Holloway and Vass), but the same structure and idiom from the native language were retained. Smitherman offers as an example, “...West African languages allow for the construction of sentences without a form of the verb *to be*. Thus we get a typical African-English Pidgin sentence such as ‘He tell me he God,’ used [by a slave] and recorded [by a judge] at the Salem witch trial of 1692” (Smitherman 1977, 6). The words, Smitherman points out, are English, but the grammar or structure is West African. Sentences without the verb *be* are still prevalent today and “can frequently be heard in virtually any modern day black community.” According to Holloway and Vass, such sentences are just as prevalent in West Africa and in other regions affected by the Bantu Dynamic (Holloway and Vass 1993).

Tables 1 and 2, adapted from Smitherman (1977), Labov (1972), Dillard (1975), list some of the distinguishing characteristics of Black English, which according to Smitherman are examples of West African language rules that were grafted onto early Black English and which are still operating in present-day Black English:

**TABLE 1**  
**BLACK ENGLISH CHARACTERISTICS MATCHED WITH WEST AFRICAN**  
**GRAMMAR AND STRUCTURE**

Grammar & Structure Rule In West African Languages	Black English
Absence of form of the verb <i>be</i> ( <i>copula</i> )	He a big boy.
Invariant <i>be</i> to show habitual action	Tia be late too much.
Repetition of noun subject with pronoun	My brother he in the army.
Question patterns without <i>do</i>	What that mean?
No tense indicated in verb; emphasis on manner or character of action	I see the man when he come there.
Same verb form for all subjects	I talk; you talk; he talk; they talk. I was; you was; he was; we was; they was
Same form of noun for singular and plural	One foot; five foot.

Adapted from Smitherman (1977, Labov (1972), Dillard (1975).

**TABLE 2**  
**BLACK ENGLISH CHARACTERISTICS MATCHED WITH**  
**WEST AFRICAN SOUND RULES**

Sound Rules in West African Languages	Black English
No consonant pairs	<i>mus</i> for <i>must</i> ; <i>sen</i> for <i>send</i> .
Few long vowels or two-part vowels (diphthongs)	<i>nat</i> or <i>naht</i> for <i>night</i> ; <i>clahm</i> for <i>climb</i>
No /r/ sound	<i>foh</i> for <i>four</i> ; <i>moh</i> for <i>more</i>
No /th/ sound	BE speaker substitutes /d/ or /f/ for /th/; thus <i>dem</i> for <i>them</i> and <i>souf</i> for <i>south</i>

Adapted from Smitherman (1977).

Table 3 shows additional distinctive features of Black English along with their standard English equivalents. For thorough analyses of the features of African American Vernacular English/Black English/Ebonics, see Smitherman, Labov, Dillard, Rickford and Rickford and Baugh.

**TABLE 3**  
**BLACK ENGLISH CHARACTERISTICS MATCHED WITH**  
**STANDARD ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS**

Black English Feature	Standard English Equivalent
Plural <i>an dem</i> ; <i>past participle for simple past</i> : Sean an dem seen the baseball team leave.	Sean and his friends saw the baseball team leave.
Existential <i>it is</i> : It's a box under the table.	There is a box under the table.
Absence of third-person singular present-tense <i>s</i> : Joe make me sick.	Joe makes me sick.
Absence of possessive 's': I was at my auntie house all day.	I was at my aunt's house all day.
Multiple negation: We ain't got no stoh.	We don't have a favorite store.
<i>Do</i> and <i>don't</i> with invariant <i>be</i> questions: Allie don't be listenin', do she?	Alice doesn't listen, does she?
Aspectual marker <i>steady</i> : I be steady tellin' my kids to read moh.	I steadily tell my kids to read more often.
<i>Ah</i>	I
<i>Mah</i>	My
<i>Motha</i>	Mother

Adapted from Rickford and Rickford (2000) and Baugh (1999).

Smitherman (1977) emphasizes that when a new language is being learned, the vocabulary and to some extent the sounds are “fairly easy to master; however the syntactical structure and idiomatic rules require considerable time and practice to master. Moreover, the one item of a language that remains relatively rigid and fixed over time is its structure (grammar and syntax)” (1977, 6).

Black English speakers, for the most part, were learning the English language from uneducated whites and then teaching what they had learned to newly arriving Africans and to subsequent generations. Early in the process some Blacks gained exposure to the more “literate” language and to the culture of slavemasters. Once the Africans adjusted to the “facts of life” of not returning to their native land, they adapted as best they could to the new country and to its value and moral systems. To a slave the country must have seemed horribly brutal and wicked in its treatment of slaves. With the power to buy, sell, torture, separate families, rape women, murder and mutilate men coupled with the power to also protect, clothe, feed, and shelter all at the whim of the slave master, adaptation was the key to survival for slaves.

Language acquisition is an adaptive behavior. Many blacks saw the need to adapt to the standard language in order to survive and/or advance socially and economically. Because the means to learn this language were for centuries legally withheld and forbidden from blacks, those who gained competence in using the standard were looked upon by many of those who had not achieved competence as turning away from their own kind and turning toward the white world for self-aggrandizement.

Haskins and Butts (1973) comment that the development of verbal behavior in Blacks is an extremely complicated process “because of unique aspects of the black experience (e.g., family organization; interaction among families, the black community, and the wider society; the impact of the mass media upon cognitive development in black children; and the effect of institutionalized racism on language development and learning ability (1973, 10). The authors posit a variety of techniques developed by Blacks to assist them in coping with oppression. Haskins and Butts enlist the “extremely useful terms,”



“adaptation” and “maladaptation” in explaining the coping processes. Adaptation refers to “the psychological devices the human being employs in his social environment in order to ensure his health and his survival.” Good health, they add, depends upon satisfaction of needs, both physiological and social . The adaptations required to meet social needs such as those for prestige, status, and conformity to convention develop after the individual is exposed to the society into which he or she has been born. The demands of that society determine the nature of these social needs (Haskins and Butts 1973, 15). The authors add that “adaptations required to meet these needs will vary with the cultural institutions of a society.” Hence, a supportive speech community would heighten “good health” and inspire loyalty and comfortableness, providing its members with a sense of ease. Within the inner city Black English speech community, linguistic adaptations for “status, prestige and conformity to convention” may seem to come naturally and with minimum effort. However, as Baugh (1983) has stated, “Black America is not a monoculture. Most blacks are required to function in two societies, one black; the other white. Black [English] is therefore highly functional in the black community and from a linguistic point of view, it is equal to any other living language.”(1983, 23).

Nevertheless, those same “adaptations” may become “maladaptations” when one leaves his or her own speech community and encounters one where linguistic expectations are quite different, as is very often the case when a Black English speaking student enters college.

Maladaptive language behavior may also occur when Blacks distrust the language learning process or are ambivalent towards it to the extent that they do not do all in their power individually and collectively to master the language sufficiently to achieve

communicative competence, to broaden their linguistic repertoires. As an illustration, Ogbu notes in his Lafayette, CA study (1999) that parents said that they wanted the schools to teach their children proper (standard) English so that the children could get good jobs once they've grown up, but the actual behavior and attitudes exhibited by the parents toward standard English was "incompatible" with that stated desire. The parents seemingly did not support their children's efforts to learn and use standard English and neither did the community.

There is no question that in America, a great deal of pressure is exerted to impel minorities to use the standard dialect. (The term dialect refers to *all* spoken varieties of a language.) Ogbu (1991, 1999) has theorized that immigrant (voluntary) minorities are usually more amenable to this pressure than African Americans and other non-voluntary minorities because immigrants come to America looking for a better life and expecting to learn English as another language to add to their native languages. Even though African Americans, on the other hand, were forced here and compelled to abandon their native African languages, prior to the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s, many African Americans seemed to be open and even eager to learn SE for much the same reasons: as an entrée to a better life in America. Smitherman confirms that during the Abolitionist movement and "immediately following Emancipation, [teaching Blacks to read, write, and speak standard English] was a primary tactic of Abolitionists (and traditionally, all fighters for the black cause) to prove [B]lacks equal to whites and therefore worthy of freedom and equality." Yet, as Brunious (2002), hooks (1994), West (1993), Wilson, Smitherman, Spears , and many others note, racial ideology and socioeconomic policies have interfered in the pursuit of the American Dream for

many Blacks. Smitherman (1977) adds that since Blacks “have never really been viewed or treated as equals, there has been and still is a certain level of rejection of White American culture and English” (ii). The Black Power movement ushered in a groundswell of pro-black sentiment. Included in the “I’m black and I’m proud” philosophy, delivered powerfully through song by James Brown, was the preservation of Black English. Many black Americans, including a considerable number of those in the present research study, now feel that Black English is the last vestige of their native language and therefore guard it closely as a conscious choice. Others embrace Black English at home, with their friends but speak SE in public. Still others, in accord with Bourdieu’s *habitus* concept, adhere to BE as a matter of acquired disposition, passed down and formed as habitual and natural. Habiti are durable and difficult to change. In contrast to these Black English speakers, there are African Americans who consider Black English to be uneducated, ignorant speech, shunning it and its speakers.

Black English is most often used by lower SES African Americans and by those trying to identify with that sector of the population; however, as Baugh and Smitherman attest, most, if not all, Black Americans can speak Black English when and if they choose to do so. Paralleling DuBois’ “double-consciousness,” Smitherman establishes how what she terms the “push-pull” momentum has divided the black community as its members have had to handle the often opposing expectations of White and Black America. Those who want admission into the economic and social mainstream of America are pushed toward white norms and language, while those who want to retain ties with the black community are pulled toward black norms and language. Sometimes, oftentimes, the push-pull occurs in the same individual. Smitherman asserts:

While some blacks speak very Black English, there are others who speak very White English, and still others who are competent in both linguistic systems. Historically, black speech has been demanded of those who wish to retain close affinities with the black community, and intrusions of White English are likely to be frowned upon and any black users thereof promptly ostracized. Talkin' proper (trying to sound white) just ain considered cool.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, White America has insisted upon White English as the price of admission into its economic and social (I would add educational) mainstream (1977, 12). [Smitherman is well-known for her practice of interspersing Black English throughout her academic writings.]

Further complicating the dynamics of this divisiveness in the black community is the “psychological factor.” Echoing Haskins and Butts’ third function of language in the African American community as a healthy expression of group narcissism and solidarity, Smitherman (1977) states, “People tend to feel more comfortable when they can relax and rap (converse) within the linguistic framework that has been the dialect of their nurture, childhood, identity, and style. Hence, even when there is no compelling social pressure to use Black English, there may be an inner compulsion to ‘talk Black.’” (1977, 12). Rickford and Rickford (2000) echo this sentiment as they enumerate the variety of ways Black English is used in the African American community:

...to sing, to rap, to shout, to style, to express our individual personas and our ethnic identities, to confide in and communicate with friends, to chastise, to cuss, to act, to act the fool, to get by and get over, to pass secrets, to make jokes, to mock and mimic, to tell stories, to reflect and philosophize, to create authentic character and voices in novels, poems, and plays, to survive in the streets, to relax at home and recreate in playgrounds, to render our deepest emotions and embody our vital core (Rickford and Rickford 2000, 4).

However, the “double-consciousness, the “push-pull”, the cultural duality that confront Black Americans are no where more pressing than in the Black English versus Standard English phenomenon. Where race might seem to non-Blacks the most ready

individual identifier, it is language that most frequently marks one's group identity within the black community. Nonetheless, Blacks and Whites alike view Black English as a less prestigious dialect than standard English and may judge its speakers negatively. At the same time, speakers of Black English have negative views about standard English and its speakers, black and white.

Even though I disagree with both Ogbu and McWhorter's tendencies to deny or belittle the African part of the linguistic history of Black English, I agree with them and with Fordham regarding the detrimental effects of attitudes about and perceptions of Standard English use by African Americans as "acting white" or trying to be white. In 1986 Fordham and Ogbu published an article entitled "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the Burden of 'Acting White,'" and thus the term "acting white" is most often associated with the research of these two scholars. Fordham and Ogbu assert that as a response to racism and other inequities of American society, Blacks have developed coping mechanisms that "protect their identity and maintain boundaries between themselves and Whites." "Fictive kinship" is an integral part of this coping strategy, wherein "you are one of us if you do these things and not one of us if you do those things." "Those things" mean you are "acting white." The first "thing" mentioned in determining if a black person is "acting white" is the use of standard English. Fordham and Ogbu contend that one major reason that black students do poorly in school is that they experience "inordinate ambivalence" and "affective dissonance" in regard to academic effort and success (Fordham and Ogbu 1986, 176). This "acting white" mentality is culturally transmitted and creates the ambivalence and affective dissonance.

McWhorter cites a “cultural disconnect” stemming from a trio of factors with the broad categorical labels of “Victimology,” “Separatism,” and “Anti-Intellectualism.” He associates the continued use of Black English in spite of its proven detrimental effects on the life chances of its users in public situations with the Black Power movement and its separatist foundations. Nothing has been as detrimental to the linguistic development of African Americans as the notion that using standard English is equivalent to “acting white” or trying to be white .

Fordham and Ogbu presented the notion of “acting white” in their 1986 study of African American students in a predominately black high school. Later Ogbu and Ferguson extended the concept to include blacks in racially integrated communities.

These authors and McWhorter tied the “acting white” notion not only to speaking standard English but also to the overall academic underachievement of black students, attributing the “achievement gap” to a pervasive anti-intellectualism in the black community caused by, for the former researchers a reaction to a racist society and for the latter, an uncontrolled victimology. Fryer (2006) documents the untenability of the anti-intellectual “tradition,” citing a long history of educational emphasis and striving among Blacks of all classes. Fryer connects the “acting white” syndrome to situations where the educational system has failed to identify and nurture gifted and talented black youngsters early on and thus when a group of black students are in an integrated school setting, those who have been marked as very bright and educational strivers and who, by the way, speak standard English, are placed in classes with white students. Finding themselves among the one or two blacks in such classes, they may be subjected to taunts of “acting white.” Fryer claims that the phenomenon is almost non-existent in all black or nearly

black schools, refuting Fordham and Ogbu's initial claim. Richardson (2003) ties "acting white" to notions of white supremacy and joins Woodson (1933) in locating the concept at the feet of (mis)educated Blacks who most often speak SE and who, once having achieved their education and class status, remove themselves physically and consciously from the larger black community from whence they and/or their ancestors came, with notions that they, too, along with Whites, are superior to lesser educated, non standard English speaking Blacks.

Harpalani (2002), Fryer (2006), Lundy (2003), and Richardson view the "acting white" phenomenon from a broader scope. Harpalani, Richardson and Lundy tie the concept to perceptions about white supremacy.

Harpalani contends that Fordham and Ogbu (1986) have misinterpreted the meaning of "acting white", and he chooses to "reframe the issue from a developmental perspective." He claims that the "acting white" hypothesis posed by Fordham and Ogbu asserts that Blacks have not historically valued education, viewing academic success as the domain of whites and thus fundamentally in opposition to Black culture and identity. Harpalani refutes that hypothesis. Citing Woodson (1919), DuBois (1935) and Anderson (1988), Harpalani, like Fryer, demonstrates that Blacks have indeed had a long history of both valuing and striving for educational excellence. Harpalani faults Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) study on "acting white" for "drawing psychological inferences from a sociohistorical taxonomy." He comments that ethnographic data used to support the "acting white" hypothesis in Fordham and Ogbu's analysis is not considered from a developmental perspective and this omission leads to "erroneous attributions that implicate Black culture for academic underachievement." According to Harpalani, a

protégé and co-researcher of Margaret Beale Spencer, failing to consider identity formation processes, particularly with regard to race, causes Fordham & Ogbu to “miss the meaning of ‘acting white’ references entirely.” Harpalani maintains, following Tatum (1997, 16 quoted in Harpalani 2002) that racial identity development refers to the “process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group.” Harpalani uses Cross’s Nigrescence framework (Cross, 1971; Cross, Parham & Helms, 1991 cite in to delineate a four stage racial identity progression to which he assigns corresponding racial attitudes. Harpalani cautions that he modified Cross’s framework “to incorporate a more dynamic and flexible view of racial identity” and adds that the stages should not be interpreted “as a literal progression with strict well-defined boundaries between them”(Spencer, Noll et al. 2001, 4). Conceivably, one could become “stuck” in a certain stage and be entrenched in the corresponding racial attitude well into adulthood. Bourdieu’s *habitus* then becomes a factor as the attitudes associated with the stages become dispositions that color and even construct one’s social reality. The Nigrescence stages and their corresponding racial attitudes are shown below.

1. Pre-encounter stage: Persons view the world from a White Eurocentric frame of reference, consciously or unconsciously espousing pro-White and anti-Black attitudes. Racial attitude: Eurocentrism.
2. Encounter stage: Involves an event or series of events whereby individuals come to realize that they can never be fully accepted into the White world. Racial Attitude: Transitional —movement or transition from anti-Black attitudes .
3. Immersion-Emersion stage: Represents a reaction to the encounter stage at which point individuals become more interested in their own Black identities and their awareness of racism also increases. This



stage may be marked by anti-White attitudes. Racial Attitude: Reactive Afrocentrism.

4. Internalization stage: Occurs as individuals achieve security with their own Black identities and move towards a more pluralistic perspective in which African Americans represent the primary reference group but attitudes are not anti-White. Racial Attitude: Proactive Afrocentrism.

Harpalani draws from a study by Spencer et al. (2001), in which he participated, involving 562 Black adolescents, ranging between eleven and sixteen years old to refute what the authors see as a reductionist claim by Fordham and Ogbu (1986) that an anti-education philosophy pervades the African American community and negatively impacts academic achievement in that community. He provides evidence that individuals at certain stages of identity development are acting or reacting from certain racial attitudes which emanate from the developmental needs and experiences of the individual.

Interestingly, the researchers found that persons with a Eurocentric orientation, at the Pre-Encounter stage, demonstrate lower academic achievement and lower self-esteem than those individuals who have a proactive Afrocentric orientation at the Internalization stage. The study further indicates that “while individuals with a reactive Afrocentric orientation (Immersion-emersion stage) performed poorly,... a strong, proactive sense of Black cultural identity is associated with positive academic achievement for Black youth.” These findings “contradict the claims of Fordham and Ogbu (1986), who contend that Blacks must distance themselves from Black culture in order to achieve.”

Significantly, Harpalani notes that while Fordham and Ogbu’s 1986 article is credited with the popularization of the term “acting white,” it was not the first academic work to use the term. The earliest reference found by Harpalani was in a 1970 paper by McArdle and Young entitled “Classroom discussion on racial identity or how can we

make it without ‘acting white.’” The authors comment that the black youth in the sample, high schoolers from Madison, Wisconsin, express the goal of “having equal rights and opportunities without ‘acting white,’” bolstered by a sense of “Black is beautiful”(McArdle and Young 1970, 137 cited in Harpalani 2002, 5). The students wanted to be successful in life and at the same time reach Cross’s Internalization stage. There is no indication, by the way, that these students saw speaking standard English in school settings as “acting white.”

Harpalani, Lundy, Richardson, and Fryer all maintain that the “acting white” phenomenon is not as pervasive as Fordham and Ogbu, collectively and individually, have indicated. Nor is it as simplistic as Ogbu’s oppositional culture theory or McWhorter’s victimology theory.

Fryer contends that he found the “acting white” phenomenon to be more common in racially diverse schools than in predominantly black schools and connects this fact to an anthropological observation wherein social groups seek to preserve their identity, intensifying the effort to do so when threats to “internal cohesion” are heightened. Fryer (2000) provides further insight into the issue as he discusses the effects of talented and educated and successful Blacks distancing themselves from the black masses.

Within a group, the more successful individuals can be expected to enhance the power and cohesion of the group as long as their loyalty is not in question. But if the group risks losing its most successful members to outsiders, then the group will seek to prevent the outflow....In an achievement based society where two groups, for historical reasons achieve at noticeably different levels, the group with lower achievement levels is at risk of losing its most successful members, especially in situations where successful individuals have opportunities to establish contacts with outsiders. Over the long run, the group faces the danger that its most successful members will no longer identify with its interests, and group identity will itself erode. To forestall such erosion, groups may try

to reinforce their identity by penalizing members for differentiating themselves from the group. The penalties are likely to increase whenever the threats to group cohesion intensify (Fryer 2000, 8).

As Gilyard notes, language is tightly entwined with identity . For educators at all levels, it is important to recognize this fact and to be sensitive to it in the midst of the Black English versus Standard English controversy and particularly so when trying to encourage, convince, cajole or otherwise persuade Black English speaking students to use Standard English.

Black English/Ebonics is a stigmatized language form. Dowdy indicates that one of the central concerns fueling efforts to de-stigmatized Black English is providing individuals with “the freedom to go back and forth from the home language (Black English)to the public language (standard English) without feeling a sense of inferiority.”

These efforts have enjoyed a measure of success. The 1974 Students Right to Their Own Language policy adopted by the prestigious National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) together with the King v. Ann Arbor case were instrumental in advancing the de-stigmatization. However, the 1996 Oakland School Board Resolution spotlighted the enormously persistent and widespread negative perceptions and beliefs about BE and demonstrated that these perceptions are held by Blacks as well as Whites. Vaughn-Cooke enumerates lessons learned form the Ebonics controversy that are still pertinent in today’s social and educational environment. For example, she comments that for the most part, people in the United States do not believe that all languages are equal and consequently view BE/Ebonics and other non standard varieties of English as deficient. Additionally, Vaughn-Cooke notes that many people believe that Ebonics is only slang or street language. Furthermore, it is commonly believed that BE/Ebonics

speakers have limited intelligence and sometimes cannot be understood. She also calls attention to the fact that the evidence that Ebonics is systematic and rule-governed is often rejected or ignored along with the experts who present such evidence. Another point of emphasis is that many people minimize the differences between Ebonics (Black English) and Standard English and think that SE can be learned without formal instruction. (Even though McWhorter asserts that assuming that black children are incapable of negotiating the “one-inch gap” between their home dialect and standard English...insults their intelligence, formal instruction in SE is necessary.) As another point, Vaughn-Cooke emphasizes that although almost everyone believes that all BE /Ebonics speaking students “should be required to learn SE,” no one wants to pay for their instruction to the extent that instruction for other non-native SE speakers is financed. The author also stress that the intricate relationships between language and power in the United States are hidden from most people; however “a relatively small but persistent chorus of voices has resisted the subordination of Ebonics for more than 30 years, and they continued this resistance during the [Ebonics] debate (Vaughn-Cooke 1999, 150-156).

### **Effective Pedagogy**

The educational system has historically been the institution charged with teaching the formal, standardized language of a nation. Criticism of the American educational system and its failure to provide consistent, effective instruction to African American Black English speaking students abounds (Kozol 1992; 2005; Spears and Hale 2001; Delpit 1995). Since America is a highly segmented, capitalist society, factors such as race; poverty; class as determined by SES indicated by income, education, and

occupation; and language assume pivotal roles in defining life chances for those considered minorities in the U.S. In *Race and Ideology* (1999), Arthur K. Spears argues that the racial ideology upon which the nation was built and which is perpetuated through media and other major institutions such as schools, necessitates certain racist practices that sustain the power and dominance of the “haves.” He uses ideology in its “critical” sense and defines it as a “set of ideas that functions to justify and support vested interests.” Ideology in the critical sense is characteristically used in reference to “power elites, who use ideology to rationalize their power and the exploitation of other groups” (1999, 19). Spears maintains that race, including whiteness, is an ideological, sociocultural category, which changes over time in response to political and economic needs. Racial ideology has been embedded in the very fiber of the U.S. social systems impacting the “realities” of life and language in this country. And while the topics remain uncomfortable to broach, racism and its offspring internalized racial oppression continue to hover over the country like a dark cloud.

Spears (1999) defines racism as behaviors which indirectly or directly support the inequality of racial hierarchy. Racists, in this view, are those who engage in such behaviors, which include (1) supporting racial classification and claiming the biological and/or cultural inferiority of races, (2) supporting any other behaviors that support racial oppression, and (3) not doing anything to stop racism. The third results from the reasoning that if one does nothing to eliminate racism, then the racist status quo will continue that much stronger. It also takes into consideration what is referred to as *privilege*. Because America was founded as a white supremacist society, whites and those most closely aligned with whites by skin color, culture, and/or ideology are afforded

privileges or benefits which are withheld from or doled out in limited quantities to others further down the racial hierarchy (Spears 1999, 21).

Schooling is a critical area where race, ideology, and privilege (or the lack thereof) converge. America has had a sad history of choosing to educate Blacks only to the extent to which they could serve the economic needs of the power elites.

As Wilson (1987), Brunious (2002), Bond 1970, Gordon (2006), and others have noted, education cannot be separated from other societal issues that press down upon the disadvantaged. Inner city students like those in the present study must have reasons that resonate with them to learn SE and to pursue education in general. While “immigrant minorities” embrace SE with the expectation that doing so will lead to a “better life” in America, disadvantaged Blacks have seen insufficient evidence of that possibility. Rampant joblessness, substandard housing, ineffective schooling, woeful health care, widespread political and moral corruption, media bombardment with negative or prurient images of Blacks, blatant and aggressive wooing of the Hispanic community as the current “minority of choice,” all coupled with a deeply entrenched tradition of racism, mitigate against the notion that something as simple as using standard English might improve the lot of poor, disadvantaged African Americans.

One of the staunchest activists for eliminating racism in teaching students who do not speak standard English is linguist Geneva Smitherman. She is considered the foremost advocate for recognition and respect for the validity and value of Black English, which she refers to as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), as well as other varieties of English. She was the catalyst for the 1974 adoption of the Students Rights to

Their Own Language (SRTOL) policy by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC).

While attending a CCCC workshop in 2004 led by Smitherman, I listened intently to her assertion that the students' home language must be respected and that students must be allowed to use it in college classrooms. Being vaguely familiar at that time with her efforts regarding SRTOL, I squirmed uncomfortably in my seat. I knew that students who could not write in some semblance of Standard English were failing courses at the college where I teach. So, I asked her, "What happens to these students if they use their home language and can't pass their classes?" She responded that they have to be taught Standard English, or as she often terms it "the language of wider communication" (Personal Communication, March 2004).

Kinloch (2005) revisits the SRTOL resolution to "reinterpret" its use and value in today's academic and political climate. Her purpose in doing so is to demonstrate that the resolution, though fashioned and adopted during the Civil Rights era, is intended to prompt educators to "reimagine our educational commitments, our shared values, in ways that mobilize public and professional attitudes—circulating around the education of monolingual and multilingual students." Kinloch adds that she believes "this mobilization...needs to be grounded in linguistic and cultural negotiation and not in wrong language/right language debate." (2005, 98).

Tomesevski in her Human Rights Report (2001) argues that black children's right to a quality education has been violated through willful acts and neglect. She contends that America has had the resources to address educational inequities, but has not consistently, earnestly, nor continuously viewed doing so as a priority. As argued earlier,

it seems that lower income or disadvantaged urban minority students have not had much exposure to *equal educational opportunity*. Tomesevski reveals that in the wake of September 11 and heightened emphasis and expenditures for the “war on terrorism,” she is skeptical about when and whether educating African American students will become a compelling issue for the U.S. government.

It has been widely documented and accepted that the non-standard dialect spoken by members of the Black English speech community affects student performance in reading, math, writing, spelling and other subject areas (Labov 1970; Baratz 1970, 1972, Epps 1985; Wheeler 2006; Mohamed 2002; Ogbu 1999). Debate continues regarding the value or lack thereof in teaching SE grammar. Ever since Braddock proclaimed that teaching grammar traditionally—with drills, worksheets—as a subject and in isolation from context might have a “harmful effect”, grammar has been relegated to a “hands off” or “touch lightly and move on” position in American public schools. David Mulroy (2003) cites a “war on grammar” adopted and promulgated by the largest and most prestigious organization representing English teachers from K-12 and beyond, the National Council of Teachers of Grammar (NCTE). This approach has left at a distinct disadvantage countless non-standard English speaking children who may not have strong “intuitive knowledge” of American SE structures. ESL programs have assisted foreign/immigrant non-native English speakers. But African American children for whom SE is also not their first language do not receive the benefit of programs and dollars directed towards remediating non-fluency in SE. The Oakland School Board Resolution of 1996 was intended to address that need. However, its intent was misconstrued and misunderstood as a call for teaching Ebonics/Black English in the schools. Ogbu, a



member of the task force drafting the Ebonics Resolution, remarks that in California school aged immigrant minority children are tested and sorted into two categories “Fluent English Proficiency” (FEP) or “Limited English Proficiency” (LEP). Students in the LEP category are placed into ESL classes with instructors who understand their “home language” and who are skilled in teaching English as a second language, that is, SE grammar, structure and idiom. [It is important to note that ESL students are not put into the high stakes testing pool until their skills are sharp enough not to bring down the test scores (Jencks and Phillips 1998, Ogbu 1999)] In contrast, African American students are tested and categorized as either FEP or Speech Impaired (SI) (Ogbu 1999, 148). The California policy is indicative of the insidious educational practices that create feelings of deficiency, inferiority, nihilism and/or resistance among speakers of Black English, including those in the present study.

Delpit, Baker , Baugh, Spears, Smitherman and other scholars have described the psychic damage visited upon Black students as a result of American educational policies that constantly reinforce notions about the inferiority of Black English and, by implication, its speakers. Delpit (2002) laments:

We have not fully realized the extent to which the media and general American belief systems have permeated the consciousness of African American [students]. Many have internalized the beliefs of the larger society that they and people who look like them are less than the intellectual norm. From media portrayals of African American criminals, to news broadcasts which ignore the positive models of African American maleness, to a focus in schools on slavery rather than the brilliance of the African intellectual legacy, children come to believe that there is nothing in their heritage to connect to schooling and academic success (2002, 46).

The 1974 Students’ Right to Their Own Language position adopted and disseminated by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) sought to address

the issue; however, it may have inadvertently absolved educators and policy makers from the responsibility of discovering innovative and effective ways of teaching standard English to non-standard English speakers. Walsh reminds educators of this responsibility:

Language is one of the principal sites where power is realized, for it is through language—its range of linguistic forms and discursive practices—that values, meanings, identities, and subjectivities are shaped and positioned. It is through language that people construct a sense of who they are and where they fit in particular contexts or settings. Since language plays a major part in the formulation of pedagogy and the presentation and legitimation of particular ideas and perspectives within schools and classrooms, the relation of language and power is also integral to much of what goes on in education. Part of this power is evident in the objective ways language is presented. By offering some meanings, interpretations, and experiences as universal and by belittling or leaving out others, schools—as does society in general—impart a language which teachers as well as students are expected to internalize and assume as exigent and indisputable. While multiple conflicts and struggles are waged within, through, and over language, this discordance is typically ignored, excluded, or disregarded. What is recognized and encouraged instead is a reified, unitary, and hegemonic treatment and understanding of language that, if singularly accepted, would only serve to sustain the social structure (Walsh 1991, viii).

Walsh cautions college instructors to become more sensitive to the needs and challenges of non-native standard English speaking students as they navigate the terrain of retaining their community identity while attempting to develop communicative competence in standard English, a language form the use of which might alienate them from their home community.

Writing in the midst of the Oakland School Board Ebonics controversy, linguist Orlando Taylor held that one central fact stands out against all the varying contentions—“Far too many African American children have not acquired sufficient proficiency in standard English to facilitate academic success and career mobility,” and notes that a

major hurdle for the country and particularly for educators was “to devise positive, sensitive, and effective ways to teach African Americans and other children standard English—the language of education, career mobility and the marketplace” (Taylor 1999, 107, 108). Taylor sets forth the requisite environment for delivery of such instruction, calling for one that (1) does not denigrate the student; (2) recognizes that all groups have a human right to retain culturally based language systems to communicate with family, peers, and friends; and (3) utilizes the language systems that children bring to school as vehicles for teaching them [standard English] (1999, 105).

John McWhorter is right in his assessment of poor black youngsters’ ability to learn SE just as other minority children do. However, as Vaughn-Cooke (1999) and Holmes (2004) state, non-standard English speakers must be taught SE; it is not their native/home language. Theories like oppositional culture; “acting white;” and victimology, proposed as universal explanations for the Black-White language achievement gap, offer convenient escape clauses for educators and policy makers and others, allowing them to elude their responsibilities and obligation to provide adequate and effective language arts education to poor, underprepared black students.

Kolln and Hancock (2005) trace the history of English grammar in the United States as a means of documenting their stance that the anti-grammar position assumed by Hartwell, Braddock, Hillocks and most importantly the NCTE have been detrimental. They note that as a result of these stances, “several generations of students have had no instruction in the parts of speech and sentence structure, neither in the language of traditional grammar nor in the new language of structural linguistics”(2005, 19).

The cost to English education of the NCTE anti-grammar policy is impossible to calculate. The policy has affected more than the K-12 curriculum itself; equally important, has been the negative effect on teacher education. The strides that linguistics has made during the past several decades has almost completely eluded the prospective English teacher. Rarely does an English or education major's program call for more than one or two courses having to do with language—possibly a class that includes the history of English and/or an introduction to linguistics. But many teacher-training programs certify secondary English teachers without the students having had a single course in modern grammar. And it's certainly possible that these new teachers had little or no grammar instruction in their own middle-school and high-school experiences... [One wonders] how teachers with little if any grammar education can be expected to teach reading and writing, let alone discuss the social implications of language in our lives (2005, 19) .

The authors note that some states have begun to institute more rigorous curriculum standards, which has produced a recent impetus for including grammar study. They also cite the No Child Left Behind initiative as a further impetus for schools to re-examine their curriculum. Adding to that is the new SAT which has started testing grammatical structures in context and requiring a timed essay.

In education, three main approaches dominate pedagogical stances regarding Black English: eradicationism, bi-dialectism or bidialectalism aka code-switching, and pluralism. Eradicationism holds that educators should help students get rid of Black English and substitute Standard English for it. Gilyard, citing Trudgill (1974) contends that eradicationism is wrong in the eyes of linguists and many others for several reasons.

First, it is wrong *psychologically*. Language...is not simply a means of communicating messages. It is also very important as a symbol of identity and group membership. To suggest to a [student] that his language, and that of those with whom he identifies, is inferior in some way is to imply that he is inferior. This, in turn, is likely to lead wither to alienation from the school and school value, or to a rejection of the group to which he belongs. It is also *socially* wrong in that it may appear to imply that particular social groups are less valuable than others. This is particularly undesirable when the language being stigmatized is that of lower-class

black [students] and the one which is extolled is that of white middle-class adult teachers. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is *practically* wrong: it is wrong because it does not and will not work... The fact must also be faced that, in very many cases, speakers will not want to change their language—even if it were possible (Trudgill 1974, 80-81 quoted in Gilyard 1991, 72).

Bidialectalists, Gilyard (1991) asserts, hold that Black English is equal to Standard English, but not equal enough. “They acknowledge that BE is not inferior linguistically or conceptually, but claiming to be pragmatic, they feel that SE must be mastered by [Blacks] in the schools so that [they] can keep the possibility of upward mobility alive” (1991,74). The final pedagogical approach to BE for non-standard English speaking African American students is pluralism. Pluralists say leave BE alone, for it is as good as any other language. In answering critics who counter the pluralist tenet as unrealistic by calling attention to the fact that BE “speakers suffer setbacks in the society at large,” pluralists assert, “Such setbacks are due to who they are—not what they speak”(1991, 72). The author advances the idea that schools and society need to be changed: “The crucial work involving language is to develop a school system (and of course a society) in which language differences fail to have deleterious consequences for those whose language has been traditionally frowned upon” (1991, 73). Gilyard emphasizes the importance of teaching all children to read SE. Nevertheless, he states, in a more equitable society, black students, “finding that their language is not devalued,” would be more amenable to learning the standard English. He believes students would also be more prone to see the value of broadening their “productive communicative repertoires,” and would be skillful at doing so (1991, 73).

I now highlight pedagogical strategies, policies and techniques that have been proven effective in leading Black English speaking students to SE without stripping them of the “healthy group narcissism” associated with their home language.

Melanie A. Lewis (1998) encourages students to “code-switch.” Citing Feigenbaum, she asserts that the only criteria for choosing “one language or dialect for use in a given situation is ‘appropriateness.’” Drawing from her own background as a white non-native standard English speaker and using that to build trust, Hanni Taylor (1991) incorporated a bi-dialectal approach to teaching writing to BE students. She utilized audio recordings for practice with SE constructions and reinforced them with practice drills. She, like others, centered attention on students’ writing as context and also provided practice in translating passages from BE to standard English. Taylor’s approach persuaded many of her students that it was in their best academic and career interests to become bidialectal enabling them to code-switch as necessary. In that same vein, Baugh reminds us that children tend not to develop style shifting until they find some personal value in standard English.” (1999, 69)

Gilyard (1991) emphasizes the importance of familial support for learning SE and practicing it in appropriate situations. Parents and speech community members, as has been noted, are charged with the responsibility of authorizing SE as a legitimate alternative linguistic code. In *Identity Development in Diverse Populations*, Torres (1998) notes that children follow their parents (or parent substitutes); adolescents follow their peers; and college students are usually at last ready to choose an individual identity that might include SE adoption. Many of the students in the present study have made such a choice, code-switching, as the situation demands.

Rebecca Wheeler (2006) cites a technique called “contrastive analysis” which is an ESL methodology that uses the students’ home language as an entrance point for teaching and learning standard English. It presents the idea, term, concept, and/or structure in the native language then contrasts that notion with its SE equivalent. She begins by teaching the differences between the concepts *formal* and *informal* and then applies those notions to language. She uses role play and dramatization. Thus, students learn SE while also developing critical thinking skills. Baker suggests a similar methodology for her multicultural classes. She lets the students discuss and analyze differences in their dialects and those of classmates and assists them in developing a critical appreciation for language variation in a pluralist society. Baker’s approach is termed *trilingualism* as she treats three language varieties: the home language, standard English, and the professional/technical language of one’s career.

Burling (1973) suggests that instructors approach teaching SE grammar by concentrating efforts on the most highly stigmatized aspects of nonstandard speech and notes, for example, that nonstandard grammar is far more stigmatized than nonstandard pronunciation. He comments, “If the teacher wants to help her students adjust to the prejudices of the dominant society (and there is no other reason for teaching SE), she ought to concentrate on those aspects of language that are most likely to evoke negative responses.”(1973, 147). Burling adds that random error correction is ill-advised and negative and tends to rob students of all motivation. Shaughnessy (1977) also advocates focusing on certain glaring deviations from standard English, those that detract from accurate conveyance of a writer’s meaning. Weaver (2006) suggests the same kind of focus, teaching “an inch wide and a mile deep” regarding SE grammar. Lerner (1993) has

been successful with a Whimbey-like technique using sentence modeling and expansion. Richardson, Baugh, Ball and Lardner, Holmes, Yasin (1999) and others advocate African American literacies, bringing literary and other examples of BE, including music, into the classroom to motivate interest, spark creativity and teach SE. All of the effective pedagogical techniques and strategies share a common link--respect for the students' home language.

Ball and Lardner (2005) focus on the fact that the vast majority of teachers in the U.S. (90% according to National Public Radio's Carlos Sanchez) are white, as the authors address the "disjuncture" between the teachers' cultural reality and that of BE speaking students. Ball and Lardner tackle the issue of teacher preparation for dealing with students from diverse backgrounds. Their emphasis is on teacher attitudes toward AAVE (BE) speaking students. They declare, "Critical here is the issue of dealing with teachers' feelings about their students. Whether in teacher preparation programs or college writing classrooms, this affective dimension of teacher knowledge and professional identity can no longer remain a hidden variable in our quest for students' educational success." . A second major concern of the authors is *critical race theory* (CRT). Noting the widely recognized conception of race as a socially constructed category, Ball and Lardner, citing Omi and Winant (1966), assert: "As a social construct in a hierarchy of power relations, race has served to define identity and difference both as a 'matter of individuality, of the formation of identity' and as 'a matter of individuality, of the formation of social structures'"(Ball and Lardner 2005, 20). Thus, race defines both internal and external realities, for the individual and for the society within which he or she lives.



It follows, then, that one principle of CRT is that racism is pervasive in our society. In the words of educator, Gloria Ladson-Billings, racism is a basis for the social construction of reality for not only disadvantaged, inner-city Blacks, but also for all Americans:

Critical race theory begins with the notion that racism is ‘normal, not aberrant in American society’ (Delgado, 1995, p.xiv) and because it is so enmeshed in the fabric of our social order, it appears both normal and natural to people in this culture...[R]acism is a permanent fixture of American Life. Thus, the strategy of critical race theorists becomes one of unmasking and exposing racism in all its various permutations (Cited in Ball and Lardner 2005, 20).

Ball and Lardner propose three components for effective teacher education: knowledge, efficacy, and reflective optimism. Knowledge encompasses both the material being taught and knowledge about the students and their home language. Efficacy is the teacher’s belief in his/her own effectiveness as an educator. Reflective optimism is the teacher’s ability to face his/her attitudes truthfully, to modify them as necessary, and to believe that all students can be taught and are worthy of the effort.

Elaine Richardson, a sociolinguist and educator, in *African American Literacies* (2003), chronicles her experiences as a “smart” African-American college student from the ghetto who could code-switch to speak standard English, but who could not write in standard English. Attending a predominately white institution and placed in a developmental writing program, she struggled in her English classes with both the requirement to write SE and with the mono-cultural selection of and approaches to assigned texts. In describing her experience and that of her only fellow Black student classmate, Richardson comments, “[We did not like] how the prof would change the meaning of what we were writing about when he made us rearrange it and change our

words” (Richardson 2003, 1). She notes that the professor’s only “explicit instruction in negotiating different discourses and ideologies” was that she was using “dialectal variants” and needed to spend more time in the writing center. Before long, working with the tutors there, Richardson came to a “harsh realization about the value placed on her language and culture in that college setting”: She saw that success could be hers if she relinquished her “language variety and [her] history, experience, culture, and perspective for theirs.” Richardson felt that if she “let them Whitenize [her] papers, conceding the “the images and reality of what [she] wanted to express, their language could speak for [her] and ‘earn’ a grade of ‘C’,” which at the time was all she wanted (2003, 2). Richardson felt that in exchange for the grade, she had participated in “the subordination of [her] experience and “the erasure of [her] voice paralleling the absence of Black voices and culturally relevant material and instruction in the curriculum and the classroom” (2003, 1-2).

The author’s response at that time reflects the Standard English as “acting white” mentality, but she notes that she later learned “that standardized American English is not the possession of any one group and can be used by any citizen as a tool of empowerment.” She adds that SE had not been presented to her “as something that strong conscious Black people could help to shape.” She did not envision it as “a tool of empowerment” and asserts that no one “was showing [her] how [she] could make it [her] own” (2003, 3). Richardson’s background and response to the Standard English requirement in college is similar to that of the students in the present study. Her coping strategies inform the research.

Richardson left college, only to return several years later as a welfare mother of two, armed with more experience and the determination to succeed in school, as an undergraduate English major. Once she learned how to use Standard English as a tool of empowerment, inspired by Smitherman's work, Richardson developed an African American literacies approach to teaching rhetoric and composition, piloting it as the basis of her 1996 dissertation. Remarking on the continuing achievement gap, Richardson (2003) comments:

For the most part, America continues to teach us to accept the status of lower achievement for Black students as the norm. Under the present system, we are set in motion to replicate the paradigm and the results...Research has presented evidence which suggests that certain factors correlate with lower literacy achievement (and overall academic achievement) such as low parent educational level, low social economic status, poor school resources, no writing of successive drafts... Of course poverty and a host of other social problems hinder some students from coming to school every day and excelling in their work (2003, 8).

The author contends that remedies to offset the aforementioned factors, remedies such as highly funded schools, highly trained teachers, Teach for America volunteer-paid teachers, community and family literacy programs, and open access to the latest technological advancements, "are a start in the right direction." However, urging readers to "face the facts," Richardson (2003) asserts, "these solutions evade a deeply rooted problem":

One of the major roots of African American literacy underachievement is the ideology of White supremacist and capitalistic-based literacy practices that undergird curriculum construction and reproduce stratified education and a stratified society, that reproduce the trend of African American literacy underachievement.

White supremacist ideology is insidious because it is entangled with the discourse of American meritocracy, which says that individuals are responsible for their own success. The value of individualism is consonant

with White supremacy when large groups of students of color fail to achieve under its account. White supremacy in my usage refers to practices that confer privileges to white-skinned Anglo Americans at the expense of disprivileging people not of white skin, a form of racism. The percentage of students suffering under this paradigm is far beyond that of a smattering of lazy or cognitively deficient individuals who can't measure up. The failure is not individual, but ethnic and cultural groups are underachieving under the present (decades long) practices. This indicates that the problem is structural (Richardson 2003, 9).

Again, alluding to the historical divisiveness created by educational practices that separate the haves from the have-nots, Richardson calls attention to the cultural bias promulgated throughout the usual school curricula, "What many [students] see, and what many African Americans have seen down through the years is attempts to erase them culturally, word by word, from the literacy experience." Citing Woodson's *Mis-Education of the Negro*, published in 1933, Richardson highlights the manner in which Blacks are mis-educated toward Narpalani and Spencer's Eurocentric racial attitude and suggests, like the others cited in this section, a healthy respect for Black language and culture. Also, like the others, she recommends that we as educators use examples of Black English (and culture) to demonstrate its vibrancy and effectiveness in certain situations and to move students toward more skillful use of standard English.

One of the goals of effective pedagogy is attempting to establish a truly pluralist society wherein students of marginalized races and cultures learn to choose--as a result of their own critical consciousness--to gain communicative competence in standard English--to code switch [or following Young (2003), to code mesh] because they want to rather than because they are being forced to do so.

One of the most widely held tenets of effective language arts pedagogy is the belief that the home language of the student must be respected, valued and used as a

starting point for teaching the student the target language. Nevertheless, it is also well-documented that teachers have negative attitudes, beliefs and feelings about Black English and the students who speak it (Baldwin 1999, Mohamed 2002, Vaughn-Cooke 1999, Lippi-Green 1997). Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and Conley (2005) have documented the effects, both negative and positive, of teacher expectations on student achievement.

Overall problems in American education have resulted at least in part from the low academic expectations held by teachers of students within the urban educational system. Some of these problems in achievement outcomes are directly related to the conscious expectations held by teachers while other educational deficits relate to subtle expectations held unconsciously by teachers (Conley 2005, 8).

Many, if not most, teachers believe that BE speakers are less intelligent and less able to perform academically than their SE speaking counterparts. Given the racial history of this nation, such attitudes have been difficult to expunge.

Joan T. Wynne is an educator with more than thirty years of teaching experience. She is Associate Director of the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence and director of the Urban Teacher Leadership graduate program at Georgia State University. While working with a group of talented and bright African American high school students, Wynne was deeply moved by their lack of self-confidence when placed in a predominately white environment and called upon to speak. Witnessing the verbal consternation, born of the students' fear that "we don't talk right," created in Wynne the desire to explore the "pervasive myths" about language supremacy held by students, teachers-in-training, and in-service teachers." Wynne (2002), engaged in the kind of self-reflection promoted by Ball and Lardner (2005),

Looking back now, I recognize the full measure of my own miseducation. My schooling had not prepared me, as an English major, to understand the depth and breadth of language oppression. No one had taught me that the language I had grown up loving was used to bludgeon others into submission and feelings of inferiority. But even worse none of my teachers had ever encouraged me to assist these youngsters in creating a psychological sanctuary so they didn't succumb to unfounded language bias when exposed to the dominant culture. In the absence of such instruction, I had made those adolescents [who had won an award for best high school newspaper] vulnerable to the prejudices of the majority, reflected in their own internalized notions of being linguistically inadequate. Nothing had prepared me or my students for that moment of defeat, a moment when they should have been reveling in victorious celebration (Wynne 2002, 206).

Wynne notes that "insidious myths" about language superiority run rampant and are exceedingly destructive. "They lie about people's ability to think, and, perhaps, equally as tragic, they prevent the dominant culture from learning from the gifts of "the other." These myths do not only affect Whites and urban Blacks traditionally thought of as disadvantaged, they also influence well educated, middle class Blacks. There are striking parallels between Woodson's and Richardson's descriptions of the effects of Anglo American centered education on the perceptions of educated Blacks about their own people and Wynne's experience with the men of Morehouse College, America's "premier" African American male college. Wynne taught at Morehouse for fourteen years and observed "intelligent, sophisticated" Morehouse student mentors "misled" by the SE myths.

[At Morehouse] young men parroted what they had heard mainstream English teachers, like myself, proclaim for years, that the use of standard English was 'talking right.' In Morehouse classrooms, the students and I would often struggle through discussions on the speech patterns of the children who lived in the housing projects surrounding the college and who were mentored by the Morehouse students. My college students often would argue with me about my contention that the language of those children was as valid as theirs. Because the Morehouse students had

fallen prey to invalidated linguistic assumptions of the mainstream culture, they had no tolerance for the speech of these children. The mentors assumed that the children's speech indicated not only linguistic, but cognitive deficit. (Wynne 2002, 207)

Wynne (2002) does not advocate abandoning efforts to teach Black English/Ebonics speaking students Standard English; however, she--consistent with the findings of linguists, including some eradicationists--advocates respect for the home language of non-standard English speakers.

Of course, if we want these children to be socially and economically mobile in mainstream culture, we must teach them standard English; yet, if we reject them by rejecting the language they grew up with, we alienate them from the very places where they could learn the standard dialect. And by teaching children that their language is inferior, we teach a lie (2002, 207).

The effects of the "lie" carry over into a child's adolescent years and often into adulthood. Many African American working class and lower SES adults, including the students in the present research study, are silenced or unsteady in the presence of mainstream (white) speakers and uncomfortable or suspicious in the presence of African American standard English speakers.

Not only are the effects of teaching language supremacy perilous for African American students, Wynne (2002) contends that such abuses of linguistic oppression also produce severe consequences for the students of the dominant culture, giving them a rationale for perpetuating racist, classist, and elitist views about Blacks and members of other non-dominant cultures. In addition, these abuses shield Whites from certain realities:

...we keep white children trapped in myopic visions of world realities. We give them one more reason to bolster their mistaken notions of supremacy and privilege. If we believe, too, as Baldwin suggests, that Black English

‘is rooted in American history,’ then, by discounting Ebonics, we keep White children oblivious to significant slices of their own country’s history and deny them the opportunity to look at their own ancestors and history in a way that might help them recognize their collective responsibility for injustices, as well as their collective potential for redemption (Wynne 2002, 209).

Rebecca Moore Howard (1996) shares the concern. Howard attempted to broaden the perspectives of students in a Race, Language, and Ethnicity class that she taught in a racially integrated class. She explained the history and functionality and distinctiveness of Black English. Two of her students, one white and one black, suggested having an African American Vernacular English Day at the school wherein all of the students black and white would speak only AAVE for the day. By the appointed day, all of the students had backed out—the white ones because they did not want to appear racist, knowing that they only used BE when they were making fun of Blacks; the black ones because they did not want to appear ignorant, knowing how both they and the white students viewed BE.

Mohamed’s study (2002) suggests that the community college classroom is a microcosm of the larger society where issues of race are at the heart of the Black English/Ebonics issue. She found that both Blacks and Whites “equate positive connotations with Standard English and negative connotations with [Black English/Ebonics]. Mohamed notes that this can lead to oppositional relationships in the classroom between teachers and African American students, especially since these students maintain strong connections to [Black English] and the Black English speech community. Even though students in the present study attend a predominantly black school, they often face similar “oppositional relationships” when the expectation to use Standard English in their college classes arises.



## Summary

Ten years after the Ebonics controversy and in spite of the “persistent chorus of voices,” Black students still find themselves performing less well on exams that measure SE proficiency and less well in composition classes as a result of a lack of communicative competence in SE. Part of that problem lies at the doorstep of policy makers such as NCTE which took an official anti-grammar stance in 1985 leading to an abandonment of the systematic teaching of standard English grammar (Kolln and Hancock 2005, 17). When white students who possessed an “intuitive” knowledge of SE were determined by researchers not to need to be taught grammar, schools of education that prepare teachers stopped requiring that they learn how to teach grammar. Kolln and Hancock (2005) and Mulroy (2003) note the deleterious effects of what Mulroy terms “the war on grammar,” marking the well-intentioned SRTOL and other anti-grammar policies promulgated by NCTE. The SRTOL policy no doubt played a role in the abandoning of systematic grammar for inner city youngsters in that teachers would not want to be labeled racist for insisting that non-standard English speaking students learn and use SE. Additionally, low teacher expectations for BE speaking student have probably contributed equally to the academic shortcomings of Ebonics speakers, as documented first by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and more recently by Conley (2005).

A like measure of responsibility, not blame, must be attributed to Blacks who present behaviors that allow scholars such as Fordham and Ogbu and McWhorter to associate lack of SE proficiency and academic underachievement with “oppositional culture” and “victimology.”

McWhorter (2001) and Cosby (2004) chastise those who take such positions for lingering too long on the problem without maximizing efforts to be part of the solution. They acknowledge the historical patterns and practices of racism, but admonish poorer blacks to release the shackles of internalized oppression that seem to concede educational equity to the whims of “power elites” and relegate educational excellence and standard language proficiency to “acting white.” As Spears (1999) notes,

People of color cannot simply blame white power elites. Agency is everywhere, and oppressed peoples everywhere are wont to participate to varying degrees in their own oppression. ...Analyses of white power elites culpability cannot truly fulfill their emancipatory function unless they are complemented by analyses of internalized oppression within individuals and of cultural domination within groups (Spears 1999, 17).

Many committed and dedicated educators and scholars are working to manage the two-fold challenge of bringing respect to the home language of non-standard English speaking African Americans along with finding effective ways of teaching SE to such students. Baugh (1999), Lerner (1993), H. Taylor (1991), Wheeler (2006), Gilyard (1999), Ball and Lardner (2005), Whimbey and Linden (2001), Hancock, and Richardson are among those who present innovative and effective ideas for teaching Standard English to non-native SE speakers whose home language is not a foreign language. Based on ESL techniques and sound linguistic principles calling for using the home language as a starting point, educators are advocating innovative and helpful methods of leading Black students toward a critical awareness of the value of learning SE without a concomitant devaluation or denigration of the students’ home language.

Evidence from discussions with students in my classes and from interviews with those participating in the present study indicate that when working or lower class blacks

resist or criticize educated and standard English speaking blacks, they may very well be resisting and criticizing classism, alienation, elitism, and racism rather than standard English per se.

The review of the literature delineates and illuminates the profound impact of the collective speech community upon its individual members' perceptions about and use of language. A speech community is defined as a group with a shared understanding and use of language. The speech community is impacted by the social, political, economic and educational values, policies and practices in the wider society as transmitted by "power elites," those entities that control wealth, production, distribution, education, and media. For African Americans, their unique history as involuntary minorities in this country plays a vital role in the development of the African American speech community and in their perceptions about the use and value of standard English. Equally significant is that unique history's lasting impact on the perceptions of Whites about African Americans and their speech patterns, both oral and written.

Smitherman, Baugh, Rickford and Rickford, Spears, Woodson, and Fanon (1967) among others locate the seeds of class issues associated with language for the Black community in the slave-master practices of choosing certain Blacks for favor and then exposing them to white values, morals, attitudes, and indeed, language patterns so that the allegiance of these Blacks would adhere to the slave-master rather than to their own community. Spears refers to this practice in its modern day permutation as cooptation. In the vernacular, blacks who behave this way are known as "sell-outs."

Because standard English has been historically associated with the white community from whom it originated, many Blacks cannot or will not dissociate standard

English from whiteness. This attitude has been connected to the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and 1970s (McWhorter, Smitherman, Rickford and Rickford). After Reconstruction, Blacks of every class were moving towards speaking SE, and the halting of this movement has been charted to the Black Power movement's separatist tenets. As researchers have indicated, the Civil Rights/Black Power Movements strongly impacted current attitudes about SE. The double-consciousness/push-pull tug of war regarding language was crystallized in the assimilationist vs. separatist, nonviolence vs. militancy controversies of the 1960s and 1970s. The leaders of both sides of these movements had achieved communicative competence in SE; however, the more militant factors employed a forceful, strident, confrontational tone, nuance and stance. Assimilationists, associated with nonviolence, took a more conciliatory position in language and in action. They often spoke SE in an ultra proper manner.

With the changes in economic, political and social policies in the 1980s, droves of lower SES blacks were left isolated in poverty-stricken, often desolated, communities abandoned by middle class Blacks and Whites as well. Black English/Ebonics was the language of the familiar, "the language of nurture." Witnessing middle class blacks using SE and acting as though that and their education made them superior, these disadvantaged African Americans may very well have concluded that blacks who behaved this way were "acting white" or trying to be white. However, the findings of the present study, discussed in detail in Chapter Four, indicate that there is more to the connection of "acting white" with standard English than can be realized from an unexamined association with merely speaking standard English. For example, Malcolm

X used Standard English and was never nor would he ever now be accused of “acting white.”

Before discussing the research findings, I describe the research methodology in Chapter Three.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **The Rationale**

The research study focused on urban community college students who must manage the disparities between the linguistic expectations of the college environment and those of their home/community environment. Students who use Black English--also known as Black Vernacular English, African American English and Ebonics--and are unable or unwilling to demonstrate an acceptable level of competence in using Standard English have difficulties managing the linguistic demands of college. The primary question that this study anticipated answering was: How do lower SES African American students at an urban community college manage the competing linguistic expectations of their home environment and the college environment?

There have been many studies indicating that lower-income African American students in general do not have the requisite language arts skills as they enter college. According to 2004 institutional research, 74.6% of all Chicago Public School graduates must take developmental English classes. At the college attended by the research participants, approximately 70% of its incoming students were placed in developmental classes over the 2002-2005 time span. The present research was influenced by the work of Theresa Mohamed (2002) and Loretta J. Brunious (1997, 2002). Theresa Mohamed's dissertation indicates that faculty in an upstate New York community college have

negative attitudes about Black English and positive attitudes about standard English; her study included 23 full-time and part-time faculty members. Two of the faculty participants in her study were minorities--one African American and one Hispanic. Her study involved only five African American students, all of whom had taken a developmental English class. In contrast, the school in the current study has a full-time English faculty that is 90% African American with a similar percentage of African American students. The project compares faculty attitudes at the two colleges, but it focuses primarily on how students manage the diverging language expectations of home and school. The other research project that was vital to my study is Loretta Brunious's 1997 dissertation and the 2002 book based on the dissertation. Brunious utilized the case study approach in her qualitative study involving disadvantaged adolescents living in the same community as those in my study. Brunious examined the social construction of reality for these adolescents. Grounded in Wilson's theories (1978, 1980, 1987, 1996), her account of the setting and its impact on the reality constructed by Blacks living in poverty and amidst crime, drugs, and rampant unemployment was foundational as the researcher began to frame the social context of the study. These abject conditions shape the social backdrop where the speech community is formed—where language is learned and where attitudes about language are molded.

To explore the factors that contribute to the underpreparedness with which so many African American students enter college, the same naturalistic inquiry approach taken by both Mohamed and Brunious was selected. Naturalistic Inquiry is a method that is "largely emergent, open-ended, and inductive." It is flexible and supports a process of discovery, allowing meaning to unfold (Mohamed 2002, 71). One of the primary goals

was to give voice to the students themselves, to understand and to explain their experiences and attitudes with and about Standard English and Black English as they journeyed through the community college setting.

Since the 1970s, many studies have examined Black or African American Vernacular English. However, the present study sought to delineate and express the students' direct perceptions about their own experiences in the urban community college environment. To do this, a case study, naturalistic inquiry approach and a mixed method methodology were used. The quantitative aspect of the study centered upon two surveys. The first is called the Language Attitude Scale (LAS), a Likert scale type survey, developed and validated by linguist Orlando Taylor, who granted permission to use the instrument. The instrument was tested for both reliability and validity by Taylor. His methodology is described in the 1973 article "Teachers' Attitudes toward Black and Nonstandard English as Measured by the Language Attitude Scale" (Taylor 1973). While Mohamed did not detail the reliability or validity of the document in her study, she did comment that references to "child" and "children" in some of the questions may have proven confusing to college level faculty (Mohamed 2002). However, no one in her study or the current one actually expressed confusion or voiced objections to the terms. Because the Language Attitude Scale is the instrument employed by Mohamed and since the researcher wished to replicate the faculty attitude portion of that research, she believed it important and proper to use the same instrument.

The second instrument was a Student Language Attitude Survey that was developed by the researcher because she could not find one in the literature that addressed the elements that interested her. The survey began as an 80 question apparatus



but was reduced to 41 questions upon advice of the dissertation director and the panel of scholars who reviewed the survey for content validity. It should be noted that the original Q8 and Q9 survey questions used in the pilot study were:

Q8. Using Standard English means trying to be white.

Q9. Black people can speak Standard English without trying to be white.

However, because one member of the dissertation committee called attention to the fact that the literature uses “acting white” rather than “trying to be white,” when the survey was piloted with a group of developmental English students at another site, those students were asked (after they had completed their surveys) what they saw as the difference between the two terms. The pilot group students felt that the terms convey the same meaning, explaining—“They mean the same thing. It’s just the way we say it. Sometimes ‘trying to be white’ and sometimes ‘acting white.’ It’s all the same.” Since the researcher was more familiar with the expression “trying to be white,” used in the same way as “trying to be all stuck up” or “trying to be all siddity” or “trying to be all that,” she decided to test whether the two terms would elicit the same or significantly different responses. The results are discussed in Chapter Four.

The surveys afforded a quantitative broad picture of attitudes and perceptions while the interviews permitted a more concentrated, expanded and yet focused perspective. Thus, the qualitative aspect of the study, as seen through the interviews, provided a more in-depth examination and exploration of the research questions.

## **The Research Questions**

Five questions steered the research study—one primary and four secondary. The major Research Question of this study is:

RQ1. How do lower SES African American students at an urban community college manage the competing linguistic expectations of their home environment and the college environment?

Additional research questions of the study are:

RQ2. What are the attitudes of urban community college composition teachers toward Standard English? (Adapted from Mohammed)

RQ3. What are the attitudes of urban community college composition teachers toward Ebonics/BE? (Adapted from Mohammed)

RQ4. What are the attitudes of urban community college students toward Ebonics/BE?

RQ5. What are the attitudes of urban community college students toward SE?

## **The Setting**

The College is located within a lower SES area of Chicago. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Report, the area has a population of 40,222, with 98.2% (39,501) of the total classified as Black or African American, less than 1% (242) as white, and the remainder as other races. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the population is female and 45% is male. The median age of the community is 28 years. Of the total population, 14,569 or 36% are less than 18 years of age, while 25,653 or 64% are 18 years of age or older. Of the total population, 11.39% are 65 years of age or older.

Census data further indicates that the community has 12,619 households with 47% of that total occupied by individuals under 18 years of age and 29.5% occupied by an individual 65 years of age or older. The average household size is 3.16 persons. There are 15,210 housing units in the community, and 12,619 are occupied. Of the occupied units, 258 lack complete plumbing facilities and 288 are without complete kitchen facilities. Most of the occupied units house renters rather than owners: 68.5% are occupied by renters, while 31.5% are owner-occupied.

An examination of the educational attainment levels of the community's residents reveals the following:

- Of the 21,595 who are over 25 years old, 9.3% have less than a ninth grade education.
- 31.4% of the population does not have a diploma or GED.
- 28.9% has earned a high school diploma or a GED.
- 21.2% has some college but no degree.
- 4.0% has an associate's degree.
- 4.0% has a bachelor's degree.
- 1.2% has a graduate or professional degree.
- Of the population five years of age and older, 96.2% speak English only.

Of the community's population 16 years of age or older, 46.1% are active participants in the labor force. Of those, 74.2% are employed and 25.8% are unemployed. The national unemployment rate is 5.8%; the city unemployment rate is 6.2%. The disparity is glaring. Of workers 16 years of age and older, 39% use public transportation

to commute to and from work. The mean travel time to work is 43.6 minutes revealing that the average working resident must travel well outside of his/her community for employment and testifying to the dearth of employment opportunities in the community. The median household income in the community is \$18,955, while the median household income for the city is \$51,680. Of the 12, 619 households in the community, 73.1% earn less than \$35,000 per year, 59.8% earn less than \$25,000 per year, and 32.4% earn less than \$10,000 per year. Poverty is an overwhelming fact of life for this community's residents: 83.4% of families with related children under 18 years of age living in the household live in poverty.

These socioeconomic conditions are pivotal in creating an underground economy of drug dealing, gang activity, and other criminal pursuits. As Wilson has noted,

Lack of resources or their proper utilization in the ghetto and the overwhelming abundance of adverse circumstances, shapes the minds of the inhabitants, forces them to narrow their perspectives, to concentrate on adapting and surviving in those conditions, spends their cognitive talents on the trivialities of a highly fragmented environment and this forces them to take their pleasures where and when they find them, to take them immediately and to constantly seek escape—most by psychological means such as alcohol, drugs, chronic sexual involvement, to take from their fellow members through crime, whatever amount of scarce resources they may possess (Wilson 1978, 202 cited in Brunious 1997, 58).

The College is located in the heart of this community, affecting and being affected by it. According to the research department of the District which oversees the College, the College fall semester enrollment, when enrollment is highest, averaged 5,995, for the 2002-2005 period, while the average fiscal year enrollment as expressed by headcount was 11,250. For the fiscal year 2006, the period during which the research activities took place, the official enrollment as expressed by headcount was 5,248 for the fall semester

and 10,112 for the fiscal year. The College offers degrees and certificates in a number of fields for students wishing to transfer to four-year institutions and for those who wish to enter the work force, as the College seeks to prepare students to compete in the global economy. Associate degrees are offered in Arts, Applied Science, Science, and General Studies. Specialized courses and certificates provide students intending to enter immediate employment to upgrade their professional and technical skills with knowledge in areas such as business, computer technology, culinary arts, theater, HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), automotive technology, graphic communications, dental hygiene, nursing, child development, mental health, and media communications.

In support of the students, the College provides a number of services including a Writing Center, computer-assisted academic support services, tutoring, a Math Lab, a Special Needs office and other academic support services.

### **The Sample and Procedures**

The sample for this study was drawn from students enrolled in spring semester second tier developmental English classes (Group 1) and from English and speech teaching faculty (Group 2), both full- and part-time, at one inner city community college campus.

### ***Faculty Participants***

The researcher had originally planned to include only faculty who taught English classes but added the speech instructor in order to obtain her perspective on Black English/Standard English controversy. At the time of the research, there were ten full-time and six part-time faculty teaching English, including the researcher. Nine of the ten full-time professors are African American, and one is Caucasian. All of the part-timers

are minorities: five African-Americans and one with East Indian ancestry. There were also two speech instructors, one full-time and one-part-time, both African American. Fourteen faculty members completed the 25-question Language Attitude Scale along with the Faculty Demographic Profile. Of those 14, four or 28.5% had one to six years of teaching experience; another four or 28.5% had seven to 12 years; and six or 42.9% had more than 13 years of experience. Furthermore, of the 14 faculty members, four (28.5% of the total) were male and ten (71.4%) were female.

The intention was to survey all full-time faculty members other than the researcher and all part-time instructors. In the end, all but one from the first set of faculty was surveyed for a total of nine along with five of the six part-timers for a total of 14 faculty members. The researcher did not differentiate full-time faculty surveys from part-time, as did Mohamed. Incidentally, the department added a seventh part-time English instructor after the survey phase of the project had concluded. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the full-time speech instructor was included in the survey (reflected in the total above) and interview phases. Because the College has a Writing Across the Curriculum initiative, the researcher felt that this instructor could provide an added perspective that would illuminate student responses to being required to use both oral and written Standard English.

### ***Student Participants***

Approximately 98% of the 206 students enrolled in the target classes were African American. The goal was to survey one third of the total or about 70 students. In actuality, 108 students, all at least 18 years of age, were surveyed. In addition to the 41 questions comprising the survey, students were asked to provide demographic

information indicating gender, age group and year of birth, ethnicity, whether they were born in Chicago, whether they attended Chicago Public Schools, whether they had received a diploma or a GED, whether they were first in their families to attend college, and their college major or area of interest. There were 25 male participants and 81 female, representing 23.1% and 75% of the total, respectively. Two students or 1.9% did not indicate their gender. Of the 108 students surveyed, 50 or 46.3% were in the 18-24 age group with the largest group of students born between 1986 and 1987; 27 or 25% were in the 25-34 age group; 29 or 26.9% were over 35 years of age; and two students or 1.9% did not indicate their age group. The median age of the students was 26 years.

### *Procedures*

All of the surveys and most of the interviews were administered during the spring semester 2006. One full-time faculty member who had completed a survey and volunteered to be interviewed had a medical condition which delayed interviewing until fall 2006. Another full-time faculty member was on extended medical leave during the original process and subsequently declined to participate. Prior to beginning the research activities, the researcher had requested and been granted permission by the president of the College to involve, on a voluntary basis, students and faculty in the research project (see Appendix). She had also applied for and been granted approval to proceed with the study involving human subjects by Loyola University's Institutional Review Board. Measures were taken to protect participant identity and ensure anonymity during data collection and afterwards. Students and teachers were asked to complete a blind survey and to indicate their interest in being interviewed. They were also asked to complete a demographic profile form. No personal identifying information was requested on any of

the surveys or demographic profiles. (Copies of both surveys are provided in the Appendices section.) Faculty surveys were administered first, to those instructors who responded affirmatively to an inquiry requesting their participation. Individual letters were sent (see Appendix) to faculty members explaining the research project and requesting their participation in three research activities: (1) faculty surveys, (2) allowing class time for the researcher to administer student surveys for those instructors who taught the targeted classes, and (3) subsequent faculty interviews. (Interview recruitment letters for both students and faculty were not attached to the surveys but were distributed at the same time.) Faculty members who returned the response part of the letter, thus giving consent, were issued a survey. Each faculty survey had a cover letter providing information about the survey and explaining how to volunteer for an interview. Pre-addressed envelopes were provided for faculty to return their completed surveys and consent forms to the researcher. Faculty surveys took ten to 15 minutes to complete.

Student surveys were administered during their regularly scheduled classes. Faculty members teaching the second tier developmental English classes allowed the researcher to visit the classes. Prior to surveying the research site students, the survey was administered to a pilot group of students in the same kind of class at another community college with similar demographics. For both groups of students, the survey process took fifteen to twenty minutes including time to explain the purpose of the surveys and review directions. The directions were read aloud to the students to insure that each class received the same information. The researcher carefully explained that participation in the survey was totally voluntary although she distributed surveys to every student present. She asked that the surveys completed or left blank, be placed in the envelope



she provided and not handed directly to her. Each survey was accompanied by a cover letter providing information about the survey and explaining how to volunteer for an interview.

Once the surveys had been administered, twelve African American students were selected, based on demographic information, from among those surveyed who had indicated their interest in being interviewed. The intention was to involve six students who had completed their high school education between 1995-2005, three who had finished between 1984-1994 and three who had finished earlier. This choice was based on changes in the political, educational, and economic climate over the various time periods. In the end, the twelve students who made themselves available were interviewed, regardless of age or date of graduation. The actual breakout of high school education completion dates turned out as planned, with six from 1995-2005, three from 1984-1994, and three earlier than 1984. The student interviews lasted from 35 minutes to one and a half hours. Most of these interviews, however, were about one hour in duration.

For faculty interviews, six had been planned originally, three with faculty having less than ten years of experience and three with more. However, because more than six faculty members volunteered, the researcher interviewed all who wished to be interviewed, ten in total: eight full-timers, including the one who had completed the survey and then taken a leave and the speech instructor, and two part-timers. Four of the ten had more than 13 years of teaching experience; two had seven to 12 years; and three had one to six years. One of the less experienced instructors, whom the researcher wished to interview, declined.

All interviews were audio-taped with the consent of the participants. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed for patterns and for similarities and differences in responses to the same questions. Survey data were analyzed with SPSS software. Chapter Four describes the results and findings of the research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RESULTS

#### **Findings and Results**

This chapter presents the findings and results of faculty and student investigations utilizing for faculty, Taylor's Language Attitude Scale and faculty interviews and for students, the researcher's Student Language Attitude Survey and student interviews. This study sought to explore how these students manage the conflicting language expectations between their home environment and the community college environment. Some of the questions raised and examined by this research are of the following nature: For those students who wish to use SE and simply do not know how, what pedagogical approaches do they think would be most effective? For those students who resist SE due to "critical consciousness," who think using SE is selling out their race--their black identity--what pedagogical approaches, if any, would convince them to use SE in certain situations? If students are willing to code switch or alternate between two linguistic systems BE and SE, how do they make decisions about doing so? Do teacher attitudes toward SE and BE effect student performance in writing classes? These are issues that this research study intended to illuminate.

Five questions steered the research study--one primary and four secondary. The major Research Question of this study is:

RQ1. How do lower SES African American students at an urban community college manage the competing linguistic expectations of their home environment and the college environment?

Additional Research Questions of the study are:

RQ2. What are the attitudes of urban community college composition teachers toward Standard English?

RQ3. What are the attitudes of urban community college composition teachers toward Ebonics/BE?

RQ4. What are the attitudes of urban community college students toward Ebonics/BE?

RQ5. What are the attitudes of urban community college students toward SE?

I treat questions RQ2 through RQ5 first and conclude with RQ1. Faculty investigations answer RQ2 and RQ3.

Since one of the stated goals of the research study was to replicate the survey portion of Mohamed's (2002) faculty attitudes study, the presentation of quantitative and qualitative data analysis begins with a comparison of faculty responses at the present research site, which has a predominately Black faculty, to faculty responses at Mohamed's site, consisting of a predominately White faculty. I wanted to determine whether substantial differences in attitudes toward Standard English and Black English/Ebonics would emerge. I expected to find that a predominately Black faculty would be far less tolerant of BE in the classroom for two major reasons. First, Black faculty teaching English would be acutely and directly aware of the social consequences of using BE in inappropriate situations and of the benefits of using SE. Second, white

faculty would be constrained by political correctness and by not wanting to appear racist. The comparison of the survey responses did reveal several major differences.

The organization of the chapter follows Mohamed's model and presents the Faculty Demographic Profile in Table 4 and the survey results in Table 5.

1. Faculty Investigations include:
  - a. Faculty Demographic Profile
  - b. Language Attitude Survey
  - c. Findings from Faculty Interviews

Student investigations are organized similarly.

2. Student Investigations include:
  - a. Student Demographic Profiles (see Table 6)
  - b. Student Language Attitude Survey (see Table 7)
  - c. Findings from Student Interviews

A summary of major findings ends the chapter.

### **Faculty Investigations**

#### *Faculty Demographic Profile*

Eighty-eight percent (14 of 16) of faculty completed the Demographic Profile form. Fourteen respondents (both full and part-time) provided information on Gender, Ethnicity, Locations Raised in, Years Teaching, Subjects Taught, and College Attendance Locations. The results for all except Subjects Taught are shown below in Table 4. Twelve of the 14 respondents taught Composition and Rhetoric, seven taught Developmental Education (English and/or Reading), seven taught Literature, and four indicated that they taught Other classes. The Other category includes Creative Writing, Journalism, Speech,

and French. Of the 14 respondents, 10 were female and 4 were male, and 13 of the 14 were African American; one respondent was Caucasian.

**TABLE 4**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC FREQUENCIES FACULTY**

**TAYLOR'S LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SCALE**  
**GENDER**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
	Female	10	71.4	71.4	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	
Missing	0	0	0		
Total		14	100.0		

**ETHNICITY**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	African Amer.	13	92.9	92.9	92.9
	Caucasian	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Hispanic	0	0	0	
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	
Missing	0				
Total		14	100.0		

**LOCATIONS RAISED**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rural	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
	Suburban	2	14.3	14.3	21.4
	Urban	11	78.6	78.6	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	
Missing	0	0	0		
Total		14	100.0		

TABLE 4 (CONTINUED)

## YEARS TEACHING

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-6	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
	7-12	4	28.6	28.6	57.2
	13+	6	42.8	42.8	100.0
	Total		100.0		
Missing	0	0	0		
Total		14	100.0		

## COLLEGE ATTENDANCE LOCATIONS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	N/NE	1	7.1	7.7	7.1
	S	1	7.1	7.7	15.4
	MW	11	78.6	84.6	100.0
	W	0			
Missing	0	1	7.1		
Total		108	100.0		

*Language Attitude Scale*

Theresa Mohamed's (2002) study included 23 full and part-time faculty members, 91% of whom were Caucasian. Only two (about 9%) of the participants were minorities—one African American and one Hispanic. In contrast, 13 of the 14 faculty participants in the current study, or 93%, are African American, and only one, representing 7% of the total, is Caucasian. The project compares faculty attitudes at the two colleges. Eighty-eight percent of faculty completed the completed the Language Attitude Scale, which consists of 25 questions that ascertain their attitudes toward Black English (Ebonics) and non-standard English.

Like Mohamed's study, values assigned to the questions were: strongly agree=5, mildly agree=4, neutral =3, mildly disagree=2, or strongly disagree=1. The survey

answered Research Questions two and three. The survey results are presented in Table 5 below and have been grouped in numerical order for ease in comparing this study's responses to those in Mohamed's. The current study reveals substantial attitude differences between the two contrasting faculties. It is important to note that Table 5 presents those responses in inverse order from Mohamed's original presentation; her responses are shown here in that inverse order to facilitate comparisons. Mohamed's dissertation indicates that faculty in an upstate New York community college have negative attitudes about Black English and positive attitudes about Standard English. She also indicates that political correctness might have influenced some responses and adds that her race as an African American posing this survey to Whites might have also factored into the responses. Spears (1999) notes that discussions about race are often difficult and strained. Non-Blacks may be guarded in their responses and comments lest they appear racist.

The survey results in the current study do suggest that while instructors on the predominately African American faculty value Black English, they are less tolerant of Black English/Ebonics use in the classroom than the responses of the predominately White faculty in Mohamed suggest for that population, as evidenced by Q6 and Q7 in the LAS. The former are significantly more highly in favor of correcting non-standard grammar and usage (87%) than the latter (52%), as evidenced by Q17; however, these faculty members may also be swayed by a reluctance to reveal fully their true sentiments in some instances. For example, the responses to Q6, "Teachers should allow Black students to use Ebonics (Black English) in the classroom," indicate that 50% disagree, strongly and mildly, compared to 43.5% of Mohamed's faculty, but 28.6% chose the



neutral response compared to only 13% of Mohamed's. The neutral response is sometimes a safe one allowing the respondent to avoid expressing his/her actual position on an issue. Given the fact that most of those interviewed staunchly admit to correcting violations of SE, one would expect a percentage closer to the 87% in Q17. Neutral responses to Q19, "Widespread acceptance of Ebonics (Black English) is imperative," follow this pattern as well.

A larger proportion of the predominately Black faculty seems to believe that acceptance of Black English/Ebonics by teachers and allowing students to speak in Black English in school will lead to reduced standards and lower scholastic level, based on responses to Q1 and Q21. Additionally, almost an equal percentage of these instructors believe that Black English is simply a misuse of Standard English as do not. Furthermore, unlike Mohamed's faculty at 39%, Q13 shows that 71% of the subject faculty disagrees that encouraging the use of Ebonics increases student motivation to achieve, and to Q20, four of the 14 survey respondents, nearly 29%, agreed mildly or strongly that "the sooner BE non-standard dialects of English are eliminated, the better." Overall, the survey results for the predominately Black faculty suggest that they are overtly stricter adherents to Standard English use for Black students, perhaps because they are conscious of and more sensitive to the pervasive negative perceptions and attitudes about BE along with the social price Black non-standard English speakers pay. For these reasons, they may feel more directly vested in the linguistic welfare of the students. They may be demonstrating the collective consciousness or fictive kinship described by Gurin and Epps (1975) and by Ogbu (1999), respectively, whereby the

students are a reflection of the collective Black race and, thus, of the African American faculty members, as well.

Table 5 below details the present survey responses and provides commentaries comparing them to the corresponding responses in Mohamed's faculty study.

**TABLE 5**  
**FREQUENCY TABLES - FACULTY LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SCALE**

**1. The scholastic level of a school will fail if teachers allow Ebonics (Black English) to be spoken.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
mildly agree	2	14.3	14.3	42.9
neutral	2	14.3	14.3	57.1
mildly disagree	5	35.7	35.7	92.9
strongly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 4.3, 8.7, 21.7, 26.1, and 39.1 respectively. Of particular significance is the difference in those who disagree about the effects of permitting students to use Black English in school. Of the predominately Black faculty in the present study, 42.9% agrees with the statement and 42.8% disagrees; however only 13% of Mohamed's predominately White faculty agrees while 65.2% disagrees.

**2. Ebonics (Black English) is simply a misuse of Standard English.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	2	14.3	14.3	14.3
mildly agree	4	28.6	28.6	42.9
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	50.0
mildly disagree	3	21.4	21.4	71.4
strongly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 0, 8.7, 4.3, 17.4, and 69.6, respectively. Responses from a predominately African American faculty are considerably different on this point: 42.9% agrees with the statement while only 8.7% of Mohamed's faculty does.

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

**3. Attempts to eliminate Ebonics (Black English) in school will result in a situation that can be psychologically damaging to Black children.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid mildly agree	3	21.4	21.4	21.4
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	28.6
mildly disagree	3	21.4	21.4	50.0
strongly disagree	7	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 21.7, 26.1, 13 26.1, and 13, respectively. None of the local faculty strongly agrees with this statement, and 71.4% disagrees, compared to the 21.7% that strongly agrees and the 39.1% that disagrees within Mohamed's upstate New York faculty.

**4. Continued usage of a non-standard dialect of English will accomplish nothing worthwhile for students.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	1	7.1	7.1	14.3
neutral	3	21.4	21.4	35.7
mildly disagree	6	42.9	42.9	78.6
strongly disagree	3	21.4	21.4	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 8.7, 17.4, 13, 17.4, and 34.8, respectively. The two contrasting faculties disagree on the value of continued usage of a non-standard dialect: the predominately Black faculty at 64.3%, and the other at 52.2%.

**5. Ebonics (Black English) sounds as good as Standard English.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
mildly agree	1	7.1	7.1	35.7
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	42.9
mildly disagree	2	14.3	14.3	57.1
strongly disagree	6	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 13, 17.4, 30.4, 13, and 21.7, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. The variance in neutral responses is telling since in many cases, "neutral" means that the person was not comfortable in revealing his/her position rather than truly neutral in the sense that he/she has no opinion.

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

**6. Teachers should allow Black students to use Ebonics (Black English) in the classroom.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	2	14.3	14.3	21.4
neutral	4	28.6	28.6	50.0
mildly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	57.1
strongly disagree	6	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 4.3, 30.4, 13, 26.1, and 17.4, respectively. 8.7% categorized as Missing. The predominately Black faculty is less inclined to allow Black students to use BE/Ebonics in the classroom. This is likely due to a heightened sensitivity to the social consequences of using BE. The neutral response percentage may be evidence of reluctance to voice actual sentiments.

**7. Ebonics (Black English) should be discouraged.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	3	21.4	21.4	21.4
mildly agree	4	28.6	28.6	50.0
neutral	2	14.3	14.3	64.3
mildly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	92.9
strongly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 8.7, 17.4, 8.7, 26.1, and 34.8, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. The local faculty seems substantially more in favor of discouraging BE, with 50% agreeing with the statement vs. 26.1% of Mohamed's faculty doing so.

**8. Ebonics (Black English) must be accepted if pride is to develop among Black children.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	4	28.6	28.6	35.7
neutral	3	21.4	21.4	57.1
mildly disagree	2	14.3	14.3	71.4
strongly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 17.4, 21.7, 13, 34.8 and 8.7, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. Faculty responses to this statement are similar in that 35.7% and 39.1% agree while 42.9% and 43.5% disagree.

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

## 9. Ebonics (Black English) is an inferior language system.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	2	14.3	14.3	21.4
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	28.6
mildly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	57.1
strongly disagree	6	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 0, 0, 26.1, 8.7, and 65.2, respectively. Even though the percentages disagreeing are similar for both faculties, 71.5% for the local and 73.9% for Mohamed's, the intensity of expressed disagreement is stronger for Mohamed's faculty, with 65.2% strongly disagreeing vs. 42.9% for the local faculty.

## 10. A child who speaks Ebonics (Black English) is able to express ideas as well as the child who speaks Standard English.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	5	35.7	35.7	35.7
mildly agree	3	21.4	21.4	57.1
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	64.3
mildly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	92.9
strongly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 43.5, 21.7, 17.4, 13, and 0, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. A higher percentage of predominately Black faculty disagrees with the statement. College introduces many concepts which have no corollaries in BE, so BE speakers lacking the vocabulary to express these ideas would be at a disadvantage.

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

**11. Ebonics (Black English) should be considered an influential part of American culture and civilization.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	5	35.7	35.7	35.7
mildly agree	5	35.7	35.7	71.4
neutral	2	14.3	14.3	85.7
mildly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	92.9
strongly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 52.2, 34.8, 0, 4.3, and 4.3, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. Both faculties tend to agree with this statement; however, the level of agreement is substantially higher for Mohamed's faculty: 87% agree vs. 71.4% of the predominately Black faculty.

**12. The use of Ebonics (Black English) will not hinder a child's ability to achieve in school.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid .00	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	3	21.4	21.4	28.6
neutral	3	21.4	21.4	50.0
mildly disagree	3	21.4	21.4	71.4
strongly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 13, 8.7, 8.7, 30.4, and 30.4, respectively. 8.7% categorized as Missing. The predominately Black faculty disagrees with this statement at the 50% level, while Mohamed's faculty disagrees at the 60.8% level. There is a considerable difference in the neutral responses as well.

**13. If the use of Ebonics (Black English) is encouraged, speakers of Ebonics (Black English) will be more motivated to achieve.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid neutral	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
mildly disagree	6	42.9	42.9	71.4
strongly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 8.7, 30.4, 13, 21.7, and 17.4, respectively. 8.7% categorized as Missing. Zero percent of the predominately Black faculty agrees with this statement, and 71.5% vs. 39.1% disagrees.

**TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)****14. Ebonics (Black English) is a clear, thoughtful and expressive language.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
mildly agree	3	21.4	21.4	50.0
neutral	2	14.3	14.3	64.3
mildly disagree	3	21.4	21.4	85.7
strongly disagree	2	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 30.4, 26.1, 30.4, 8.7, and 0, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. The two faculties agree at the 50% and 56.1% levels. However, the difference in disagreement levels is considerable. 35.7% for the local and 8.7% for Mohamed's faculty. Also, the difference in neutral response is notable—Mohamed's faculty expresses more than twice the percentage of neutrals as the local faculty.

**15. Ebonics (Black English) is too imprecise to be an effective means of communication.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	5	35.7	35.7	42.9
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	50.0
mildly disagree	2	14.3	14.3	64.3
strongly disagree	5	35.7	35.7	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 0, 0, 34.8, 17.4, and 43.5, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. Of the predominately Black faculty, 42.8% agrees with the statement compared with 0% of Mohamed's. Percentages that disagree are 50% and 60.9%, respectively.

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

**16. Children who speak Ebonics (Black English) lack the basic concepts of plurality and negation.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	1	7.1	7.1	14.3
neutral	4	28.6	28.6	42.9
mildly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	71.4
strongly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 0, 13, 17.4, 21.7, and 43.5, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. Of the predominately Black faculty, 57.2% disagrees while 65.2% of the predominately White faculty expressed that opinion.

**17. A teacher should correct a student's use of non-standard English.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	6	42.9	42.9	42.9
mildly agree	6	42.9	42.9	85.7
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	92.9
mildly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 17.4, 34.8, 17.4, 8.7, and 13, respectively. 8.7% categorized as Missing. Of the predominately Black faculty, 85.8% agrees that teachers should correct students' use of non-standard English, while only 52.2% of the predominately White faculty did. Neutrals are also incongruent.

**18. In a predominantly Black school, Ebonics (Black English), as well as Standard English should be used.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	4	28.6	28.6	35.7
neutral	3	21.4	21.4	57.1
mildly disagree	2	14.3	14.3	71.4
strongly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 21.7, 26.1, 17.4, 21.7, and 4.3, respectively. 8.7% categorized as Missing. It is interesting to note again that the percentage of predominately Black faculty disagreeing with the statement is notably higher than what is reflected by the predominately White faculty, 42.9% vs. 26%, respectively.



TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

## 19. Widespread acceptance of Ebonics (Black English is imperative.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
neutral	5	35.7	35.7	42.9
mildly disagree	2	14.3	14.3	57.1
strongly disagree	6	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 8.7, 21.7, 8.7, 34.8, and 17.4, respectively. 8.7% categorized as Missing. Response percentages are close except that the neutrals are significantly higher for the local, predominately Black faculty. Again, this neutral stance may be evidence of holding back since these faculty members have previously expressed opposition to having BE accepted in the classroom.

## 20. The sooner non-standard dialects of English are eliminated , the better.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	3	21.4	21.4	28.6
mildly disagree	4	28.6	28.6	57.1
strongly disagree	6	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 0, 21.7, 13, 8.7, and 56.5, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. Both faculties tended to disagree with this statement. While 13% of Mohamed's took a neutral position, 0% of the local faculty took that stance. Interestingly, 21.7% and 28.5% of the respective faculties agreed with the statement.

## 21. Acceptance of Ebonics (Black English) by teachers will lead to a lowering of educational standards in school.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	5	35.7	35.7	35.7
mildly agree	3	21.4	21.4	57.1
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	64.3
mildly disagree	5	35.7	35.7	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 0, 30.4, 8.7, 26.1, and 30.4, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. The predominately Black faculty agrees at the 57.1% level that acceptance of BE by teachers will lead to a lowering of standards, in sharp contrast to only 21.7% of the predominately White faculty. Then 65.2% of the latter disagreed with the statement while 42.8% of the former took that stance.

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

## 22. Non-standard English should be accepted socially.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
mildly agree	9	64.3	64.3	71.4
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	78.6
mildly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	85.7
strongly disagree	2	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 30.4, 39.1, 13, 13, and 0, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. The percentages agreeing with the statement are similar for both faculties.

## 23. Ebonics (Black English) has a faulty grammar system.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	6	42.9	42.9	42.9
mildly agree	2	14.3	14.3	57.1
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	64.3
strongly disagree	5	35.7	35.7	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 0, 8.7, 26.1, 8.7, and 52.2, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. There is a high level of variance in the responses of the two faculties to this statement. The predominately Black faculty agrees with it, surprisingly, at a much higher level than the predominately White faculty: 57.2% vs. 8.7%.

## 24. One of the goals of the American school system should be the standardization of the English language.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	9	64.3	64.3	64.3
mildly agree	3	21.4	21.4	85.7
neutral	1	7.1	7.1	92.9
mildly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Percentages in Mohamed's study were 13, 17.4, 17.4, 26.1, and 21.7, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. Again, responses are surprisingly contrastive, with 85.7% of predominately Black faculty agreeing with the statement and only 30.4% of predominately White faculty doing so.

**TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)**

**25. The academic potential of Ebonics (Black English) speaking students will not improve until they replace their dialect with Standard English.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid .00	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
strongly agree	4	28.6	28.6	35.7
mildly agree	5	35.7	35.7	71.4
neutral	2	14.3	14.3	85.7
mildly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	92.9
strongly disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

**Percentages in Mohamed's study were 13, 26.1, 8.7, 26.1, and 21.7, respectively. 4.3% categorized as Missing. Once more, predominately Black faculty see speaking BE as a hindrance to academic progress to a far greater extent than does the predominately White faculty, 64.3% vs. 39.1%, respectively.**

#### **Findings from Faculty Interviews**

Statements made by the local faculty during the interviews corroborate the survey findings. The interviews reveal that faculty are unanimously concerned about students' ability to use Standard English for the students' own benefit. Not one of the participants expressed a desire to eradicate Black English. However, faculty responses to Q25 suggest that 64% of the faculty believes that BE impedes student academic progress so much so that it should be replaced by SE. Consistent with the survey findings, interviewees express the view that the classroom is not the place for BE unless its use is specifically related to the lesson or activity taking place. Rather, they push, exhort, and expect students to learn and use Standard English. In the words of one faculty member responding to the question: "How does the use of Black English in writing, in their papers, how does that affect the grading...?" (Faculty comments are capitalized; researcher comments are lower cased.)

OH I'M STRINGENT. SINCE I DON'T TEACH CREATIVE WRITING, I TEACH STRAIGHT COMPOSITION, IT'S STANDARD ENGLISH OR BUST. I DO MORE THAN MARK WHAT'S WRONG THOUGH; I'M A THOROUGH CORRECTOR. I CORRECT THINGS, ... I LEAVE LITTLE EXPLANATIONS, AND A LOT OF TIMES I'LL REFER TO THE PAGE IN THE BOOK.

SO WHEN THEY GET THEIR PAPER BACK, BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND THAT MANY TIMES STUDENTS ARE SURPRISED WHEN THEY GET THEIR PAPER BACK, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT TO SEE ME OR MAKE AN APPOINTMENT, YOU HAVE A SERIES OF NOTES AND IT TAKES ME A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF TIME. BECAUSE I DO THAT, I EXPECT TO SEE THE WRITING AUTOMATICALLY IMPROVE, WHICH IT DOES. I'LL KNOW WHETHER OR NOT YOU READ WHAT I HAD TO SAY BECAUSE YOU WON'T HAVE REDUNDANT ERRORS.

Indeed, the faculty seems to be unrelenting in its collective insistence on SE. The speech instructor exemplifies the manner in which students adapt. She requires all of her classes to speak in SE while in speech class. She tells them to pretend that they are acting. Since everyone else in the class must comply, she says that they all are usually willing to do so. She assures them that she is concerned about them and that they can resort to using BE again as soon as class is over if they wish.

Most of the faculty members define BE/Ebonics as a language form associated with the oral communication of African Americans. The comments of two veteran instructors are provided as examples:

**MAEVE, A VETERAN FEMALE TEACHER**

WELL, EBONICS TO ME SIGNIFIES A PATTERN OF SPEECH WHICH DERIVES FROM OUR CAPTIVITY, WHICH DERIVES FROM OUR LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE VERY EARLY ON IN OUR BEGINNING TO BECOME A PEOPLE. SINCE WE HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN A PEOPLE, WE ARE A DISTINCT PEOPLE. WE LEARNED [ENGLISH], OF COURSE, WITH AN ACCENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT DID NOT ALLOW FOR US TO LEARN IT WELL NECCESARILY AS FAR AS WHAT WAS CONSIDERED WELL IN THOSE DAYS.

THOSE HABITS OF SPEAKING, OF SYNTAX, OF GRAMMAR, AND ALL THOSE THINGS, VOCABULARY AS WELL, HAVE BEEN PASSED ON AND ELABORATED THROUGH OUT THE DECADES. THAT I BELIEVE HAS EVOLVED COMMON EBONICS. THAT'S WHAT I BELIEVE.

**MILES, A VETERAN MALE TEACHER**

THE WAY THAT BLACK PEOPLE SPEAK AMONGST THEMSELVES. EVERY ETHNIC GROUP HAS A WAY THEY SPEAK SECRETLY AMONGST THEMSELVES THAT IS DIFFERENT THAN HOW THEY'LL SPEAK IN EITHER MIXED COMPANY OR MIXED RACIAL COMPANY... PARTICULARLY WHEN THEY GET INTO THE SLANG.

However, several of the interviewees, four of whom are Black and the one White professor, attempt to de-racialize the language issue when they teach, preferring to focus instead on correctness and appropriateness. The first two excerpts are from instructors who completely avoid race as a language issue. Earnest, the lone Caucasian faculty member provides his candid and, in this situation, unique, point of view, followed by that of an African American male instructor who acknowledges that he, himself, was taunted for "trying to be white" as he grew up on the south side of Chicago.

**EARNEST, A NEWER WHITE MALE TEACHER**

I DON'T REALLY LIKE THAT TERM [EBONICS]

...What is your objection to the term, and what would you prefer?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD PREFER. I GUESS MY MAIN OBJECTION WITH IT IS THAT [WHEN] I WAS WORKING IN POLITICS, ... AN OAKLAND SCHOOL BOARD DECISION CAME OUT; IT WAS IN THE 90'S, LATE 90'S... AND, YOU KNOW, IT WAS REALLY DEMONIZED. THE IDEA OF TEACHING EBONICS WAS REALLY DEMONIZED, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE POLITICAL RIGHT, AND IT WAS KIND OF USED AS A POLITICAL HAMMER, I WOULD SAY, BY THE POLITICAL RIGHT, BASICALLY WHERE THEY SAID, YOU KNOW, "LOOK AT THESE LIBERALS, WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO DO? THEY'RE TRYING TO CHANGE ENGLISH."

I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHAT THE ATTEMPT WAS, BUT I THINK IT'S REALLY EASY TO KIND OF YOU KNOW, CONTROL... IT'S AN ARGUMENT THAT'S PRETTY EASY FOR THE RIGHT WING. THEY HAVE A MORE SIMPLISTIC VIEW OF IT.

IT'S NOT VERY NUANCED AND, HENCE, THE TERM EBONICS IN MY MIND KIND OF BECAME THIS... IT HAD A NEGATIVE ASSOCIATION, MOSTLY NOT BECAUSE I THINK IT'S A BAD TERM, BUT BECAUSE IT STOOD FOR THE KIND OF EASY PICKING THAT THE POLITICAL RIGHT COULD KIND OF TAKE TOWARD ACADEMIA.

So [what about] the term Black English, which is used synonymously [with Ebonics], Black Vernacular English, and African American Vernacular English?

YOU KNOW, AS A WHITE...TEACHER IN A PREDOMINATELY AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOL..., I'M NOT REALLY COMFORTABLE WITH THAT EITHER. HONESTLY, I FORGOT TO ANSWER YOUR FOLLOW-UP TO YOUR PREVIOUS QUESTION, WHICH IS WHICH TERM WOULD I PREFER. I DON'T KNOW THAT THAT'S SOMETHING THAT I THINK ABOUT, AND I DON'T HONESTLY KNOW. I'M NOT COMFORTABLE SAYING EBONICS, AND I'M NOT COMFORTABLE SAYING BLACK VERNACULAR BECAUSE I THINK IF I WERE TO KIND OF USE A TERM LIKE THAT, IN MY MIND, I VIEW IT AS STEREOTYPING, ALTHOUGH IT'S THE KIND OF THING WHERE I THINK AN AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHER WOULD HAVE AN EASIER TIME USING THAT...BECAUSE [OF] THE RACIAL EXCLUSIVITY...

SO IN MY VIEW, I DON'T LOOK AT IT, I DON'T TEACH IT AS EBONICS; I DON'T TEACH IT AS BLACK DIALECT. WHEN I TEACH IT IN MY CLASSROOMS, I SAY, "THIS IS SOMETHING THAT'S COMMONLY SAID," AND WHEN I TEACH IT I SAY, "WE ALL COMMONLY USE" BECAUSE HONESTLY I THINK THAT THE CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS OF EBONICS ARE ALSO TRAITS THAT ARE COMMON, NOT JUST AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS. I HAVE AN AUNT WHO DOESN'T USE SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT TO ANY... DEGREE...SO, IT'S NOT LIKE ITS COMPLETELY EXCLUSIVE TO AFRICAN AMERICANS, AT LEAST A LOT OF THE TRAITS. SO I KIND OF TRY TO BROADEN IT AS, OK, THIS A COMMON ORALLY COMMUNICATED ERROR--LACK OF SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT, OR LACK OF INCLUDING PLURALS ON THE END OF NOUNS. SO I TEND TO NOT REFER TO IT AS A RACIALLY EXCLUSIVE ERROR...

**MILES**, A NEWER FULL-TIME MALE TEACHER WITH MANY YEARS OF ADJUNCT TEACHING EXPERIENCE.

As far as Black English, Black Vernacular, Ebonics, and Standard English, you don't racialize the language?

NO. IT'S GOOD WRITING, WHICH IS CLARITY. LABELS ARE DANGEROUS BECAUSE WHEN YOU START LABELING THINGS, YOU PUT THINGS IN A BOX, AND EITHER THIS ESSAY THAT YOU'VE WRITTEN, EITHER IT'S CLEAR AND PEOPLE COULD UNDERSTAND IT OR IT ISN'T. I'VE NEVER WRITTEN THE WORD "EBONICS" ON THE PAGE, JUST "THIS SENTENCE IS UNCLEAR."

The next two instructors attempt to de-emphasize race, preferring to focus on professionalism and appropriateness.

**DORELLE**, A VETERAN FEMALE TEACHER AND A FAIRLY NEW ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR AT THE COLLEGE.

YOU KNOW WHAT, I DON'T USE THE TERM BLACK ENGLISH, UNFORTUNATELY, I GUESS BECAUSE I WAS NEVER ALLOWED TO SPEAK IT.

So you don't use that term, you just use Non-Standard?

YES, THAT'S WHAT I USE.

So are you de-racializing, do you associate it with race at all, or do you just talk about Non-Standard English.

THAT'S WHAT I USE, NON-STANDARD ENGLISH. EVERY NOW AND THEN I MIGHT USE THE TERM EBONICS, BUT VERY, VERY RARELY--MAYBE AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER WHEN I ASSOCIATE NON-STANDARD ENGLISH WITH THE EBONICS.

Her teaching philosophy or guiding principal?

I FEEL THAT ALL STUDENTS CAN LEARN, IT'S JUST HOW YOU APPROACH THEM. I KNOW AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL, I DID A LOT OF PERSONAL, HANDS ON TYPE THINGS. I FIND AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, THE STUDENTS, EVEN THE ADULTS, THEY LIKE THAT HANDS ON. THEY WANT YOUR APPROVAL, AND IF THEY SEE THAT YOU HAVE A HANDS-ON APPROACH. SOMETIMES THEY DRIVE ME NUTS UNTIL I COME INTO MY OFFICE, BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT I WILL FIND LOTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS TO GET THE CONCEPT OVER TO THEM.

To Dorelle, Ebonics is "just speaking non-standard English." She was asked, "How does that philosophy come into play when you encounter students who use non-standard English at the college level?"

ESPECIALLY IN WRITING, ESPECIALLY IN WRITING, I STEER THEM AWAY FROM IT...FIRST OF ALL, I SPEND A LOT OF TIME ON GRAMMAR: VERBS, SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT. THEY HAVE A LOT OF PROBLEMS WITH THAT. THE ENDINGS OF WORDS, THE "-S'S"AND

THE “-ED’S,” AND WHEN THEY WRITE THEY TEND TO OMIT THOSE ENDINGS, AND SO I SPEND A LOT OF TIME ON SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT AND THOSE KINDS OF THINGS. AND I FIND AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER I’VE MISSED PARALLELISMS AND DANGLING MODIFIERS AND ALL THAT STUFF.

BECAUSE I BELIEVE IF I CAN GET THEM TO WRITE IT, THEY WILL SPEAK IT, AND I TELL THEM CONSTANTLY, YOU CAN’T FUNCTION IN A WORK PLACE USING THAT KIND OF LANGUAGE...WE HAVE A LOT OF NURSING STUDENTS, AND STUDENTS GOING INTO OTHER AREAS. I SAY, “YOU KNOW PEOPLE ARE GOING TO LISTEN TO THE WAY YOU SPEAK. YOU MAY DO A+ WORK ON THE JOB, BUT IF THEY HOLD YOU UP AGAINST SOMEONE WHO’S DOING THE SAME KIND OF WORK AND THEY SPEAK WELL, THAT REPRESENTS THE COMPANY THAT YOU’RE WORKING FOR AND THEREFORE, YOU WON’T GET THE RAISE, OR YOU WON’T GET THE PROMOTION.”

SO I TALK ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS LIKE THAT TO THEM. I TALK ABOUT HOW IMPORTANT STANDARD ENGLISH IS...

#### LETTICIA, A NEW FEMALE INSTRUCTOR

Leticia, like Dorelle views Black English/Ebonics as simply non-standard English.

...Do you ...ever mention the term Black English or Ebonics, or do you simply take this as Non-Standard English, saying, ”In this class you have to use Standard English.” Do you de-racialize it?

YES, I DE-RACIALIZE IT; I DON’T EVEN BRING UP EBONICS. YES, NON-STANDARD [VS] THIS IS STANDARD ENGLISH; THIS IS BEING ARTICULATE; THIS IS PRONOUNCING. YES, YES

Do you have a philosophy of teaching, something that guides you, an overarching teaching principle that guides you as you teach?

YES, FROM MY TEACHING I HOPE MY STUDENTS BUILD CONFIDENCE, THAT THEY BECOME ARTICULATE BEINGS, AND ARE ABLE TO PRESENT THEMSELVES PROFESSIONALLY. THAT IS MY GOAL TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND ENABLE THEM TO PRESENT THEMSELVES PROFESSIONALLY.

With this philosophy that you have, how does student use of Ebonics or Black English work into your philosophy? How does that change your teaching? How do you adjust your teaching methods as you encounter students who use Black English Vernacular?



WELL, IT'S A MATTER OF CORRECTING THEM CONSISTENTLY BECAUSE I WANT THEM TO ACQUIRE SPEAKING SKILLS THAT THEY CAN TAKE WITH THEM WHEN THEY GO ON JOB INTERVIEWS OR JUST ENTER THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD, ENTERING THEIR CAREERS. SO YES, IT'S A MATTER OF CONSISTENTLY CORRECTING THE NON-STANDARD ENGLISH, AS SOCIETY MAY NOT BE SO ACCEPTING OR UNDERSTANDING OF THAT.

Other instructors, however, directly associate race with language as they present their expectation that students are to use SE in class. The next excerpts are representative of those stances.

**RICHARD, A VETERAN MALE TEACHER**

MY OVERALL PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING IS THAT TEACHING IS A TWO WAY STREET: THE TEACHER STARTS OFF AT ONE END OF THE STREET AND THE STUDENT STARTS [AT] THE OTHER. THEY WALK TOWARDS EACH OTHER, HOPEFULLY, SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, THEY CAN MEET AND SAY 'HI, HOW ARE YOU,' AND START SOME KIND OF DIALOGUE, COMMUNICATION AND OUT OF THAT COMMUNICATION A TEACHER CAN IMPART THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE THAT HE OR SHE HAS TO THE STUDENT. THE STUDENT CAN ALSO TO AN EXTENT TEACH THE TEACHER SOMETHING ABOUT STUDENTS. SO I THINK THAT IT'S A TWO WAY STREET.

How does that philosophy relate to Black students who use Black English in their writing and speaking?

... I EXPLAIN THAT [STANDARD EDITED ENGLISH] IS A PART OF MY [GRADING STRUCTURE]. I'VE COME TO BELIEVE THAT STUDENTS USUALLY KNOW WHAT THEY WANT TO SAY, BUT PUTTING IT IN STANDARD ENGLISH FORMAT IS WHERE THERE IS A PROBLEM. THERE IS A PROBLEM BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY RULES FOR GRAMMAR. THEY TELL YOU ON PAGE 22 THIS, THIS, THIS, AND THIS; THEN ON PAGE 30, WELL HERE'S 100,000 EXCEPTIONS TO EACH 15 RULES YOU KNOW.

AFTER I ... SEVERAL YEARS AGO LEARNED ABOUT THE DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES, I STOPPED, GOT AWAY FROM MEMORIZE THIS, MEMORIZE THAT. ESPECIALLY WITH THE COLLEGE STUDENT: KNOW WHERE TO LOOK IT UP AND BE WILLING TO SPEND ANOTHER FIVE OR TEN MINUTES LOOKING IN THE HANDBOOK TO SEE IF YOU ARE FOLLOWING THE BASIC RULES FOR COMMON USAGE, UTILIZING THIS ON PAPER. SPEAKING AND WRITING ARE

TWO DIFFERENT THINGS. I TRY TO PERSONALIZE, SAYING I DON'T SPEAK LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME.

IF I'M OFF WITH MY BUDDIES, I'M USING THE BLACK VERNACULAR, HOWEVER, IF I'M SPEAKING WITH MY BOSS OR ONE OF MY SUPERVISORS, I'M NOT GOING TO DO THAT BECAUSE I'M IN ANOTHER ATMOSPHERE, ANOTHER SITUATION. I THINK THAT TRYING TO GET ACROSS TO THEM THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN LANGUAGES FOR CERTAIN SITUATIONS. WHAT IS APPROPRIATE IN ONE SITUATION IS NOT APPROPRIATE IN ANOTHER.

### **MAEVE**

Her teaching philosophy?

I LIKE TO FOLLOW THE IDEA THAT DOCTORS HAVE, AND THAT IS FIRST DO NO HARM, AND SO THEN ALL ELSE COMES FROM THAT... I THINK THAT I DO NO HARM BY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT [THE STUDENTS] SPEAK THIS LANGUAGE, AND THAT IT IS A LANGUAGE WHICH IS SUFFICIENT UNTO ITSELF TO CARRY IDEAS AS ANY LANGUAGE IS. I THINK IT IS A DIALECT AND I AFFIRM THAT. THAT DOESN'T MAKE THEM IGNORANT THAT THEY SPEAK IT. HOWEVER, WE ALL KNOW THAT SOCIETY HAS ITS RULES AND REGULATIONS THAT ARE NOT ALWAYS LOGICAL AND NOT ALWAYS FAIR.

IF THE STUDENTS ARE LIMITED TO THAT ONE DIALECT, THEN THEY CANNOT PROGRESS, AND NOT BECAUSE OF ANY IMPAIRMENT OF THEIR OWN, BUT BECAUSE OF SOCIETAL IDEAS. THAT IS THE APPROACH THAT I [BRING] TO EBONICS, TO BLACK ENGLISH.

WE TALK ABOUT IT ALL SEMESTER AS IT POPS UP IN DIFFERENT WAYS. BECAUSE THESE ARE ADULTS, THEY KNOW. THEY DON'T WANT TO NECESSARILY PUT IN THE TIME IT TAKES TO CHANGE LIFETIME HABITS, BUT THEY KNOW.

... [H]ow does the students' use of Black Vernacular conventions in their writing affect your teaching methods? What do you actually do?

WELL, THERE ARE CERTAIN PATTERNS OF ERRORS THAT I WILL GO AFTER, VERBS FOR EXAMPLE, SYNTAX, BITS AND PIECES OF SLANG THAT HAVE WORKED THEIR WAY INTO THAT SPEECH. CURSE WORDS, BECAUSE THEY DON'T SOMETIMES REALIZE THAT YOU CAN'T USE THOSE IN WRITTEN... YOU KNOW... YOU FIND ALL KINDS OF THINGS IN THERE. SO, I WILL GO AFTER IT IN TERMS OF THOSE THINGS, NOT SO MUCH IN TERMS OF THEIR OWN THOUGHT ABOUT IDEAS.

IT MAY BE A PAPER OF ARGUMENTATION, AND I MAY DISAGREE WITH THEIR ARGUMENT, BUT IF IT IS WELL THOUGHT THROUGH

AND SUPPORTED WITH FACTS AND SO ON, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT AND STILL GO ON.

And how do students respond to your acknowledgement and then going after and bringing that to their attention?

THEY RESPOND TO THE FIVE EXTRA POINTS THAT THEY GET IF THEY REVISE. [LAUGHTER] IF I SAY I WANT DRAFTS IN THERE, I GET THE DRAFTS...BUT, I TRY TO DO IT IN SUCH A WAY THAT I'M NOT CRITICIZING THEM AS PEOPLE. AND THAT I'M NOT SAYING THAT YOU ARE LESS A PERSON BECAUSE YOU DON'T SOUND LIKE ME OR SOMEBODY ELSE. I'M USUALLY SUCESSFUL LIKE THAT.

ONE OF MY STUDENTS SAID [SOMETHING] ABOUT ME A LONG TIME AGO. I HEARD [HIM TALKING TO A FRIEND AS] THEY WERE TRYING TO REGISTER FOR SCHOOL, AND SO THE GUY SAYS, 'TAKE MISS \_\_\_ [FOR THIS CLASS].' I COULDN'T SEE THEM BUT I COULD HEAR THEM. 'SHE BE DEALIN; SHE DON'T BE PLAYIN. WHEN YOU BE THROUGH, YOU BE KNOWING WHAT YOU BE DOING,' AND I THOUGHT, 'OH GOSH!! YOU BE DEALIN.' [LAUGHTER]

**MINERVA, A FAIRLY NEW TEACHER.**

Her teaching philosophy or guiding principal?

MY GOAL FOR EACH CLASS IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE STUDENTS ARE BETTER WRITERS, BECAUSE EVERYONE WILL COME IN AT A DIFFERENT LEVEL. I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT EACH PERSON INDIVIDUALLY LEAVES THERE A BETTER WRITER, A BETTER THINKER. I CAN'T HAVE THEM ALL BEING AT THE SAME LEVEL BECAUSE EVERYBODY'S COMING IN AT A DIFFERENT LEVEL. IF I COULD JUST GET THEM TO BE BETTER WHEN THEY LEAVE, I'M HAPPY.

How does this Black Vernacular English, or Ebonics figure into your trying to make your students better writers and better thinkers?

SOMETIMES I CAN GET A POINT ACROSS IN THE VERNACULAR IF I EXPLAIN IT. FOR EXAMPLE, I WAS HAVING TROUBLE GETTING THEM TO UNDERSTAND A DEPENDENT CLAUSE. THEY COULDN'T QUITE GRASP IT, SO I SAID LISTEN, SUPPOSE YOU HAVE A CHILD, HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE CHILDREN? EVERYBODY RAISED THEIR HANDS.

I SAID, NOW WHEN YOU PUT YOUR CHILD ON YOUR INCOME TAX OR WHEN YOU GO TO BUY THEM THINGS THEY ARE YOUR WHAT? DEPENDENT. BECAUSE THEY CAN'T TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES RIGHT? THEY CAN'T STAND ALONE RIGHT? SAME THING, A DEPENDENT CLAUSE IS LIKE A CHILD; IT NEEDS HELP; IT CAN'T STAND ON ITS OWN. BECAUSE I MADE THAT ANALOGY, EVERYBODY GOT IT.

**ZORA, A VETERAN TEACHER FAIRLY NEW TO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Her teaching philosophy or guiding principal?

I GUESS MY FIRST THING IS TO NOT JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COLOR, AND PARTICULARLY WORKING WITH MINORITY STUDENTS, I'M SENSITIVE TO THE TRAUMA--I DID USE THE WORD TRAUMA--THAT THEY DID RECEIVE FROM THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS. OF COURSE, THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS, THERE ARE NO ABSOLUTES, BUT THE VAST MAJORITY OF STUDENTS I SEE HERE HAVE BEEN TRAUMATIZED BY THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PARTICULARLY WITH MY SUBJECT MATTER, WHICH IS ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AND WRITING COMPOSITION.

...How do you then approach students who use the vernacular, who use Black English in their speaking and in their writing?

ACTUALLY, I GIVE THEM A LITTLE HISTORY LESSON. THIS IS HOW I BEGIN ALL OF MY 100 COURSES BECAUSE I KNOW THEY'RE SENSITIVE. WHAT IS IT SAID IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY, "YOU SPEAK AS THOUGH YOU'RE WHITE."? SO I GIVE THEM A LITTLE HISTORY ABOUT THE EVOLUTION OF BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR. I EXPLAIN INSTITUTIONAL RACISM AND THAT BLACK PEOPLE WERE CHASTIZED, OF COURSE, FOR BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR.

I EXPLAIN TO THEM THAT ALL CULTURES CODE SWITCH. WHERE SOME PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS A BAD THING--THEY WOULD SAY "THEY'VE BEEN HERE THREE OR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AND THEY STILL CAN'T SPEAK ENGLISH."-- I TRY TO PUT A POSITIVE APPROACH TO IT, THAT WE WERE ACTUALLY MULTILINGUAL WHEN WE CAME ACROSS AS AN ENSLAVED PEOPLE. [MEMBERS OF ONE TRIBE WERE] CHAINED TO MEMBERS OF A DIFFERENT TRIBE-- WOLAF, FULANI, AND WHATEVER. SO, BLACK PEOPLE ACTUALLY ADAPTED VERY WELL.

So you explain this to your students first?

I LITERALLY TELL THEM THIS, AND IT'S SOME THINGS I START OFF RIGHT AWAY WITH..., IN THE BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR, "BE, "HAVE", AND "DO." "BE" HAS BEEN THE MOST MISUSED VERB; I SPEND A FAIR AMOUNT OF TIME ON IT, EXPLAINING TO THEM WHY "BE" GIVES AFRICAN AMERICANS SO MUCH TROUBLE.

WE CONJUGATE THE VERB "BE" AND I ALSO CURRENTLY CONJUGATE IT FOR THEM FIRST FROM A TELEVISION SHOW [WITH] MARTIN LAWRENCE, AND WHAT IS HIS CONJUGATION? "I BE," "YOU BE," "HE BE," AND "WE ALL WAS," OR "WE ALL IS." THAT

USUALLY KIND OF RELAXES THEM TO LET THEM KNOW THAT I KIND OF KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT WHEN I TALK ABOUT CODE SWITCHING.

JUST BECAUSE I SPEAK DIFFERENTLY, THIS IS MY JOB. THEN WE GO INTO LEARNING THE STANDARD ENGLISH FOR "BE", "HAVE," AND "DO" BEFORE WE DO ANYTHING ELSE.

**GEORGE**, A VETERAN TEACHER WITH MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, ALL AT THE POST-SECONDARY LEVEL

His teaching philosophy?

I WANT STUDENTS TO KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM... THAT IS THE TOTAL ISSUE, EVEN IF THEY CANNOT DO IT, THEY KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED. THAT IS THE TOTAL ISSUE FOR ME IN TERMS OF STANDARD ENGLISH, WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THEM. THE BEST THING I CAN DO IS MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT STANDARD ENGLISH INVOLVES, AND WHAT COLLEGE AND COLLEGE EDUCATION INVOLVE.

Do you have any specific strategies for getting students who are Non-Standard English speakers to become better able to write and use Standard English?

YES THERE IS ONE STRATEGY THAT I'M TOO LAZY TO ENTER IN, BUT ON OCCASION I DID DO IT THIS WAY, AND IT WORKED. THAT IS TO MAKE SURE I AM USING STANDARD ENGLISH MYSELF AND THAT I'M COMMUNICATING IN A MANNER THAT SAYS, THIS IS WHAT IS REQUIRED AT THIS LEVEL IN THIS CLASSROOM. HOWEVER, I HAVE TENDED TO LAPSE INTO NON-STANDARD ENGLISH SOMETIMES WHEN I'M SPEAKING TO THE CLASS.

IT'S NOT TO SAY NON-STANDARD ENGLISH DOES NOT STILL HAVE VALUE... WE'RE ALL SPEAKING NON-STANDARD ENGLISH IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES. I HAVE A HABIT OF FORGETTING TO DO THAT WHEN I SHOULDN'T. HOWEVER, THE BEST WAY TO DO THAT IS TO SPEAK IN STANDARD ENGLISH AND MAKE SURE THAT THAT'S MAINTAINED AT THE LEVEL OF WORKING AT ALL TIMES SO THAT WHEN THE STUDENT SEES THAT [HE OR SHE] IS CORRECTED IN SPEECH AS WELL AS IN WRITING, THEY WILL DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS IS WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU.

How do your students respond to being corrected when they speak Non-Standard English in class?

WHEN THEY ARE BEING CORRECTED, THEY RESPOND VERY POSITIVELY, AS IF TO SAY, "THANK YOU FOR CORRECTING ME."

...Do you think that is because of [their] high school experience...?

YOU KNOW I'M NOT REALLY SURE OF WHAT THEIR EXPERIENCES WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL AND IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND I'VE HEARD TERRIBLE HORROR STORIES THAT STUDENTS HAD NO WRITING EXPERIENCE. I TRIED NOT TO BELIEVE THAT, BUT I RECEIVED CONFIRMATION TO SUPPORT THAT. VERY OFTEN THEY RECEIVED NO KINDS OF REAL STANDARD ENGLISH INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION. SO UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, I JOKE THAT I COULD JUST TAKE SOME OF THOSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND SLAP SOMEBODY. [LAUGHTER] BECAUSE THEY ARE THE ONES WHO NEED A WHIPPING. THEY'RE THE ONES WHO HURT YOU.

I just want to get your opinion on this notion that using Standard English is acting white.

I HOPE YOU HAVE ENOUGH ROOM ON YOUR TAPE. [LAUGHTER] THERE IS A FELLA BY THE NAME OF DR. PENA, AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY WHO MADE REFERENCE TO WHAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR CULTURE, IN THIS CASE HISPANICS. HE TALKED ABOUT HOW HISPANICS WHO LET GO OF THEIR CULTURE SEEM TO DO MUCH BETTER IN STANDARD EDUCATION.

HOWEVER, WILLIAM RASPBERRY IN HIS ARTICLE IN THE TRIBUNE REFERENCES THE SAME PHENOMENON IN YOUNG PEOPLE WHO SPEAK COCKNEY. COCKNEY BECOMES... A PART OF THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND THEY DON'T WANT TO LET IT GO AND AS A RESULT, THEY THINK IF THEY LET IT GO, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE ACCEPTED INTO THE HIGHER CLASSES EVEN THOUGH YOU NOW SPEAK LIKE THEM. YOU STILL ARE NOT ACCEPTED, BUT YOU'VE LOST TOUCH WITH THE LOWER CLASS, SO YOU'RE IN "NO MAN'S LAND"; THAT'S THE EXPRESSION HE USED.

I BELIEVE THAT THAT IS ONE OF THE GREATEST DRAWBACKS IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY, AND THAT IS THE BELIEF THAT ACHIEVEMENT ONLY BELONGS TO WHITE PEOPLE., AND NOT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ARE AS EQUALLY AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AS EQUALLY BLACK, ACHIEVING AS OPPOSED TO NON ACHIEVING...

SO, I THINK THAT WHAT HAS HAPPED IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN PSYCHE IS THAT THE AFRICAN AMERICAN PSYCHE BELIEVES THAT ANY FORM OF ACHIEVEMENT MEANS THAT YOU'VE STEPPED OUT OF THE BLACK AND TRYING TO BE WHITE. NOW, YOU KNOW WE HAVE THAT EXPRESSION, "WANNA BE," BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET INTO THE WHITE WORLD. SO, YOU WILL BE IN A KIND OF NEVER NEVER NO MAN'S LAND.

I BELIEVE THAT IT IS MOST OBSTENSIBLY SHOWN WHERE AFRICAN AMERICANS SPEAK STANDARD ENGLISH. THEY COULD ARTICULATE STANDARD ENGLISH, THEY ARE WANNA BE'S BECAUSE THEY ARE NEVER GOING TO BE WHITE, BUT THEY ARE NO LONGER BLACK. I HAVE MIXED EMOTIONS ABOUT THAT BECAUSE COMING UP IN THE 60'S, WE NOTED THE PEOPLE THAT WERE IDENTIFIED AS SO CALLED LEADERS WERE VERY

ARTICULATE. IT STARTED WITH DR. KING, AND IT STARTED WITH MALCOLM X. WHO HUNG OUT IN THE “HOOD”AND YET THEY WERE STILL VERY, VERY ARTICULATE.

...THE PROBLEM IS THAT THOSE WHO ARE ACHIEVERS DON'T EXPLAIN TO PEOPLE THAT AS ACHIEVERS, NOW THEY ARE BLACK ACHIEVERS. SO PEOPLE CAN KNOW THAT THEY CAN ACHIEVE, TOO. MANY TIMES I'VE SEEN PEOPLE SLUR THEIR SPEECH ON PURPOSE JUST SO THEY CAN MESS UP THE KING'S ENGLISH BECAUSE THAT TO THEM IS BEING BLACK. THEY'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD IN THE WHOLE VALUE SYSTEM THAT ACHIEVING AND THEN SPEAKING IN A WAY THAT IS ARTICULATE AND CAN BE UNDERSTOOD BY ANYBODY IN THE WORLD IS ALSO BEING BLACK. YOU CAN BE BLACK AND INTELLIGENT TOO.

The faculty Language Attitude Survey revealed that the predominately African American faculty is less tolerant of BE and other forms of non-standard English in the classroom than the predominately Caucasian faculty in Mohamed's study (2002). They are far more likely to point out and “correct” BE features to SE. The faculty interview substantiated, expanded, and clarified the survey findings. Even though some instructors do not racialize language issues in their classrooms, the issue of race is still foremost in the consciousness of all of the instructors, for they are acutely aware of the role of language in the social, economic, political and particularly educational spheres impacting the lives of the urban community college students.

The faculty members demonstrate respect for the students' home language, but they do not allow the students to simply “express themselves” often reversing the prior language arts experiences of the students. The instructors emphasize situational appropriateness in language use, but for most, the English classroom is rarely if ever the appropriate situation for BE usage. All of the teachers reduce students' grades if they do not adhere to the SE requirement. Overall, teachers try to use engaging materials that are of high interest to the students. They express high expectations, and some are intractable

and rigid in their positions although most seem to have excellent rapport with the students. They write comments on the students' papers in an effort to assist the revising process, but students are the ones who must adjust. When they do not, they are not successful in moving ahead to the next level.

### **Student Investigations**

The results of the current research indicate that most of the community college students in the survey, the overwhelming majority of whom are classified as lower SES, are open to learning Standard English. They understand that such knowledge is vital in their attempts to succeed in the American economy. However, they often lack the experience, techniques, and formal knowledge required of college-ready students. The review of the literature indicates that part of this is due to low teacher expectations and their concomitant low student and family self-efficacy. Other social and societal ills play a role as well. Wilson (1978, 1980, 1987, 1996) and Kozol (1992, 2005), among others, have documented the pernicious effects of entrenched poverty and inferior schooling. Kolln (1981, 2005), Hancock (2005, 2006), and Mulroy (2003) have examined the effects of a nationwide anti-grammar policy in place for two decades. Dating from the 1980s, the Chicago Public Schools did not mandate the teaching of Standard English grammar on a formalized, structured, regular basis until 2004. Prior to that time, approaches to teaching grammar were at the whim of book publishers and individual teachers. CPS did stipulate in their standards-based curriculum guidelines instituted in 1995 that students would speak in Standard English, but, according to veteran teachers and administrators, there was no district wide methodology or policy as to how students would gain this ability or as to how student learning of these objectives would be measured. The ACT and SAT did



not require writing until recently, and many teachers at the elementary and high school level teach to the test. Kolln and Hancock (2005) also note that colleges of education were not requiring pre-service teachers to demonstrate a high level of competence to teach Standard English grammar or to appreciate dialect differences. So, although I was amazed when so many of my developmental English students told me that they had not been taught SE grammar in high school and could not remember learning much beyond parts of speech in elementary school, if anything, I came to believe them and to see that not only were they not speaking and writing SE in their speech communities, the institutions charged with exposing them to SE grammar were not delivering consistently nor effectively.

I found that these students have indeed suffered what might be termed “educational neglect.” At the same time, the research also reveals that nearly all of the students surveyed said that they believe that any Black person can learn to speak and write standard English if he or she wants to (see survey results for Q3 and Q4). There is also evidence that students hold their pre-college teachers and themselves responsible for the underpreparedness with which they enter school. Nevertheless, many of the students who attend the College persevere and succeed in code-switching as a conscious choice. Even so, most of them do not want to abandon Black English, the “language of their nurture.” They respond well to instructors who do not denigrate the students’ home language, but who, motivated by demonstrated concern for the student’s welfare, insist on their learning SE.

This study involved students enrolled in second tier developmental English classes. Approximately 98% of the 206 students enrolled in the target classes were

African American. My goal was to survey one third of the total or about 70 students. In actuality, 108 students, all at least 18 years of age, were surveyed. In addition to the 41 questions comprising the survey, students were asked to provide demographic information indicating gender, age group and year of birth, ethnicity, whether they were born in Chicago, whether they attended Chicago Public Schools, whether they had received a diploma or a GED, whether they were first in their families to attend college, and their college major or area of interest. There were 25 male participants and 81 female, representing 23.1% and 75% of the total, respectively. Of the 108 students surveyed, 50 or 46.3% were in the 18-24 age group with the largest group of students born between 1986 and 1987; 27 or 25% were in the 25-34 age group; 29 or 26.9% were over 35 years of age; and two students or 1.9% did not indicate their age group. The median age of the students was 26 years. Table 6 below presents the complete demographic profile data.

**TABLE 6**  
**STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

**GENDER**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	25	23.1	23.6	23.6
	female	81	75.0	76.4	100.0
	Total	106	98.1	100.0	
Missing	0	2	1.9		
Total		108	100.0		

**AGE RANGE**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 to 24	50	46.3	47.2	47.2
	25-34	27	25.0	25.5	72.6
	35+	29	26.9	27.4	100.0
	Total	106	98.1	100.0	
Missing	0	2	1.9		
Total		108	100.0		

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED)

AGE		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18.00	1	.9	1.0	1.0
	19.00	12	11.1	11.5	12.5
	20.00	14	13.0	13.5	26.0
	21.00	6	5.6	5.8	31.7
	22.00	3	2.8	2.9	34.6
	23.00	5	4.6	4.8	39.4
	24.00	2	1.9	1.9	41.3
	25.00	6	5.6	5.8	47.1
	26.00	5	4.6	4.8	51.9
	27.00	2	1.9	1.9	53.8
	28.00	5	4.6	4.8	58.7
	29.00	3	2.8	2.9	61.5
	30.00	4	3.7	3.8	65.4
	31.00	2	1.9	1.9	67.3
	32.00	2	1.9	1.9	69.2
	33.00	2	1.9	1.9	71.2
	34.00	2	1.9	1.9	73.1
	35.00	1	.9	1.0	74.0
	36.00	6	5.6	5.8	79.8
	37.00	1	.9	1.0	80.8
	38.00	4	3.7	3.8	84.6
	39.00	2	1.9	1.9	86.5
	40.00	3	2.8	2.9	89.4
	45.00	1	.9	1.0	90.4
	46.00	1	.9	1.0	91.3
	47.00	1	.9	1.0	92.3
	50.00	3	2.8	2.9	95.2
	51.00	1	.9	1.0	96.2
	52.00	2	1.9	1.9	98.1
	56.00	1	.9	1.0	99.0
	61.00	1	.9	1.0	100.0
	Total	104	96.3	100.0	
Missing	System	4	3.7		
Total		108	100.0		

NOTE: This table was developed by subtracting the student's year of birth from 2006.

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED)

**ETHNICITY**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	African American	106	98.1	100.0	100.0
Missing	0	2	1.9		
Total		108	100.0		

**BIRTHPLACE**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Chicago	88	81.5	88.9	88.9
	South	6	5.6	6.1	94.9
	Other	5	4.6	5.1	100.0
	Total	99	91.7	100.0	
Missing	0	9	8.3		
Total		108	100.0		

**FIRSTINFAM**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	29	26.9	27.4	27.4
	No	77	71.3	72.6	100.0
	Total	106	98.1	100.0	
Missing	0	2	1.9		
Total		108	100.0		

**DIP\_GED**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Diploma	91	84.3	86.7	86.7
	GED	14	13.0	13.3	100.0
	Total	105	97.2	100.0	
Missing	0	3	2.8		
Total		108	100.0		

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED)

## HIGH SCHL ATT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	CPS	82	75.9	85.4	85.4
	Other	14	13.0	14.6	100.0
	Total	96	88.9	100.0	
Missing	0	11	10.2		
	System	1	.9		
	Total	12	11.1		
Total		108	100.0		

## MAJORAREA INT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A Arts	1	.9	.9	.9
	Accounting	1	.9	.9	1.9
	Addiction Studies	2	1.9	1.9	3.7
	Automotive Studies	5	4.6	4.7	8.4
	Broadcasting	2	1.9	1.9	10.3
	Business	13	12.0	12.1	22.4
	Child Care and-or Dev	11	10.2	10.3	32.7
	CIS-CompSci	5	4.6	4.7	37.4
	Communication	2	1.9	1.9	39.3
	Crim Just	4	3.7	3.7	43.0
	Cultural Arts	6	5.6	5.6	48.6
	Dental Hygiene	2	1.9	1.9	50.5
	Drafting	1	.9	.9	51.4
	General Studies	3	2.8	2.8	54.2
	HVAC	2	1.9	1.9	56.1
	Music	2	1.9	1.9	57.9
	None	3	2.8	2.8	60.7
	Nursing	34	31.5	31.8	92.5
	Parole Officer	1	.9	.9	93.5
	Pharm Tech	1	.9	.9	94.4
	Physical Therapy	1	.9	.9	95.3
	Psychology-Business	2	1.9	1.9	97.2
	Social Work	1	.9	.9	98.1
Undecided	2	1.9	1.9	100.0	
Total		107	99.1	100.0	
Missing	No response	1	.9		
Total		108	100.0		

### **Student Language Attitude Survey**

The Student Language Attitude Survey was designed to elicit six categories of responses: student attitudes about Black English/Ebonics, about Standard English, about identity issues, about previous schooling experiences, about instruction/teachers, and about locus of control. Each question was coded to correspond with one (and in some cases more) of the categories. Q8, Q8a, Q9, and Q9a were designed to elicit direct responses on the Standard English as trying to be white or “acting white” issue. The Student Language Attitude Survey was developed with Q8 and Q9 referring to “trying to be white” because that was the more familiar term in my experience for describing attempts to adopt the ways of Whites, including their speech. However, when a member of the dissertation committee pointed out that “acting white” was the more widely used term in the literature, I became curious to see if there was a significant difference in perceptions about the two terms. As a result, when the survey was piloted, I asked the students at the pilot site for their views on the two expressions (after they had completed their surveys). They assured me that the two terms meant the same thing. Therefore, in the actual study, I modified the surveys to include both versions of the questions alternatively. Thus, 60 surveys contained references to “trying to be white” in Q8 and Q9 and 48 contained references to “acting white” in Q8a and Q9a.

The surveys showed that there was no measurable difference between the percentage of students who strongly agreed with the Q9 statement: “Black people can speak Standard English without trying to be white” and the Q9a statement: “Black people can speak Standard English without trying to act white.” Eighty-five percent (85%) of both groups of respondents strongly agreed. However, while 86% of the “be” group

disagreed strongly that “Using Standard English means trying to be white,” only 76% disagreed strongly that “Using Standard English means trying to act white.” This discrepancy seems to indicate that there is a degree of perceptual difference about how one uses Standard English which determines whether or not a person is trying to be or act white. What is especially important about the responses, though, is that a significantly high percentage of the students indicate that they feel that there is a manner by which African Americans can use Standard English that does not imply that they are trying to be or act white.

The notion that the use of Standard English by Blacks equates with their trying to be white or “acting white” is a central focus of this study. Because the literature links use of Standard English with “acting white” for many lower SES and working class Blacks and because the literature lists such language attitudes as a benchmark of oppositional culture theory (Fordham and Ogbu 1986, Fryer 2006, Lundy 2003, Ogbu 1999) and as one of the primary causes of the lower academic achievement in English language arts among Blacks as a whole (Fordham and Ogbu, McWhorter 2003), this notion is directly broached to students during the interviews. Table 7 below details the actual breakdown of survey responses for the most frequent responses to Q8, Q8a, Q9, and Q9a questions.



**TABLE 7**  
**COMPARISON OF Q8, Q8A, Q9, AND Q9A**

Percentage and Number for Most Frequent Responses in Student Surveys				
Question Number	Percentage	N		
Q8-be Using Standard English means trying to be white.	86.0	49 of 57 strongly disagree 3 Missing N=60		
Q8a-act Using Standard English means trying to act white.	77.0	36 of 47 strongly disagree 1Missing N=48		
Q9-be Black people can speak Standard English <b>without</b> trying to be white.	85.0	51 of 60 strongly agree		
Q9a-act Black people can speak Standard English <b>without</b> trying to act white.	85.0	41 of 48 strongly agree		

Table 8 below presents the full modified survey and shows questions that elicited statistically significant responses. When the questions were analyzed with the SPSS program for these analyses, Q8 and Q8a responses were aggregated, as were those for Q9 and Q9a.

TABLE 8

**STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY WITH  
DATA ANALYSIS SUMMARY**

STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY

<i>RESPONSES WITH ASSIGNED VALUES</i>	<i>CODES</i>	<i>CATEGORY OF RESPONSES</i>
STRONGLY AGREE 5	A	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT BLACK ENGLISH/EBONICS
AGREE SOMEWHAT 4	B	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT STANDARD ENGLISH IDENTITY
DON'T KNOW 3	C	ISSUES
DISAGREE SOMEWHAT 2	D	PRIOR SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES
DISAGREE STRONGLY 1	E	ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHERS
NO RESPONSE 0	F	LOCUS OF CONTROL

C O D E	Q.#		MEAN RESPONSE	T-TEST ANOVA AGE	T-TEST ANOVA GEN	T-TEST ANOVA FIF	CROSS TAB BY GENDER
				SIG.	SIG.	SIG.	SIG.
A	1	I think Black English (Ebonics) is just as good as any other form of English.	3.04				
A	2	Black English (Ebonics) is just bad English.	2.90		.002		.004
B	3	Any black person can learn to speak Standard English if he/she wants to.	4.89	.042		.004	
B	4	Any black person can learn to write Standard English if he/she wants to.	4.84				
A	5	The use of Black English does not hurt or hinder a student's ability to achieve in school.	3.25				
E, A	6	If a student writes using Black English (Ebonics), teachers should pay more attention to what the student says in a paper than how he/she says it.	2.96				
A	7	It's hard for me to get my thoughts out on paper if I don't write using Black English (Ebonics).	2.01				
B	8	Using Standard English means trying to be white.	1.33		.040		
B	8a	Using Standard English means trying to act white.	1.47		.040		
B	9	Black people can speak Standard English <u>without</u> trying to be white.	4.80		.019		
B	9a	Black people can speak Standard English <u>without</u> trying to act white.	4.69		.019		

B	10	Sometimes I use Standard English.	4.40				
E	11	When teachers or other people try to get me to use Standard English, I feel like they are putting me down.	1.58				
E, A	12	I think teachers look down on students who speak Black English (Ebonics).	2.59				
D	13	I was not taught much about English grammar in elementary school.	2.00			.006	
D	14	I was not taught much about English grammar in high school.	2.04			.009	
F, D	15	I would have been better prepared for college English if the schools had done a better job when I was younger.	3.03				
F, D	16	I would have been better prepared for college English if I had worked harder in school when I was younger.	4.08				
B, E	17	I want my professors to teach me how to use Standard English better.	4.63				
E	18	I like for my teachers to write comments on my papers.	4.63	.023	.021		
E	19	I read my teachers' comments and try to learn from them.	4.74	.018			
B	20	It shouldn't matter whether you use Standard English or not as long as you get your point across.	2.64	.010			.002
B, C	21	Using Standard English is hard because no one who lives around me uses it.	2.15				
B	22	I don't mind writing Standard English, but speaking it is too much trouble.	1.92			.025	
B, C	23	If I spoke Standard English in my neighborhood, people would make fun of me.	1.77			.004	
F, B	24	I know being able to use Standard English will help me in my career, so I am going to learn it.	4.77			.006	
F, B	25	If I went on a job interview, I would know how to change the way I talk to fit the situation.	4.77				
A	26	Writing papers would be easier if I could start in Black English and then translate to Standard English.	2.78				
E, B	27	I like for my teachers to treat me like they believe I can learn Standard English and expect me to get better at it.	4.53				
E, B	28	When teachers try to force me to use Standard English, I resent it and them.	1.61			.032	
E	29	I like for my teachers to talk to me personally about my papers.	4.39				.007
E, A	30	It annoys me when my professors make me rewrite my papers just because I used some Black	1.89	.019			

		English/Ebonics.					
B	31	Standard English should be used for all college writing.	4.10				
B	32	Using Standard English is a way to avoid some kinds of discrimination	3.42				
A, B	33	Using Standard English in some situations and Black English (Ebonics) in others is the best way to handle language.	3.48	.003		.000	.002
B, F	34	I can see that being able to use Standard English gives me more options.	4.60			.047	
A	35	Most black people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they're ignorant.	3.39				
A	36	Most white people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they're ignorant.	4.06				
A, B	37	Some black people who speak Standard English act like they think they're better than everybody who speaks Black English/Ebonics.	3.29		.014		
B, F	38	Black English (Ebonics) is the language of my community, and I'm not giving it up no matter what anybody else thinks.	2.52		.005		
B	39	It's hard to get ahead in America if you don't use Standard English.	3.76				
F	40	I could do better in my college writing classes if I just applied myself more and worked harder.	4.69				
F	41	I could do better in my college writing classes if I the teachers helped me more.	4.12		.010		

The statistical analysis indicates that cross tabulations of the demographic factors gender, age, first in family to attend college, and major or area of interest with each survey question produced some statistically significant results, as did t-tests and ANOVAs by age, gender, and first in family to attend college. Males tended to be stronger adherents to Black English than females. One indication of this is the variance in their responses to Q2: "Black English (Ebonics) is just bad English." Seventy-six percent of male respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement compared to

42.5% of female respondents. Males also appear to be less amenable than females to using SE consistently, as evidenced by their responses to Q20: “It shouldn’t matter whether you use Standard English or not as long as you get your point across” and to Q33: “Using Standard English in some settings and Black English in others is the best way to handle language.” Male respondents also expressed more concern about peer pressure as it relates to SE and Black English than did female students, as indicated by their responses to Q23: “If I spoke Standard English in my neighborhood, people would make fun of me.” Although the majority of the students, male and female, disagreed with this statement, males agreed at more than three times the percentage rate of females. This fact coupled with the actuality that most females in this population disagreed (82.7%), seems to indicate that males feel more pressure not to use Standard English in their BE speech community. This is consistent with the literature (Fordham 1996; Gilyard 1991; Raspberry 1986; Smith 2002; Young 2003). Another noteworthy finding is that males tend to find being able to write in BE and then translate to Standard English easier for them and an aid to the writing process. This variance approached significance at the .056 level, but because several male students mentioned this point in their interview, I include it as significant.

All students expressed the belief that they are capable of learning to speak and write Standard English, as not one disagreed with statements to that effect. However, older students agreed less strongly than younger ones. Older students also tended to agree that instructors hold students who speak Black English in less regard than they do for speakers of Standard English. These older students may be more perceptive of, sensitive to or paranoid about language issues, having likely encountered more racially

charged situations and/or more language bias, perhaps in work place settings. This may account for the fact that older students also tend to acknowledge and rate using SE as consistently important, as evidenced by responses to Q20, “It shouldn’t matter whether you use Standard English or not as long as you get your point across.” and Q33, “Using Standard English in some situations and Black English (Ebonics) in others is the best way to handle language.” Older students tended to disagree with both statements, implying that SE should be used predominately. Younger students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement at nearly twice the rate of older students.

Students who were first in their families to attend college tended to agree or strongly agree more so than other students with Q13 and Q14 regarding not receiving instruction about English grammar in elementary and high school. One student, Marie, describes the frustration, anger, and sense of being cheated voiced by many developmental English students:

**MARIE (Student comments are capitalized.)**

Tell me what it was like in your Language Arts English classes before you came to college.

TERRIBLE.

Ok, talk about that.

I JUST KNOW WE DIDN’T HAVE GOOD TEACHERS, I KNOW WE WERE’NT TAUGHT WELL BECAUSE I KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ALL MY CLASSMATES AND WE ALL HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM WITH ENGLISH. I DON’T KNOW BECAUSE IT WAS THE SCHOOL OR THE TEACHERS JUST WASN’T UP TO STANDARDS, BUT I KNOW THAT WE WASN’T CORRECT AND OUR ENGLISH WASN’T PROPERLY TAUGHT TO US.

Significant also is that students want instructors to treat them as though the instructors believe the students are capable of learning SE. They want their teachers to

have high expectations of them and to express confidence in their ability. This is consistent with the literature (Baker 2002; Ball and Lardner 2005; Delpit 1998, 2002; Rickford 1996; Wynne 2002). They also seem to relish faculty feedback in the form of comments on their papers or direct communication. Based on responses to Q40 and Q41, all of the students tend to think they would do better in their writing classes if they applied themselves more, but most also feel that teacher assistance would help to enhance their performance as well. Older students tended to feel that they would benefit from teacher assistance a bit more so than did younger students.

Tables 9 and 10 present additional analyses of the survey results. Table 9 presents the survey result frequencies in item order, in category order, and in a preliminary factor analysis order. The original survey statements were grouped to elicit the six categories of responses mentioned above. A preliminary factor analysis indicated that the questions loaded in a somewhat different pattern than the design had anticipated. Both are presented for purposes of comparison. Table 10 shows the survey items that produced statistically significant results for one or more demographic variables and a commentary on each the results. Age and gender produced the greatest numbers of significant results. As for major or areas of interest and first in family to attend college, there was very little statistically significant variance. Interestingly, students pursuing degrees in social service fields disagreed with the Q22 statement “I don’t mind writing Standard English, but speaking it is too much trouble” less than those with other majors. Likewise, those who were not the first in their families to attend college, agreed with the Q36 statement: “Most white people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they’re ignorant” by nearly 20% more than those who were first in family. Noteworthy is that

Q33 generated significant results for three different demographic variables: age, gender, and first in family to attend college. Additional statistical data, including descriptive statistics, are presented in Appendix J.



**TABLE 9**  
**FREQUENCIES-STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY**

RESULTS IN ORIGINAL ITEM ORDER WITH FREQUENCIES

RESPONSES WITH VALUES	CODES	CATEGORY OF RESPONSES ASSIGNED TO CODES				
STRONGLY AGREE 5	A	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT BLACK ENGLISH/EBONICS				
AGREE SOMEWHAT 4	B	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT STANDARD ENGLISH				
DON'T KNOW 3	C	IDENTITY ISSUES				
DISAGREE SOMEWHAT 2	D	PRIOR SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES				
DISAGREE STRONGLY 1	E	ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHERS				
NO RESPONSE 0	F	LOCUS OF CONTROL				

Orig Code	Q#	QUESTIONS GROUPED IN ORIGINAL ITEM ORDER	MODE	MEAN	MEDIAN	SIG. RESULTS*
A	1	I think Black English (Ebonics) is just as good as any other form of English.	4	3.04	3	
A	2	Black English (Ebonics) is just bad English.	2	2.90	2	*
B	3	Any black person can learn to speak Standard English if he/she wants to.	5	4.89	5	*
B	4	Any black person can learn to write Standard English if he/she wants to.	5	4.84	5	
A	5	The use of Black English does not hurt or hinder a student's ability to achieve in school.	5	3.25	4	
E,A	6	If a student writes using Black English (Ebonics), teachers should pay more attention to what the student says in a paper than how he/she says it.	4	2.96	3	
A	7	It's hard for me to get my thoughts out on paper if I don't write using Black English (Ebonics).	1	2.01	2	
B	8	Using Standard English means trying to be white.	1	1.33	1	*
B	8a	Using Standard English means trying to act white.	1	1.47	1	*
B	9	Black people can speak Standard English without trying to be white.	5	4.80	5	*
B	9a	Black people can speak Standard English without trying to act white.	5	4.69	5	*
B	10	Sometimes I use Standard English.	5	4.40	5	
E	11	When teachers or other people try to get me to use Standard English, I feel like they are putting me down.	1	1.58	1	
E	12	I think teachers look down on students who speak Black English (Ebonics).	1	2.59	2	
D	13	I was not taught much about English grammar in elementary school.	1	2.00	1	*
D	14	I was not taught much about English grammar in high school.	1	2.04	2	*
D,F	15	I would have been better prepared for college English if the schools had done a better job when I was younger.	1	3.03	3	
D,F	16	I would have been better prepared for college English if I had worked harder in school when I was younger.	5	4.08	5	
B,E	17	I want my professors to teach me how to use Standard English better.	5	4.63	5	
E	18	I like for my teachers to write comments on my papers.	5	4.63	5	*
E	19	I read my teachers' comments and try to learn from them.	5	4.74	5	*
B	20	It shouldn't matter whether you use Standard English or not as long as you get your point across.	1	2.64	2	*
B,C	21	Using Standard English is hard because no one who lives around me uses it.	1	2.15	2	
B	22	I don't mind writing Standard English, but speaking it is too much trouble.	1	1.92	1	
B,C	23	If I spoke Standard English in my neighborhood, people would make fun of me.	1	1.77	1	
B,F	24	I know being able to use Standard English will help me in my career, so I am going to learn it.	5	4.77	5	
F,B	25	If I went on a job interview, I would know how to change the way I talk to fit the situation.	5	4.77	5	
A	26	Writing papers would be easier if I could start in Black English and then translate to Standard English.	1	2.78	3	
E,B	27	I like for my teachers to treat me like they believe I can learn Standard English and expect me to get better at it.	5	4.53	5	

TABLE 9 (CONTINUED)

RESPONSES WITH VALUES	CODES	CATEGORY OF RESPONSES ASSIGNED TO CODES
STRONGLY AGREE 5	A	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT BLACK ENGLISH/EBONICS
AGREE SOMEWHAT 4	B	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT STANDARD ENGLISH
DON'T KNOW 3	C	IDENTITY ISSUES
DISAGREE SOMEWHAT 2	D	PRIOR SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES
DISAGREE STRONGLY 1	E	ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHERS
NO RESPONSE 0	F	LOCUS OF CONTROL

Orig Code	Q#	QUESTIONS GROUPED IN ORIGINAL ITEM ORDER	MODE	MEAN	MEDIAN	SIG. RESULTS*
E,B	28	When teachers try to force me to use Standard English, I resent it and them.	1	1.61	1	*
E	29	I like for my teachers to talk to me personally about my papers.	5	4.39	5	*
E,A	30	It annoys me when my professors make me rewrite my papers just because I used some Black English/Ebonics.	1	1.89	1	*
B	31	Standard English should be used for all college writing.	5	4.10	5	
B	32	Using Standard English is a way to avoid some kinds of discrimination	4	3.42	4	
A,B	33	Using Standard English in some situations and Black English (Ebonics) in others is the best way to handle language.	4	3.48	4	*
B,F	34	I can see that being able to use Standard English gives me more options.	5	4.60	5	*
A	35	Most black people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they're ignorant.	4	3.39	4	
A	36	Most white people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they're ignorant.	5	4.06	4	
B	37	Some black people who speak Standard English act like they think they're better than everybody who speaks Black English/Ebonics.	4	3.29	4	*
A,F	38	Black English (Ebonics) is the language of my community, and I'm not giving it up no matter what anybody else thinks.	1	2.52	2	*
B	39	It's hard to get ahead in America if you don't use Standard English.	4	3.76	4	
F	40	I could do better in my college writing classes if I just applied myself more and worked harder.	5	4.69	5	
F	41	I could do better in my college writing classes if I the teachers helped me more.	4	4.12	4	*

TABLE 9 (CONTINUED)

## RESULTS IN CATEGORY/CODE ORDER WITH FREQUENCIES

RESPONSES WITH VALUES	CODES	CATEGORY OF RESPONSES ASSIGNED TO CODES	MODE	MEAN	MEDIAN	SIG. RESULTS*
STRONGLY AGREE 5	A	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT BLACK ENGLISH/EBONICS				
AGREE SOMEWHAT 4	B	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT STANDARD ENGLISH				
DON'T KNOW 3	C	IDENTITY ISSUES				
DISAGREE SOMEWHAT 2	D	PRIOR SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES				
DISAGREE STRONGLY 1	E	ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHERS				
NO RESPONSE 0	F	LOCUS OF CONTROL				
<i>Code A (Black English/Ebonics)</i>						
A	1	I think Black English (Ebonics) is just as good as any other form of English.	4	3.04	3	
A	2	Black English (Ebonics) is just bad English.	2	2.90	2	*
A	5	The use of Black English does not hurt or hinder a student's ability to achieve in school.	5	3.25	4	
A	7	It's hard for me to get my thoughts out on paper if I don't write using Black English (Ebonics).	1	2.01	2	
A	26	Writing papers would be easier if I could start in Black English and then translate to Standard English.	1	2.78	3	
A	35	Most black people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they're ignorant.	4	3.39	4	
A	36	Most white people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they're ignorant.	5	4.06	4	
<i>Code B (Standard English)</i>						
B	8	Using Standard English means trying to be white.	1	1.33	1	*
B	8a	Using Standard English means trying to act white.	1			*
B	9	Black people can speak Standard English without trying to be white.	5	4.80	5	*
B	9a	Black people can speak Standard English without trying to act white.	5			*
B	10	Sometimes I use Standard English.	5	4.40	5	
B	20	It shouldn't matter whether you use Standard English or not as long as you get your point across.	1	2.64	2	*
B	22	I don't mind writing Standard English, but speaking it is too much trouble.	1	1.92	1	*
B,F	24	I know being able to use Standard English will help me in my career, so I am going to learn it.	5	4.77	5	*
B	31	Standard English should be used for all college writing.	5	4.10	5	
B	32	Using Standard English is a way to avoid some kinds of discrimination.	4	3.42	4	
A,B	33	Using Standard English in some situations and Black English (Ebonics) in others is the best way to handle language.	4	3.48	4	*
B,F	34	I can see that being able to use Standard English gives me more options.	5	4.60	5	*
B	37	Some black people who speak Standard English act like they think they're better than everybody who speaks Black English/Ebonics.	4	3.29	4	*
B	39	It's hard to get ahead in America if you don't use Standard English.	4	3.76	4	
<i>Code C (Identity)</i>						
B,C	21	Using Standard English is hard because no one who lives around me uses it.	1	2.15	2	
B,C	23	If I spoke Standard English in my neighborhood, people would make fun of me.	1	1.77	1	*
A,F	38	Black English (Ebonics) is the language of my community, and I'm not giving it up no matter what anybody else thinks.	1	2.52	2	*

TABLE 9 (CONTINUED)

RESPONSES WITH VALUES	CODES	CATEGORY OF RESPONSES ASSIGNED TO CODES	MODE	MEAN	MEDIAN	SIG.
STRONGLY AGREE 5	A	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT BLACK ENGLISH/EBONICS				
AGREE SOMEWHAT 4	B	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT STANDARD ENGLISH				
DON'T KNOW 3	C	IDENTITY ISSUES				
DISAGREE SOMEWHAT 2	D	PRIOR SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES				
DISAGREE STRONGLY 1	E	ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHERS				
NO RESPONSE 0	F	LOCUS OF CONTROL				
<i>Orig Code</i>	<i>Orig Q#</i>	<i>QUESTIONS GROUPED BY CATEGORY/CODE</i>	<i>MODE</i>	<i>MEAN</i>	<i>MEDIAN</i>	<i>SIG.</i>
		<i>Code D (Prior Schooling)</i>				
D	13	I was not taught much about English grammar in elementary school.	1	2.00	1	*
D	14	I was not taught much about English grammar in high school.	1	2.04	2	*
D,F	15	I would have been better prepared for college English if the schools had done a better job when I was younger.	1	3.03	3	
D,F	16	I would have been better prepared for college English if I had worked harder in school when I was younger.	5	4.08	5	
		<i>Code E (About Teachers)</i>				
E,A	6	If a student writes using Black English (Ebonics), teachers should pay more attention to what the student says in a paper than how he/she says it.	4	2.96	3	
E	11	When teachers or other people try to get me to use Standard English, I feel like they are putting me down.	1	1.58	1	
E	12	I think teachers look down on students who speak Black English (Ebonics).	1	2.59	2	
B,E	17	I want my professors to teach me how to use Standard English better.	5	4.63	5	
E	18	I like for my teachers to write comments on my papers.	5	4.63	5	*
E	19	I read my teachers' comments and try to learn from them.	5	4.74	5	*
E,B	27	I like for my teachers to treat me like they believe I can learn Standard English and expect me to get better at it.	5	4.53	5	*
E,B	28	When teachers try to force me to use Standard English, I resent it and them.	1	1.61	1	*
E	29	I like for my teachers to talk to me personally about my papers.	5	4.39	5	*
E,A	30	It annoys me when my professors make me rewrite my papers just because I used some Black English/Ebonics.	1	1.89	1	
		<i>Code F (Locus of Control)</i>				
B	3	Any black person can learn to speak Standard English if he/she wants to.	5	4.89	5	*
B	4	Any black person can learn to write Standard English if he/she wants to.	5	4.84	5	
F,B	25	If I went on a job interview, I would know how to change the way I talk to fit the situation.	5	4.77	5	
F	40	I could do better in my college writing classes if I just applied myself more and worked harder.	5	4.69	5	
F	41	I could do better in my college writing classes if I the teachers helped me more.	4	4.12	4	*

TABLE 9 (CONTINUED)

		STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY						
		RESULTS OF FACTOR ANALYSIS WITH FREQUENCIES						
<i>RESPONSES WITH VALUES</i>	<i>CODES</i>	<i>CATEGORY OF RESPONSES ASSIGNED TO CODES</i>						
STRONGLY AGREE 5	A	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT BLACK ENGLISH/EBONICS						
AGREE SOMEWHAT 4	B	STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT STANDARD ENGLISH						
DON'T KNOW 3	C	IDENTITY ISSUES						
DISAGREE SOMEWHAT 2	D	PRIOR SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES						
DISAGREE STRONGLY 1	E	ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHERS						
NO RESPONSE 0	F	LOCUS OF CONTROL						
<i>Orig Code</i>	<i>Orig Q#</i>	<i>Questions Grouped by Factor Analysis Results</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>MEDIAN</i>			
		<b>Factor 1</b>						
A	1	I think Black English (Ebonics) is just as good as any other form of English.	4	3.04	3			
A	2	Black English (Ebonics) is just bad English.	2	2.90	2			
A	5	The use of Black English does not hurt or hinder a student's ability to achieve in school.	5	3.25	4			
E,A	6	If a student writes using Black English (Ebonics), teachers should pay more attention to what the student says in a paper than how he/she says it.	4	2.96	3			
B	20	It shouldn't matter whether you use Standard English or not as long as you get your point across.	1	2.64	2			
A	26	Writing papers would be easier if I could start in Black English and then translate to Standard English.	1	2.78	3			
E,B	28	When teachers try to force me to use Standard English, I resent it and them.	1	1.61	1			
E,A	30	It annoys me when my professors make me rewrite my papers just because I used some Black English/Ebonics.	1	1.89	1			
A,F	38	Black English (Ebonics) is the language of my community, and I'm not giving it up no matter what anybody else thinks.	1	2.52	2			
		<b>Factor 2</b>						
B,E	17	I want my professors to teach me how to use Standard English better.	5	4.63	5			

E	18	I like for my teachers to write comments on my papers.	5	4.63	5			
E	19	I read my teachers' comments and try to learn from them.	5	4.74	5			
B,F	24	I know being able to use Standard English will help me in my career, so I am going to learn it.	5	4.77	5			
E,B	27	I like for my teachers to treat me like they believe I can learn Standard English and expect me to get better at it.	5	4.53	5			
B,F	34	I can see that being able to use Standard English gives me more options.	5	4.60	5			
B	39	It's hard to get ahead in America if you don't use Standard English.	4	3.76	4			
F	40	I could do better in my college writing classes if I just applied myself more and worked harder.	5	4.69	5			
		<b>Factor 3</b>						
A	7	It's hard for me to get my thoughts out on paper if I don't write using Black English (Ebonics).	1	2.01	2			
E	11	When teachers or other people try to get me to use Standard English, I feel like they are putting me down.	1	1.58	1			
B,C	21	Using Standard English is hard because no one who lives around me uses it.	1	2.15	2			
B	22	I don't mind writing Standard English, but speaking it is too much trouble.	1	1.92	1			
B,C	23	If I spoke Standard English in my neighborhood, people would make fun of me.	1	1.77	1			
B	31	Standard English should be used for all college writing.	5	4.10	5			
		<b>Factor 4</b>						
D	13	I was not taught much about English grammar in elementary school.	1	2.00	1			
D	14	I was not taught much about English grammar in high school.	1	2.04	2			
D,F	15	I would have been better prepared for college English if the schools had done a better job when I was younger.	1	3.03	3			
		<b>Factor 5</b>						
E,A	12	I think teachers look down on students who speak Black English (Ebonics).	1	2.59	2			
A	35	Most black people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they're ignorant.	4	3.39	4			
A	36	Most white people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they're ignorant.	5	4.06	4			
A,B	37	Some black people who speak Standard English act like they think they're better than everybody who speaks Black English/Ebonics.	4	3.29	4			

		<b>Factor 6</b>							
B	3	Any black person can learn to speak Standard English if he/she wants to.	5	4.89	5				
B	4	Any black person can learn to write Standard English if he/she wants to.	5	4.84	5				
D,F	16	I would have been better prepared for college English if I had worked harder in school when I was younger.	5	4.08	5				
E	29	I like for my teachers to talk to me personally about my papers.	5	4.39	5				
B	32	Using Standard English is a way to avoid some kinds of discrimination	4	3.42	4				
A,B	33	Using Standard English in some situations and Black English (Ebonics) in others is the best way to handle language.	4	3.48	4				
		<b>Questions with Low Communalities</b>							
B	10	Sometimes I use Standard English.	5	4.40	5				
F,B	25	If I went on a job interview, I would know how to change the way I talk to fit the situation.	5	4.77	5				
F	41	I could do better in my college writing classes if I the teachers helped me more.	4	4.12	4				
		<b>Questions with Inconsistent Responses</b>							
B	8	Using Standard English means trying to be white.	1	1.33	1				
B	8a	Using Standard English means trying to act white.	1						
B	9	Black people can speak Standard English <u>without</u> trying to be white.	5	4.80	5				
B	9a	Black people can speak Standard English <u>without</u> trying to act white.	5						

TABLE 10

## CROSS TABULATIONS SHOWING SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

**Q2: Black English (Ebonics) is just bad English.**

		GENDER		Total	
		Male	Female	1 male	
q2a	Strongly disagree to disagree	Number	19	34	53
			76.0%	42.5%	50.5%
	Neutral	Number	2	3	5
			8.0%	3.8%	4.8%
	Agree to strongly agree	Number	4	43	47
			16.0%	53.8%	44.8%
Total		Number	25	80	105
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square = 11.02, df=2, Sig.=.004

Males are more likely to disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. These differences are significant at the .004 level.

**Q20: It shouldn't matter whether you use Standard English or not as long as you get your point across.**

			GENDER		Total
			Male	Female	
q20a	Strongly disagree to disagree	Number	7	50	57
			28.0%	62.5%	54.3%
	Neutral	Number	1	7	8
			4.0%	8.8%	7.6%
	Agree to strongly agree	Number	17	23	40
			68.0%	28.8%	38.1%
Total		Number	25	80	105
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square = 12.44, df=2, Sig.=.002

Males are more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement. These differences are significant at the .002 level.

NOTE: IN MOST CASES, RESPONSES ARE COLLAPSED INTO THREE CATEGORIES RATHER THAN REPORTED IN FIVE EXCEPT WHERE SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL IS GREATER IN THE FIVE CATEGORY CROSS TAB. SUFFIX "a" FOLLOWING THE QUESTION NUMBER INDICATES COLLAPSED RESULTS.



TABLE 10 (CONTINUED)

**Q23: If I spoke Standard English in my neighborhood, people would make fun of me.**

			GENDER		Total
			Male	Female	
q23a	Strongly disagree to disagree	Number	16 64.0%	67 82.7%	83 78.3%
	Neutral	Number	2 8.0%	8 9.9%	10 9.4%
	Agree to strongly agree	Number	7 28.0%	6 7.4%	13 12.3%
Total		Number	25 100.0%	81 100.0%	106 100.0%

Pearson Chi-square = 7.53, df=2, Sig.=.023

Males are more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement, while females are more likely to disagree. These differences are significant at the .023 level.

**Q33: Using Standard English in some situations and Black English (Ebonics) in others is the best way to handle language.**

			GENDER		Total
			1 male	2 female	1 male
q33	1 Strongly disagree	Number	0 .0%	6 8.1%	6 6.2%
	2 Disagree	Number	2 8.7%	13 17.6%	15 15.5%
	3 Neutral	Number	2 8.7%	14 18.9%	16 16.5%
	4 Agree	Number	8 34.8%	33 44.6%	41 42.3%
	5 Strongly agree	Number	11 47.8%	8 10.8%	19 19.6%
Total		Number	23 100.0%	74 100.0%	97 100.0%

Pearson Chi-square = 16.54, df=4, Sig.=.002

Males are more likely to strongly agree with the statement, while females are more likely to agree. There is a good deal of variance among females on this issue. These differences are significant at the .002 level.

TABLE 10 (CONTINUED)

**Q33: Using Standard English in some situations and Black English (Ebonics) in others is the best way to handle language. (Responses collapsed into three categories.)**

			GENDER		Total
			Male	Female	
Q33a	Strongly disagree to disagree	Number	2 8.7%	19 25.7%	21 21.6%
	Neutral	Number	2 8.7%	14 18.9%	16 16.5%
	Agree to strongly agree	Number	19 82.6%	41 55.4%	60 61.9%
Total		Number	23 100.0%	74 100.0%	97 100.0%

Pearson Chi-square = 5.55, , df=2, Sig.=.062

When responses are collapsed into three categories, males appear substantially more likely to agree with this statement. Significance level is .062, however.

**Q12a: I think teachers look down on students who speak Black English (Ebonics).**

% Within Age

		AGE			Total
		18 to 24	25-34	35+	
q12a	strongly disagree to disagree	63.3%	65.4%	37.9%	56.7%
	neutral	6.1%	11.5%	3.4%	6.7%
	agree to strongly agree	30.6%	23.1%	58.6%	36.5%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square = 9.53, , df=4, Sig.=.049

Older students are more likely to agree with this statement than students in both of the other age groupings. These differences are significant at the .049 level. These older students may be more perceptive of, sensitive to or paranoid about language issues, having likely encountered more racially charged situations and/or more language bias.

**Q20: It shouldn't matter whether you use Standard English or not as long as you get your point across.**

% Within Age

		AGE			Total
		18 to 24	25-34	35+	
q20a	strongly disagree to disagree	44.0%	55.6%	71.4%	54.3%
	neutral	6.0%	14.8%		6.7%
	agree to strongly agree	50.0%	29.6%	28.6%	39.0%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square =10.02, , df=4, Sig.=.040

Once again Q20 reveals differences across another demographic. Students tend to disagree with this statement as they get older and presumably wiser about the use and importance of language in American society. The youngest students agree or strongly agree at nearly twice the rate of each group of older students. These differences are significant at the .040 level.

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TABLE 10 (CONTINUED)

**Q25: If I went on a job interview, I would know how to change the way I talk to fit the situation.**  
% Within Age

		AGE			Total
		18 to 24	25-34	35+	
q25a	strongly disagree to disagree			11.1%	3.0%
	agree to strongly agree	100.0%	100.0%	88.9%	97.0%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square =8.36, , df=2, Sig.=.015

All of the students in the younger two age groups agree with this statement, and most of the older students do as well; however, 11% of the oldest group of students disagree, indicating that they lack the knowledge or the ability to codeswitch at will. These results suggest that most students in the study believe that they have that ability. These results are significant at the .015 level.

**Q33: Using Standard English in some situations and Black English (Ebonics) in others is the best way to handle language.** % Within Age

		AGE			Total
		18 to 24	25-34	35+	
q33a	strongly disagree to disagree	15.9%	11.1%	46.2%	22.7%
	neutral	20.5%	14.8%	11.5%	16.5%
	agree to strongly agree	63.6%	74.1%	42.3%	60.8%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square =11.95, , df=4, Sig.=.018

Q33 is another question that produced significant results across multiple demographic variables. Older students seem to be divided on the statement whereas the middle grouping tends to be in agreement with it. The majority of the youngest students also tend to agree, but 20.5% of them seem to be unsure. These differences are significant at the .018 level.

**Black English (Ebonics) is the language of my community, and I'm not giving it up no matter what anybody else thinks.** % Within Age

		AGE			Total
		18 to 24	25-34	35+	
q38a	strongly disagree to disagree	45.7%	48.1%	84.6%	56.6%
	neutral	13.0%	7.4%		8.1%
	agree to strongly agree	41.3%	44.4%	15.4%	35.4%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square =12.47, df=4, Sig.=.014

Again, the oldest group of students is substantially more likely than their younger counterparts to disagree with this statement, indicating once more a heightened awareness of the use and importance of language in the United States. These differences are significant at the .014 level.

TABLE 10 (CONTINUED)

**Q33: Using Standard English in some situations and Black English (Ebonics) in others is the best way to handle language.** % within FIRSTINFAM

		FIRSTINFAM		Total
		Yes	No	
q33a	strongly disagree to disagree	7.1%	29.0%	22.7%
	neutral	14.3%	17.4%	16.5%
	agree to strongly agree	78.6%	53.6%	60.8%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square =6.34, df=2, Sig.=.042

**Q33 engendered statistically significant responses within cross tabulations for three different demographics: age, gender, and first in family. Here those who are first in their families to go to college tend to agree with the statement substantially more than those who are not. This may due to stronger attachment to the family speech community.**

**Q36: Most white people have negative ideas about people who use Black English and think they're ignorant.** % within FIRSTINFAM

		FIRSTINFAM		Total
		Yes	No	
q36a	strongly disagree to disagree	10.7%	14.1%	13.1%
	neutral	28.6%	7.0%	13.1%
	agree to strongly agree	60.7%	78.9%	73.7%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square =8.16, df=2, Sig.=.017

**Those who are not the first in their family to attend college are more likely to agree with this statement, perhaps because they have encountered or heard more about the language biases that are prevalent in American society.**

TABLE 10 (CONTINUED)

Q22a: I don't mind writing Standard English, but speaking it is too much trouble.

		MAJOR					Total	
		1.00 Arts/Cmun/ Gen/None- Undcd	2.00 Business	3.00 Health	4.00 Social Service	5.00 Technical	1.00 Arts/Cmun/ Gen/None- Undcd	
q22a	1.00 strongly disagree to disagree	Number	12	18	30	13	11	84
		% within major	80.0%	85.7%	78.9%	68.4%	78.6%	78.5%
	2.00 neutral	Number	2	0	0	1	3	6
		% within major	13.3%	.0%	.0%	5.3%	21.4%	5.6%
	3.00 agree to strongly agree	Number	1	3	8	5	0	17
		% within major	6.7%	14.3%	21.1%	26.3%	.0%	15.9%
Total		Number	15	21	38	19	14	107
		% within major	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=16.55, df =8, sig. =.035

**The bulk of students disagree with this statement; however those majoring in the social services disagree less than other majors. This may be due to their working or wanting to work in speech communities where Black English is the norm. These differences are significant at the .035 level.**

TABLE 10 (CONTINUED)

**Q30a: It annoys me when my professors make me rewrite my papers just because I used some Black English/Ebonics.**

			MAJOR					Total
			1.00 Arts/Cmun/Gen/ None-Undcd	2.00 Business	3.00 Health	4.00 Social Service	5.00 Technical	1.00 Arts/Cmun /Gen/None -Undcd
q30a	1.00 strongly disagree to disagree	Number	9	15	30	12	8	74
		% within major	64.3%	71.4%	88.2%	75.0%	57.1%	74.7%
	2.00 neutral	Number	4	1	2	3	1	11
		% within major	28.6%	4.8%	5.9%	18.8%	7.1%	11.1%
	3.00 agree to strongly agree	Number	1	5	2	1	5	14
		% within major	7.1%	23.8%	5.9%	6.3%	35.7%	14.1%
Total		Number	14	21	34	16	14	99
		% within major	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=16.95, df =8, sig. =.031

The majority of students in the study disagree with the statement, implying that they are not annoyed by having to rewrite papers due to using Black English/Ebonics. However, the first and fifth groupings of majors disagree to a lesser extent, 64.3% and 57.1%, than do the other majors. Health related majors out pace all others in the percentage disagreeing with the statement, 88.2%.

### Findings of Student Interviews

Student interviews indicate that the feeling attached to the speaking is what is the determining factor regarding Standard English. If one speaks or uses SE in a manner that conveys that he/she feels superior to common people, the “acting white” factor becomes a consideration. The interviews without exception reveal that students recognize the utility of using SE in some situations, even if they don’t themselves act on this recognition consistently. The speech community to which they belong weighs heavily upon their decisions, attitudes, perceptions about and use of SE. One of the patterns that emerged from the student interviews is the sense that friends who do not attend college often

attempt to pull the students away from academic behavior and speech. This is consistent with the literature. The survey reveals that black males are more strident in their views. Standard English seems not to be tough enough for many inner city residents, particularly males. Two of the male interviewees said that more Black English speakers would approach SE with more warmth and vigor if people whom they “respect” or look up to used it. For example, one young man with gang affiliation said he and many others would speak SE if the gang leaders did so. The other suggested that rap artists who very often are knowledgeable about SE and can speak it choose not to, adopting instead, the tough street language and perpetuating the sense that it is not “cool” to use SE even along with Black English.

The study clearly shows that students are willing to code-switch or “code-mesh” in most cases, mixing SE with BE. However, many have had such little exposure to SE grammar that they simply do not possess the reserves of knowledge about SE to be able to switch at will, even when they would like. Nevertheless, as faculty members note, students who have awakened to the benefits that accrue to them for having communicative competence in SE as well as BE are usually willing to adjust to the conflicting demands and expectations between the home environment and the academic environment. Student interviews confirm and support the survey results. Excerpts from student interview transcriptions illuminate student positions on RQ4, RQ5, and finally RQ1.

***Research Question 4: What are the attitudes of urban community college students toward Ebonics/Black English?***

Overall, the students express the ambivalence toward Black English described by Ogbu (1999). They seem to be committed to it for social interactions with friends and family and for informal occasions. They echo the former student Rab's sense of connection with Black English. It is their language of comfort and ease. Students seem to use Black English in the three ways enumerated by Haskins and Butts: (1) as a defense against institutionalized racist behavior in Whites; (2) as an aspect of the black life style reflecting healthy group narcissism, cohesive bonds, and affection; and (3) as an avenue for the release of rage, fear, guilt, and other affects on an individual basis .

However, they also associate the language with a lack of education and knowledge. They do not like the term *Ebonics*; it seems to be filled with negative connotations. In the students' voices—

**NASHEED**, a 29 year old male, was born in Chicago, attended Chicago public elementary school except for the final two years. Although he has always been a bright student, he was sent away to a residential center for behavioral problems.

Tell me what the terms "Black English, Ebonics" mean to you?

I THINK THAT'S RACIST LANGUAGE, FOR REAL!! WHAT YOU CALL BLACK ENGLISH OR STANDARD ENGLISH, I DON'T CALL THIS LANGUAGE THAT I SPEAK STANDARD. I DON'T SEE NO DIFFERENCE FROM THE LANGUAGE THAT AFRICAN AMERICANS OR AFRO ASIATICS USE TO SPEAK. I MEAN THE WAY THAT WE COMMUNICATE WTH EACH OTHER IS THE WAY WE'VE BEEN TALKING SINCE BEFORE TIME. WE HAVE ALWAYS FOUND A WAY TO SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER. THE WAY THAT WE SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER IS THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE.

Do you see a difference, do you hear a difference, do you perceive a difference in the way Black people on this college campus, Black people in this community,



the way that they speak versus the way that your instructor speaks? Do you see a difference in those two?

THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT WE SPEAK TO COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER, TO UNDERSTAND SO WE CAN LEARN AMONGST EACH OTHER. THE TEACHER SPEAKS TO US IN THE WAY THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE TAUGHT. I MEAN, QUITE NATURALLY, IF YOU'RE TALKING TO AN ENGLISH TEACHER, HE OR SHE KNOWS THE PROPER WAY OF SPEAKING TO THE CLASS. WHAT WE DO IS WE TAKE IT IN AND IF SOMEBODY DON'T UNDERSTAND, WE INTERPRET IT INTO OUR OWN WAY SO THE OTHER PERSON CAN UNDERSTAND IT, OR BE ABLE TO GET BY AND BE ABLE TO DO IT.

What does the term Ebonics mean to you?

EBONICS MEAN THAT THAT'S ANOTHER NAME THAT SOMEBODY PUT ON THE WAY WE TALK. EBONICS IS LIKE I SAID IS LIKE ALMOST SEGREGATING OUR WHOLE LANGUAGE FROM THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. WHO SAYS THAT .....WHY CAN'T STANDARD ENGLISH BE EBONICS?

The researcher informs the student that the term *Ebonics* came from a Black

Psychologist working with several other Black Scholars, and he responds:

WELL, THAT'S THE FIRST I'VE HEARD OF IT; I JUST LEARNED SOMETHING AND I'M GONE TAKE THAT WITH ME....WELL, I STILL DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD LABEL US. PEOPLE BEEN LABELING US FOR A LONG TIME, SO, I MEAN, LABELING THE LANGUAGE THAT WE SPEAK AMONGST EACH OTHER, THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE. NO...NO...HE SHOULDN'T HAVE LABELED THE LANGUAGE THAT WE SPEAK AMONGST EACH OTHER.

You feel that his labeling the language ... did something negative?

YEAH, YOU SEE A BUNCH OF OTHER PEOPLE THAT SPEAK PROPER ENGLISH OR SPANISH, TALKIN ABOUT "YOU SPEAKIN THAT EBONICS," LIKE IT'S LIKE A DEGRADED LANGUAGE OR SOMETHING. LIKE THE LANGUAGE IS LOWER THAN THE LANGUAGE THAT THEY SPEAK IF THEY SPEAK PROPERLY, LIKE WE ARE IGNORANT OR UNCOOUTH. THAT WE ARE SO DUMB-FOUNDED THAT WE CAN'T COMMUNICATE WITH THEM ON THE SAME LEVEL.

How do you think teachers react to students who use Black English/ Ebonics?

SOME TEACHERS DON'T LOOK AT IT IN A NEGATIVE WAY. THEY'RE PROBABLY LIKE "THIS PERSON PROBABLY WASN'T TAUGHT THIS LANGUAGE OR THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO USE IT BETTER." THEY WOULD PROBABLY WORK WITH THEM SO THEY WOULD BE ABLE

TO GET FARTHER AHEAD. A TEACHER IS THERE TO TEACH; THEY'RE NOT THERE TO REALLY JUDGE. IN MY POINT OF VIEW, THEY WOULD BE THERE TO HELP SOMEBODY LEARN A BETTER WAY OF DOING THINGS THAN SITTING UP THERE LOOKING DOWN AT THEM.

SOME TEACHERS MIGHT LOOK DOWN AT THE PERSON AND SAY, "WELL, HE'S NEVER GONNA BE NOTHING." A LOT OF TEACHERS THAT I'VE BEEN AROUND SINCE I'VE BEEN HERE AT SCHOOL, THEY HAVE DONE NOTHING BUT HELP.

**TIFFANY**, a 19 year old female, attended Chicago Public Schools. She wants to major in broadcasting.

BLACK ENGLISH OR EBONICS IT'S LIKE WHEN A WHOLE BUNCH OF BLACK KIDS GET TOGETHER, MORE THAN LIKELY WE ARE GOING TO USE SLANG. BUT ME MYSELF, I KNOW WHEN TO CUT IT ON AND OFF. LIKE I CAN TALK EBONICS AMONG MY FRIENDS, LIKE, UH, "HEY, WHAT'S UP? WHO DAT? BUT WHEN I'M IN A JOB INTERVIEW, I SAY, [CHANGES TONE] HELLO. HOW'RE YOU DOING? MY NAME IS TIFFANY. UH, PLEASURE TO MEET YOU." YOU KNOW, IT'S LIKE YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO BALANCE YOURSELF AND THE WAY YOU TALK.

Okay. How do you think that teachers react to students who use Ebonics/Black English?

TO BE HONEST WITH YOU, I THINK THAT SOME TEACHERS LIKE FIND IT VERY IGNORANT FOR THE BLACK STUDENTS TO USE EBONICS KNOWING WHAT WE'VE GONE THROUGH IN OUR LIVES IN THE PAST, AND IT'S LIKE BLACK TEACHERS DON'T WANNA SEE STUDENTS USING EBONICS. THEY WANT TO SEE US RISE. THEY WANT TO SEE US BEING SUCCESSFUL. THEY WANNA SEE US BEING BLACK LEADERS IN THE FUTURE. I MEAN, YOU CAN'T BE A BLACK LEADER TALKIN' GHETTO. YOU HAVE TO HAVE SOME COMMON GROUND.

**JOHN P** is a 19 year old male who wants to major in automotive technology.

[BLACK ENGLISH/EBONICS] TO ME [IS] LIKE OUR OWN LITTLE LANGUAGE IN OUR COMMUNITY. IT'S HOW WE SPEAK. LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE HAVE THEIR OWN LANGUAGE.

**APPLE**, a 26 year old female, is a single parent of two daughters. She plans to major in child development or nursing.

[BLACK ENGLISH OR EBONICS IS] A WAY THAT BLACK PEOPLE HAVE COPEd TO TALK THAT DON'T HAVE THE ROLE MODEL OR THE PEOPLE IN THEIR LIVES TEACHING THEM HOW TO SPEAK CORRECT ENGLISH, STANDARD ENGLISH.

**JAMES** is a 21 year old male. In response to being asked to define the term

Black English/Ebonics:

I REALLY FEEL LIKE ENGLISH IS ENGLISH; I DON'T SEE NO DIFFERENCE.

So you don't notice a difference when people are speaking Black English in your community and [among] your friends versus Standard English?

WELL, I AIN'T GONE SAY I DON'T SEE NO DIFFERENCE IN IT, CAUSE IT IS A DIFFERENCE, BUT...BUT I DON'T SEE NOTHIN WRONG WIT BLACK ENGLISH AS FAR AS PROPER ENGLISH.

Ok. So...how would you define [it] if somebody asked you "well what is Black English," what would you say?

I WOULD JUST TELL EM, LIKE EVERYDAY ENGLISH...

**MICKEY**, a 60 YEAR OLD army veteran, is a grandfather who returned to school late in life and earned a GED. He feels his generational distance affords him a unique perspective. He has been an able user of SE and has enjoyed a measure of success in his English classes.

[BLACK ENGLISH/EBONICS] IS LIKE A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO ME BECAUSE OF MY GENERATIONAL GAP. EBONICS TO ME IS BLACK SLANG. I'VE GROWN TO KNOW WHAT IT MEANS, YOU KNOW, IT'S THE WAY THE YOUTHS SPEAK. BACK IN MY DAY, THEY DIDN'T CALL IT EBONICS, BUT WE HAD A CERTAIN SLANG, BUT IT WASN'T AS HARD CORE AND COMPLETE AS THE SLANG IS TODAY.

**JEREMIAH**, a 32 year old male, is a father of three. He is majoring in Heating & Air Conditioning.

EBONICS AND BLACK ENGLISH, UMM, BLACK ENGLISH LIKE WHEN YOU SPEAKIN SLANG OR SOMETHIN LIKE THAT.

***Research Question 5: What are the attitudes of urban community college students toward SE?***

This question addressed the “acting white”/trying to be white phenomenon, since this has been shown to be a deterrent to the use of Standard English for many African Americans.

**NASHEED**

Tell me, do you think that Black people who use Standard English are trying to be or act White?

I DON'T THINK THEY TRYIN TO BE WHITE, I MEAN, SOME OF THEM ARE, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING. LET'S SAY, FOR INSTANCE, YOU MISS JACKSON, I KNOW YOU SPEAK PROPER ENGLISH BECAUSE YOU'RE A ENGLISH TEACHER AND THAT'S JUST THE WAY YOU NORMALLY SPEAK. NOW, YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO BE WHITE.

LET'S SAY MY FRIEND, AND SHE SAYS WELL, “THE BLACK LANGUAGE IS EBONICS” AND ALL LIKE THIS, AND SHE SPEAKS TOTALLY LIKE SHE IS A WHITE GIRL, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN? SHE LIKE TALKS ABOUT SPEAKING EBONICS IS NOT RIGHT, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING, AND SPEAKING SLANG IS NOT RIGHT. SHE IS TOTALLY WRONG, THAT'S HER HERITAGE. THAT'S PEOPLE THAT HAVE BEEN SPEAKING LIKE THIS....THEY'VE BEEN SPEAKING CODE SINCE THEY WERE BACK THERE IN THE SLAVE FIELDS. THEY HAD TO SPEAK SOMETHING TO SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER.

THIS AIN'T EVEN OUR LANGUAGE. SO WHAT IS STANDARD LANGUAGE TO THE AFRICAN AND ASIATIC AMERICAN? BECAUSE THIS IS NOT OUR STANDARD LANGUAGE, OUR STANDARD LANGUAGE IS SOMETHING ELSE. THAT'S WHAT I THINK.

So you refer to Standard English as the “language of the land?”

YEAH, THIS THE LANGUAGE OF BEING OVER HERE. THAT'S HOW YOU HAVE TO GET BY. EVERYBODY GOTTA DO IT, BLACK, MEXICANS, PUERTO RICAN. YOU BETTER LEARN HOW TO SPEAK ENGLISH OR YOU AIN'T GONE GET NOTHING OVER HERE.

That's very true. So you make a distinction between people who speak...is that a mindset? Some people who speak Standard English and they're not trying to be White, and some who speak Standard English and they are trying to be White. Is that a mindset, how do you tell?

...I MYSELF, I WENT TO AN ALL WHITE SCHOOL, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THERE WAS TWO BLACK PEOPLE THERE, ME AND THIS OTHER GIRL. AT ONE TIME IN LIFE, AS TIME GOING ON, PEOPLE USED TO SAY THAT I SPEAK PROPER. WHEN I SAT BACK AND TRIED TO HEAR MYSELF, I SAID "OH NAW, THIS IS NOT FINNA HAPPEN," CAUSE I GO BACK TO MY AREA AND THEY STARTED TALKIN ABOUT ME. I HAD TO LEARN IT RIGHT QUICK. I SAID OK, 'THIS IS WHAT'S RIGHT FOR RIGHT NOW;'" THEN THEY SAID I EVEN HAD THE SLANG PROPER; I SAID, "THESE PEOPLE DOIN SOMETHING WRONG TO ME."

So... you went back into the "hood" and got teased for being proper even in your slang?

YEAH. I FELT BAD; I SAID "THEY DONE TOOK ALL MY BLACKNESS OUT OF ME." I SAID, "HOLD ON ONE SECOND, I GOT MY PEOPLE OVER HERE MAKING FUN OF ME CAUSE I'M SPEAKING PROPER SLANG." THEY WAS LIKE "YOU DON'T EVEN SOUND RIGHT SAYIN IT," I HAD TO PRACTICE ON IT FOR A WHILE BEFORE I COULD GET BACK IN THE SWING OF THINGS.

How do we get students then to switch? You are able to code switch. You think the Standard code is the White code?

IT'S FOR EUROPEANS, ON THE REAL; IT'S NOT OUR LANGUAGE.

Where does that perception come from that in the "hood" a person cannot speak Standard English in the Black community without being made fun of?

***YOU CAN SPEAK IT BUT TO AN EXTENT*** (EMPHASIS ADDED). PEOPLE KNOW YOU GO TO SCHOOL; THEY KNOW YOU GO THERE TO LEARN, BUT YOU USING THAT ON A DAILY BASIS IS NOT HAPPENING.

THAT'S HOW YOU HAVE TO BE IN LIFE, YOU CAN'T GO THROUGH LIFE TALKIN PROPERLY IN STANDARD ENGLISH AND THEN TRY TO COMMUNICATE WITH SOMEBODY THAT'S LIVING IN THE PROJECTS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE GONE BE A TEACHER OR SOMEBODY TRYING TO TEACH SOMEBODY.

Ok, so now if you say that you can't teach somebody if you're teaching someone who live in the projects...?

PROJECTS, LOW INCOME....

Any lower income area?

RIGHT, PEOPLE THAT'S JUST BEEN DEPRIVED OF LEARNING.

So how do you then, if you are a teacher, bring Standard English to people who are in lower economic groups, lower income areas, if Standard English is the school language? How do you bring that to those students if you don't speak it and they don't hear you speak it?

WELL, YOU GOTTA MAKE IT SOMETHING THAT WANT TO BE HEARD. A PERSON THAT SPEAKS WHAT YOU CALL EBONICS, IF THEY KNOW HOW TO SPEAK THAT, THEN THEY KNOW HOW TO SPEAK PROPER ENGLISH. THEY JUST USING THE WORDS AND IT MIGHT MEAN SOMETHING DIFFERENT. THEY JUST GOTTA LEARN HOW TO USE THEM IN THE PROPER CONTEXT OF WHAT YOU WOULD CALL STANDARD ENGLISH. IF YOU SIT BACK AND TAKE TIME TO TEACH THEM, THEY CAN LEARN THAT.

I MEAN IF YOU CAN LEARN A RAP SONG IN FIVE-TEN MINUTES, KEEP LISTENING TO IT, THEN ANYBODY CAN LEARN ENGLISH. ITS THREE YEAR OLD KIDS KNOW HOW TO SPEAK A WHOLE RAP SONG. IF THEY CAN LEARN THAT, THEY CAN LEARN ENGLISH. THEY GOTTA WANT TO LEARN ENGLISH.

Yes, so that's the key; they have to want to learn it. How do we get them to want to know it?

YOU CAN'T FORCE IT ON THEM, YOU HAVE TO TELL A PERSON, YOU KNOW, "THIS IS HOW YOU GET A JOB IN LIFE." YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE THIS LANGUAGE WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE. YOU'RE LEARNING THE LANGUAGE NOW SO THAT WHEN YOU GROW UP YOU CAN DO BETTER THINGS FOR YOURSELF, YOU CAN GET A BETTER JOB. YOU COULD TEACH YOUR KIDS HOW TO SPEAK IT, BE ABLE TO SPEAK TO EVERYBODY.

IF YOU KNOW EBONICS NOW, AND YOU LEARN STANDARD ENGLISH, YOU CAN GO FAR IN LIFE. I MEAN, YOU'RE LEARNING TWO DIFFERENT CULTURES. THIS IS YOUR HERITAGE LANGUAGE THAT THEY SPEAK, AND THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE LAND. YOU GOTTA LEARN HOW TO DO BOTH.

How do you think teachers can help students learn Standard English, whether the students have been taught it before or if the students are resisting it, how do you think teachers can enable a student to learn Standard English?

WELL, IF A STUDENT DOESN'T WANT TO LEARN, HE'S NOT GOING TO LEARN THAT'S FIRST THING. SECOND THING IS IF THE TEACHER IS COMING AT HIM NOT IN A NEGATIVE WAY, BUT AS MORE AS A FRIEND, THEN HE'S MORE RECEPTIVE TO SIT UP THERE AND ACCEPT THE HELP, AND BE MORE OPEN TO HEAR WHAT A PERSON WANTS TO SAY. THAT'S WITH ME, IF YOU SIT HERE AND TELL ME I'M SPEAKING IMPROPERLY AND I SHOULD SPEAK

LIKE...SOMETIMES I TALK AND PEOPLE BE LIKE "YOU SHOULD SAY IT LIKE THIS."

LIKE ICE CUBE SAY, "YOU WANT TO CHANGE MY GRAMMAR, YOU THINK I'M BETTER OFF IN THE SLAMMER." HE TALKIN ABOUT HOW WHITE AMERICA SIT UP THERE AND TRY TO CHANGE THE GRAMMAR OF THE WAY THAT WE TALK. THEY THINK THEY BETTER THAN US BECAUSE THEY SPEAK STANDARD ENGLISH AND WE SPEAK A LANGUAGE AMONGST OURSELVES.

So you think if teachers come to students in a friendly kind of a way instead of putting the language down...

SPEAK TO THEM IN A FRIENDLY WAY, NOT AS MUST DO, LIKE YOU MUST LEARN THIS LANGUAGE. LIKE THIS IS THE LANGUAGE; YOUR LANGUAGE IS BAD. THEY WILL BE MORE APT TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE. THAT'S LIKE FEEDING SOMEBODY SOMETHING THEY DON'T WANT TO KNOW. THAT'S WITH ANY HUMAN, IF YOU TRY TO TELL SOMEONE HOW TO DO SOMETHING, AND THEY DON'T WANT TO LISTEN, THEY NOT GONE WANT TO DO IT.

A PERSON TOLD ME THIS, "IT AIN'T WHAT YOU SAY; IT'S HOW YOU SAY IT." IF YOU WAS TO TELL SOMEBODY POLITELY "THIS RIGHT HERE WILL HELP YOU, AND I'M NOT TRYING TO PUT DOWN THE WAY YOU TALK, I TALK THE SAME WAY. SOMETIMES, YOU MIGHT NEED TO USE THIS LANGUAGE." IF YOU WERE TO TALK TO THEM LIKE THAT ON THAT LEVEL INSTEAD OF SAYING, "WELL, SLAPPPPP, LOOK THIS IS WHAT YOU GOT TO LEARN; IF YOU DON'T LEARN IT YOU GONE GET A 'F'."

THEN THE PERSON GONE BE LIKE "WELL THAT'S A PRICK TEACHER, AND I DON'T CARE IF I LEARN IT OR NOT." (LAUGHTER)...THAT'S HOW I FEEL.

### **TIFFANY**

[STANDARD ENGLISH IS] TALKING THE CORRECT WAY. HOW, I THINK, MAYBE EVERYBODY SHOULD DO IT. LIKE, OKAY, IF YOU'RE GOING TO TALK SLANG, OKAY; THAT'S OKAY, BUT I THINK STANDARD ENGLISH IS VERY IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY IF YOU WANT TO ATTEND COLLEGE AND HAVE A CAREER IN LIFE BECAUSE I DON'T THINK IF YOU'RE TALKING EBONICS, I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE THE HEAD CORPORATE OFFICE EMPLOYEE OR MANAGEMENT SAYING, "YO, WHAT UP?" YOU KNOW, I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE A LIMIT.

[Laughs] All right. Okay. So, do you think that black people who use Standard English are trying to be white or trying to act white?

NO. I THINK THAT BLACK PEOPLE THAT'S USING STANDARD ENGLISH, I THINK, THEY'RE TRYING TO BETTER THEIR EDUCATION AND GET A BETTER WAY OF UNDERSTANDING.

Okay, so tell me some more about that.

OKAY, LIKE WHERE I LIVE, THEY THINK THEY WHEN BLACK KIDS ARE TRYING TO TALK STANDARD ENGLISH, THEY THINK THAT IT'S TALKING WHITE AND THAT WE'RE UNCLE TOM AND YOU KNOW, TALKING LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO BE WHITE. BUT IT'S NOT THAT WE'RE TRYING TO BE WHITE, IT'S JUST THAT WE'RE TRYING TO GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO TALK THE CORRECT WAY AND NOT GET JUDGED BY THE WAY WE TALK, BUT GET JUDGED BY OUR CHARACTER AND NOT WHAT COMES OUT OF OUR MOUTH. I THINK THAT'S VERY, VERY IMPORTANT, YOU KNOW, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE TRYING TO, YOU KNOW, GO TO COLLEGE AND GET A JOB. SO, THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THAT.

Okay, so now where do you think this feeling, this attitude, that using Standard English is trying to be white comes from?

TO BE HONEST WITH YOU. SORRY, IF I'M WRONG, BUT I THINK THAT COMES FROM WHITE PEOPLE, LIKE BACK IN THE DAY. LIKE WHEN SOMEONE BLACK WAS TRYING TO GET AN EDUCATION, THEY DIDN'T WANT US TO GET OUR EDUCATION. IT'S LIKE THEY DIDN'T WANT US TO LEARN ANYTHING. SO WHEN A BLACK PERSON WAS TRYING TO GET THEIR EDUCATION BY GOING TO A WHITE SCHOOL, THEY WERE CONSIDERED A UNCLE TOM OR "YOU'RE TRYING TO BE WHITE; YOU'RE NOT GONNA BE LIKE US." BUT THAT'S NOT THE CASE. THE CASE WAS THAT ONE, I THINK, IN MY OPINION, ONE BLACK PERSON REFLECT 30,000 PEOPLE. IT'S LIKE IF ONE BLACK PERSON GOES TO COLLEGE, AND THAN ANOTHER BLACK PERSON SEES THAT, HE'S GONNA SAY, IF THEY CAN DO IT, I CAN DO IT ALSO. SO THAT'S LIKE A LOT OF BLACK PEOPLE TRYING TO GET BETTER EDUCATION. I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHERE IT COMES FROM, PEOPLE TRYING TO SAY THAT BLACK PEOPLE TRYING TO TALK WHITE IS TRYING TO BE WHITE, BUT I DON'T THINK SO. I JUST THINK THAT WE'RE TRYING TO GET THE SAME EDUCATION AS WHITE PEOPLE SO WE CAN LEARN THE SAME AMOUNT OF THINGS.

Alright, that's a good point. ...And do you think that carries over to this stage-- that "You're trying to be different from us"? So some people perceive that as, trying to be different means trying to be better.

EXACTLY.

Under what other circumstances do you use SE.



YOU MEAN BESIDES JOB INTERVIEWS?

Um Hmm.

YOU KNOW WHAT? I TRY TO USE STANDARD ENGLISH EVERYDAY. I HAD A SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASS WHEN I WAS A FRESHMAN AND MY TEACHER HE ALWAYS TAUGHT US IT'S OKAY TO USE EBONICS BUT TRY TO USE STANDARD ENGLISH EVERYDAY, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO THE GROCERY STORE, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE IN CHURCH, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE JUST HANGING WITH YOUR FRIENDS. CAUSE I KNOW, MYSELF, WHEN I HANG OUT WITH MY FRIENDS, INSTEAD OF SAYING, UH "WHAT'S UP, Y'ALL," I'LL SAY, "HEY, HOW ARE YOU GIRLS DOING?" AND THEY DON'T LIKE THAT. MY FRIENDS THEY HATE WHEN I SAY THAT. THEY BE, "WHY YOU TALKIN' LIKE THAT?" I'M LIKE, "YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M IN SCHOOL, I'M TRYING TO, YOU KNOW, DO THIS THE RIGHT WAY. DON'T KNOCK WHAT I'M DOING. DON'T DO THAT." [LAUGHTER]

### **APPLE**

And tell me what the term Standard English means?

STANDARD ENGLISH MEANS SPEAKING THE WORDS CORRECTLY AND CLEARLY.

Ok, so do you think that Black people who use Standard English are trying to be white or acting white?

NO. SOME PEOPLE WHO USE STANDARD ENGLISH?

Um hmm.

WELL, I THINK SOME PEOPLE TRY TO LEARN THE STANDARD ENGLISH, OR THEY WERE JUST BROUGHT UP USING STANDARD ENGLISH, AND IT'LL GET YOU FARTHER IN THE WORLD AS FAR AS EMPLOYMENT AND TRYIN TO GET AHEAD.

Are there any instances when you think that people who use it are trying to act white?

WELL, SOME PEOPLE THEY HAVE JUST LIKE MAYBE MOVED OUT OF THE COMMUNITY THAT THEY WERE IN. THEY WILL LEARN MAYBE THE STANDARD ENGLISH AND THEN WHEN THEY COME BACK AROUND YOU, IT'S LIKE THEY WHOLE PERSONA DONE CHANGED BECAUSE THEY WILL TRY TO CORRECT YOU. WOULD SPEAK IN EBONICS AT FIRST, SAY, THEN SPEAK IN STANDARD ENGLISH, SO IT'S SOMEWHAT SOMETIMES.

So if somebody ... moves out of the community and learns Standard English and comes back into the community and tries to teach others how to use Standard English, is that always because they are trying to act white? Or is it sometimes because they want the other people to use Standard English too. Is there a way to do that without umm...?

DISINTEGRATING? BECAUSE DAT'S WHAT IT WOULD BE. SOME PEOPLE I THINK DO IT TO MAKE YOU FEEL BAD, AND SOME PEOPLE WILL TRY TO HELP YOU TO TEACH YOU, BUT SOMETIMES YOU DON'T KNOW THAT OFF HAND.

And that's a good point.

SOME PEOPLE JUST BE BOLD WITH IT LIKE THAT'S NOT HOW YOU DO IT.

So you think that there's a way to do it?

RIGHT, WHEN YOU ARE APPROACHING SOMEONE IF THEY NOT SPEAKING THE CORRECT STANDARD ENGLISH, THEY SHOULD SAY, "WELL, THAT'S NOT HOW YOU SAY THAT. THIS IS HOW YOU SAY IT. THEY'RE JUST MAKIN YOU FEEL BAD LIKE, "OH, YOU ILLITERATE; YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU TALKIN ABOUT."

Ok, I want to go back to a couple of points we talked about. This notion of not being familiar, you said that people use Black English/Ebonics because they don't have role models or they haven't heard Standard English?

LIKE ME, I DIDN'T GROW UP AROUND STANDARD ENGLISH. I THINK MY WHOLE GENERATION OF FAMILY SPEAK BLACK EBONICS.... BUT, THAT'S WHAT I GREW UP AROUND. NOW THAT I'M IN MY 20'S AND STARTED COMING TO COLLEGE, I TRY TO USE STANDARD ENGLISH, ESPECIALLY WITH MY GIRLS.

How do you think this notion that speaking Standard English is trying to act or be white, where do you think that comes from?

IT'S HALF OF WHAT PEOPLE BE SAYIN. JUST WORD OF MOUTH, THAT'S JUST BEEN GOIN ON FOR GENERATIONS NOW.

**JAMES**

STANDARD ENGLISH THAT'S JUST SOMETHING, I WOULD SAY, SOMETHING JUST TO HELP US GO FORWARD IN MY LIFE, IN MY CAREER, JUST TO SHOW THE INTELLIGENT PART OF US.

And you think that Standard English shows intelligence?

SURE.

Doesn't Black English show intelligence?

YES.

What's the difference in the way the two show intelligence?

FOR INSTANCE LIKE WHEN WE SAY... STILL PUTTIN WORDS TOGETHER BUT STILL USIN NOUNS AND VERBS LIKE, USIN THEM IN DIFFERENT WAYS AND THEY STILL MEANIN THE SAME THING AS YOU DO USIN PROPER NOUNS OR ADJECTIVES. FOR INSTANCE, IF A VERB CAN DEMONSTRATE HOW YOU CAN...I DON'T KNOW... HOW YOU CAN UMM... ELABORATE AND EXPRESS YOUR INTELLIGENCE FOR CERTAIN PEOPLE.

Ok, so Standard English then, does that show intelligence or does that show more education? Because if... what does it show?

I SAY IT SHOWS MORE EDUCATION.

Ok, do you think that Black people who use Standard English are trying to be White or acting White?

NO, THEY ARE JUST TRYING TO IMPROVE THEIR STATUS.

... [W]hy do you think that some people think that they are trying to act White?

BECAUSE CERTAIN PEOPLE HAVE A CERTAIN MENTALITY TOWARD EBONICS BLACK ENGLISH AND TOWARD STANDARD ENGLISH. THEY GREW UP AROUND THIS ALL THEIR LIFE, SO THEY JUST SPEAK DIFFERENT. BUT IT NOT ALWAYS SHOULD BE THAT WAY BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE DIDN'T GO AS FAR IN SCHOOL AS OTHERS, AND SO THEY WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT.

So you think that Black people can speak Standard English without trying to act white because it's just showing that they're trying to improve their status?

RIGHT, JUST PLAYIN A ROLE.

What can be done to encourage more Black people in the inner city or in the Black community who are not exposed to Standard English to stop labeling people who speak Standard English as trying to be White?

WELL, UMM IF THEY APPLY THEY SELF MORE AND UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE, THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND, WELL, THEY UNDERSTAND IT'S A DIFFERENCE, BUT THEY NEED TO APPLY THEY SELF MORE. IT WILL HELP IF THEY GET AROUND SOME MORE...A DIFFERENT SURROUNDING. IF THEY GET AROUND A DIFFERENT SURROUNDING, THEY WILL SEE THAT SOMETIMES IT'S GOOD TO USE STANDARD ENGLISH.

**JOHN P** comments that he learned SE grammar formally once he entered college. He felt cheated.

...Tell me what does Standard English, what does that term mean to you?

THAT MEAN PROFESSIONAL... YOU HAVE TO USE STANDARD ENGLISH FOR OUR CAREERS, IN COLLEGE. STANDARD ENGLISH IS USED WHEN YOU'RE OUT ON BUSINESS, RATHER THAN BEIN' IN YOUR OWN LITTLE NEIGHBORHOOD.

So, do you think that Black people who use SE are trying to be white or acting white?

NO. BUT SOME WOULD AND SOME DON'T.

Give me some examples of when some would be acting white or trying to be white.

WHEN THEY JUST SAY TOO MUCH, AWWIGHT, WHEN THEY DON'T HAVE, LIKE, THEY JUST HAVE NOTHING BUT STANDARD ENGLISH AND THEY FEEL LIKE THEY'RE ALMIGHTY.

Okay. Okay. So, when they take SE and use it to make them feel that they're above everybody else?

RIGHT.

**JB** is a 20 year old male. He is majoring in business administration. He enjoys writing and writes well in SE, but speaks Black English mixed with Standard English, demonstrating what Young (2003) terms *code-meshing*.

Do you think that Black people who use Standard English are trying to be White or trying to act White?

NO, I'D SAY THAT THEY GOT THEIR MIND THING TOGETHER AND THEY LEARNING HOW TO BE VERSATILE.

When asked if he ever uses Standard English, JB responded that he does sometimes around his friends and gets teased about being proper and being white

And how do you handle that?

IT'S JUST A JOKE TO ME.

Why do you think that some Black people tease others when they use Standard English?

PROBABLY CAUSE THEY'RE NOT USED TO HEARING IT AS MUCH OR AS OFTEN CAUSE IN OUR COMMUNITY IT'S NOT HEARD.

Do you think that that stops some people from using Standard English who might use it?

WELL STANDARD ENGLISH IS SOMETHING THAT, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING, WHERE PEOPLE IN MY COMMUNITY, THEY ONLY USE IT IN SCHOOL. WHEN THEY OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL, THEY FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE SPEAKING EBONICS, NOT STANDARD ENGLISH. I FIND THEY COMMUNICATE BETTER WITH EBONICS THAN STANDARD ENGLISH.

Ok, when they're communicating to one another?

WELL, WITH ANYBODY, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN', IT SEEMS LIKE THEY CAN GET THEIR MESSAGE THROUGH, USING THE WORDS THEY'RE FAMILIAR WITH SO THAT THE MESSAGE GETS OUT AND EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS IT.

What about the writing part? What happened with the writing to get you to be able to write in Standard English? Did you learn about the verbs, or did you hear the Standard English from your teachers? On television?

WELL, THE WRITING PART WAS NEVER REALLY TOO MUCH OF A DIFFICULTY. BECAUSE WHEN I'M WRITING, MOST OF THE TIME IN ELEMENTARY IT WAS LIKE A HOME ASSIGNMENT, SO I HAD ENOUGH TIME TO TAKE MY TIME, TO ACTUALLY FOCUS ON WHAT I WAS WRITING. BUT WITH THE SPEAKING, THAT'S WHEN THE PROBLEM COMES SOMETIMES.

So I'm interested in finding out how you learned to write in Standard English.

TO ME, MY TEACHERS THEY TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING THAT I NEEDED TO KNOW ABOUT IT, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN, AND I AM A FAN OF WRITIN. SINCE I LEARNED TO ADAPT TO IT QUICK CAUSE I LOVE WRITIN, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN; THAT'S ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING MYSELF. SINCE I'M USED TO SPEAKING EBONICS, I MIGHT AS WELL WRITE SOMETHING EVERYBODY CAN UNDERSTAND. I FEEL THAT EVERYBODY SHOULD BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND ME IN STANDARD ENGLISH.

Do you think that there's a way that students can be convinced, like you are, that Standard English is something that makes you versatile? Using it and getting rid of this perception that it's trying to be White?

MOST SCHOOLS I THINK THAT THEY SHOULD LET THE KIDS EXPRESS THEMSELVES WITH EBONICS. THAT WAY THEY CAN TEACH THEM STANDARD ENGLISH. IF YOU GET THEM ACCUSTOMED TO DOING SOMETHING THAT THEY ARE USED TO, THEN TRY TO TEACH THEM SOMETHING NEW WHILE THEY'RE DOING SOMETHING OLD, THEY'LL GET USED TO IT, AND THAT'LL BECOME THE NEW THING, STANDARD ENGLISH, AND EBONICS'LL BE SOMETHING THEY USE EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.

MOST TEACHERS ARE AFRAID TO LET THE KIDS USE EBONICS. FROM MY EXPERIENCE IT IS A GREAT THING, EBONICS, I WOULDN'T TAKE IT AWAY. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN; SOME STUDENTS CAN EXPRESS THEMSELVES WAY BETTER USING EBONICS. I READ A LOT OF POETRY USING EBONICS AND EVERYTHING. I UNDERSTOOD THE MESSAGE VERY WELL. I GOT A GREAT MESSAGE THROUGH IT.

So you're saying that teachers are afraid to let the students use Ebonics?

THEY ARE SO ACCUSTOMED TO TRYING TO TEACH THEM EVERYTHING IN STANDARD ENGLISH WHEN THE KIDS ARE REJECTING IT. SO SINCE THEY'RE REJECTING IT, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LEARN ANYTHING UNLESS YOU FORCE THEM AND MOST KIDS DON'T LIKE TO BE FORCED TO DO ANYTHING.

... [H]ow do you think teachers can get student not to just reject Standard English?

LET THEM SPEAK EBONICS FIRST. THEN THEY WILL GET USED TO SPEAKING STANDARD, BECAUSE YOU LET THEM SPEAK EBONICS.

Let them speak Ebonics, then how do you introduce the Standard English to them?

WELL, THAT'S EASY. MOST OF THE TIME AT FIRST WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I HAD PROBLEMS WITH STANDARD ENGLISH. I USED TO SAY MY STUFF IN EBONICS, AND IF SOMEBODY WOULD SET ME TO THE SIDE AND HELP ME TRANSLATE IT INTO STANDARD ENGLISH.

So it's a translation, helping the students translate what they are trying to say. Translate what they said in Ebonics. Then the teachers need to early on help them translate it into Standard English?

THEY WILL LEARN FOR THEMSELVES. MOST OF THEIR SCHOOL WORK WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE USING STANDARD ENGLISH, BUT EVEN THOUGH THEY USING EBONICS, THEY'RE ABLE TO TRANSLATE, SO THEY CAN USE STANDARD ENGLISH.

So it's letting them use Ebonics to express themselves and then helping them learn to translate their thoughts into Standard English. You feel doing that early on when the child is young and doing it regularly, continuously through school will help the student.

AND IT WILL HELP THEM BE VERSATILE TOO AND THEY WILL LEARN ON THEIR OWN WHEN THEY'RE USING IT.

When they learn on their own, say with your friends, sometimes you would use it with your friends and they would tease you and they see you are a mature young man. A little child who ran into that, say, the child's big brother would say, "You're just trying to be proper and trying to be white." Then what happens?

WELL IT DEPENDS ON HOW PEOPLE REACT, I'M A DIFFERENT TYPE OF PERSON; I DON'T REACT; I REALLY DON'T CARE. OBVIOUSLY IT WOULD AFFECT THEM, ESPECIALLY A LITTLE BROTHER AND A BIGGER BROTHER, BECAUSE THEY'LL PROBABLY IDOLIZE THE BIG BROTHER, AND SO THEY WILL PROBABLY STOP USING IT BECAUSE THE BIGGER BROTHER SAYS THAT IT'S WHITE.

How do you think that people that are conscious of the beauty of Ebonics, and conscious of the necessity of Standard English, can convince those who reject Standard English not to tease children when they're trying to learn Standard English. What message could we give to those who say "you're just trying to be White, trying to be proper?"

FOR INSTANCE I GOT A LITTLE BROTHER, (HE WILL PROBABLY BE AROUND HERE IN A LITTLE BIT), HE USES A LOT OF EBONICS, AND HE DON'T LIKE USING STANDARD ENGLISH, BUT I TELL'M, "YOU AIN'T GONE GO NOWHERE USING EBONICS, THE WORLD AIN'T ACCUSTOMED TO EBONICS." I TELL HIM HE HAVE TO EVENTUALLY USE STANDARD ENGLISH, SO THAT HE CAN MOVE UP THE CORPORATE LADDER. ONCE THAT GET IN THEIR HEAD I GUESS THEY'LL LEARN IT.

I guess that's what we have to keep reminding them, and that's that they have to be versatile.

I KEEP TELLING THEM, I'M NOT TRYING TO TAKE AWAY EBONICS FROM THEM, I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP THEM LEARN SOMETHING NEW. I ASKED AROUND A COUPLE OF FRIENDS THAT KNOW EBONICS, SPANISH, AND ENGLISH, AND THEY ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE REAL WELL BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE UNDERSTANDING OF ALL SIDES.

In closing, JB adds:

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY IF TEACHERS GIVE IT A CHANCE TO LET STUDENT EXPRESS OURSELVES THROUGH EBONICS, THEN THEY

WILL PROBABLY HAVE BETTER STUDENTS AND EVERYTHING CAUSE THE STUDENTS WILL FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE COMING TO SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY WILL BE ABLE TO EXPRESS THESELVES. AT THE SAME TIME, YOU'RE HELPING THEM TRANSLATE, SO THEY WON'T REJECT THE HELP BECAUSE YOU ARE HELPING THEM, TRYING TO BETTER THEM.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN I WAS TRANSLATING MY STUFF FROM EBONICS INTO STANDARD ENGLISH, IF I DIDN'T PUT IT DOWN IN EBONICS FIRST, I PROBABLY WOULDN'T DO IT AT ALL.

That's a good point, and I do believe that.

I PROBABLY WOULD RESIST IT IF I COULD, LIKE GETTING IT IN STANDARD ENGLISH WAS TOO DIFFICULT, SO I HAD TO DO IT IN EBONICS FIRST, AND THEN SOMEONE COULD COMMENT, "LIKE, THIS IS ALRIGHT, BUT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU WRITE IT THIS WAY."

I ACCEPTED IT BECAUSE THEY CAME IN A HUMBLE WAY, INSTEAD OF MOST OF THE TIME SAYING "THIS IS NOT RIGHT, YOU CAN'T DO THIS." YOU TAKE IT AS IF THEY'RE REJECTING YOUR THOUGHTS. MOST KIDS TAKE IT PERSONALLY.

Now that's an excellent point, that most students would take it personally as if you are rejecting their thoughts, not just the language. You said that the teachers should present it in a humble way, and by that you mean....

FOR INSTANCE, EVERYBODY CAN'T SPEAK STANDARD ENGLISH, SO WHY TRY TO FORCE THEM TO DO IT NOW. SINCE THEY CAN'T DO IT, JUST LET THEM EXPRESS THEIRSELVES THE WAY THEY ARE ACCUSTOMED TO AND THEN TEACH 'EM HOW TO DO IT. YOU CAN'T JUST COME UP TO A PERSON THAT SPEAKS ENGLISH AND START SPEAKING SPANISH TO THEM AND EXPECT THEM TO UNDERSTAND IT. SO YOU HAVE TO FIRST GET TO THEIR LEVEL AND THEN THEY'LL COME UP.

### **MICKEY**

And so in your generation, did you find that most of your friends could speak the King's English as you say?

WE COULD SPEAK THE KING'S LANGUAGE, BUT WE ALSO CUSSED A LOT. IF YOU WANT TO CALL PROFANITY EBONICS, THEN ... YOU KNOW...

Ok, [laughter] but most of your friends could speak, we call it Standard English. Tell me what does the term Standard English mean?



IT WAS THE WAY EVERYONE TALKED ON RADIO AND TV...MOST OF MY FRIENDS WE ALL GREW UP FROM GRADE SCHOOL AT THAT TIME, SO WE WERE BORN HERE AND WE WERE EDUCATED HERE, SO THAT'S HOW WE WERE TAUGHT. REGULAR KING'S ENGLISH.

All right, so now, are you familiar with the term that you hear sometimes that "Black people who use Standard English are trying to be white, or acting white"? What do you think about that?

WE COULD USE THE ENGLISH, BUT WE COULDN'T PRONOUNCE IT TOO PROPERLY. THE MORE PROPERLY WE SPOKE IT, THEN WE WOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH TRYING TO BE SOMETHIN OTHER THAN BEIN BLACK.

Ok, all right, so it was more the way you pronounce the words?

PRONUNCIATION, YOU KNOW, IF WE PRONOUNCED IT, OR THE ENUNCIATION WAS TOO BOLD AND THE WAY IT... YOU KNOW... "OH YOU TRYIN TO BE WHITE," BUT WE JUST FLOATED THROUGH IT; IT WAS OK.

Mickey talks about his experiences with SE in the workplace as he observes younger African Americans who don't use SE.

And tell me, do you witness the younger generation coming to the job and not using Standard English?

I BECOME EMBARRASSED FOR THEM BECAUSE, I KNOW THAT IN THE WORLD THAT WE LIVE IN TODAY, EBONICS AND THE HIP HOP SLANG WHAT THEY GOT, IT'S ONLY TO BE USED IN OUR COMMUNITY. NO ONE ELSE ACCEPTS THAT. AND NOW WE'RE TALKIN ABOUT OUR PEOPLE, THE BLACK PEOPLE, SPEAKING WHITE. I SEE A REVERSAL OF THAT, THERE'S SOME YOUNG WHITE MEN AND WOMEN ARE TRYING TO SPEAK HIP HOP, BLACK, AND IT'S NOT ACCEPTED. IF YOU GONNA WORK IN A RADIO STATION; OK. IF YOU'RE GONNA BE AN ENTREPRENEUR, OK. IF YOU'RE GOIN TO GO TO CORPORATE AMERICA IN ANY FORM, YOU GONE HAVE TO SPEAK KING JAMES.

Do you think that your familiarity with Standard English gave you an advantage when you came to class?

YEAH, MY WORK EXPERIENCES GAVE ME A BIG ADVANTAGE, BECAUSE EVEN TODAY, I HAVE FRIENDS WHO WORK IN FACTORIES ALL THE TIME, WORKED GOOD WITH THEY HANDS, MADE A GOOD LIVIN. WE DON'T TALK THE SAME WAY, I COULD BE TALKIN AND THEY WOULD AUTOMATICALLY THINK THAT I'M GOIN OVER THEY HEAD, AND I'M THINKIN THAT I'M BEIN TOO LOW. BECAUSE WHEN

I TALK WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE ON A STRAIGHT LEVEL WITH THE KING'S ENGLISH AND STUFF, I FEEL INFERIOR TO THEM. YOU KNOW, BECAUSE I FIGURE THAT THEY EDUCATED, YOU KNOW. SO I'M LIKE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE, WITH THOSE PEOPLE I FEEL LIKE I GOTTA DO THE BEST I CAN TO BE PART OF.

THEN WHEN I'M WITH THE OTHER GUYS THAT I GREW UP WITH THAT WORKED IN FACTORIES AND STUFF, I GOTTA DROP DOWN A LITTLE BIT. SEE I NOTICE THAT IF I'M SPEAKING... IF I'M SOMEWHERE WHERE PEOPLE WHO I PERCEIVE ARE INTELLIGENT, I WON'T USE THOSE EBONIC WORDS. I'M AUTOMATICALLY ON THE DEFENSE. EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE THEY'LL SLIP THOUGH.

So you were put into a situation where it was expected that you use Standard English?

IT WAS DEMANDED. THE MILITARY IS NOT A... YOU GONE DO IT; YOU DIDN'T HAVE NO CHOICE.

And now this is the thing, how do you think, given your experience and your observation, I'm going to ask you two questions, let's finish with the teachers first. How do you think that teachers can better help convince students to learn Standard English given what you know about the way that it's needed in the work place, how do you think teachers can better equip, and prepare them and convince them that it's in their best interests to learn Standard English?

I HAVE AN EASY ANSWER FOR THAT: I THINK THE TEACHER SHOULD INSIST ON THE STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE, TO SPEAK CORRECT ENGLISH, THEY SHOULD NOT ALLOW THAT TYPE OF CONVERSATION TO GO ON IN THE HALLS OF EDUCATION.

Ok, even in elementary school? At any level?

THAT'S RIGHT, AS A BLACK PEOPLE WE SEEM TO SEPARATE FROM SOCIETY AND HAVE OUR OWN LITTLE THING IN CERTAIN AREAS. BUT IN THE AREAS WHICH WOULD HELP OUR PEOPLE THE MOST, WE CAN'T COME TOGETHER. WE CAN COME TOGETHER TALKIN CRAZY, BUT WE CANT COME TOGETHER FEEDING THE POOR AND EDUCATING THE CHILDREN AND STAYING OUT OF JAIL, GETTING THE DRUGS OFF THE STREET.

YOU KNOW, I'M AFRAID OF YOUNG BLACK MEN AND WOMEN WHO TALK TOO CRAZY, AND I'M NOT THE FEARFUL TYPE, BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN THEIR MIND. I DO THINK THAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD HAVE... YOU KNOW, MAYBE I'M OUT OF TOUCH BECAUSE I COME FROM THE OLD SCHOOL..., BUT WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL..., WE JUST COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING THAT CAME TO OUR MIND; AND IF WE DID, WE GOT IN TROUBLE FOR IT.

How do you think it came to be that students could go through 12 years of school and not know basic Standard English grammar?

I HAVE A OBSERVATION OR OPINION ON THAT. I BELIEVE THAT IN 1964 WHEN THE CIVIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT WAS APPROVED, IT DID A LOT OF GOOD FOR MY PEOPLE, BUT IT ALSO DID A LOT OF BAD. I THINK THAT, ITS LIKE, ONE DAY ALL THE ALCOHOLICS ON THE STREET STARTED DRAWING A CHECK BECAUSE THEY HAD TO BE TREATED JUST LIKE ANYBODY ELSE. ONE DAY IT BECAME WRONG TO WHIP YOUR CHILDREN, AND ALL THIS SEEMS TO HAVE SPUN FROM THE BLACK STRUGGLE TO BE FREE. IT MADE LIFE TOO LIBERAL. IT TOOK MORE RESTRICTIONS OFF, SO SOCIETY IN ITSELF BECAME TOO LIBERAL, YOU KNOW. THEY USED THE CIVIL RIGHTS LAW TO BECOME THAT WAY.

... SO PEOPLE JUST PUT THEIR OWN SPIN ON THINGS. SOCIETY HAS JUMPED ON THE BLACK MAN SO HARD--AND I'M NOT MAKIN EXCUSES BECAUSE I WAS PART OF THE PROBLEM AT ONE TIME-- SOCIETY HAS JUMPED ON THE BLACK MAN SO HARD THAT IT DESTROYED THE UNITY OF THE FAMILY, THE FAMILY STRUCTURE.

MY MOTHER WENT TO SCHOOL THREE YEARS OF HER LIFE, AND MY FATHER HAD A YEAR IN COLLEGE, BUT MY FATHER WAS AN ALCOHOLIC. MY MOTHER STAYED HOME AND TAUGHT ME HOW TO READ AND WRITE, HELPING ME DO MY HOMEWORK.

So do you think that part of it is that parents in the older generations put more emphasis on education?

THEY PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON FAMILY. TODAY'S FAMILY... HAVE CHILDREN HEADED BY A SINGLE WOMAN. THE SINGLE WOMAN NOT ONLY HEADS THE FAMILY, BUT SHE HAS TO WORK. THERE'S NOBODY AT HOME TO TEACH THE CHILDREN.

WHEN I GREW UP, ALTHOUGH MY MOTHER AND FATHER WORKED, THE MOST OF THE FAMILIES THE MOTHER WAS AT HOME. THE MEN WENT OUT AND WORKED AND TOOK CARE OF THE FAMILY. BACK IN, WHEWW, LET ME GET THE YEAR RIGHT... I CAME OUT THE SERVICE IN 1970, SO IT WAS THE EARLY 70'S ...THE CTA ALL BUS DRIVERS WERE MEN. THIS IS WHERE THE CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS COME IN AT... WOMEN GOT TO DRIVE THESE BUSES TOO OR DISCRIMINATION LAWSUITS WAS GOIN TAKE A PART.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PAID CTA, IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, IF MY KNOWLEDGE [SERVES ME], PAID CTA \$1,500 FOR EVERY FEMALE THEY HIRED AND SUBSIDIZED THEIR SALARY SO [AS] TO GET FEMALES INTO DRIVING THE BUSES SO THAT THEY CAN COME INTO COMPLIANCE WITH THE CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS. AND BECAUSE OF THAT, THIS IS KINDA FUNNY, BUT I KNEW SOME

WOMEN WHO WENT TO DRIVE A BUS, WHO WERE HAPPILY MARRIED, AND AFTER A YEAR OF DRIVING A BUS DIVORCED THEIR HUSBAND CAUSE THEY DIDN'T NEED HIM NO MO.

...[T]hen how does that translate to what has happened in education for Black people since that time?

BECAUSE THE BLACK FAMILY REALLY STARTED DISINTEGRATING IN THE LATE 60'S AND EARLY 70'S AND WITHOUT SOMEONE ...SEE I HAD TO DO MY HOMEWORK BEFO I WENT OUTSIDE AND PLAYED. ON SUNDAY I HAD TO GO TO CHURCH. THERE WAS STRUCTURE IN MY HOUSE. TODAY'S CHILDREN, AND MY GRANDCHILDREN--I CONSTANTLY PLEAD WITH MY DAUGHTER ABOUT THEM--THEY HAVE TO HAVE STRUCTURE; YOU CAN'T JUST LET CHILDREN OUT, YOU KNOW.

... THERE IS NO SUCH THANG AS YOU HAVE NO HOMEWORK. I GO TO COLLEGE NOW, I CAN'T GO HOME AND TELL MYSELF I DON'T HAVE NO HOMEWORK. THERE IS ALWAYS A BOOK TO READ OR SOMETHIN TO STUDY THAT YOU'LL LEARN, EVEN IF THE TEACHER DID NOT GIVE YOU A SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT.

So you're saying that as a result of the changes in the family structure, particularly in Black families, that there was nobody home to teach the children, and so once they went to school then what happens to them? There is no one pushing the importance of education, no one helping them with their homework?

RIGHT. CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL IN TODAY'S SOCIETY, THE PARENTS SEEM LIKE TO ME, HAVE ENTRUSTED ALL OF THE GROWTH OF THIS CHILD TO THE EDUCATOR. THAT IS NOT THE EDUCATOR'S JOB; IT'S THE EDUCATORS JOB TO EDUCATE THE CHILDREN TRUE ENOUGH, BUT THEY'RE NOT TO BE DA MOMMA, AND DA FATHER AND THE WHOLE THANG. YOU GOT PRE-SCHOOL; YOU GOT SCHOOL; YOU GOT AFTER SCHOOL. I MEAN WHEN DOES THE PARENT TEACH THE CHILD? REINFORCING [WITH] THE CHILD WHAT THE TEACHER HAS GIVEN THE CHILD. SEE I LEARNED BECAUSE MY MOTHER INSISTED THAT I LEARN WHAT THE TEACHER SENT HOME.

**LISA**

So tell me what does the term Standard English mean to you?

CORRECT.

...Now where do you think the notion that speaking Standard English is trying to act or be white, where do you think that comes from?

FROM BLACK PEOPLE, BECAUSE I BELIEVE LIKE FOR INSTANCE IF YOU WASN'T GOIN TO SCHOOL AND YOU SEE SOMEBODY GOIN TO SCHOOL, IT'S BECAUSE THEY LEARNIN. WHEN YOU OUT IN THE STREETS, YOU NOT LEARNIN ANYTHING. SO THAT'S ALL YOU KNOW IS EBONICS, SO YOU'LL TRY TO TALK ABOUT THE NEXT PERSON THAT TRY TO DO SOMETHIN WIT THEY SELF.

### **JEREMIAH**

STANDARD ENGLISH IS LIKE THE PROPER WAY TO SPEAK.

Ok, so when you say that Standard English is like the proper way to speak... do you think that when Black people speak Standard English that they're trying to be White?

NO.

What do you think when you hear Black people speak Standard English?

UMM, BASICALLY THEY FURTHERED THEIR EDUCATION AND LEARNED HOW TO SPEAK PROPER ENGLISH THE RIGHT WAY INSTEAD OF SLANG.

So you're saying that when Black people are speaking Standard English, it means that they've gotten an education and they're trying to do better?

YES, BECAUSE WHEN YOU GO AROUND HERE IN THE REAL WORLD FOR A JOB, YOU CAN'T USE SLANG WHEN THEY ASK YOU QUESTIONS. YOU BETTER LET THEM KNOW "I GOT INTELLIGENCE."

....You said that in elementary and high school, your teachers did introduce you to Standard English, the mechanics, and grammar. Yet when you came to college you still were writing without using the Standard English grammar and all, so what do you think interferes in students getting and using the correct SE grammar if it's been introduced to them early on?

I SAY THE NUMBER ONE THING IS PEER PRESSURE.

Ok, now talk to me about that; explain to me what that means.

PEER PRESSURE MEANS THEY MIGHT KNOW THE CORRECT WAY OF SPEAKING AND DON'T WANT TO DO IT BECAUSE THEY BE CALLED A NERD OR SMART OR PICKED ON. SO THEY TRY TO CHOOSE NOT TO, THEY TRY TO FIT IN WITH THE OTHER CROWD.

YOU KNOW, WHICH THEY REALLY FAIL TO REALIZE BY THEM BEIN YOUNG, IT'S GONE AFFECT THEM IN LIFE. BECAUSE BY THEM SLACKIN OFF, YOU CONTINUE TO SLACK, THEN YOU GET WEAK IN

THAT SUBJECT. SO WHEN YOU START BACK ON THAT SUBJECT, YOU GOTTA BUILD IT BACK UP.

Why do you think that in our community, students are picked on for being smart or using proper English to speak, why do you think that is?

THE PEOPLE... I THINK THAT THEY PICK ON'EM WANT TO LEARN AND KNOW IT, BUT THEY DON'T TAKE TIME OUT TO LEARN, SO WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW, THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW. WHEN YOU DO KNOW, THEY WANT TO CALL YOU, "YOU THINK YOU SMART, YOU A NERD," BECAUSE YOU TOOK TIME OUT.

INSTEAD OF GOIN OUT TO PLAY ALL DAY, YOU TOOK MAYBE 30 MINUTES TO A HOUR WHEN YOU GOT OUT OF SCHOOL TO DO YOUR HOMEWORK AND STUDY. THAT'S THE WAY I LOOK AT IT. IT'S A LOT OF PEOPLES OUT HERE THAT REALLY DON'T KNOW, SO THEY TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW... THEY TALKIN LOUD AND AIN'T SAYIN NOTHIN.

That's interesting what you just said, that they want to know. The ones who pick on the others that they want to know, but they don't. Say, maybe they didn't get it or they didn't have it [taught to them], so they don't want other people to have it.

THEN THEY DON'T WANT TO BE LOOKED AT AS BEIN DUMB BY THEM RAISIN THEIR HANDS AND PEOPLE CALLIN THEM SLOW, SO THEY SIT THERE AND BE QUIET INSTEAD OF SPEAKIN OUT.

**MARIE** is a 38 year old married woman who is very frustrated and angry about the kind of language arts education she received prior to entering college. She says her husband corrects her English. She thinks Black English/Ebonics is synonymous with slang and that it is bad.

What does the term Standard English mean to you?

PROPER ENGLISH.

So do you think that it's better to speak proper English than Ebonics?

YES.

And what are some of the advantages?

I THINK IT'S JUST THE CORRECT OF DOING IT IN THAT THERE'S JOB OPPORTUNITY; IT'S THE BEST WAY.

Do you think that Black people who use Standard English are trying to be White or acting White?

NO.

Tell me about that, what you think about that?

I ALWAYS HEAR THAT, BUT I DON'T THINK THEY TRYING TO BE WHITE; I JUST THINK THEY TALK THE RIGHT WAY.

And where do you think that notion comes from?

BETTER SCHOOLS, BETTER EDUCATION, PARENTS WHO ARE MORE EDUCATED THAN OTHER PARENTS.

Why do you think that people say that?

I GUESS BECAUSE ALL THE AFRICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE JUST NOT TAUGHT THE RIGHT WAY. THAT'S THE ENVIRONMENT THAT THEY USED TO. WHEN THEY GO INTO A DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENT WHERE PEOPLE ARE TALKING THAT WAY, THEY THINK THAT PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO BE BETTER.

***Research Question 1: How do lower SES African American students at an urban community college manage the competing linguistic expectations of their home environment and the college environment?***

Many students cope with the conflicting linguistic expectations by choosing to code-switch. Most do so only when writing except if using Standard English is part of a class requirement. They speak Black English in the hallways and in nearly all circumstances except while conducting official, formal business. on campus. Some seek help in the Writing Center or in other academic support activities. They write and re-write until they get a passing grade or they fail and repeat English classes. They choose majors that allow them to hide or minimize exposure of their SE shortcomings. Sometimes, they drop out. Interview participants describe their experiences below.

**NASHEED**

So you go to school, you learn Standard English and you come back to your neighborhood, your environment, your community, why is it that your speaking cannot reflect that you've learned Standard English, another code to some extent?

I DON'T KNOW, THE ONLY THING I KNOW IS THAT WHEN I'M IN MY AREA AND I'M TALKING TO THE PEOPLE IN MY AREA...IT'S ONE WAY OF TALKING, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING. IT'S ONE WAY OF TALKING. IF YOU'RE TALKING TO PEOPLE MY AGE, YOU SPEAK ONE WAY. IF YOU'RE TALKING TO PEOPLE THAT'S OLDER, YOU KNOW OLDER PEOPLE, AND THEN YOU SPEAK PROPER ENGLISH TO THEM. THEY WANT TO SEE THAT YOU'VE DONE SOMETHING WITH YOURSELF, THAT YOU'RE NOT THIS GANGBANGER RUNNING AROUND THE HOOD.

Why can't you communicate to your age group that you've done something with yourself? Do they not want you to have done something with yourself?

OH, NO, THEY KNOW I GO TO COLLEGE; THEY KNOW I SPEAK PROPER ENGLISH. IF I'M DOING GOOD IN SCHOOL THEY KNOW DANG WELL--THEY AIN'T DUMB--THAT I KNOW HOW TO SPEAK PROPERLY, I JUST DON'T.

Ok, so this is the question.....

IT'S NOT THAT PEOPLE IN THE HOOD DON'T WANT YOU TO SPEAK PROPERLY, THAT'S NOT WHAT'S BEING DONE. IF EVERYBODY IN THE HOOD WAS SPEAKING PROPERLY, EVERYBODY WOULD SPEAK PROPERLY; IT WOULD BE THE COOL THING TO DO. SINCE IT AIN'T COOL, DON'T NOBODY DO IT.

(Laughter)...so how do we make it cooler... at least to speak it to the extent...

YOU'RE NOT GONE MAKE IT COOL. THIS IS OUR LANGUAGE, THIS IS US, WE'VE FOUND A WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND AIN'T NOBODY GONNA CHANGE THAT. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING, UNLESS YOU GOING BACK TO SLAVERY, AND EVEN THEN WE GONE FIND A WAY TO TALK TO ONE ANOTHER. UNLESS YOU MAKE IT ILLEGAL TO SPEAK THE WAY WE SPEAK, WE NOT GONE CHANGE IT. WE CAN HAVE PH.D'S BEHIND OUR NAME AND PEOPLE STILL GONE SPEAK THAT LANGUAGE. IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE.

**TIFFANY**

... [W]hat do you do now when you have to write a paper using Standard English?



WELL, FIRST WHAT I DO IS I WRITE A, UH, UH, WHAT YOU CALL THAT? NOT A PARAGRAPH PAPER, BUT, UH, BUT A, LIKE A, OUTLINE. I WRITE THAT FIRST. THEN I READ IT. AND THEN IF IT EVEN SOUNDS LIKE I'M, YOU KNOW, WRITING EBONICS, I CROSS THAT OUT AND THEN PUT WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO, YOU KNOW, WRITE.

Is it easier for you to write, to start...by writing Ebonics and then go back and correct it? Or is it.....Easier for you to just write whatever comes out?

YEAH. CAUSE IT'S LIKE WHEN I WRITE, IT'S LIKE RAP TO ME. IT'S LIKE RAPPERS AND SINGERS; IT'S LIKE THEY FREESTYLE. SO I TAKE THE FREESTYLE IN MY WRITING ALSO. LIKE, YOU KNOW, JUST WRITE DOWN WHATEVER COMES OUT OF YOUR HEAD, PUT IT ON PAPER. INSTEAD OF THINKING ABOUT IT, I JUST WRITE IT DOWN.

And then you go back?

YEAH, I GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING THAT WAY AND THEN CORRECT IT, LOOK OVER IT.

All right. So your thoughts flow easier?

UM, HMM. YEAH! YEAH!

(Laughter) So, just in closing, how do you think students who have had very little exposure to Standard English in their community and in their homes, how do you think they manage when they get here to college, and their teachers want them and expect them to use Standard English?

YOU KNOW, IT'S NOT EASY. I MEAN, DON'T GET ME WRONG, IT'S EASY TO LEARN STANDARD ENGLISH, BUT IT'S LIKE YOU LIVE TWO DIFFERENT LIFESTYLES, LIKE WHEN YOU COME HERE, YOU'RE EXPECTED TO BE THIS PERSON, BUT WHEN YOU'RE AT HOME OR AROUND YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS, YOU'RE EXPECTED TO BE ANOTHER PERSON. SO, I THINK THAT, YOU KNOW, IT'S GOOD TO COME HERE AND LEARN STANDARD ENGLISH AND SPEAKING WITH YOUR TEACHERS, BUT I DON'T SEE ANYTHING WRONG WITH SPEAKING WITH YOUR FRIENDS ALSO. LIKE MY FRIENDS LEARNED TO ACCEPT THE WAY I TALK BECAUSE THEY SEE THAT I'M IN COLLEGE. I'M THE ONLY ONE OUT OF ALL MY FRIENDS THAT'S ATTENDING COLLEGE RIGHT NOW. THE REST OF MY FRIENDS ARE EITHER NOT IN COLLEGE OR THEY HAVE JOBS. SO I GUESS IT ACTUALLY AWAKENED THEM TO UNDERSTAND AND KNOW THAT TIFFANY IS IN COLLEGE, SO SHE'S EXPECTED TO BE THIS PERSON.

Umm hmm. So, they don't see you as selling out your race?

AT FIRST THEY DID... I HAD A LONG TALK WITH THEM. I SAID, YOU KNOW, WELL, WE'RE EITHER GOING TO BE FRIENDS OR WE CAN'T BE FRIENDS BECAUSE MY GRANDMOTHER TAUGHT ME A FRIEND IS GOING TO LOVE YOU FOR YOU AND NOT WHAT YOU DO OR HOW YOU TALK OR HOW YOU DRESS. THEY'RE GOING TO LOVE YOU FOR YOU. AND MY FRIENDS LEARNED TO ACCEPT THAT. I TOLD THEM, "IF YOU CAN'T ACCEPT ME FOR ME, THEN MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T BE FRIENDS." AND I'M GLAD THEY WOKE UP IN TIME BECAUSE I WAS NOT GOING TO BE FRIENDS WITH THEM ANY MORE.

Okay, so do you think any of them have been inspired to go to college?

OH, MISS JACKSON. OKAY, LIKE MY ONE FRIEND, SHE, I HAVE INSPIRED HER TO ATTEND COLLEGE. ABOUT A WEEK AGO SHE ASKED ME ABOUT FINANCIAL AID. I SAID, "WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO? YOU TRYING TO GET BACK IN SCHOOL? SHE WAS LIKE, "YEAH." I SAID, "AH, THAT'S GOOD." SO IT'S LIKE BY ME LEARNING WHAT I'VE LEARNED HERE, IT'S LIKE I TAKE IT BACK TO WHERE I STAY AND THEN IT'S LIKE I'M TEACHING THEM SOMETHING NEW. IT'S LIKE I FEEL GOOD ABOUT THAT. IT'S LIKE WE'RE NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT BOYS OR GOING TO THE MALL. IT'S LIKE I'M ACTUALLY TEACHING THEM SOMETHING FROM COLLEGE, AND THAT FEELS SO GOOD CAUSE I DIDN'T DO THAT IN HIGH SCHOOL. PEOPLE WERE TEACHING ME STUFF; NOW I'M TEACHING THEM STUFF. (LAUGHTER) SO, YOU KNOW, I INSPIRE THEM TO ACTUALLY EVEN TALK STANDARD ENGLISH NOW ALSO.

### APPLE

And now when you have to write using Standard English here in school, you said that you write and then you re-write.

YES, RIGHT, IT'S LIKE I WRITE A PARAGRAPH AND THEN I'LL READ IT AND DEN MAYBE I'LL JUST HAVE TO DO THE WHOLE PARAGRAPH OVER BECAUSE OF HOW I WROTE IT DOWN... YEAH, I JUST WRITE.

And then you go back over it and read it. Do you read it out loud?

UM HMM. BUT MAJORITY OF THE TIME, I JUST READ IT TO MYSELF AND SEE THAT THE SENTENCES DON'T FLOW, SO I JUST RE-WRITE THE WHOLE PARAGRAPH SOMETIME.

... How do you think that your teachers react to students who use Ebonics or Black English? Either in speaking or in their writing, how do you think the teachers react?

UMM THAT REALLY DEPENDS ON THE TEACHER AND THE INDIVIDUAL I THINK. .. IT DEPENDS ON THE INDIVIDUAL

BECAUSE SOME STUDENTS MAY BE HERE JUST TO PASS THE CLASS, BUT SOME STUDENTS MAY BE HERE TO REALLY LEARN, TO GET FURTHER AHEAD IN LIFE. SO IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE STUDENT, THE INDIVIDUAL. THE TEACHERS MAY SEE THAT THEY REALLY DON'T CARE. THEY JUST TRYING TO PASS THE CLASS AND THAT'S IT. SOME TEACHERS WILL TRY TO HELP YOU IF YOU ASK FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE AND THEY SEE THAT YOU ARE TRYIN.

**JAMES**

Well how do you think your teachers react to students who use Black English or Ebonics?

UMM, I SAY SOMETIMES TEACHERS UNDERSTAND, BUT SOMETIMES, TEACHERS ALSO GET FED UP CAUSE THEY TEACHING AND STILL FEEL LIKE YOU'RE NOT SHOWING YOUR ATTENTIVENESS.

All right, sometimes they get fed up and what happens then?

THEY GRADE YOU ON HOW YOU APPLY YOURSELF.

And you said that sometimes teachers understand. When they understand, do they still insist that you switch to Standard English in your papers or that you make corrections and change them to Standard English, or do they let you use Black English?

THEY ASK THAT YOU SWITCH TO STANDARD ENGLISH.

The complete transcription of one student interview follows. This student articulates quite effectively the view of a person who has achieved critical consciousness and has decided to use Standard English without abandoning Black English and without looking down on those who speak it. He has assessed the social climate of the world in which he lives and of the speech communities in which he participates and has decided to change, to enlarge his "communicative repertoire," using the language form that best suits the situation. He has consciously worked to expand his communicative competence in SE while retaining his native language. He is comfortable in both speech communities and exhibits a pluralist mindset, in that he feels that Black English is as good as SE, but is

inappropriate in certain settings, and he himself has made the choice to gain a high level of communicative competence in SE based on knowledge of the ways language is used in American society. Gilyard (1991) asserts that pluralism differs from bidialectalism in terms of who makes the decision that code-switching is the thing to do. When an African American functions as Freire's subject, acting on his/her own behalf, based on a critical analysis of the situation, chooses to embrace SE as an expansion of his/her language repertoire, that is an example of a pluralist stance. This is in contrast to Gilyard's assessment of bidialectalism whereby the teacher or other decides for the student that code-switching is best. Ty represents the voices of many of the other students whom I have encountered during my tenure at the community college.

Ty is a 36 year-old male who is interested in business administration. He was born in Chicago and attended public schools here until he moved to Mineral Springs, Arkansas in 1982 at age 12.

Can you tell me about your high school and elementary school experience in your English classes? What was that like? What do you remember about your English/Language Arts classes?

NOT UNDERSTANDING ALL THE RULES THAT CAME WITH SE.

And why was that?

BECAUSE IT WASN'T TAUGHT IN MY HOUSEHOLD. THE STANDARD RULES OF ENGAGEMENT WITH ENGLISH. OUR DIALECT AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY JUST WAS DIFFERENT FROM SE.

When you were in elementary school and high school, if you can remember, what was taught to you? Did you learn the rules in elementary school or did you learn them in high school?

UH, I WOULD SAY NEITHER. I LEARNED THEM WHEN I GOT OUT INTO THE WORLD, WHEN I JOINED THE MILITARY AND STARTED TO TRAVEL. AND A LOT FROM TELEVISION ALSO, LISTENING TO THE DIALECT OF THE CHARACTERS ON TV.

Okay. And when you encountered the SE, did you try to speak it; did you try to use it once you found out about it, you tried it?

YES, I APPLIED IT TO MY EVERYDAY LIFE.

Okay. And did you run into any problems with that in your community?

YES. UH, PEOPLE THAT I GREW UP WITH OR SEPARATED FROM FOR SOME YEARS, ONCE I ENTERED THEIR LIVES AGAIN WOULD SAY, "YOU MUST HAVE BEEN AROUND A LOT OF WHITE FOLKS (LAUGHTER) CAUSE YOU DON'T TALK LIKE WE TALK." AND THINGS OF THAT NATURE.

And how did you respond to that?

WITH A SMILE, IT NEVER REALLY MADE ME MAD; IT JUST LET ME KNOW I WAS DOING THE RIGHT THING. (LAUGHTER) I WAS ON TO SOMETHING.

What is your response to them when they say that to you? How do you respond? Do they think you're not trying to be in the black community anymore? Do they think you're trying to be white? What do they think? How do they respond?

THEY AUTOMATICALLY KNOW I HAVE SOME SORT OF EDUCATION. AND THAT MAKES ME FEEL PROUD.

So you equate Standard English with education?

UM, HMM.

And what else do you ...if you were categorizing, dividing: Black English is this; Standard English is that?

BLACK ENGLISH IS JUST BLACK ENGLISH. IT'S A RHYTHM; IT'S RHYTHMATIC THE WAY WE SPEAK. UH, I WOULDN'T SO MUCH SAY SHORT-CUTTING. IT'S LIKE A CHANT THE WAY WE SPEAK. IT'S JUST DIFFERENT. IT'S NOT UPTIGHT. IT'S MORE (RESEARCHER ASKS, FLUID?). YES.

Um, hmm.

POETRY. IT GOES SO FAR BACK THE WAY WE SPEAK. HASN'T JUST STARTED. MY GRANDMOTHER, SOUTHERN, THE WAY THEY SPEAK. EVERYTHING IS SHORTER. THE WORDS ARE SHORTER.

And so, when you talk about the rhythm and the fluidity of BE, do you see that as being a good thing?

YES. IT GIVES US OUR OWN IDENTITY. SE, THE WAY I FEEL, IS NOT OUR LANGUAGE IN THE FIRST PLACE. (OKAY.) THIS IS OUR TAKE ON SOMEONE ELSE'S WAY OF SPEAKING.

So, SE is not our language in the first place you say. Then what benefit does it bring to you and to others in our community to speak SE?

UH, IN ORDER TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN THE SITUATION IN WHICH WE ARE IN; IN ORDER TO GET A JOB, A DECENT JOB, YOU CAN'T GO AND SIT IN FRONT OF THE INTERVIEWER AND SPEAK AS IF YOU'RE SPEAKING TO ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD. YOU KNOW, YOU WANT TO PROJECT THE SE BECAUSE IT'S GONNA, IN SOME KIND OF WAY, SHOW TO THE INTERVIEWER THAT YOU DO HAVE SOME EDUCATION. I THINK THEY'RE REALLY LOOKING AT THAT. SO IT'S BENEFICIAL FOR US IN THAT WAY.

How do you think that more people in our community could be convinced that being able to speak SE is beneficial to them?

MAYBE BY THE PERSON THAT'S TRYING TO CONVINCING 'EM UNDERSTANDING THEIR BACKGROUND, UH, MAKING US MAYBE FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE ABOUT LEARNING SE AND NOT SLIGHTING US ABOUT THE WAY WE SPEAK.

So the person who's trying to convince, for instance, the instructor or whomever it is trying to convince the students who speak Black English or nonstandard English, uh, to use SE, you say first of all, understanding the nonstandard English speaker's background and then not making them feel that that's less?

BECAUSE MISTAKES ARE GOING TO BE MADE. YEAH. THAT WOULD HELP A LOT.

So what would be the approach? Give me an example of an approach that you would recommend. Say, if you were trying to convince somebody, some of your buddies, to use SE, what approach would you take?

MY APPROACH THAT I TAKE WITH THEM I ALWAYS USE OUR BLACK ENTERTAINMENT AND I SAY, THIS PERSON SPEAKS THIS WAY ON HIS RECORD OR IN HIS MOVIE, BUT THERE IS NO WAY THIS PERSON WALKS INTO A BOARD MEETING, LET'S SAY A TARGET OR A WAL-MART, AND SITS WITH THE PEOPLE THAT'S SITTING AT THIS LONG TABLE AND SAYS, "YEAH, LIKE YOU DIG....." THAT IS NOT GONNA WORK. THEY HAVE TO BE ABLE TO PROJECT AND SPEAK CLEARLY SO EVERYONE AT THIS TABLE CAN UNDERSTAND THEM.

What do you? Some people in the black community will tease SE speakers and say, "Oh, you're trying to be white." And you think you're better than we are,

and things like that, so how do you respond to that? What do you think about that?

IT'S A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD. I MEAN AS A PEOPLE WE'VE ALWAYS PLAYED THE DOZENS WITH EACH OTHER—NO MATTER WHAT; WE'RE GONNA FIND SOMETHING TO JOKE EACH OTHER ABOUT. SO, IT'S A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD, UH. THOSE WHO ARE VERY SERIOUS ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE SAYING, I JUST BRUSH IT OFF. I REALLY DON'T PAY TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO EM. I MEAN EVERYONE DOESN'T WANT TO LEARN. YOU KNOW, EVERYONE DOESN'T WANT TO CHANGE OR LEARN SOMETHING NEW. I FEEL LIKE THAT'S JUST THEIR CHOICE.

Um, hmm. And the ones who don't want to learn SE, you say you feel like it's their choice. Why do you think that someone—and you're presenting to them—this is going to help you get a better job; this is going to communicate a level of education; this is going to help you--why do you think that someone then would still not want to learn or choose not to?

WELL, RIGHT OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD, I WOULD JUST HAVE TO SAY THAT IT'S DUE TO THEIR ENVIRONMENT. IF NO ONE IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT, INSIDE THEIR HOME, THEY'VE NEVER HEARD THIS OTHER THAN TELEVISION OR A WHITE PERSON THAT MAYBE OPPRESSES THEM, THEN THEY'RE GONNA RUN FROM IT. MAYBE IT'S GONNA TAKE THAT RIGHT SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THEIR SITUATION OR EVEN MAYBE HAVE COME FROM THEIR SITUATION TO GET THROUGH TO THEM, TO OPEN THEIR EYES AND MINDS TO SE.

So, you have found, for you, you said once you realized that SE was associated with education and once you realized the benefits of it, then you decided that you would learn it and you applied yourself to learning the rules of SE?

YEAH.

Then, for you, now in your home environment, is SE still not spoken in your environment now?

IT'S A MIXTURE.

Okay.

YOU KNOW, WE GO IN AND OUT. I MEAN, YOU KNOW, WHEN AT HOME WE CAN RELAX AND THE ROOTS OF THE NONSTANDARD ENGLISH WILL NEVER DISAPPEAR. (Um, Hmm.) BECAUSE WE'RE BLACK PEOPLE. BUT FOR SITUATIONS, THE RIGHT SITUATIONS, SE IS GOING TO BE SPOKEN. [What situations?] MY GRANDMOTHER'S NEVER GONNA CHANGE (LAUGHTER).

Why should she at this point in her life?

THAT'S RIGHT. SHE'S NOT GONE CHANGE. SHE'S GONE SPEAK THE WAY SHE SPEAKS, AND SHE'S NOT GONE APOLOGIZE FOR IT.

That's the way it is. My mother is not going to change and she's going to speak the way that she does, but one thing is that—how does your grandmother view the way that you speak?

SHE'S VERY PROUD. VERY VERY PROUD OF THE PERSON THAT I AM AND AM TRYING TO BECOME.

Um, hmm. That is the case. That's what happens. That even though they can't speak it, they're very proud that you can. And why do you think that is, that she's proud that you can even though she can't and doesn't want to, doesn't attempt to and will not change as you say, why is she proud of the way that you speak?

BECAUSE SHE UNDERSTANDS WHAT BEING ABLE TO MANEUVER IN THIS WORLD, SHE UNDERSTANDS WHAT IT TAKES. I GUESS IT'S NICE TO HAVE A GRAND SON WHO YOU CAN SAY, LISTEN, THIS PERSON IS ON THE PHONE AND TALK TO THIS PERSON FOR ME. YOU KNOW. SO THINGS CAN BE COMMUNICATED IN LESS DRAMA.

So that your grandmother seems to understand as do you that there's a certain power that comes with being able to speak the standard English?

UM, HMM. AS YOU KNOW, SOME OF THOSE WHO SPEAK SE WILL TRY TO BEAT YOU DOWN WITH THAT IF YOU, THEY CAN GET OVER ON YOU IF YOU DON'T, CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY'RE SAYING. NOT ALL, JUST SOME.

Now, you said that you're in music; somehow you're involved in music? Do you think that the music and the lyrics and the whole culture—are you involved with hip-hop music?

YES.

Rap music? (Yes) Do you think that has negatively impacted the ability or the willingness of masses of black people to use Standard English?

NO, NOT AT ALL. BECAUSE LIKE I STATED EARLIER AT LEAST—BALL PARK FIGURE—98 PERCENT OF YOUR RAPPERS ARE INTELLIGENT PEOPLE. (UM, HMM) IT'S SAD THAT THE EXPLOITATION OF, WHAT WE HAVE TO DO TO DO WHAT WE DO. IT'S JUST BEING EXPLOITED. THE SUBCULTURE OF OUR INNER CITIES AND RURAL, SOUTHERN BACKGROUNDS AND THINGS OF THAT NATURE. TAKE A LITTLE JOHN, WHO SCREAMS, "YAYEH...", BUT I HAVE HEARD HIM SPEAK EXACTLY THE WAY I AM SPEAKING



RIGHT NOW. EDUCATED, THE MAJORITY OF US ARE COLLEGE STUDENTS.

It's just...you do it to make the money?

IT'S ABOUT THE MONEY (LAUGHTER). I MEAN NOBODY WANTS TO LIVE DORMANT. THIS IS A CAPITALIST SOCIETY. IN WHICH WE LIVE IN. WE HAVE TO CAPITALIZE ON WHATEVER WE HAVE. I WASN'T BORN WITH THE SPOON. I JUST KNOW THERE ARE A BETTER WAY AND A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING, AND WE ALL WANT THAT.

That makes sense to me. Now you said something earlier when I asked you the question about how masses of black people could be convinced about the benefits of using SE. Suppose you and rappers that you mentioned, who know how to use SE, would communicate that: that we can do this [BE] in our music and we can do this [SE], but you need to learn SE too. Many people who buy the rap records and such, maybe they don't even know that these rap artists can speak SE. and are using SE. How do you think that rap artists could assist in getting this tool--and I call it a "spare tire"; I like to use that analogy--so that inner city blacks, masses of black people also have this spare tire. How can rap artists help in that effort so that more of our people have these options? Now, you have options because you can go, you can speak BE and you can speak SE. The rap artists that you mentioned who can speak BE and SE have the options that you have; you are not limited; you're not boxed in. So how do rappers help to communicate this to the masses?

HMM. I'LL SAY, HIP-HOP'S ROOTS WHEN IT FIRST STARTED WAS ABOUT EDUCATING AND ATTEMPTING TO OPEN THE MINDS OF OUR COMMUNITY. UH, THE MEDIA AND THE POWERS THAT BE, THE MACHINE, I WOULD SAY, THAT IS WHAT PRETTY MUCH ELIMINATED THAT FROM OUR CULTURE, FROM THE MAINSTREAM CULTURE. I MEAN IT STILL GOES ON IN THE UNDERGROUND, BUT THE MAINSTREAM PART OF IT, THE MEDIA PLAYS AN ENORMOUS ROLE IN DOWNPLAYING THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE PEOPLE WHO DO THIS TYPE OF MUSIC. USE WILL SMITH AS AN EXAMPLE. THIS CAT COULD HAVE WENT TO MIT. YOU KNOW, BUT HE OPTED TO DO HIP-HOP MUSIC. WE HAVE RUSSELL SIMMONS AND SEAN PUFFY COMBS—I MEAN THERE ARE SO MANY EXAMPLES OF VERY INTELLIGENT, AND ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS, MAY I ADD. THESE ARE ALL YOUNG BLACK MEN, AND THERE A LOT OF INTELLIGENT BLACK WOMEN: QUEEN LATIFAH, JADA, THE LIST IS VERY LONG.

I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WOULD TAKE TO GET TO THE MASSES BECAUSE WE CANNOT JUST PUT IT ON THE ENTERTAINMENT. MAYBE IF IT STARTED IN THE HOUSEHOLDS YOUNG, WITH YOUNG CHILDREN OR YOU KNOW IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. THAT WOULD BE THE BIGGEST PLUS, TO START WITH THE KIDS WHEN THEY'RE IN PRESCHOOL BY MAYBE FORMING SOME

TYPE OF CURRICULUM THAT THEY WOULD ENJOY TO START LEARNING THE SE, THE WAY TO START SPEAKING SE.

So, forming a curriculum that the young students would enjoy. Then what happens to them when they go home and they go back to their environment and people say, "You're trying to sound like you're white" to these young children.

I DON'T THINK IT WOULD STOP 'EM. I DON'T THINK IT WOULD STOP 'EM. WHEN CHILDREN ARE LEARNING SOMETHING BECAUSE MOST OF OUR CHILDREN TODAY, A LARGE NUMBER OF OUR CHILDREN TODAY THAT ARE GOING THROUGH THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IF THEY GO TO A DECENT SCHOOL WHERE IT'S JUST NOT A BLACK POPULATION, IF THERE ARE DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS OF CHILDREN THERE, THEY TEND TO PICK UP ON IT VERY EASILY AND USE IT. AND I DON'T EVEN THINK THEY REALIZE WHAT THEY'RE DOING. YOU KNOW. THEY PICK UP ON IT PRETTY EASILY.

You said if they go to a school with a mixed population, most of them though are locked into their neighborhood schools, so they have to go to schools where black people who are very often poor and then what can be done to help them because this is a perpetuating situation if there is no intervention to help them, then they come through that system and they're always in inner city schools. What do you think; what kind of intervention? Rap music has a powerful influence. That's why I'm asking you what rap artists might be able to do to reverse this because if the students hear BE all the time-- and there's nothing wrong with it, but they only have that as a tool and they don't have the other tool.

I'LL SAY THIS. IF RAP ARTISTS USED SE IN THEIR SONGS, (LAUGHTER) I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WOULD SOUND LIKE. I GUESS IT WOULD SOUND LIKE A WHITE IMITATING WHAT WE DO AND IT WOULD LOSE ALL OF ITS FLAVOR. BUT INSIDE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM; IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STAFF INSIDE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, STARTING FROM THE PRINCIPAL OR WHOEVER SETS THE CURRICULUM. IT STARTS RIGHT THERE. IT HAS TO BE MORE THAN JUST A PAYCHECK OR SHUFFLING THESE CHILDREN THROUGH. YOU HAVE TO BE MORE AGGRESSIVE WITH WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO; YOU CANNOT JUST SHUFFLE THE CHILDREN THROUGH. YOU HAVE TO MAKE IT INTERESTING FOR THEM. YOU HAVE TO GET THEIR ATTENTION.

So now, for instance, you watch basketball?

YES, MA'AM.

You see the NBA Cares and they're always talking about how the players go into the schools and talk to the kids about the importance of reading and doing things like that. Suppose the rap stars went into the schools.

AND THEY DO.

And they talked to the students about reading and about using SE as an alternative, using both so that the students would learn both and maybe the rap artists spoke to the students in SE. Maybe the rap artists came to the schools and spoke to the students in SE even though the raps just won't have the flavor, as you said; you just can't do the raps in SE. But if the rap artists came and spoke to the students in SE, do you think that would have some impact, that the students then would see that people like them, whom they admire, use SE? Do you think that would have some impact?

YES. IT WOULD AFFECT, I'M NOT GOING TO SAY IT WOULD AFFECT ALL THE STUDENTS, BUT I'M SURE THAT WOULD AFFECT THE MAJORITY OF THE STUDENTS, YES.

Okay. So Ty, I'm going to let that be your challenge.

OKAY.

To help that initiative. Because I'm taking it back to something you said: that people who have been through what they've been through, who have come the same way, who know and understand them and their environment can go and get them to embrace SE as beneficial.

YES.

Without putting them down, without making them feel deficient, without making them feel less, just simply inviting them and showing them a way they can use this tool as an alternative and give them some more options. So, I'm hoping that since you're in that music field, that you'll take that challenge.

I'LL TRY. I'LL TRY. I'LL DO MY BEST.

### Summary of Major Findings

- Students associate Black English or Ebonics with what is deemed the natural speech of Blacks. This is consistent with the literature (Smitherman 1978, 1999; Ogbu 1999).
- The notion that speaking SE means a person is trying to be white or "acting white" is part of the Black community's *habitus*, passed down from generation to generation. *Habitus* as defined by Bourdieu (1991) is that set of dispositions that

bend the consciousness of a group and its members in particular directions. These dispositions are thought to be class-based.

- For the students in this study, speaking Standard English does not necessarily mean a person is acting white or trying to be white. Students have certain criteria for judging whether a Standard English speaking African American is “acting white” or trying to be white:

A Eurocentric racial attitude as described by Harpalani (2005). In sum, this attitude is marked by the impression that everything White is better than anything Black.

A superiority attitude that conveys the perception that one thinks he or she is better than others by virtue of his or her ability to speak SE and/or by virtue of his or her education.

A perceivable distancing from the Black community and from Black culture.

Speaking ultra “proper”-- with White cadence, pronunciation, and texture.

- Students want and need to be respected and to have whatever way they talk or write respected when they enter class. BE speakers are very sensitive about their language. Because they know that theirs is not a prestige dialect, they often act from either shame or defiance. Males are more apt to be defiant and females are more apt to be ashamed. In either case, they are open to being guided toward greater proficiency with SE when the teacher shows that as an option which will help the student’s life chances and--this is critical--presents in an “humble” or “friendly” or “kind” way that demonstrates caring and not superiority.
- Students respond well to high expectations and standards if they perceive them to be fair and equitable.

- Students value personalized feedback from their instructors and want teachers to meet with them outside of class.
- If the above conditions are met, the race of the teacher does not seem to matter in terms of effectiveness in teaching students SE.
- White instructors must wrestle and conquer student pre-conceptions about racism and superiority; Black instructors must wrestle and conquer student pre-conceptions about classism, elitism, and superiority as both sets of educators attempt to lead students toward greater communicative competence in SE.
- The predominately Black faculty members are, as a whole, decidedly more adamant in their stances on student use of Standard English than the predominately White faculty in Mohamed's study. While both faculties profess respect for the students' home language, the faculty in the current study press the issue of the need for SE with more insistence, and when they are able to convince the students that using SE is in the students' best interest, these instructors seem to garner cooperation on that basis, along with reducing the grades of students who do not adhere to SE conventions.
- Students believe that eliminating slang from their writing and speech means that they are using SE because many equate slang with BE. Therefore, students can benefit from an orientation on the definition and characteristics of BE.
- Most BE- speaking students enter college without a clear, thorough understanding of SE use of the most basic verbs of English: *be*, *have*, and *do*. They are totally unfamiliar with the term *conjugation*. The findings and the research indicate that SE grammar and syntax are more important to college instructors than they have

been to high school instructors. Students in developmental classes often feel angry and cheated as they come to this realization. One student commented that he “should’ve been learned that” meaning that he should have learned about these verb conjugations, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and other foundational aspects of SE grammar and syntax a long time ago.

- Students are teaching or plan to teach their own children SE because they do not want them to be crippled by the lack of SE proficiency. These students recommend that SE instruction begin early--even as early as preschool.
- For some students, intelligence and being educated mean the same thing and all students feel that using SE is the way to express intelligence and being educated. They refer to SE as “correct.”
- Many of the students feel that they do best in writing classes when allowed to write first in BE/Ebonics and then translate the writing to SE.
- Of the ones tested, age and gender seem to be the demographic variables with the most impact in determining the language attitudes of the students in this study. For example, older students tend to value SE more and to be more willing to use it consistently than younger students, and male students tend to be more strident in their views about retaining BE.
- Overall, the students in the study seem open to learning SE and using it when required to do so; however, many--if not most--do not see any need to replace their home language with SE.

CHAPTER FIVE  
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**A Brief Review of the Problem**

In Chapter One I recounted a story about my first semester of teaching Developmental English at an urban community college. As I stood before my class, consisting entirely of African American students, engaging them in a discussion about the necessity of speaking and writing Standard English (SE) in college, being careful to acknowledge the beauty, utility, history and “flavor” of Black English, and noting the legitimacy of Black English/Ebonics as a language/dialect, I cautioned the students that they would be expected to use SE in their academic writing. Then, one male student, whom I refer to as Rab, explained that he felt resistant to using Standard English because doing so felt to him like he was surrendering a part of his heritage. He said his family and all of his friends spoke Black English; it was part of his very existence. He did not want to give that up. His statement lingered with me, causing a level of creative discontent. At that time I could not understand why, given the way that language is used to categorize, stigmatize and marginalize those who do not demonstrate competence in Standard English, students would be unwilling to learn and use SE when appropriate. I began to view Rab’s position as similar to that of a black motorist refusing to have a spare tire because white motorists have them. Standard English is a linguistic spare tire. I could not understand why, given the current racial, political and economic climate in America,

a black student would make a conscious decision not to learn the language of academia and commerce. I could not understand what I considered the implied “self-limiting” concept in Rab’s position, that in the “hood” one must either use Black English or disavow his/her heritage by using Standard English. My question was why not have both language options?

The primary problem which this research addressed is that the majority of African American students entering urban community colleges are not equipped with the requisite language skills to perform as expected in their writing classes. The reasons for these high levels of underpreparedness are complex and multifaceted. However, poverty, race and deeply rooted societal inequities weigh heavily upon the educational life chances of the student population at the college where the research was conducted, where most of the students emanate from Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in low-income neighborhoods. In addition, internal attitudes and entrenched views about language also impact the underpreparedness. The research sought knowledge that would assist in improving the lot of these students and in clarifying what lies behind the views of students like Rab and why after 12 years of schooling, students lacked fundamental background knowledge regarding Standard English grammar, knowledge that foreign language learners and ESL students routinely receive.

When confronted with the expectation to use Standard English, black students whose home/native language is Black English/Ebonics are at a distinct disadvantage. In their home environment, they are stigmatized for using SE, and in the college environment, they are stigmatized for not using it. These students are from a speech community with different language norms from the members of the more dominant



speech community to whom they are accountable. Black English (BE)-speaking students entering community college from inner city public schools usually have little experience writing, so they tend to write the way that they speak. Once they enter college, their professors, particularly the ones who teach English, expect them to use Standard English (SE). These underprepared students are then quite often placed in remedial or developmental English classes.

Grounded in sociolinguistic theory, this study sought to explore how these students construct linguistic reality and in so doing manage the conflicting language expectations. Assuming that reality is socially constructed, the speech community is the entity that molds and shapes linguistic reality for its members. However, social systems of the wider society impinge upon the speech community as it establishes its values, ideals, and norms (Haskins and Butts 1973). Language is the primary means by which “reality” is transmitted. The origins of linguistic reality for African Americans arose within a setting of deprivation, degradation, brutality, abject poverty, and linguistic dislocation. Baugh (1999) has described BE as the linguistic consequence of slavery.

For those who wish to use SE and simply do not know how, what pedagogical approaches do they think would be most effective? For those students who resist SE due to “critical consciousness,” who think using SE is selling out their race--their black identity-- what pedagogical approaches, if any, would convince them to use SE in certain situations? If students are willing to code switch or alternate between two linguistic systems BE and SE, how do they make decisions about doing so? Do teacher attitudes toward SE and BE effect student performance in writing classes? These are issues that this research study intended to illuminate. The major Research Question of this study is:

How do lower SES African American students at an urban community college manage the competing linguistic expectations of their home environment and the college environment?

Findings reveal that most African American students in the community college study do want to learn SE; many are angry that they were not effectively taught SE grammar in elementary and high school; and most do not seem to believe that using SE has to be tantamount to “acting white” or trying to be white. Yet, the influence of the speech community and the force of habit are powerful indeed. Ogbu (1999), Fordham and Ogbu (1986), and McWhorter (2001) site factors within the students and their speech communities as the primary culprits. The first two scholars claim that “oppositional culture” and notions associating excelling in school and speaking Standard English with “acting white” are the greatest deterrents to academic achievement among Black Americans. McWhorter claims that holding on to notions of victimology and separatism (along with “acting white” ideology) is what is causing masses of Blacks to “lose the race” and to be lost as a race. Ogbu posits that cultural ambivalence and oppositional ideology impede students’ attitudes and progress in gaining mastery over Standard English. Fryer (2006) notes that fear of losing the race’s best and brightest to the majority culture causes lower SES Blacks to lash out and accuse Standard English speaking Blacks and those who demonstrate other characteristics or habits associated with Whites of “acting white.” Thus, two primary causes emerged from the research study for the SE underpreparedness of African American students at the College. First, the students have not been taught and have not learned SE grammar in a systematic, consistent, effective manner. Second, students lack the requisite motivation and support

for gaining communicative competence in SE since notions associating SE use with “acting white” or trying to be white have been habitualized in the BE speech community to which they belong. It is important to note that these causes are themselves encapsulated within layers of complex causality which include race, poverty, and class.

As a member of the SE speaking branch of the African American community, I feel a personal obligation to emphasize the benefits of using SE without creating for BE speakers the sense of alienation that often arises when members of that branch of the community attempt to use SE. Also, as a member of the SE speaking branch of the Black Speech Community, I have witnessed first hand the privilege afforded to Blacks who use SE. In like manner, I have witnessed the bias directed against BE speakers. The literature is replete with research on how BE is stigmatized along with its speakers (Baugh 1983, 1999; Labov 1970, 1972; Lippi-Green 1997; Gilyard 1991, 1999; Haskins and Butts 1973, 1993; Rickford and Rickford 2000; Spears 1999; Smitherman 1977, 1987, 1998, 2003). There is also a vast body of work on how teacher attitudes about language (and its speakers) affect student performance (Ball and Lardner 2005; Delpit 1998, 2002; Hale 2001; Richardson 1993, 2003; H. Taylor 1991; O. Taylor 1973, 1999; Wynne 2002; Walsh 1991; Rickford 1999). Language use has been and continues to be a very active method of discriminating. Alongside the scholarly documentation of bias and discrimination is the work of scholars who have found that Blacks have participated in their own oppression to some extent (Cosby 2004; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; McWhorter 2001; Ogbu 1999, 2004).

My interest in studying and alleviating the gnarly controversy of Standard English versus Black English within the Black Community springs from a persistent realization

that language provides access to power and from a relentless desire to have all citizens gain access to that power. I grew up in a household where my mother and stepfather spoke BE. Both came from the South. My grandmother, aunts, uncles, and older cousins spoke BE for the most part. However, because most of them worked in settings where they had some exposure to Standard English, they never communicated to our generation any opposition to that language style. My parents and most of those in our community emphasized the importance of education. They were not well educated themselves, neither having advanced beyond sixth grade. The fact that educational opportunity had been denied to them motivated our parents to push us toward education. My mother would often remind us that her generation could not go to school. They had to work in the cotton fields. She told me that even though my biological father had been a very good student, he had had to quit school so that he could work to help his family. So for us, getting a “good education” was paramount. We had to graduate from high school; there was no question. A critical part of the educational process was learning the language of education--Standard English. Our parents expected us to use “school English” They were proud of us for doing so. This pattern was widespread in our community: As I recall, all of the schoolmates could speak “school English” and could read. Therefore, I grew up thinking that speaking SE came along as a natural component of being educated.

However, this did not mean that we looked down on our relatives who did not speak SE, nor did it mean that all of us always spoke SE. (I happened to be one of the ones who did and was once taunted for being “too proper.”) We reveled in the colorful expressions our BE speaking relatives used and delighted in the vivid stories they told in BE. We were comfortable in what Ferguson (1964) and Fishman (1972) would term a

diglossic speech community, where SE and BE existed harmoniously side by side. I do not recall the oppositional culture described by Ogbu (1999). I do not recall the notion that using SE, or what was termed “school English,” being associated with “acting white” as described by Fordham and Ogbu (1986). Our parents subscribed to the theory that was prevalent during the Abolitionist movement and described by Smitherman (1977): getting a good education and using SE demonstrated that we were equal to Whites. I believe that our parents’ generation, fresh from the oppressive Jim Crow and segregationist South, armed with visions of their children being able to get better jobs and work in the White world, armed with the collective consciousness described by Gurin and Epps (1975), where a victory for one Black person was a victory for the race and a defeat or set back for one had a similar effect on the race, strongly desired to have their children rise above the conditions that had constrained them. They implicitly taught us that education and the language that it exposed one to had power. They wanted us to have that power.

Gilyard (1999) emphasizes the importance of family and community support for children to learn and use SE as they are growing up. The following excerpt from an interview with a faculty member affirms the educational climate in the homes of that generation. (Researcher comments are lower-cased and faculty comments are capitalized.):

One more last thing. What do you make of this concept that is really pervasive that using Standard English is selling out your race, trying to be white?

YEAH, I THINK IT’S A VERY BIG PROBLEM; I THINK THAT THE PARENTS HAVE TO TAKE THE TIME. I THINK THAT OUR PARENTS’ GENERATION MADE SURE THAT WE UNDERSTOOD... I MEAN, BEFORE WE LEFT THE HOUSE, WE UNDERSTOOD THAT YOUR JOB IS TO MAKE IT IN LIFE.

[NOW] WE HAVE PARENTS THAT I DON'T THINK HAVE THE SAME TYPE OF WISDOM THAT OUR PARENTS HAD. THEY DON'T HAVE THE SAME KIND OF SELF ESTEEM THAT OUR PARENTS HAD, WHICH THEY IMPARTED TO US. I THINK THAT PARENTS HAVE TO TAKE IT BACK. THESE PARENTS CANNOT ALLOW SOMEONE ELSE TO EDUCATE YOUR CHILD. THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR ALL THE CRITICISMS I HAVE FOR THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, THE CPS CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH.

So what I hear you saying is that the parents have to take back their responsibility in imparting certain values to the kids.

WHAT'S MADE IMPORTANT IN THE HOUSEHOLD I THINK IS WHAT THE CHILD MAKES IMPORTANT IN HER LIFE. MY MOTHER HAD AN 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE EDUCATION. I'M NOT SURE, BUT MY FATHER PROBABLY HAD A 4<sup>TH</sup> OR 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE EDUCATION, I'M THINKING. THEY MADE EDUCATION IMPORTANT IN THEIR HOUSEHOLD. DID YOU USE STANDARD ENGLISH AT HOME? I DON'T REMEMBER IT EVER BEING AN ISSUE AT HOME.

I know I used it at home, but it was never an issue. It seemed as though they were proud that I could speak that way.

I HAD SEVERAL OLDER BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND IT NEVER SEEMED LIKE AN ISSUE... MY OLDER SISTER WENT TO COLLEGE FOR A YEAR OR SO. I ALWAYS HEARD THEM SPEAK. ... MY AUNTS AND UNCLES, THEY WERE ALL FROM MISSISSIPPI, THE SOUTHERN DIALECT.

I HAD ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD WHAT THEY WERE SAYING. WHEN MY FATHER SAID "TAKE DAT GARBAGE OUT" THERE WAS NO QUESTION. [LAUGHTER] I WOULDN'T SIT THERE AND SAY "HUH?"

My parents certainly spoke the Vernacular, they were from Alabama, my mother and Tennessee, my stepfather, and he raised me. There was something about them and how they perceived education in that speaking Standard English wasn't trying to be white; it was indicative of being educated. To them, that's what it meant; it didn't mean trying to be white.

AS YOU SAY, IT WAS ABOUT BEING EDUCATED, "GET YOU A BETTER JOB. IT WILL OPEN CERTAIN DOORS FOR YOU. IT'S IMPORTANT, YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS, AND I DIDN'T GET TO HIGH SCHOOL BUT YOU'RE GOING TO GET TO

HIGH SCHOOL.” THEY MADE IT IMPORTANT IN OUR HOUSEHOLD, AND THAT’S WHAT I MEAN. THESE PARENTS JUST HAVE TO SAY ENOUGH IS ENOUGH; WE’RE TAKING THESE KIDS BACK.

Because experience has taught me that language is a sorting device in this country, that Blacks who are adept at using SE have more options, and because the review of the literature reinforces those observations, I long to see African Americans remove this excuse from those who discriminate on the ostensible basis of language.

### **Conclusions**

One central fact remains and that is far too many African American [students] have not acquired sufficient proficiency in Standard English to facilitate success and career mobility... [A] major challenge for our nation—and especially for our educators—is to devise positive, sensitive and effective ways to teach African American and other [students] Standard English—the language of education and career mobility (Taylor 1999, 105)..

In spite of years of work by linguists and activists to dislodge the stigma attached to BE and its speakers, the negative perceptions persist. Racism in America persists. As the students in this study have articulated, African Americans cannot get very far in terms of career mobility outside of the underground economy prevalent in inner city ghettoized communities without communicative competence in SE. Freire (1973) taught the poor of his country to use the standard language as a tool to better themselves individually and collectively, as a means of expressing their frustrations and desires so that those in power could no longer ignore them. Using SE is a way to avoid some kinds of discrimination, yet most of the students in the research project do not strongly believe that.

Perhaps over time, having internalized much of the oppressive and stereotypical imagery transmitted through books that focus on slavery as the most important thing to be

learned about African Americans, through media that regularly depict Blacks as criminals or “bling”-craving, and/or sex-obsessed consumers, that frequently remind the world that as a group African Americans lag behind Whites and other minorities regarding salaries, employment, and test scores--rarely if ever, applauding those millions of Black Americans who are industrious, honest, hard-working, and scoring at or above national norms on tests; perhaps having witnessed the rampant joblessness in their communities, having been jarred by the seemingly uncontrollable violence in their communities, having been disillusioned by the chaotic and ineffective schools that they must attend, having seen that only rap stars, drug dealers, athletes, and entertainers seem to be the main ones who look like them, talk like them, identify with them, and are able to earn enough money to make a decent living, many disadvantaged Black Americans have thrown up both of their hands and hollered, “What’s the use?”

Learning SE and being able to communicate effectively in that language variety peels back the curtain on those who discriminate against Black people on the basis of language. Once that barrier is removed, prejudice against African Americans can be seen as what it is. As Noguchi argues:

If it turns out that the adverse reactions to certain linguistic features ultimately result not from the features themselves but from the social groups that produce them, then it seems far more enlightening and productive to remove the linguistic features as a cover and to expose the prejudice for what it is. That is, if people in power unfairly make it difficult for certain social groups to climb the socioeconomic ladder, we should try not to give these perpetrators an opportunity to hide the more underlying cause by letting them use nonstandard features of writing as the discriminating factor (cited in Campbell 1994, 13).

The students in the study have graduated from high school or earned a GED in spite of the chronically high drop out rates in Chicago. They have entered the community



college system for a variety of reasons, seeking to improve their lots in life. However, nearly 70% of them lacked the academic preparation deemed necessary for college level courses at the time that they entered college. The reasons for this underpreparedness are complex and multifaceted--poverty, race, educational neglect, and lack of motivation play strong roles in the students' plight. The literature reveals that schools in poor, minority dominated areas are frequently saddled with inexperienced and less qualified teachers. These schools and their students are further hampered by a lack of resources, by overcrowded classrooms, and by chaotic or prison-like school climates. Many of the students in the study report not having been taught Standard English grammar with the depth and thoroughness expected by their college professors. An article by Rossi in the April 9, 2003, *Chicago Sun-Times* attests to the assertions of Kolln and Hancock (2005) and Mulroy (2003) on the detrimental effects of anti-grammar policies, as the author reports findings from an ACT study contending that SE grammar is more important to college professors than to elementary and high school teachers.

Based on assumptions that native English speakers possess intuitive knowledge of English grammar, anti-grammar policies espoused by Hillocks (1986), Braddock et al (1963), and others determined that SE grammar should only be taught at the end of the writing process--in the editing and proofreading stages. They maintained that spending time on grammar isolated from context did not improve student writing and, on the contrary, had a "harmful effect" as such study detracted from the pursuit of teaching literature and rhetorical form.

While there is evidence demonstrating the ineffectiveness of cold, decontextualized worksheets and such, there is also evidence that SE grammar still needs

to be taught, particularly to minority non-standard English speakers. Interestingly, there has never been a debate about the need to teach grammar to nonstandard English speaking ESL students. Inner city students who live in speech communities where Black English is the only language variety used in their homes and neighborhoods need to be taught SE grammar in systematic, structured, consistent ways that are at the same time effective. Baker (2002); Ball and Lardner (2005); Baugh (1999); Delpit (1995, 1998); Epps (1985); Gilyard (1999); Hancock (2006); Ladson-Billings (2002); Moore (1996); Rickford (1999); Smitherman (1987, 1999, 2002); Taylor (1999); Richardson (1996, 2003); Wheeler (2006, 1991); Walsh (1991); and Wynne (2002) are among the many scholars and educators who note the primacy of teaching SE without denigrating the students' home language. Responses to the Student Language Attitude Survey along with interviews with students and faculty affirm the importance of this approach. Moore (1996) notes that Black English speakers appear to need what Delpit calls "direct instruction" in grammar rules so that they can make the conscious translations to Standard English. For this reason, they are seen as being low-level achievers. Delpit argues that most process-oriented teaching methods are hampered by the fact that they "create situations in which students ultimately find themselves held accountable for knowing a set of rules about which no one has ever directly informed them."

Institutions charged with the responsibility of training pre-service teachers have often failed to provide adequate instruction in SE grammar and in effective ways of teaching it to BE speakers, and so the teachers cannot teach what they do not know. To assist educators in effectively teaching SE, several successful strategies have been developed. Wheeler (2006) and Rickford (1999) have suggested a technique called

contrastive analysis. Wible (2006) notes that this technique was effectively utilized by a group known as the Language Curriculum Research Group (LCRG) during the 1970s in response to the Students Right to Their Own Language resolution adopted in 1974. Based on ESL pedagogy, the contrastive analysis methodology calls for acknowledging and using the students' home language as a bridge to SE, as is commonly done in foreign language acquisition; using culturally relevant, highly engaging materials; and emphasizing the contrasts between formal and informal language and appropriate and inappropriate language based on situation and audience. Whimbey and Linden (2006) teach grammar as a critical thinking skill wherein students model sentence patterns and build new grammatical structures based on given guidelines. Lerner (1993) suggests a similar technique whereby students model a variety of sentences by creating their own as imitations of a given structure. Campbell's (1994) practicum was aimed at the development of methods which lead to empowerment of students to express themselves fully and with confidence, using either the BE or SE dialect equally well, depending on the time, place and circumstances. She, as do the instructors in the present study, recommends reading passages aloud. She further suggests that English teachers adapt speech class techniques such as role playing, imitation of newscasters and other media personalities as a means of helping students become more comfortable using SE in front of audiences. This practice is consistent with the technique utilized by the College speech teacher. The NCTE, acknowledging that the grammar and usage skills of all students, not just African American, have fallen, has published a teaching grammar kit entitled *Grammar: A Collection of Resources and Strategies to Support Grammar Instruction*

(2003) and endorsed an interest group within its membership called the Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar (ATEG).

In response to questions about prior schooling experiences, students indicate that they had no idea that SE grammar was important because it was not emphasized. Inner city, lower SES students and their parents often do not know what should be taught, what lessons and skills the child and then the adolescent should be getting in school. Therefore, they are unable to demand better instruction because they have no frame of reference. One of the hazards of grouping poor students together in isolation from more middle class students is that the poorer students do not benefit from, generally speaking, more educationally savvy parents and their students. Middle class students and their parents tend to be more aware of the ingredients of better schooling and to be better able to articulate their disapproval and frustration with greater communicative competence in SE. Due to negative perceptions about BE and its speakers, SE speaking adults and children are likely to gain favor.

Faculty at the research site confirms the success of pedagogical approaches that respect the students' home language, and yet these instructors are relentless in their insistence on SE. They hold the students firmly accountable for learning the standard dialect. Student grades suffer if their thoughts are not presented in SE. Consequently, students must make a choice. Often they recognize that they must learn SE in order to advance in their careers and in their academic pursuits; however, many lack the motivation and the kind of self-discipline required to bridge the frequently daunting chasms between what they need to know and what they know as they enter the developmental English classroom. Others may have the motivation and the discipline but

may be plagued and hindered by an array of social and/or economic challenges and problems that middle class students and instructors cannot even imagine. Then, there are still other students who persist in spite of the myriad factors that militate against them. Students who are adequately motivated respond well to instructor feedback, to individual attention from instructors in conferences and meetings, to extra help by way of student support services and to gentle and judicious correction. Judicious refers to corrections that do not embarrass or belittle the students. Interviewee Marie is an example of such a student. Students who consciously resist SE as an expression of Black identity must be doubly convinced that they will benefit directly from learning and using SE. Most of these students also respond to gentle and judicious correction. However, the correction must be student-centered. Resisters are extremely alert to any perceived hint of supremacist attitude or behavior. Nasheed is an example of such students.

Participants in the current study demonstrate unequivocally that teacher attitudes toward BE and SE matter greatly and can determine how students manage the competing expectations of their home environment and the college environment. Those students whose self-confidence with SE is low can easily be discouraged by harsh, non-supportive teacher attitudes. Resisters can become confrontational with instructors who insist that they learn SE for any reason other than one designated to help the students' life chances. These students respond negatively to authoritative teacher attitudes that appear even slightly to denigrate BE in favor of SE. Firm but supportive attitudes seem to work best in all instances. Code-switching seems to be the coping strategy of choice for most students. They make the decision to code-switch when they find it in their best interest to do so or when using SE is an explicit requirement of the class. However, they revert to

BE immediately when the perceived need passes. How much better would all of these students be in their English classes if they had been taught SE grammar systematically, regularly, and effectively throughout their 12 or so years of schooling? And how much better would they be if they could learn SE without the troublesome burden of having to question and to be questioned about whether or not doing so is selling out their race, acting white or trying to be white?

### **Recommendations**

Due to the massive social “dislocations” prevalent in lower income African American communities, changes need to occur systemically. Wilson (1987) proposes drastic programs such as those initiated during the WPA period. I would like to see a return to the collective consciousness of the Civil Rights Era, described by Gurin and Epps (1975) when educated Blacks and conscientious Whites worked together to improve the lot of those less fortunate, agitating the “establishment” into change. I would like middle class and more advantaged Blacks to take more responsibility and demonstrate more concern for members of the race who have superb street knowledge and uncommon survival skills but who may lack the political and educational skills, knowledge, and means to affect the large scale, systemic changes necessary to improve their life chances. There is a profound need for a groundswell of activism to insure that every student emerges from high school with a marketable skill, either the tools to continue on to a four-year college or to continue on to a career program. It is shameful that students can emerge from 12 years of schooling without a firm grasp of something as fundamental as the SE conjugation of the verbs *be*, *have*, and *do*.

Language competence in SE is a necessary part of marketability in this society. Language needs to be taught as a critical thinking skill, a means of developing critical consciousness. Freire (1973, 1993) defines critical consciousness as the capacity to perceive the social, political, and economic forces impinging on one's existence and the courage, knowledge and skill to express one's dissatisfaction and to take action, thus becoming a subject (actor) rather than an object (acted upon) (1973, 35, 36). With that in mind, the Black Community needs to examine the "acting white"/trying to be white paradigm. Students need to be provided a different perspective on "acting white." Richardson associates it with those Blacks who achieve and then look down upon peers who have not achieved or have not achieved as much. Fryer (2006), Harpalani (2002), Spencer (2001) and Lundy (2003) see the accusation as a coping strategy, as do Fordham and Ogbu (1986). Fryer sees a problem in the way that school systems fail to nurture and develop young, bright minority students in the early grades and throughout.

The perpetuation of the myth that Blacks have something against achievement is damaging and counterproductive. There is nothing in the survey or in the interviews to support the conclusion that students are against academic achievement or SE per se. They are, however, against any behaviors that communicate the message that education and/or using SE make an individual better than one who has less formal education or who is less skilled at using SE. The distancing of oneself from the common people, the loss of the common touch, the perceived "high and mightiness" are associated with "acting white." Thus, when the parent in Ogbu's study (1999) chides her daughter for correcting the parent's English, Ogbu could well have been witnessing the parent's discouragement of the child from feeling superior due to using Standard English rather than just for using SE

per se. The students in a Power and Politics of Language class I piloted as well as those in the sample for the present research reflect this position. The question becomes, "What is the motivation behind the use of the language." Educated Blacks who, by virtue of succeeding in the academic arena and mastering to some noticeable extent standard English, believe that they have disproved the stereotypes and unspoken but not always subtle notions about Black intelligence and cognitive ability, may experience feelings of shame in the presence of Black English, which is still thought of as uneducated speech. Uneducated or less educated Blacks may also experience shame as a result of their inability to use SE. Some may lash out at the SE speaker, as noted above, in a retaliatory manner. Collective identity and fictive kinship do exist in the Black community. They exist in both positive and negative behaviors.

When my father said, "Don't gimme no two for one," he was communicating an incisive and concise directive to one of his three daughters, letting us know unequivocally that we were on the verge of talking too much, talking back to him, and that it was time to stop immediately. Standard English could not communicate this message with the same level of effectiveness and efficiency. When my mother said, "If you cain' git on the mule, git on the milk cow," she was teaching her three daughters to look for creative solutions to seeming problems or challenges. Although there is no nonstandard English grammatical inconsistency, the pronunciation and cadence of her speech were and are congruent with Black English. It is that rhythm and cadence that makes this and other little nuggets of wisdom she imparted so memorable and captivating. I relate these brief anecdotes to demonstrate the reason that I do not advocate the eradication of Black English. I agree with Baldwin (1979, 1998), Morrison (1994), and all of the other



scholars who labor to demonstrate and honor the beauty and effectiveness of Black English. However, I also agree with Taylor (1999) and others that Black students cannot achieve at the highest level in this capitalist society until and unless they gain greater proficiency in Standard English. The fact that such students have not been taught systematically, consistently nor effectively is a major drawback. Effectively here includes ways that engage students to want to learn the language as a result of having a satisfactory answer to the question, "What's in it for me?" A second drawback is the students lack of opportunity to practice using SE enough to sustain any proficiency level, for the "acting white," "trying to be white" mentality is at large in the Black community. Even though students in the survey responded that using SE does not necessarily equate with "acting white," or "trying to be white," the notion has gained such a foothold that it persists.

If as the literature indicates, the lack of communicative competence in Standard English impedes reading ability, language arts ability, and negatively impacts achievement in other subject areas and if the mentality is prevalent that using SE is "acting white," what then can educators and others concerned about the well-documented academic disparities do? Students and instructors in the study contend that the parents must take an active role in authorizing and legitimizing the learning of SE. Parents can help dispel the "acting white" notion. Torres and Mitchell (1998) indicate that adolescents are guided by parents, then peers and finally in college reach the point of establishing a personal identity that may veer away from what peers promulgate. The discontinuity between the linguistic style that is valued in the community and most often what is expected and valued in the academic or professional/business setting create the

“double-consciousness,” “push-pull” anxiety described by DuBois (1933, 1969) and Smitherman (1977) respectively. Just as important, though, is that educated Blacks, middle class Blacks, must not turn their backs on those who are locked in poverty. That group of Blacks must demonstrate that one can be well-educated, speak SE, and still connect with the Black community, still care about those who are entrenched in poverty, care enough to see their plight as the responsibility of all Blacks and indeed to insist that the larger society see their plight as the responsibility of this nation.

Parents in earlier generations could insist that their children go to school and get a good education so that they could be somebody. As Richardson (2003) explains, education has been important in the Black community throughout generations. However, the caution not to forget where you came from, is a reminder that the “talented tenth” and all others who have achieved and who have influence, have a duty and responsibility to “uplift the race” by working for the collective good. Woodson (1933) maintains that talented Blacks are often educated away from their own community. After they obtain positions of power and influence, they pay little attention to humanity. Richardson notes that such education encourages students “to reject the struggles of their cultures and their histories and is prevalent today just as it was in 1933” when Woodson originally published his ground-breaking work. “This type of education trains students to fit into the status quo. It is a problem that is true across ethnic groups, and is supported by the ideology of American individualism” (Richardson 2003a, 10). This ideology contrasts with and is often in conflict with the collective identity associated with the Civil Rights struggle and described by Gurin and Epps (1975).

The African American struggle was always about getting education, bettering the condition of other African Americans, and changing society. That much was explicit and common knowledge in most African American families down through the years. But as we 'progress' through the system many of us become inundated with ideas that those who are stuck in poverty or other urban traps deserve to be there (Richardson 2003a, 10).

When educated and prosperous Blacks use their talents, means, and influence to prevail upon the larger society to correct the social ills that spawn ghettos and rampant social dislocations that have escalated since the days of Reaganomics and "benign neglect," when lower SES Blacks see that middle and higher SES Blacks have not abandoned them and are no longer seemingly using their education and ability to use SE as proof of superiority, perhaps the "acting white," trying to be white, phenomenon will lose its currency.

As the students in this study indicate, they must first desire to learn SE; this desire springs from finding a satisfactory answer to the question, "What's in it for me?" Once the students reach a certain level of maturity, they can see for themselves that knowing SE and being comfortable and capable in using it matters and can help them advance. The problem at that point is often there is such a discrepancy between what they know and what they need to know.

Faculty at the subject college have attempted with some success to shift the students away from viewing SE use as "acting white" or trying to be white. They present SE as a tool for career and academic advancement, as a means of communicating professionalism, and as formal language to be used in situations where formal is appropriate. I have begun to position Standard English as a linguistic "spare tire"-- something that everyone needs for safe travel beyond walking distance. If Black English

speakers could view Standard English in that way, not as the property of Whites or Blacks trying to be or act white, but as a necessary tool, I believe that a subtle and yet profound shift might occur. Language is power. Being able to use SE when it is appropriate to do so is having access to communicative power. Richardson (1996) and Smith (2002) testify to their individual awakenings from seeing SE as “acting white” to re-seeing it as a instrument of power to which they, too, as Americans have the right to access. Race is a factor in the acquisition of SE proficiency, as is poverty. How do we as educators convince those who may not see SE use as valuable to nevertheless prepare themselves? For all instructors, Black and White, remediation begins with respect for the home language. As Hancock (2006) notes, White teachers have the burden of leading the BE speaking students through the SE highways without putting the students’ native language down and without wandering into landmines labeled racism. Black teachers have the burden of leading these students through those roadways by modeling SE and avoiding the landmines labeled “acting white” or trying to be white. Neither category of teachers has the right to ask the BE speaking students to relinquish their home language, but each has the obligation to teach SE systematically, consistently, and effectively. Showing students how to use a spare tire might help. Reminding them that it has to be kept in proper condition and be ready for use at a moment’s notice; reminding them that it has to be checked regularly; reminding them that every driver needs a spare tire--regardless of age, race, or any other factor--all might help. Perhaps in time, *habitus*, “dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways” (Bourdieu 1991, 12), will loosen its grip, and the BE speech community will no longer have to choose either/or but will use both BE and SE comfortably and ably, giving rise to a new linguistic reality.

“Nothing is real unless we make it real.

Nothing can touch us unless we let it touch us.”

Earnest Holmes

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Because community colleges are open access institutions, they quite receive students whose elementary and high school language arts experience has not adequately prepared them for college level English classes. This is particularly true of lower SES students. Until that preparation changes, community college instructors in developmental English classes must continue to work at finding effective ways to fill in the gaps.

Further research is needed in support of those efforts. Several suggestions follow:

- The differences between African American male and female attitudes about BE and SE warrant further study.
- Research has shown that many urban African American males believe that SE is more acceptable for girls (Young 2003). It would be helpful to know more about when Black males start to resist SE, at what age and under what circumstances.

Other suggestions are:

- Research on the effectiveness of presenting SE as a linguistic spare tire.
- Research testing the effectiveness of adapting Wheeler’s contrastive analysis approach for use at the community college level.
- Research measuring student attitudes about language before and after teaching them a Language and Society class based on the Spears (1999) model.

- Further research on the effects of using culturally relevant materials to teach argument and other rhetorical modes rather than traditional Eurocentric materials.
- Further research on the effects of racial identity stages and their corresponding racial attitudes, as described by Cross (1971) and Harpalani (2002), on language attitudes.

APPENDIX A  
CONSENT FORMS

March 16, 2005

4740 S. Kimbark Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60615

Dr. Orlando L. Taylor  
Vice Provost for Research and  
Dean of the Graduate School  
Howard University  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
otaylor@howard.edu

Dear Dr. Taylor:

I am a doctoral candidate at Loyola University Chicago and a member of the English faculty at Kennedy King College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago. In reviewing the literature for my dissertation, I came across a study very similar to the one I am proposing. This study was conducted by Theresa Mohamed in 2001. Her study focused on Ebonics at the community college level. Dr. Mohamed "examined perceptions of obstacles in a college writing program by both mainstream teachers and African American students." She used your Language Attitude Scale (LAS) as part of her research methodology.

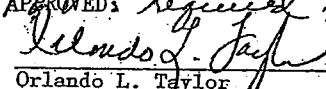
I would like to replicate that portion of her study. My focus is also the conflict between Standard English and Black English (Ebonics) but in an urban community college setting. Whereas her faculty sample was predominantly white working in upstate New York, mine will be predominantly black working in the inner city of Chicago. I think it would be enlightening to examine to what extent the attitudes of the Chicago instructors mirror the attitudes in the 2001 study.

The students in my study have also been placed in developmental English, like those in Dr. Mohamed's. They are expected to use Standard English for school; however, on the outside, in their home environment, they face conflicting language expectations. My study will examine the attitudes, perceptions and coping strategies of these students as they confront the attitudes and perceptions of their English instructors.

I am, therefore, requesting your permission to use your Language Attitude Scale (LAS) as part of my research methodology. I am eager to hear from you and look forward to your approving response. Thanks so much for your help. As a time consideration, would you please e-mail your response to me at [rjackson@ccc.edu](mailto:rjackson@ccc.edu).

Sincerely,

  
Rosemary R. Jackson

*Copy of final results*  
APPROVED: *request*  


Orlando L. Taylor  
Vice Provost for Research  
and  
Dean, Graduate School  
Howard University

Date

ORIGINAL

FILE COPY

ORIGINAL



From "Mohamed, Theresa" <MOHAMEDT@mail.sunyocc.edu>

Sent Wednesday, March 16, 2005 10:58 am

To [rrjackson@ccc.edu](mailto:rrjackson@ccc.edu)

Cc

Bcc

Subject RE: Permission to use your Demographic Profile

Ms. Jackson, I received your request to use my Demographic Profile and also some of the student responses in order to formulate a student survey from my 2001 study on Black Dialect. Permission is granted. I would be most interested in learning about the results. Keep me posted. All the best with your research.

Theresa Mohamed, Ed.D  
Onondaga Community College  
4941 Onondaga Road  
Syracuse, New York 13215

-----Original <<http://www.hotsearchbar.com/cgi/v30//ezlclk.fcgi?id=33>> | Message  
<<http://www.hotsearchbar.com/cgi/v30//ezlclk.fcgi?id=65>> -----

From: rrjac <<http://www.hotsearchbar.com/cgi/v30//ezlclk.fcgi?id=279>> kson@ccc.edu  
[mailto:[rrjackson@ccc.edu](mailto:rrjackson@ccc.edu)]

Sent: Wed 3/16/2005 4 <<http://www.hotsearchbar.com/cgi/v30//ezlclk.fcgi?id=30>> :16 AM

To: Mohamed, Theresa

Cc:

Subject: Permission to use your Demographic Profile

Hello, Dr. Mohamed. My name is Rosemary R. Jackson. I am a doctoral candidate at Loyola University Chicago and would like to use your Demographic Profile as part of the research methodology for my dissertation. In addition, I'd like to incorporate some of the student responses from your 2001 study into a Student Language Attitude Survey I am developing. I have attached a formal request with details about my study. I would appreciate your favorable response.

Thanks so much,

Rosemary Jackson

September 14, 2005

Mr. Clyde El Amin  
President  
Kennedy King College  
6800 S. Wentworth Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60621

Dear President El-Amin,

I am a doctoral candidate at Loyola University Chicago and would like to focus my dissertation study on community college students who must manage the disparities between the linguistic expectations of the college environment and those of their home/community environment. There have been many studies indicating that lower-income African American students in general do not have the requisite language arts skills as they enter college. Several experts have cited a conscious and deliberate resistance to Standard English on the part of most lower income and some other African Americans.

It is well documented that a high percentage of these students are placed in developmental English classes when they enter college. I would like to explore and provide insight on this "language achievement gap" from the students' point of view. I believe that this approach can bring a different level of clarity to complex issues of race, poverty, language, and remediation. Therefore, I am asking your permission to recruit, survey and interview students for the study.

I would use the attached consent form for students in English 098 and English 100 classes who are willing to be interviewed. The research would take place between October 15, 2005 and January 15, 2006. Participation would be on a purely voluntary basis. No incentive or punishment will be offered or given to students currently enrolled in my classes, as a result of their participation or non-participation in the research project. I would ask another faculty member to administer the surveys to my students, and I would not be present at that time.

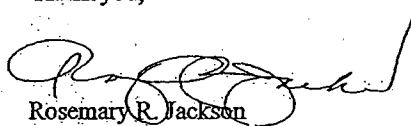
Because I recognize the need and importance of protecting students' privacy and establishing and maintaining their trust, I would safeguard student identity. No real names would be used in the study. In addition, Kennedy King College would only be identified if doing so is desirable to the College.

Another component of the research is faculty Language Attitude Scale that I would like to use to survey Communications Department faculty on their views about Standard English and Black Vernacular English (Ebonics). The faculty survey would be administered anonymously also.

I would provide you with a copy of the results of both the student and faculty surveys.

Because Loyola's Internal Review Board policy does not allow me to proceed with the study in any way until and unless I have written authorization from you, I would very much appreciate your prompt response to my request. Please sign below indicating that I have your permission to involve students and faculty from Kennedy King College in my research.

Thank you,



Rosemary R. Jackson

cc: John Dozier  
Vera Averyhart Fullard  
Fritz Bush

Dear Student,

As a graduate student working on a doctorate degree at Loyola University Chicago, I am conducting a research study for my dissertation and as a requirement for the Ph.D. The title of my study is *The Language Dilemma: A Study of Attitudes towards English*. It will examine the ways community college students view and manage the language expectations of their home environment and the expectations of the college environment. The research project has two phases. The first is the Language Attitude Survey, which is intended to gather your impressions about Black English (also known as Ebonics and Black Dialect) and Standard English (also known as school English). Below are three examples each of Black English (BE) and Standard English (SE).

BE

*Me and my friends went skating.  
Them girls always talking about somebody  
I seen my niece doing her homework.*

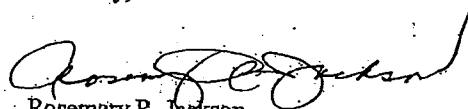
SE

*My friends and I went skating.  
Those girls are always talking about somebody.  
I saw my niece doing her homework.*

Your participation in this research study survey is voluntary and anonymous. If you wish to complete the survey, please fill out the demographic profile and answer the survey questions by placing an "X" in the column that best describes you. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON EITHER THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OR THE SURVEY.**

If after you complete your survey, you want to take part in the second phase of the project, a personal interview with me, please fill out the attached interview consent form. At the end of the allotted time, I will collect all surveys and other materials even if you left them blank. Thanks so much for your attention and support.

Sincerely,



Rosemary R. Jackson  
Ph. D Candidate  
Loyola University Chicago

Loyola University Chicago: Lakeside Campus  
 Institutional Review Board for  
 The Protection of Human Subjects

Date of Approval: 1/24/2010

Approval Expires: 11/23/2010

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY INTERVIEW  
 (STUDENT)

Title of Study: The Language Dilemma: A Study of Attitudes towards English

As a graduate student working on a doctorate degree at Loyola University Chicago, I, Rosemary R. Jackson, am conducting a research study for my dissertation and as a requirement for the Ph.D. My study examines the ways community college students view and manage the language expectations of their home environment and the expectations of the college environment. I am interested in giving the students who have been placed in Developmental English courses a vehicle to tell their own stories about language use and expectations.

With that in mind, you will be asked a number of questions about your language background, attitude and achievement. I will be interviewing ten (10) or twelve (12) students. To insure your privacy, I will personally conduct each interview and keep your identity confidential. At the time of the interview, you will be given an alias or nickname, which will be used in all documents, tapes, and in the dissertation. At no point will your real name be used.

All interviews will be audio taped, but at no time will anyone besides me be involved in the study. No one will sit in on the interviews. Audiotapes of interviews will be stored off campus in a safe place for five years and then destroyed. I would be happy to share the results of this study with you.

It is crucial that you feel comfortable revealing your thoughts and feelings openly, fully, and frankly. However, if at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to answer any question, you will be free not to. You will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participating at any time. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

By taking part in this study, you will be helping educators and other students find ways to bridge the achievement gap in English. Educators will get your point of view on what worked or did not work as you were exposed to Language Arts/English classes in elementary and high school. They will hear your views on Standard English and its role in your life.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by phone at 312-485-5071 or by e-mail at [rijwrite@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rijwrite@sbcglobal.net), or you may contact my faculty sponsor at Loyola, Dr. Steven I. Miller at [smille@luc.edu](mailto:smille@luc.edu). Should you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact the Compliance Manager for Research at Loyola University by calling (773) 508-2689.

If you are willing to be interviewed for this study, please sign this consent form. Thank you.

My signature below indicates that I have read the above statements and agree to be interviewed for the research study.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that my interview will be taped and that portions of the interview may be quoted and published. My signature below indicates that I agree to have my interview taped and quoted.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Colleague:

As you may or may not know, I am a graduate student working on a doctorate degree at Loyola University Chicago. I am beginning the process of conducting a research study for my dissertation. My study will examine the ways community college students view and manage the competing language expectations of their home environment and those of the college environment. I am interested in giving the students who have been placed in Developmental English courses a vehicle to tell their own stories about language use and expectations.

There is a wealth of research showing that the vast majority of students entering college from Chicago public high schools are underprepared for the demands of their writing and communications classes. These students most often bring their home language to the college setting where they are expected to use Standard English. I am also interested in how teachers view the language used by students at the college.

In 2002 one researcher conducted a study of student and teacher attitudes about Black Dialect/Ebonics and Standard English. Her research was done at an upstate New York community college where the faculty and student body were predominately Caucasian. I intend to use the same survey instrument (Language Attitude Scale) used by that researcher to determine to what extent teachers at our urban community college share the same attitudes and perceptions as at the other college.

With these goals in mind, I would very much appreciate your participation in the following three research activities:

1. Completing the Language Attitude Scale (LAS) survey and accompanying Demographic Profile form.
2. If you teach English 100, allowing me to visit your classes to administer a Student Language Attitude Survey. The survey should take less than fifteen (15) minutes for the students to complete it.
3. Letting me know if you are willing to be interviewed shortly after the surveys are completed. The interviews should last no more than an hour.

Your open and candid participation will insure an accurate analysis. To protect your privacy, your identity will be kept confidential. The surveys will be anonymous, and prior to every interview, each participant will be given a pseudonym, which will be used throughout the research study—in all documents, tapes and in the dissertation. In addition, all of the data will be presented in a summarized format. At no time will your identity be revealed.

If you would agree to be interviewed, please return the enclosed consent form in the self-addressed envelope marked "Consent".

Thanks so much for your participation and support.

Sincerely,

Rosemary R. Jackson  
Ph. D. Candidate  
Loyola University Chicago

Loyola University Chicago, Lakeside Campuses  
 Institutional Review Board for  
 The Protection of Human Subjects

Date of Approval: 11/24/2006

Approval Expires: 11/23/2006

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY INTERVIEW  
 (FACULTY)

Title of Study: The Language Dilemma: A Study of Attitudes towards English

As a graduate student working on a doctorate degree at Loyola University Chicago, I, Rosemary R. Jackson, am conducting a research study for my dissertation and as a requirement for the Ph.D. This study will examine the ways community college students view and manage the language expectations of their home environment and those of the college environment. In addition, it will explore teacher attitudes about the language used by students at the college.

A major component of the research study will be interviews with faculty and students. I will be interviewing five or six faculty members. If you decide to participate in this component, I will tape record a one-hour interview with you. To insure your privacy, I will keep your identity confidential. At the time of the interview, you will be given a pseudonym, which will be used in all documents, tapes, and in the dissertation. At no point will your real name be used. Audiotapes of interviews will be stored off campus in a safe place for five years and then destroyed. I would be happy to share the results of this study with you.

It is vital that you feel comfortable revealing your thoughts and feelings openly, fully, and frankly. However, if at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to answer any question, you will be free to skip that question. In addition, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

By taking part in this study, you may help other educators and prospective educators find ways to bridge the achievement gap in English. You will assist students in more clearly understanding the educational context in which they must function. You will also assist others in understanding the general climate and context of an urban community college communications department regarding language varieties.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by phone at 312-485-5071 or by e-mail at [rjwrite@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rjwrite@sbcglobal.net), or you may contact my faculty sponsor at Loyola, Dr. Steven I. Miller at [smille@luc.edu](mailto:smille@luc.edu). Should you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact the Compliance Manager for Research at Loyola University by calling (773) 508-2689.

If you are willing to be interviewed for this study, please sign this consent form. Thank you.

My signature below indicates that I have read the above statements and agree to be interviewed for the research study.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that my interview will be taped and that portions of the interview may be quoted and published. My signature below indicates that I agree to have my interview taped and quoted.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Loyola University Chicago: Lakeside Campuses  
Institutional Review Board for  
The Protection of Human Subjects  
Date of Approval: 1/24/2008  
Approval Expires: 11/23/2008

**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY SURVEY (FACULTY)**  
**Title of Study: The Language Dilemma: A Study of Attitudes towards English**

My signature below indicates that I have read the above statements and agree to complete the research study survey.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



[REDACTED] GE  
[REDACTED]

Communications

[REDACTED]  
Chicago, Illinois [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION AUTHORIZATION

My signature below authorizes Rosemary R. Jackson, a doctoral candidate at Loyola University Chicago, to survey and interview [REDACTED] students and English faculty for her dissertation research study, *The Language Dilemma: A Study of Attitudes toward English*. My signature also authorizes Ms. Jackson to conduct a survey of Communications Department faculty as part of her research study.

Ms. Jackson understands the importance of protecting student and faculty privacy and agrees to keep student and faculty identity confidential.

She also assures [REDACTED] Administration that students in her classes will not be rewarded or punished for participation or non-participation in the study. Student participation is on a strictly voluntary basis.

Authorized on January 9, 2006  
Date

By: Clyde El Amin, President

[REDACTED]  
Signature: Clyde El Amin

One of the City Colleges of Chicago

Preparing People to Lead Extraordinary Lives



LOYOLA  
UNIVERSITY  
CHICAGO

Research Services  
Institutional Review Board for  
The Protection of Human Subjects  
Lakeside  
Lake Shore Campus  
6525 N. Sheridan Road  
Chicago, Illinois 60626

January 24, 2006

Rosemary R. Jackson  
4740 S. Kimbark Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60615

Dear Ms. Jackson,

Thank you for submitting the research project entitled: **The Social Construction of Linguistic Reality: A Case Study Exploring Relationships among Poverty, Race and Redemption at an Urban Community College**, for *expedited review* by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. After careful examination of the materials you submitted, we have approved this project as described for a period of one year. **The IRB has approved the final version of the consent form and enclosed is an official stamped version of the form. Please make copies of this original form and use it for obtaining consent from participants.**

Approximately eleven months from your initial review date, you will receive a renewal notice stating that approval of your project is about to expire. This notice will give you detailed instructions for submitting a renewal application. If you do not submit a renewal application prior to **November 23, 2006**, your approval will automatically lapse and your project will be suspended. **When a project is suspended, no more research or writing regarding human subjects may be done until the project is reevaluated and re-approved.** I recommend that you respond to these annual renewals in a complete and timely fashion.

**This review procedure, administered by the IRB, in no way absolves you, the researcher, from the obligation to immediately inform the IRB in writing if you would like to change aspects of your approved project (please consult our website for specific instructions).** You, the researcher, are respectfully reminded that the University's ability to support its researchers in litigation is dependent upon conformity with continuing approval for their work. Should you have questions regarding this letter or general procedures, please contact the Compliance Manager at (773) 508-2689. Kindly quote File #73490, if this project is specifically involved.

With best wishes for the success of your work,

Dr. Patricia Rupert

Board

APPENDIX B

TAYLOR'S LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SCALE

### Language Attitude Scale

Indicate your opinion, with a check, according to the following scale:

**SD** - strongly disagree

**MD** - mildly disagree

**N** - neutral

**MA** - mildly agree

**SA** - strongly agree

- |   |                             |                             |                            |                             |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. The scholastic level of a school will fail if teachers allow Ebonics (Black English) to be spoken.   | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Ebonics (Black English) is simply a misuse of Standard English.  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Attempts to eliminate Ebonics (Black English) in school will result in a situation that can be psychologically damaging to Black children. | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Continued usage of a non-standard dialect of English will accomplish nothing worthwhile for students.                                      | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Ebonics (Black English) sounds as good as Standard English.  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Teachers should allow Black students to use Ebonics (Black English) in the classroom.  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |

- |   |                             |                             |                            |                             |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 7. Ebonics (Black English) should be discouraged.   | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Ebonics (Black English) must be accepted if pride is to develop among Black children.  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Ebonics (Black English) is an inferior language system.  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 10. A child who speaks Ebonics (Black English) is able to express ideas as well as the child who speaks Standard English.       | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Ebonics (Black English) should be considered an influential part of American culture and civilization.                      | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 12. The use of Ebonics (Black English) will not hinder a child's ability to achieve in school.                                  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 13. If the use of Ebonics (Black English) is encouraged, speakers of Ebonics (Black English) will be more motivated to achieve. | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 14. Ebonics (Black English) is a clear, thoughtful and expressive language.   | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 15. Ebonics (Black English) is too imprecise to be an effective means of communication.   | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 16. Children who speak Ebonics (Black English) lack the basic concepts of plurality and negation.                               | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 17. A teacher should correct a student's use of non-standard English.   | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |

- |  |                             |                             |                            |                             |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 18. In a predominantly Black school, Ebonics (Black English), as well as, Standard English should be used.                                       | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 19. Widespread acceptance of Ebonics (Black English) is imperative.  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 20. The sooner non-standard dialects of English are eliminated, the better.  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 21. Acceptance of Ebonics (Black English) by teachers will lead to a lowering of educational standards in school.                                | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 22. Non-standard English should be accepted socially.  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 23. Ebonics (Black English) has a faulty grammar system.   | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 24. One of the goals of the American school system should be the standardization of the English language.  | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |
| 25. The academic potential of Ebonics (Black English) speaking students will not improve until they replace their dialect with Standard English. | SD<br><input type="radio"/> | MD<br><input type="radio"/> | N<br><input type="radio"/> | MA<br><input type="radio"/> | SA<br><input type="radio"/> |

Taylor, O. L. (1973). *Teachers' attitudes toward Black and non-standard English as measured by the language attitude scale*. In R. Sivv and R. Fasold (Eds.), *Language attitudes: Current trends and prospects* (pp. 174-201). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS-  
LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SCALE

- RESPONSES:  
STRONGLY DISAGREE 5  
MILDLY DISAGREE 4  
NEUTRAL 3  
MILDLY AGREE 2  
STRONGLY AGREE 1  
NO RESPONSE 0

QUEST.#	SURV#1	SURV#2	SURV#3	SURV#4	SURV#5	SURV#6	SURV#7	SURV#8	SURV#9	SURV#10	SURV#11	SURV#12	SURV#13	SURV#14
1	1	4	1	3	3	5	4	2	2	1	4	4	4	1
2	5	2	5	4	2	1	5	2	3	4	5	4	2	1
3	5	3	5	2	5	4	2	4	5	5	2	5	4	5
4	1	3	3	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2
5	3	4	1	4	5	1	1	5	5	5	1	5	2	5
6	5	3	5	2	3	1	3	5	4	5	3	5	2	5
7	5	2	4	4	3	2	4	2	3	1	2	1	4	1
8	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	5	4	1	5	4	5
9	3	4	3	2	4	5	3	1	3	5	5	4	4	2
10	5	2	1	4	3	1	1	2	4	1	1	4	4	2
11	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	2	2	1	4	2	5
12	5	3	3	2	3	2	2	0	2	5	5	4	4	5
13	5	4	3	3	5	4	3	4	4	4	5	3	4	4
14	3	3	3	4	5	2	1	4	2	2	1	1	4	5
15	1	4	5	2	3	5	5	2	2	2	5	5	2	4
16	5	3	5	1	3	5	4	3	2	5	3	4	4	4
17	1	2	1	1	1	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
18	5	2	5	3	3	2	1	4	2	5	3	2	4	5
19	5	3	3	3	3	4	1	5	5	5	5	3	4	5
20	5	4	4	4	2	5	5	2	5	5	5	4	2	1
21	1	3	1	2	1	4	4	2	2	1	4	4	4	1
22	2	2	2	2	5	2	2	2	2	4	5	1	2	3
23	5	2	5	3	1	2	5	1	1	5	5	1	1	1
24	1	4	1	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
25	1	0	1	2	2	3	5	2	2	1	3	2	4	1

\*The Language Attitude Scale is used with permission from Orlando J. Taylor, Howard University.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE RESPONSES-FACULTY

	SURV#1	SURV#2	SURV#3	SURV#4	SURV#5	SURV#6	SURV#7	SURV#8	SURV#9	SURV#10	SURV#11	SURV#12	SURV#13	SURV#14
GENDER (M=1 OR F=2)	2	2	1	0	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
YEARS TEACHING (GRE=1-5 YRS, GRP=6-10 YRS, GRP11-15 YRS)	2	1	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	3	3	2	1
ETHNICITY (A=1 AS=2 CAU=3 HISP=4 OTHER=5)**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
SUBJECTS TAUGHT (COM=1 COM/RETI=2 DEVEL ED=3 LIT=4 OTHER=5)	1,2,3	1,2	1,2,3	1,3,4	4	1,5	1,2	1	1	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1	1,2,3	4
LOCATIONS RAISED IN (RURAL=1 SUBURB=2 URBAN=3)	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	1,2	3	3	3	3	3
COLLEGE ATTEND LOCATIONS (NONE=1 S=2 MIDW=3 W=4)	3	3	3	0	3	3	2	3	1,4	1,3	3	2,3	3	3

Demographic Profile adapted with permission from T. Benacron-Mohammed.

NOTE: OTHER SUBJECTS TAUGHT BY FACULTY SURVEYED INCLUDE CREATIVE WRITING, JOURNALISM, SPEECH, AND FRENCH.



APPENDIX C  
STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS																							
Responses with no valid values																							
CODES - CATEGORY OF RESPONSES																							
A - STUDENT ATTITUDES AND/BLACK ENGLISH/FRONTS																							
B - STUDENT ATTITUDES AND/STANDARD ENGLISH																							
C - IDENTITY ISSUES																							
D - PRIOR SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES																							
E - ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS																							
F - LOCUS OF CONTROL																							
NO RESPONSES																							
12	CODE	QC	SUR#1	SUR#2	SUR#3	SUR#4	SUR#5	SUR#6	SUR#7	SUR#8	SUR#9	SUR#10	SUR#11	SUR#12	SUR#13	SUR#14	SUR#15	SUR#16	SUR#17	SUR#18	SUR#19	SUR#20	
13																							
14	A	1	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	
15	A	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	
16	A	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
17	B	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
18	B	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
19	B	6	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	
20	B	7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
21	B	8	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
22	B	9	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
23	B	10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
24	B	11	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	

		C														
		STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS														
A	B	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD	AE	AF	AG	AH	AI	AL	AM
Responses with Assigned Values																
1	STRONGLY AGREE 3															
2	AGREE SOMEWHAT 4															
3	DON'T KNOW 0															
4	DISAGREE SOMEWHAT 2															
5	DISAGREE STRONGLY 1															
6	NO RESPONSE 0															
SURV 20 SURV 21 SURV 22 SURV 23 SURV 24 SURV 25 SURV 26 SURV 27 SURV 28 SURV 29 SURV 30																
13	1. I think Black English (Ebonics) is just as good as any other form of English.	3	4	3	3	1	2	2	2	3	1	1				
14	2. Black English (Ebonics) is just bad English.	4	4	3	4	1	2	3	4	4	4	5	1			
15	3. Any black person can learn to speak Standard English if he/she wants to.	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	5	5	5			
16	4. Any black person can learn to write Standard English if he/she wants to.	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5			
17	5. The use of Black English does not hurt or hinder a student's ability to achieve in school.	2	2	2	2	4	1	5	1	1	5	1	4			
18	6. If a teacher writes using Black English (Ebonics), teachers should put more emphasis on what the students say in a paper than on how they write it.	4	4	4	4	1	1	4	4	1	4	1	1	1		
19	7. It is better to write in Black English (Ebonics) than to write in Standard English (Ebonics) on paper if I don't know how to write in Standard English.	4	4	4	4	1	1	4	4	1	4	1	1	1		
20	8. Using Standard English means trying to act white.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
21	9a. Black people can speak Standard English without trying to act white.	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5			
22	9b. Black people can speak Standard English without trying to act white.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
23	10. Black people can speak Standard English without trying to act white.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
24	11. Black people can speak Standard English without trying to act white.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			

		C. STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS																									
A	B	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y				
		CODES - CATEGORIES OF RESPONSE																									
		A - STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT BLACK ENGLISH SPEECH																									
		B - STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT STANDARD ENGLISH																									
		C - IDENTIFY (BIBES)																									
		D - PRIOR SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES																									
		E - ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHERS																									
		F - LOCUS OF CONTROL																									
11	CODE	11A	11B	11C	11D	11E	11F	11G	11H	11I	11J	11K	11L	11M	11N	11O	11P	11Q	11R	11S	11T	11U	11V	11W	11X	11Y	
1	1																										
2	2																										
3	3																										
4	4																										
5	5																										
6	6																										
7	7																										
8	8																										
9	9																										
10	10																										
11	11																										
12	12																										
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19	19																										
20	20																										
21	21																										
22	22																										
23	23																										
24	24																										

A. B		C		D		E		F		G		H		I		J		K		L		M		N		O		
STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS																												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
STRONGLY AGREE																												
AGREE SOMEWHAT																												
DON'T KNOW																												
DISAGREE SOMEWHAT																												
STRONGLY DISAGREE																												
NO RESPONSE																												
12. CODE: Q.#																												
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
I think Black English (Slovenly) is just as good as any other form of English.																												
Black English (Slovenly) is just bad English.																												
Any Black person can learn to speak Standard English if he/she wants to.																												
Any Black person can learn to write Standard English if he/she wants to.																												
The use of Black English does not hurt or hinder a student's ability to achieve in school.																												
If a student writes using Black English (Slovenly), teachers should pay more attention to what the student says in a paper than how he/she says it.																												
It's hard for me to get my thoughts out on paper if I don't write using Black English (Slovenly).																												
Using Standard English means trying to act white.																												
Using Standard English means trying to act black.																												
Black people can speak Standard English without trying to be white.																												
Black people can speak Standard English without trying to act white.																												

APPENDIX D  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORMS

**Demographic Information Form (Faculty)**  
**(PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE CIRCLES)**

SEXMale Female YEARS TEACHING1-6 7-12 13 & over ETHNICITYAfrican American Asian American Caucasian Hispanic Other SUBJECTS TAUGHTComp./Rhetoric Developmental Ed. Literature Other LOCATIONS RAISED INRural Suburban Urban COLLEGE ATTENDANCE LOCATIONSN/NE S Midwest W 

Adapted from T. Bennerson-Mohamed (2002)

## Demographic Information Form (Students)

**PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE CIRCLES****SEX**Male Female **AGE**18 - 24 25 - 34 35 & over **ETHNICITY**African American Asian American Caucasian Hispanic Other **BIRTH PLACE**Chicago Southern U.S. Other **FIRST IN FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE?**Yes  No **HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR GED?**Diploma  GED **PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

YEAR OF BIRTH 19\_\_

HIGH SCHOOL(S) ATTENDED \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR DIPLOMA OR GED RECEIVED \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR OR AREA OF INTEREST \_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX E  
PEARSON CORRELATION MATRIX

	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	CC
Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.083	-.058	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	
Sig. (2-tailed)		.385	.533	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.318**	1.000	-.077	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	-.006	
Sig. (2-tailed)			.385	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	.934	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.095	-.077	1.000	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)				.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	1.000	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)					.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	-.077	1.000	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)						.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	-.077	-.077	1.000	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)							.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	1.000	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)								.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	1.000	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)									.385	.385	.385	.385	.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	1.000	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)										.385	.385	.385	.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	1.000	-.077	-.077	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)											.385	.385	.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	1.000	-.077	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)												.385	.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	1.000	-.077	
Sig. (2-tailed)													.385	
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	
Pearson Correlation	-.055	-.006	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	-.077	1.000	
Sig. (2-tailed)														.385
N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107

	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13
q21	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.012 0.428 108	-0.078 0.227 108	-0.133 0.208 108	0.115 0.246 108	0.071 0.102 108	0.178 0.060 108	-0.068 0.157 108	-0.042 0.051 108	-0.001 0.092 108	-0.138 0.069 108	0.068 0.178 108	0.068 0.108 108
q22	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.060 0.641 108	-0.060 0.359 108	-0.160 0.126 108	-0.126 0.164 108	0.046 0.084 108	0.046 0.084 108	0.046 0.084 108	-0.046 0.084 108	-0.160 0.260 108	-0.381 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.108 0.274 108
q23	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.006 0.954 107	-0.162 0.081 108	-0.014 0.881 108	-0.018 0.475 108	0.094 0.716 108	0.094 0.716 108	0.094 0.716 108	-0.094 0.281 108	-0.138 0.355 108	-0.382 0.000 108	0.170 0.000 108	0.068 0.863 108
q24	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.066 0.194 107	-0.133 0.064 108	-0.133 0.307 108	0.084 0.448 108	0.084 0.448 108	0.084 0.448 108	0.084 0.448 108	-0.084 0.448 108	-0.133 0.354 108	-0.442 0.000 108	0.108 0.108 108	0.068 0.170 108
q25	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.171 0.044 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108
q26	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.044 0.859 107	0.169 0.064 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108
q27	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.044 0.859 107	0.169 0.064 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108
q28	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.077 0.377 107	-0.008 0.705 108	0.029 0.770 108	0.029 0.770 108	0.029 0.770 108	0.029 0.770 108	0.029 0.770 108	0.029 0.770 108	-0.042 0.355 108	-0.382 0.000 108	0.170 0.000 108	0.068 0.863 108
q29	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.098 0.260 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108	0.116 0.164 108
q30	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.171 0.044 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108
q31	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.044 0.859 107	0.169 0.064 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108
q32	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.044 0.859 107	0.169 0.064 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108
q33	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.125 0.222 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108	-0.142 0.116 108
q34	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.108 0.274 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108	0.068 0.000 108
q35	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108	0.164 0.138 108
q36	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108	0.176 0.176 108
q37	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.006 0.954 107	-0.162 0.081 108	-0.014 0.881 108	-0.018 0.475 108	0.094 0.716 108	0.094 0.716 108	0.094 0.716 108	-0.094 0.281 108	-0.138 0.355 108	-0.382 0.000 108	0.170 0.000 108	0.068 0.863 108
q38	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.066 0.194 107	-0.133 0.064 108	-0.133 0.307 108	0.084 0.448 108	0.084 0.448 108	0.084 0.448 108	0.084 0.448 108	-0.084 0.448 108	-0.133 0.354 108	-0.442 0.000 108	0.108 0.108 108	0.068 0.170 108
q39	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.171 0.044 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108	0.101 0.312 108
q40	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.044 0.859 107	0.169 0.064 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108	0.169 0.307 108
q41	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108	0.134 0.194 108

a. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
b. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
c. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.



CORRELATION MATRIX FOR ALL ITEMS Q1 TO Q41 INCLUDING Q34 AND Q34P (REMOVE DELETION OF DATA)

	Q11	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28						
Q21	1.000																				
Q22	0.004	1.000																			
Q23	0.108	0.105	1.000																		
Q24	0.287	0.062	0.618	1.000																	
Q25	0.094	0.014	0.035	0.023	1.000																
Q26	0.397	0.684	0.752	0.606	0.266	1.000															
Q27	0.062	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	1.000														
Q28	0.197	0.010	0.151	0.075	0.178	0.082	0.050	1.000													
Q29	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000												
Q30	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000											
Q31	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000										
Q32	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000									
Q33	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000								
Q34	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000							
Q35	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000						
Q36	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000					
Q37	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000				
Q38	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000			
Q39	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000		
Q40	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000	
Q41	0.092	0.029	0.112	0.004	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1.000

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
 \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
 \*. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.



	q29	q30	q31	q32	q33	q34	q35	q36	q37	q38	q39	q40	q41
q21 Pearson Correlation	0.071	0.108	-0.216	0.024	0.088	-0.072	-0.159	-0.148	-0.023	0.038	-0.050	-0.075	0.110
q21 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.485	0.287	0.033	0.776	0.369	0.177	0.151	0.151	0.765	0.705	0.764	0.461	0.188
N	100	98	98	98	98	98	98	100	100	100	100	100	100
q22 Pearson Correlation	0.078	-0.183	-0.131	0.024	-0.024	-0.031	-0.111	-0.024	0.064	0.068	0.008	-0.058	0.120
q22 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.460	0.069	0.169	0.775	0.762	0.614	0.364	0.864	0.528	0.577	0.938	0.897	0.233
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q23 Pearson Correlation	0.029	0.108	-0.245	0.068	-0.161	-0.088	-0.065	0.044	0.064	0.094	0.042	-0.118	-0.079
q23 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.774	0.328	0.014	0.634	0.173	0.383	0.605	0.852	0.608	0.579	0.725	0.235	0.432
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q24 Pearson Correlation	0.140	-0.183	-0.278	0.138	-0.183	-0.233	0.157	0.148	0.018	0.034	0.018	-0.101	-0.158
q24 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.164	0.053	0.024	0.159	0.101	0.050	0.108	0.101	0.918	0.933	0.933	0.101	0.113
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q25 Pearson Correlation	0.042	-0.019	0.003	0.044	-0.031	-0.031	-0.031	0.059	0.058	-0.001	0.018	0.058	0.048
q25 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.648	0.858	0.900	0.487	0.841	0.841	0.841	0.658	0.704	0.898	0.891	0.838	0.647
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q26 Pearson Correlation	0.014	-0.183	-0.278	0.138	-0.183	-0.233	0.157	0.148	0.018	0.034	0.018	-0.101	-0.158
q26 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.682	0.053	0.024	0.159	0.101	0.050	0.108	0.101	0.918	0.933	0.933	0.101	0.113
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q27 Pearson Correlation	0.148	-0.066	-0.144	-0.024	-0.024	-0.031	-0.111	-0.024	0.064	0.068	0.008	-0.058	0.120
q27 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.158	0.632	0.161	0.824	0.824	0.811	0.605	0.852	0.608	0.579	0.725	0.235	0.432
N	97	98	98	98	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q28 Pearson Correlation	0.009	-0.009	-0.009	-0.104	0.002	-0.183	-0.058	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068
q28 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.981	0.981	0.981	0.308	0.981	0.076	0.348	0.813	0.813	0.813	0.813	0.813	0.813
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q29 Pearson Correlation	0.183	-0.058	-0.144	-0.024	-0.024	-0.031	-0.111	-0.024	0.064	0.068	0.008	-0.058	0.120
q29 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.078	0.328	0.014	0.634	0.173	0.383	0.605	0.852	0.608	0.579	0.725	0.235	0.432
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q30 Pearson Correlation	0.078	-0.183	-0.131	0.024	-0.024	-0.031	-0.111	-0.024	0.064	0.068	0.008	-0.058	0.120
q30 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.460	0.069	0.169	0.775	0.762	0.614	0.364	0.864	0.528	0.577	0.938	0.897	0.233
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q31 Pearson Correlation	0.127	-0.009	-0.144	-0.024	-0.024	-0.031	-0.111	-0.024	0.064	0.068	0.008	-0.058	0.120
q31 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.127	0.981	0.161	0.824	0.824	0.811	0.605	0.852	0.608	0.579	0.725	0.235	0.432
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q32 Pearson Correlation	0.171	-0.034	-0.144	-0.024	-0.024	-0.031	-0.111	-0.024	0.064	0.068	0.008	-0.058	0.120
q32 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.068	0.745	0.081	0.824	0.824	0.811	0.605	0.852	0.608	0.579	0.725	0.235	0.432
N	98	98	98	98	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q33 Pearson Correlation	-0.033	-0.033	-0.033	0.047	-0.033	-0.033	-0.033	0.047	-0.033	-0.033	-0.033	-0.033	-0.033
q33 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.478	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.478	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.708
N	98	98	98	98	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q34 Pearson Correlation	0.031	-0.145	-0.245	0.029	-0.029	-0.029	-0.029	0.029	-0.029	-0.029	-0.029	-0.029	-0.029
q34 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.851	0.053	0.024	0.634	0.634	0.634	0.634	0.634	0.634	0.634	0.634	0.634	0.634
N	98	98	98	98	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q35 Pearson Correlation	0.044	-0.044	-0.044	0.044	-0.044	-0.044	0.044	-0.044	-0.044	-0.044	-0.044	-0.044	-0.044
q35 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618
N	98	98	98	98	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q36 Pearson Correlation	0.113	-0.058	-0.144	-0.024	-0.024	-0.031	-0.111	-0.024	0.064	0.068	0.008	-0.058	0.120
q36 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.288	0.378	0.078	0.718	0.718	0.688	0.378	0.868	0.528	0.577	0.938	0.897	0.233
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q37 Pearson Correlation	-0.148	-0.213	-0.107	-0.179	0.127	-0.009	0.183	-0.183	-0.183	-0.183	-0.183	-0.183	-0.183
q37 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.147	0.034	0.288	0.078	0.208	0.483	0.100	0.001	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q38 Pearson Correlation	0.058	0.009	-0.009	-0.104	0.002	-0.183	-0.058	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068
q38 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.618	0.981	0.981	0.308	0.981	0.076	0.348	0.813	0.813	0.813	0.813	0.813	0.813
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q39 Pearson Correlation	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	-0.029	-0.029	0.029	-0.029	-0.029	-0.029	-0.029	-0.029	-0.029
q39 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605	0.605
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q40 Pearson Correlation	0.044	-0.044	-0.044	0.044	-0.044	-0.044	0.044	-0.044	-0.044	-0.044	-0.044	-0.044	-0.044
q40 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618	0.618
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101
q41 Pearson Correlation	0.183	-0.058	-0.144	-0.024	-0.024	-0.031	-0.111	-0.024	0.064	0.068	0.008	-0.058	0.120
q41 Sig. (2-tailed)	0.068	0.745	0.081	0.824	0.824	0.811	0.605	0.852	0.608	0.579	0.725	0.235	0.432
N	100	100	100	97	98	98	100	101	101	101	101	101	101

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
 \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).  
 \*. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

APPENDIX F

ANOVA/T-TEST BY AGE—ALL QUESTIONS-SLAS



Descriptives  
ANOVA TESTS BY AGE--ALL QUESTIONS

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean <sup>a</sup>		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
q1	1 18 to 24	3.18	1.286	.184	2.81	3.55	1	5
	2 25-34	3.07	1.174	.226	2.61	3.54	1	5
	3 35+	2.79	1.590	.295	2.19	3.40	1	5
	Total	3.05	1.347	.131	2.79	3.31	1	5
q2	1 18 to 24	2.84	1.419	.203	2.43	3.24	1	5
	2 25-34	2.85	1.460	.281	2.27	3.43	1	5
	3 35+	3.00	1.464	.272	2.44	3.56	1	5
	Total	2.89	1.430	.140	2.61	3.16	1	5
q3	1 18 to 24	4.96	.200	.029	4.90	5.02	4	5
	2 25-34	4.73	.533	.105	4.52	4.95	3	5
	3 35+	4.90	.409	.076	4.74	5.05	3	5
	Total	4.88	.377	.037	4.81	4.96	3	5
q4	1 18 to 24	4.90	.364	.052	4.80	5.00	3	5
	2 25-34	4.70	.609	.117	4.48	4.94	3	5
	3 35+	4.86	.351	.085	4.73	5.00	4	5
	Total	4.84	.439	.043	4.75	4.92	3	5
q5	1 18 to 24	3.38	1.550	.219	2.94	3.82	1	5
	2 25-34	3.30	1.613	.310	2.66	3.93	1	5
	3 35+	3.00	1.648	.306	2.37	3.63	1	5
	Total	3.25	1.586	.154	2.95	3.56	1	5
q6	1 18 to 24	3.06	1.504	.213	2.63	3.49	1	5
	2 25-34	3.04	1.506	.290	2.44	3.63	1	5
	3 35+	2.79	1.424	.264	2.25	3.33	1	5
	Total	2.98	1.473	.143	2.70	3.26	1	5
q7	1 18 to 24	1.77	1.047	.153	1.46	2.07	1	5
	2 25-34	2.22	1.450	.279	1.65	2.80	1	5
	3 35+	2.24	1.380	.256	1.72	2.77	1	5
	Total	2.02	1.268	.125	1.77	2.27	1	5

q10	1 18 to 24	50	4.36	.964	.136	4.09	4.63	1	5
	2 25-34	27	4.56	.506	.097	4.36	4.76	4	5
	3 35+	28	4.29	1.084	.205	3.87	4.71	1	5
q11	Total	105	4.39	.904	.088	4.22	4.57	1	5
	1 18 to 24	49	1.47	1.023	.146	1.18	1.76	1	5
	2 25-34	27	1.70	1.137	.219	1.25	2.15	1	5
q12	3 35+	29	1.69	1.072	.169	1.28	2.10	1	4
	Total	105	1.59	1.062	.104	1.38	1.80	1	5
	1 18 to 24	49	2.41	1.383	.198	2.01	2.81	1	5
q13	2 25-34	26	2.38	1.267	.249	1.87	2.90	1	5
	3 35+	29	3.10	1.472	.273	2.54	3.66	1	5
	Total	104	2.60	1.404	.138	2.32	2.87	1	5
q14	1 18 to 24	50	1.88	1.299	.175	1.53	2.23	1	5
	2 25-34	27	1.96	1.224	.236	1.48	2.45	1	5
	3 35+	29	2.31	1.561	.290	1.72	2.90	1	5
q15	Total	106	2.02	1.331	.129	1.76	2.28	1	5
	1 18 to 24	50	1.92	1.353	.191	1.54	2.30	1	5
	2 25-34	27	1.78	1.013	.195	1.38	2.18	1	4
q16	3 35+	28	2.57	1.550	.293	1.97	3.17	1	5
	Total	105	2.06	1.358	.132	1.79	2.32	1	5
	1 18 to 24	49	2.86	1.658	.237	2.38	3.33	1	5
q17	2 25-34	26	2.62	1.551	.304	1.99	3.24	1	5
	3 35+	29	3.55	1.502	.279	2.98	4.12	1	5
	Total	104	2.99	1.616	.158	2.68	3.30	1	5
q18	1 18 to 24	49	4.04	1.322	.189	3.66	4.42	1	5
	2 25-34	25	3.84	1.214	.243	3.34	4.34	1	5
	3 35+	29	4.28	1.222	.227	3.81	4.74	1	5
q19	Total	103	4.06	1.267	.125	3.81	4.31	1	5
	1 18 to 24	49	4.51	.916	.131	4.25	4.77	1	5
	2 25-34	26	4.54	.647	.127	4.28	4.80	3	5
q20	3 35+	29	4.90	.310	.058	4.78	5.01	4	5
	Total	104	4.63	.740	.073	4.48	4.77	1	5

q18	1 18 to 24	50	4.40	1.069	.151	4.10	4.70	1	5
	2 25-34	27	4.81	.483	.093	4.62	5.01	1	5
	3 35+	29	4.86	.441	.082	4.69	5.03	3	5
	Total	106	4.63	.832	.081	4.47	4.77	3	5
q19	1 18 to 24	49	4.53	.838	.120	4.29	4.77	1	5
	2 25-34	26	5.00	.000	.000	5.00	5.00	1	5
	3 35+	29	4.83	.759	.141	4.54	5.12	5	5
	Total	104	4.73	.724	.071	4.59	4.87	1	5
q20	1 18 to 24	50	3.08	1.496	.212	2.65	3.51	1	5
	2 25-34	27	2.48	1.369	.263	1.94	3.02	1	5
	3 35+	28	2.07	1.303	.246	1.57	2.58	1	5
	Total	105	2.66	1.466	.143	2.37	2.94	1	4
q21	1 18 to 24	50	2.06	1.252	.177	1.70	2.42	1	5
	2 25-34	26	2.12	1.211	.237	1.63	2.60	1	5
	3 35+	29	2.41	1.500	.279	1.84	2.98	1	4
	Total	105	2.17	1.312	.128	1.92	2.43	1	5
q22	1 18 to 24	50	1.86	1.178	.167	1.53	2.19	1	5
	2 25-34	27	2.04	1.315	.253	1.52	2.56	1	5
	3 35+	29	1.97	1.401	.260	1.43	2.50	1	5
	Total	106	1.93	1.267	.123	1.69	2.18	1	5
q23	1 18 to 24	50	1.88	1.058	.150	1.38	1.98	1	5
	2 25-34	27	1.93	1.072	.206	1.50	2.35	1	5
	3 35+	29	1.83	1.227	.228	1.36	2.29	1	5
	Total	106	1.78	1.104	.107	1.57	2.00	1	4
q24	1 18 to 24	46	4.72	.779	.115	4.49	4.95	1	5
	2 25-34	27	4.63	.742	.143	4.34	4.92	1	5
	3 35+	27	5.00	.000	.000	5.00	5.00	2	5
	Total	100	4.77	.664	.066	4.84	4.90	1	5
q25	1 18 to 24	46	4.87	.341	.050	4.77	4.97	1	5
	2 25-34	27	4.74	.447	.086	4.56	4.92	4	5
	3 35+	27	4.63	.967	.186	4.25	5.01	2	5
	Total	100	4.77	.601	.060	4.65	4.89	2	5
q26	1 18 to 24	46	3.11	1.509	.222	2.66	3.56	1	5
	2 25-34	27	2.59	1.448	.279	2.02	3.17	1	5
	3 35+	27	2.41	1.526	.294	1.80	3.01	1	5

q27	Total	100	2.78	1.515	.151	2.48	3.08	1	5
	1 18 to 24	.44	4.45	1.022	.154	4.14	4.77	1	5
	2 25-34	.25	4.44	.870	.174	4.08	4.80	2	5
	3 35+	.26	4.69	.884	.173	4.34	5.05	1	5
	Total	.95	4.52	.944	.097	4.32	4.71	1	5
q28	1 18 to 24	.46	1.80	1.167	.172	1.46	2.15	1	5
	2 25-34	.27	1.56	1.013	.195	1.15	1.96	1	5
	3 35+	.26	1.38	1.023	.201	.97	1.80	1	5
	Total	.99	1.63	1.093	.110	1.41	1.84	1	5
q29	1 18 to 24	.46	4.37	.799	.118	4.13	4.61	2	5
	2 25-34	.26	4.15	.967	.190	3.76	4.54	2	5
	3 35+	.26	4.62	.852	.167	4.27	4.96	1	5
	Total	.98	4.38	.868	.088	4.20	4.55	1	5
q30	1 18 to 24	.46	2.20	1.455	.214	1.76	2.63	1	5
	2 25-34	.27	1.96	1.160	.223	1.50	2.42	1	5
	3 35+	.25	1.32	.748	.150	1.01	1.63	1	4
	Total	.98	1.91	1.269	.128	1.65	2.16	1	5
q31	1 18 to 24	.45	4.04	1.261	.188	3.67	4.42	1	5
	2 25-34	.27	3.93	1.072	.206	3.50	4.35	1	5
	3 35+	.26	4.46	1.240	.243	3.96	4.96	1	5
	Total	.98	4.12	1.212	.122	3.88	4.37	1	5
q32	1 18 to 24	.45	3.49	1.199	.179	3.13	3.85	1	5
	2 25-34	.26	3.12	1.211	.237	2.63	3.60	1	5
	3 35+	.24	3.50	1.668	.341	2.80	4.20	1	5
	Total	.95	3.39	1.331	.137	3.12	3.66	1	5
q33	1 18 to 24	.44	3.77	1.179	.178	3.41	4.13	1	5
	2 25-34	.27	3.67	.877	.169	3.32	4.01	1	5
	3 35+	.26	2.85	1.223	.240	2.35	3.34	1	5
	Total	.97	3.49	1.174	.119	3.26	3.73	1	5
q34	1 18 to 24	.46	4.46	.959	.141	4.17	4.74	1	5
	2 25-34	.25	4.52	.714	.143	4.23	4.81	2	5
	3 35+	.26	4.88	.326	.064	4.75	5.02	4	5
	Total	.97	4.59	.787	.080	4.43	4.75	1	5
q35	1 18 to 24	.45	3.53	1.392	.207	3.12	3.95	1	5
	2 25-34	.27	3.04	1.315	.253	2.52	3.56	1	5
	3 35+	.26	3.62	1.267	.249	3.10	4.13	1	5

q36	Total: 1 18 to 24 2 25-34 3 35+	98 46 27 26	3.42 3.96 3.81 4.42	1.346 1.210 1.241 .902	.136 .178 .239 .177	3.15 3.60 3.32 4.06	3.69 4.32 4.31 4.79	1 1 1 2	5 5 5 5
q37	Total: 1 18 to 24 2 25-34 3 35+	99 46 27 26	4.04 3.43 3.30 2.96	1.160 1.393 1.265 1.371	.117 .205 .244 .269	3.81 3.02 2.80 2.41	4.27 3.85 3.80 3.52	1 1 1 1	5 5 5 5
q38	Total: 1 18 to 24 2 25-34 3 35+	99 46 27 26	3.27 2.87 2.78 1.69	1.354 1.529 1.553 1.379	.136 .225 .299 .270	3.00 2.42 2.16 1.14	3.54 3.32 3.39 2.25	1 1 1 1	5 5 5 5
q39	Total: 1 18 to 24 2 25-34 3 35+	99 46 27 26	2.54 3.67 3.48 4.12	1.567 1.384 1.369 1.275	.157 .197 .263 .250	2.22 3.28 2.94 3.60	2.85 4.07 4.02 4.63	1 1 1 1	5 5 5 5
q40	Total: 1 18 to 24 2 25-34 3 35+	99 46 27 26	3.74 4.57 4.67 4.92	1.337 .958 .679 .272	.134 .141 .131 .053	3.47 4.28 4.40 4.81	4.00 4.85 4.94 5.03	1 1 2 4	5 5 5 5
q41	Total: 1 18 to 24 2 25-34 3 35+	99 46 27 26	4.69 4.00 3.81 4.58	.765 1.011 1.075 .578	.077 .149 .207 .113	4.53 3.70 3.39 4.34	4.84 4.30 4.24 4.81	1 1 2 3	5 5 5 5
Merged q8 and q8a responses	Total: 1 18 to 24 2 25-34 3 35+	99 46 25 29	4.10 1.39 1.44 1.28	.974 .881 1.003 .922	.088 .130 .201 .171	3.91 1.13 1.03 .93	4.30 1.65 1.85 1.63	1 1 1 1	5 4 4 4
Merged q9 and q9a responses	Total: 1 18 to 24 2 25-34 3 35+	100 49 26 28	1.37 4.78 4.65 4.79	.917 .621 .892 .787	.092 .089 .175 .149	1.19 4.60 4.29 4.48	1.55 4.95 5.01 5.09	1 2 2 1	5 5 5 5
	Total:	103	4.75	.737	.073	4.60	4.89	1	5

## Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
q1	4.484	2	102	.014
q2	.051	2	102	.950
q3	12.274	2	101	.000
q4	6.781	2	103	.002
q5	.264	2	103	.769
q6	.241	2	103	.786
q7	3.421	2	100	.037
q10	1.739	2	102	.181
q11	.725	2	102	.487
q12	1.367	2	101	.260
q13	2.396	2	103	.096
q14	3.484	2	102	.034
q15	1.383	2	101	.256
q16	.002	2	100	.998
q17	10.755	2	101	.000
q18	11.348	2	103	.000
q19	11.574	2	101	.000
q20	1.684	2	102	.191
q21	3.604	2	102	.031
q22	.469	2	103	.627
q23	.944	2	103	.393
q24	10.305	2	97	.000
q25	7.662	2	97	.001
q26	.235	2	97	.791
q27	.940	2	92	.394
q28	1.167	2	96	.316
q29	.630	2	95	.535
q30	8.543	2	95	.000
q31	.558	2	95	.574
q32	4.224	2	92	.018
q33	4.096	2	94	.020
q34	9.844	2	94	.000
q35	.649	2	95	.525
q36	1.772	2	96	.175
q37	.118	2	96	.889
q38	2.562	2	96	.082
q39	.621	2	96	.540
q40	7.728	2	96	.001
q41	1.887	2	96	.157

Merged q8 and q8a responses	.670	2	97	.514
Merged q9 and q9a responses	1.135	2	100	.325

## ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
q1	Between Groups	2.804	2	1.402	.769	.466
	Within Groups	185.957	102	1.823		
	Total	188.762	104			
q2	Between Groups	.527	2	.264	.127	.881
	Within Groups	212.101	102	2.079		
	Total	212.629	104			
q3	Between Groups	.892	2	.446	3.282	.042
	Within Groups	13.723	101	.136		
	Total	14.615	103			
q4	Between Groups	.696	2	.348	1.830	.166
	Within Groups	19.578	103	.190		
	Total	20.274	105			
q5	Between Groups	2.713	2	1.357	.534	.588
	Within Groups	261.410	103	2.538		
	Total	264.123	105			
q6	Between Groups	1.421	2	.710	.323	.725
	Within Groups	226.542	103	2.199		
	Total	227.962	105			
q7	Between Groups	5.559	2	2.779	1.755	.178
	Within Groups	158.403	100	1.584		
	Total	163.961	102			
q10	Between Groups	1.090	2	.545	.662	.518
	Within Groups	83.901	102	.823		
	Total	84.990	104			
q11	Between Groups	1.350	2	.675	.593	.554
	Within Groups	116.041	102	1.138		
	Total	117.390	104			
q12	Between Groups	10.358	2	5.179	2.715	.071
	Within Groups	192.680	101	1.908		
	Total	203.038	103			

q13	Between Groups	3.512	2	1.756	.991	.375
	Within Groups	182.450	103	1.771		
	Total	185.962	105			
q14	Between Groups	10.453	2	5.227	2.942	.057
	Within Groups	181.204	102	1.777		
	Total	191.657	104			
q15	Between Groups	13.664	2	6.832	2.703	.072
	Within Groups	255.326	101	2.528		
	Total	268.990	103			
q16	Between Groups	2.579	2	1.290	.801	.452
	Within Groups	161.071	100	1.611		
	Total	163.650	102			
q17	Between Groups	2.979	2	1.489	2.817	.064
	Within Groups	53.396	101	.529		
	Total	56.375	103			
q18	Between Groups	5.129	2	2.564	3.912	.023
	Within Groups	67.522	103	.656		
	Total	72.651	105			
q19	Between Groups	4.120	2	2.060	4.174	.018
	Within Groups	49.842	101	.493		
	Total	53.962	103			
q20	Between Groups	19.379	2	9.690	4.838	.010
	Within Groups	204.278	102	2.003		
	Total	223.657	104			
q21	Between Groups	2.406	2	1.203	.695	.501
	Within Groups	176.508	102	1.730		
	Total	178.914	104			
q22	Between Groups	.589	2	.295	.181	.835
	Within Groups	167.948	103	1.631		
	Total	168.538	105			
q23	Between Groups	1.140	2	.570	.463	.631
	Within Groups	126.870	103	1.232		
	Total	128.009	105			
q24	Between Groups	2.088	2	1.044	2.433	.093
	Within Groups	41.622	97	.429		
	Total	43.710	99			
q25	Between Groups	1.011	2	.506	1.413	.248
	Within Groups	34.699	97	.358		
	Total	35.710	99			



q26	Between Groups	9.666	2	4.833	2.156	.121
	Within Groups	217.494	97	2.242		
	Total	227.160	99			
q27	Between Groups	1.119	2	.559	.623	.539
	Within Groups	82.608	92	.898		
	Total	83.726	94			
q28	Between Groups	3.112	2	1.556	1.310	.275
	Within Groups	114.060	96	1.188		
	Total	117.172	98			
q29	Between Groups	2.775	2	1.387	1.876	.159
	Within Groups	70.256	95	.740		
	Total	73.031	97			
q30	Between Groups	12.531	2	6.266	4.144	.019
	Within Groups	143.642	95	1.512		
	Total	156.173	97			
q31	Between Groups	4.306	2	2.153	1.480	.233
	Within Groups	138.225	95	1.455		
	Total	142.531	97			
q32	Between Groups	2.691	2	1.346	.755	.473
	Within Groups	163.898	92	1.782		
	Total	166.589	94			
q33	Between Groups	15.136	2	7.568	6.074	.003
	Within Groups	117.112	94	1.246		
	Total	132.247	96			
q34	Between Groups	3.198	2	1.599	2.670	.075
	Within Groups	56.307	94	.599		
	Total	59.505	96			
q35	Between Groups	5.530	2	2.765	1.542	.219
	Within Groups	170.317	95	1.793		
	Total	175.847	97			
q36	Between Groups	5.505	2	2.753	2.092	.129
	Within Groups	126.333	96	1.316		
	Total	131.838	98			
q37	Between Groups	3.741	2	1.870	1.021	.364
	Within Groups	175.896	96	1.832		
	Total	179.636	98			
q38	Between Groups	25.204	2	12.602	5.616	.005
	Within Groups	215.423	96	2.244		
	Total	240.626	98			

q39	Between Groups	5.668	2	2.834	1.605	.206
	Within Groups	169.503	96	1.766		
	Total	175.172	98			
q40	Between Groups	2.142	2	1.071	1.865	.161
	Within Groups	55.151	96	.574		
	Total	57.293	98			
q41	Between Groups	8.570	2	4.285	4.873	.010
	Within Groups	84.420	96	.879		
	Total	92.990	98			
Merge d q8 and q8a respo nses	Between Groups	.400	2	.200	.234	.792
	Within Groups	82.910	97	.855		
	Total	83.310	99			
Merge d q9 and q9a respo nses	Between Groups	.307	2	.154	.279	.757
	Within Groups	55.130	100	.551		
	Total	55.437	102			

APPENDIX G  
T-TESTS/ANOVA BY GENDER-SLAS

**T-Tests by Gender  
Group Statistics**

	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
q1	male	25	2.92	1.352	.270
	female	80	3.08	1.339	.150
q2	male	25	2.20	1.190	.238
	female	80	3.11	1.423	.159
q3	male	25	4.92	.277	.055
	female	79	4.87	.404	.045
q4	male	25	4.84	.473	.095
	female	81	4.84	.432	.048
q5	male	25	3.60	1.780	.356
	female	81	3.17	1.531	.170
q6	male	25	3.16	1.434	.287
	female	81	2.90	1.471	.163
q7	male	23	1.87	1.058	.221
	female	80	2.06	1.325	.148
Merged q8 and q8a responses	male	23	1.65	1.071	.223
	female	77	1.30	.859	.098
Merged q9 and q9a responses	male	23	4.57	.945	.197
	female	80	4.80	.664	.074
q10	male	25	4.28	1.137	.227
	female	80	4.43	.823	.092
q11	male	25	1.56	1.044	.209
	female	80	1.59	1.076	.120
q12	male	25	2.68	1.376	.275
	female	79	2.59	1.428	.161
q13	male	25	2.08	1.382	.276
	female	81	2.00	1.323	.147
q14	male	25	1.96	1.241	.248
	female	80	2.09	1.398	.156
q15	male	25	3.04	1.620	.324
	female	79	3.03	1.625	.183
q16	male	24	4.04	1.233	.252
	female	79	4.10	1.267	.143
q17	male	25	4.48	.653	.131
	female	79	4.67	.763	.086
q18	male	25	4.36	.995	.199
	female	81	4.73	.742	.082
q19	male	24	4.75	.442	.090
	female	80	4.74	.787	.088
q20	male	25	3.36	1.319	.264
	female	80	2.43	1.439	.161

	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
q21	male	25	2.28	1.370	.274
	female	80	2.13	1.306	.146
q22	male	25	1.84	.943	.189
	female	81	1.95	1.359	.151
q23	male	25	2.24	1.363	.273
	female	81	1.63	.980	.109
q24	male	23	4.57	.896	.187
	female	77	4.83	.571	.065
q25	male	23	4.78	.422	.088
	female	77	4.77	.647	.074
q26	male	23	3.39	1.406	.293
	female	77	2.61	1.523	.174
q27	male	23	4.26	1.054	.220
	female	72	4.65	.790	.093
q28	male	23	2.00	1.348	.281
	female	76	1.47	.945	.108
q29	male	23	4.35	.714	.149
	female	75	4.39	.914	.106
q30	male	22	2.18	1.296	.276
	female	76	1.82	1.262	.145
q31	male	23	4.09	1.240	.259
	female	75	4.13	1.212	.140
q32	male	23	3.57	1.121	.234
	female	72	3.33	1.394	.164
q33	male	23	4.22	.951	.198
	female	74	3.32	1.136	.132
q34	male	23	4.61	.722	.151
	female	74	4.58	.811	.094
q35	male	23	3.04	1.430	.298
	female	75	3.55	1.298	.150
q36	male	23	4.30	.974	.203
	female	76	4.00	1.189	.136
q37	male	23	3.74	1.137	.237
	female	76	3.14	1.383	.159
q38	male	23	3.04	1.609	.336
	female	76	2.36	1.503	.172
q39	male	23	3.48	1.442	.301
	female	76	3.86	1.293	.148
q40	male	23	4.74	.752	.157
	female	76	4.67	.773	.089
q41	male	23	3.96	.767	.160
	female	76	4.14	1.029	.118

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
q1	Equal variances assumed	.061	.805	-.504	103	.615	-.155	.307	-.765	.455
	Equal variances not assumed			-.502	39.832	.619	-.155	.309	-.780	.470
q2	Equal variances assumed	9.673	.002	-2.902	103	.005	-.913	.314	-1.536	-.289
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.187	47.361	.003	-.913	.286	-1.488	-.337
q3	Equal variances assumed	1.257	.265	.537	102	.592	.047	.087	-.125	.219
	Equal variances not assumed			.650	59.001	.518	.047	.072	-.097	.190
q4	Equal variances assumed	.003	.957	.005	104	.996	.000	.101	-.200	.201
	Equal variances not assumed			.005	37.218	.996	.000	.106	-.214	.215
q5	Equal variances assumed	2.789	.098	1.173	104	.244	.427	.364	-.295	1.149
	Equal variances not assumed			1.083	35.664	.286	.427	.394	-.373	1.227
q6	Equal variances assumed	.505	.479	.773	104	.441	.259	.335	-.405	.922
	Equal variances not assumed			.784	40.836	.438	.259	.330	-.408	.926

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
q7	Equal variances assumed	.1745	.189	-.641	101	.523	-.193	.301	-.790	.404
	Equal variances not assumed			-.726	43.846	.472	-.193	.266	-.728	.343
Merged q8 and q8a responses	Equal variances assumed	4.328	.040	1.633	98	.106	.353	.216	-.076	.783
	Equal variances not assumed			1.450	30.951	.157	.353	.244	-.144	.851
Merged q9 and q9a responses	Equal variances assumed	5.670	.019	-1.351	101	.180	-.235	.174	-.579	.110
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.115	28.521	.274	-.235	.211	-.666	.196
q10	Equal variances assumed	1.633	.204	-.698	103	.487	-.145	.208	-.557	.267
	Equal variances not assumed			-.591	32.243	.559	-.145	.245	-.645	.355
q11	Equal variances assumed	.149	.701	-.112	103	.911	-.028	.245	-.513	.458
	Equal variances not assumed			-.114	41.183	.910	-.028	.241	-.514	.459
q12	Equal variances assumed	.019	.891	.262	102	.794	.085	.325	-.559	.730
	Equal variances not assumed			.267	41.657	.791	.085	.319	-.558	.728
q13	Equal variances assumed	.057	.812	.262	104	.794	.080	.306	-.526	.686
	Equal variances not assumed			.256	38.568	.800	.080	.313	-.553	.713
q14	Equal variances assumed	1.774	.186	-.408	103	.684	-.128	.312	-.747	.492
	Equal variances not assumed			-.435	44.675	.666	-.128	.293	-.718	.463
q15	Equal variances assumed	.008	.929	.039	102	.969	.015	.373	-.724	.754
	Equal variances not assumed			.039	40.460	.969	.015	.372	-.737	.766

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
q16	Equal variances assumed	.159	.691	-.203	101	.839	-.060	.293	-.642	.523
	Equal variances not assumed			-.206	38.942	.838	-.060	.289	-.645	.525
q17	Equal variances assumed	.321	.572	-1.126	102	.263	-.191	.170	-.527	.145
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.221	46.548	.228	-.191	.156	-.505	.124
q18	Equal variances assumed	5.500	.021	-1.994	104	.049	-.368	.185	-.735	-.002
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.710	32.653	.097	-.368	.215	-.807	.070
q19	Equal variances assumed	.280	.598	.074	102	.941	.013	.169	-.322	.347
	Equal variances not assumed			.099	69.292	.921	.013	.126	-.239	.264
q20	Equal variances assumed	.865	.354	2.890	103	.005	-.935	.323	.293	1.577
	Equal variances not assumed			3.026	43.344	.004	-.935	.309	.312	1.558
q21	Equal variances assumed	.135	.714	.512	103	.610	.155	.303	-.445	.755
	Equal variances not assumed			.499	38.623	.620	.155	.310	-.473	.783
q22	Equal variances assumed	5.206	.025	-.379	104	.705	-.111	.292	-.689	.468
	Equal variances not assumed			-.458	57.522	.649	-.111	.242	-.594	.373
q23	Equal variances assumed	8.754	.004	2.469	104	.015	.610	.247	.120	1.101
	Equal variances not assumed			2.080	32.036	.046	.610	.293	.013	1.208
q24	Equal variances assumed	7.890	.006	-1.700	98	.092	-.266	.156	-.576	.044
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.345	27.553	.190	-.266	.198	-.671	.140
q25	Equal variances assumed	.244	.622	.114	98	.909	.016	.143	-.268	.301
	Equal variances not assumed			.143	55.797	.887	.016	.115	-.214	.246



		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
q26	Equal variances assumed	.806	.372	2.194	98	.031	.781	.356	.075	1.487
	Equal variances not assumed			2.292	38.754	.027	.781	.341	.092	1.470
q27	Equal variances assumed	2.542	.114	-1.903	93	.060	-.392	.206	-.801	.017
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.642	30.306	.111	-.392	.239	-.879	.095
q28	Equal variances assumed	4.750	.032	2.106	97	.038	.526	.250	.030	1.022
	Equal variances not assumed			1.747	28.836	.091	.526	.301	-.090	1.143
q29	Equal variances assumed	.615	.435	-.187	96	.852	-.039	.208	-.451	.374
	Equal variances not assumed			-.213	46.182	.832	-.039	.182	-.406	.328
q30	Equal variances assumed	.578	.449	1.191	96	.237	.366	.307	-.244	.976
	Equal variances not assumed			1.173	33.403	.249	.366	.312	-.268	1.000
q31	Equal variances assumed	.001	.977	-.160	96	.873	-.046	.290	-.623	.530
	Equal variances not assumed			-.158	35.860	.876	-.046	.294	-.643	.550
q32	Equal variances assumed	2.991	.087	.725	93	.470	.232	.320	-.403	.867
	Equal variances not assumed			.812	45.652	.421	.232	.286	-.343	.807
q33	Equal variances assumed	2.413	.124	3.413	95	.001	.893	.262	.374	1.413
	Equal variances not assumed			3.747	43.260	.001	.893	.238	.413	1.374
q34	Equal variances assumed	.198	.657	.146	95	.884	.028	.189	-.347	.403
	Equal variances not assumed			.155	40.733	.877	.028	.178	-.331	.387
q35	Equal variances assumed	1.080	.301	-1.589	96	.115	-.503	.317	-1.132	.126
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.508	33.878	.141	-.503	.334	-1.181	.175
q36	Equal variances assumed	.645	.424	1.118	97	.266	.304	.272	-.236	.845

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	Equal variances not assumed			1.244	43.705	.220	.304	.245	-.189	.797
q37	Equal variances assumed	6.316	.014	1.876	97	.064	.594	.317	-.034	1.223
	Equal variances not assumed			2.084	43.549	.043	.594	.285	.019	1.169
q38	Equal variances assumed	.312	.578	1.893	97	.061	.688	.364	-.033	1.410
	Equal variances not assumed			1.825	34.447	.077	.688	.377	-.078	1.454
q39	Equal variances assumed	1.505	.223	-1.193	97	.236	-.377	.316	-1.004	.250
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.125	33.432	.269	-.377	.335	-1.059	.305
q40	Equal variances assumed	.171	.680	.372	97	.710	.068	.183	-.295	.431
	Equal variances not assumed			.378	37.198	.708	.068	.180	-.297	.433
q41	Equal variances assumed	2.805	.097	-.810	97	.420	-.188	.232	-.649	.273
	Equal variances not assumed			-.947	48.261	.349	-.188	.199	-.588	.212

APPENDIX H

T-TESTS/ANOVA BY FIRST IN FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE-SLAS

## Group Statistics

	FIRSTINFAM	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
q1	1 Yes	29	3.03	1.267	.235
	2 No	76	3.08	1.383	.159
q2	1 Yes	29	3.07	1.387	.258
	2 No	76	2.82	1.449	.166
q3	1 Yes	29	4.97	.186	.034
	2 No	75	4.85	.425	.049
q4	1 Yes	29	4.86	.441	.082
	2 No	77	4.83	.441	.050
q5	1 Yes	29	3.38	1.474	.274
	2 No	77	3.22	1.643	.187
q6	1 Yes	29	2.62	1.265	.235
	2 No	77	3.10	1.527	.174
q7	1 Yes	29	2.17	1.365	.253
	2 No	74	1.97	1.227	.143
Merged q8 and q8a responses	1 Yes	27	1.48	1.014	.195
	2 No	74	1.34	.880	.102
Merged q9 and q9a responses	1 Yes	28	4.82	.612	.116
	2 No	75	4.72	.781	.090
q10	1 Yes	29	4.45	.572	.106
	2 No	76	4.37	1.005	.115
q11	1 Yes	29	1.55	.910	.169
	2 No	76	1.61	1.120	.129
q12	1 Yes	28	2.39	1.370	.259
	2 No	76	2.68	1.426	.164
q13	1 Yes	29	2.38	1.568	.291
	2 No	77	1.88	1.214	.138
q14	1 Yes	29	2.38	1.590	.295
	2 No	76	1.92	1.252	.144
q15	1 Yes	29	3.34	1.696	.315
	2 No	75	2.91	1.578	.182
q16	1 Yes	27	4.15	1.262	.243
	2 No	77	4.04	1.272	.145
q17	1 Yes	28	4.71	.535	.101
	2 No	76	4.59	.803	.092
q18	1 Yes	29	4.72	.528	.098
	2 No	77	4.58	.923	.105
q19	1 Yes	28	4.68	.819	.155
	2 No	76	4.75	.690	.079
q20	1 Yes	28	3.00	1.440	.272
	2 No	77	2.56	1.455	.166
q21	1 Yes	29	2.34	1.370	.254
	2 No	77	2.09	1.289	.147

q22	1 Yes	29	2.17	1.391	.258
	2 No	77	1.84	1.215	.138
q23	1 Yes	29	1.72	1.066	.198
	2 No	77	1.79	1.128	.129
q24	1 Yes	28	4.82	.476	.090
	2 No	72	4.75	.727	.086
q25	1 Yes	28	4.71	.659	.124
	2 No	72	4.79	.580	.068
q26	1 Yes	28	3.00	1.540	.291
	2 No	72	2.72	1.531	.180
q27	1 Yes	26	4.65	.689	.135
	2 No	70	4.47	1.018	.122
q28	1 Yes	28	1.79	1.258	.238
	2 No	71	1.56	1.024	.122
q29	1 Yes	28	4.61	.497	.094
	2 No	71	4.30	.962	.114
q30	1 Yes	28	2.04	1.319	.249
	2 No	70	1.86	1.254	.150
q31	1 Yes	28	4.25	.967	.183
	2 No	70	4.09	1.305	.156
q32	1 Yes	27	3.52	1.252	.241
	2 No	68	3.40	1.351	.164
q33	1 Yes	28	3.82	.723	.137
	2 No	69	3.38	1.307	.157
q34	1 Yes	27	4.70	.465	.090
	2 No	71	4.55	.875	.104
q35	1 Yes	28	3.32	1.335	.252
	2 No	70	3.43	1.347	.161
q36	1 Yes	28	3.79	1.101	.208
	2 No	71	4.14	1.175	.139
q37	1 Yes	28	3.32	1.389	.263
	2 No	71	3.24	1.347	.160
q38	1 Yes	28	2.64	1.545	.292
	2 No	71	2.48	1.575	.187
q39	1 Yes	28	3.86	1.268	.240
	2 No	71	3.75	1.339	.159
q40	1 Yes	28	4.79	.499	.094
	2 No	71	4.65	.847	.100
q41	1 Yes	28	4.07	1.086	.205
	2 No	71	4.13	.940	.112

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Upper	Lower
q1	Equal variances assumed	1.399	.240	-.151	103	.881	-.044	.295	-.630	.541
	Equal variances not assumed			-.157	55.007	.876	-.044	.284	-.613	.524
q2	Equal variances assumed	.517	.474	.810	103	.420	.253	.313	-.367	.873
	Equal variances not assumed			.826	52.755	.413	.253	.307	-.362	.868
q3	Equal variances assumed	8.483	.004	1.368	102	.174	.112	.082	-.051	.275
	Equal variances not assumed			1.869	100.436	.064	.112	.060	-.007	.231
q4	Equal variances assumed	.323	.571	.321	104	.749	.031	.096	-.160	.222
	Equal variances not assumed			.321	50.453	.749	.031	.096	-.162	.224
q5	Equal variances assumed	3.084	.082	.455	104	.650	.159	.348	-.533	.850
	Equal variances not assumed			.478	55.847	.634	.159	.332	-.506	.823
q6	Equal variances assumed	3.143	.079	-1.518	104	.132	-.483	.318	-1.114	.148
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.653	60.435	.104	-.483	.292	-1.068	.102
q7	Equal variances assumed	1.268	.263	.719	101	.474	.199	.278	-.351	.750
	Equal variances not assumed			.686	46.762	.496	.199	.291	-.386	.785
Merged q8 and q8a responses	Equal variances assumed	1.474	.228	.697	99	.488	.144	.206	-.266	.553
	Equal variances not assumed			.652	41.148	.518	.144	.220	-.301	.589

	Merged q9 and q9a responses	Equal variances assumed	1.477	.227	.619	101	.537	.101	.164	-.223	.426
		Equal variances not assumed			.692	61.521	.492	.101	.147	-.192	.395
q10		Equal variances assumed	2.370	.127	.403	103	.688	.080	.198	-.313	.473
		Equal variances not assumed			.509	87.419	.612	.080	.157	-.232	.391
q11		Equal variances assumed	.662	.418	-.230	103	.819	-.054	.233	-.516	.408
		Equal variances not assumed			-.252	62.037	.802	-.054	.212	-.478	.371
q12		Equal variances assumed	1.740	.190	-.934	102	.353	-.291	.312	-.910	.327
		Equal variances not assumed			-.951	49.974	.346	-.291	.306	-.906	.324
q13		Equal variances assumed	7.982	.006	1.727	104	.087	.496	.287	-.073	1.066
		Equal variances not assumed			1.539	41.290	.131	.496	.322	-.155	1.147
q14		Equal variances assumed	7.145	.009	1.553	103	.124	.458	.295	-.127	1.044
		Equal variances not assumed			1.395	41.927	.170	.458	.328	-.205	1.121
q15		Equal variances assumed	.518	.473	1.243	102	.217	.438	.352	-.261	1.137
		Equal variances not assumed			1.204	47.859	.234	.438	.364	-.294	1.170
q16		Equal variances assumed	.000	.991	.385	102	.701	.109	.284	-.454	.672
		Equal variances not assumed			.386	45.820	.701	.109	.283	-.460	.679
q17		Equal variances assumed	2.236	.138	.745	102	.458	.122	.164	-.203	.447
		Equal variances not assumed			.894	72.513	.374	.122	.137	-.150	.395
q18		Equal variances assumed	2.886	.092	.768	104	.444	.140	.182	-.221	.500
		Equal variances not assumed			.972	87.090	.334	.140	.144	-.146	.425

q19	Equal variances assumed	.509	.477	-.445	102	.658	-.071	.161	-.390	.247
	Equal variances not assumed			-.411	41.956	.683	-.071	.174	-.422	.279
q20	Equal variances assumed	.092	.762	1.379	103	.171	.442	.320	-.194	1.077
	Equal variances not assumed			1.385	48.407	.172	.442	.319	-.199	1.082
q21	Equal variances assumed	.640	.426	.889	104	.376	.254	.286	-.313	.821
	Equal variances not assumed			.864	47.839	.392	.254	.294	-.337	.845
q22	Equal variances assumed	2.981	.087	1.192	104	.236	.328	.275	-.218	.875
	Equal variances not assumed			1.120	45.036	.268	.328	.293	-.262	.918
q23	Equal variances assumed	.002	.963	-.281	104	.779	-.068	.242	-.548	.412
	Equal variances not assumed			-.288	53.128	.774	-.068	.236	-.541	.405
q24	Equal variances assumed	.972	.327	.481	98	.632	.071	.149	-.223	.366
	Equal variances not assumed			.575	74.834	.567	.071	.124	-.176	.319
q25	Equal variances assumed	.868	.354	-.577	98	.566	-.077	.134	-.344	.189
	Equal variances not assumed			-.545	44.202	.589	-.077	.142	-.364	.209
q26	Equal variances assumed	.173	.678	.813	98	.418	.278	.342	-.400	.956
	Equal variances not assumed			.811	49.006	.421	.278	.342	-.410	.966
q27	Equal variances assumed	2.547	.114	.844	94	.401	.182	.216	-.247	.612
	Equal variances not assumed			1.003	66.130	.320	.182	.182	-.181	.546
q28	Equal variances assumed	1.270	.263	.910	97	.365	.222	.244	-.262	.707
	Equal variances not assumed			.833	41.870	.410	.222	.267	-.317	.761

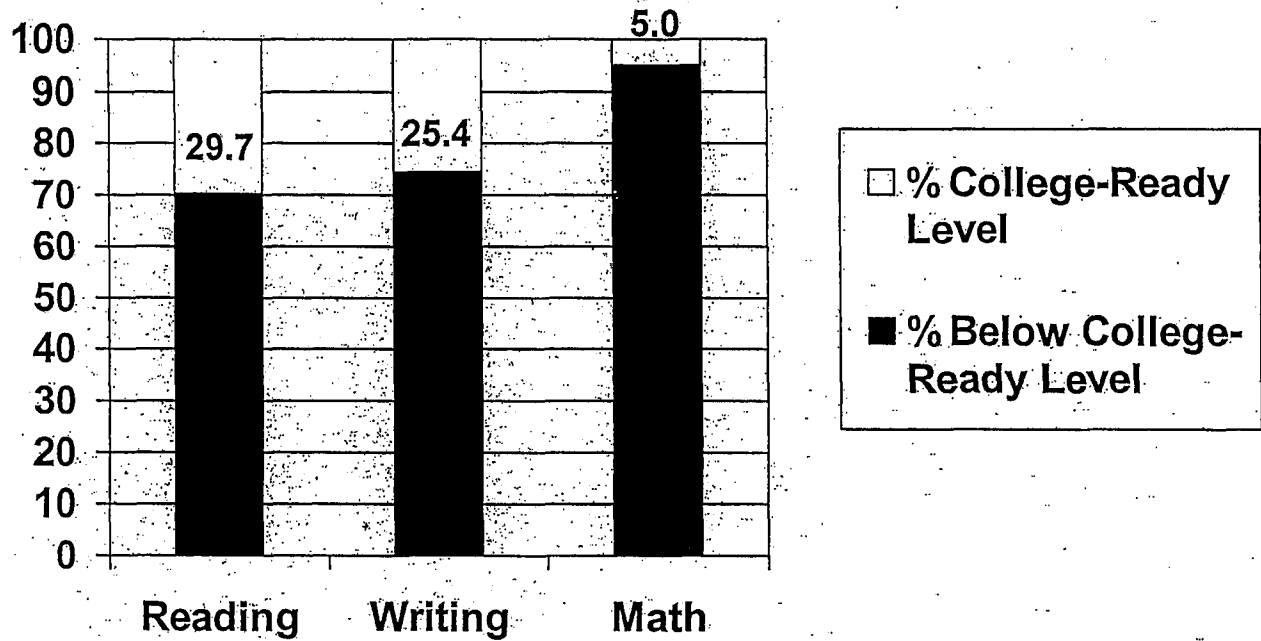


q29	Equal variances assumed	7.583	.007	1.626	97	.107	.311	.192	-.069	.692
	Equal variances not assumed			2.105	89.938	.038	.311	.148	.018	.605
q30	Equal variances assumed	.682	.411	.627	96	.532	.179	.285	-.386	.744
	Equal variances not assumed			.614	47.634	.542	.179	.291	-.406	.764
q31	Equal variances assumed	1.710	.194	.603	96	.548	.164	.273	-.377	.706
	Equal variances not assumed			.684	66.787	.496	.164	.240	-.315	.644
q32	Equal variances assumed	.515	.475	.403	93	.688	.121	.301	-.477	.720
	Equal variances not assumed			.417	51.347	.678	.121	.291	-.463	.706
q33	Equal variances assumed	21.942	.000	1.694	95	.093	.445	.262	-.076	.966
	Equal variances not assumed			2.134	86.047	.036	.445	.208	.030	.859
q34	Equal variances assumed	4.031	.047	.870	96	.387	.154	.178	-.198	.507
	Equal variances not assumed			1.126	85.499	.263	.154	.137	-.118	.427
q35	Equal variances assumed	.097	.756	-.357	96	.722	-.107	.300	-.703	.489
	Equal variances not assumed			-.358	50.206	.722	-.107	.299	-.708	.494
q36	Equal variances assumed	.012	.915	-1.378	97	.171	-.355	.258	-.866	.156
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.418	52.606	.162	-.355	.250	-.857	.147
q37	Equal variances assumed	.045	.833	.270	97	.787	.082	.303	-.520	.684
	Equal variances not assumed			.267	48.165	.791	.082	.307	-.536	.700
q38	Equal variances assumed	.338	.562	.469	97	.640	.164	.350	-.530	.858
	Equal variances not assumed			.473	50.418	.638	.164	.347	-.532	.860

q39	Equal variances assumed	.457	.501	.376	97	.708	.111	.294	-.474	.695
	Equal variances not assumed			.385	52.061	.702	.111	.288	-.466	.688
q40	Equal variances assumed	2.555	.113	.806	97	.422	.138	.171	-.201	.477
	Equal variances not assumed			1.000	82.283	.320	.138	.138	-.136	.412
q41	Equal variances assumed	.529	.469	-.252	97	.801	-.055	.219	-.491	.380
	Equal variances not assumed			-.237	43.830	.814	-.055	.234	-.526	.416

APPENDIX I  
PERCENTAGE OF CPS GRADUATES WHO SCORED  
BELOW COLLEGE-READY LEVEL

### Percentage of CPS Graduates Who Scored Below College-Ready Level in Reading, Writing, and Math Placement Tests at CCC, Fall 2004-6



APPENDIX J  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

## AGE FREQUENCY TABLE

## STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18.00	1	.9	1.0	1.0
	19.00	12	11.1	11.5	12.5
	20.00	14	13.0	13.5	26.0
	21.00	6	5.6	5.8	31.7
	22.00	3	2.8	2.9	34.6
	23.00	5	4.6	4.8	39.4
	24.00	2	1.9	1.9	41.3
	25.00	6	5.6	5.8	47.1
	26.00	5	4.6	4.8	51.9
	27.00	2	1.9	1.9	53.8
	28.00	5	4.6	4.8	58.7
	29.00	3	2.8	2.9	61.5
	30.00	4	3.7	3.8	65.4
	31.00	2	1.9	1.9	67.3
	32.00	2	1.9	1.9	69.2
	33.00	2	1.9	1.9	71.2
	34.00	2	1.9	1.9	73.1
	35.00	1	.9	1.0	74.0
	36.00	6	5.6	5.8	79.8
	37.00	1	.9	1.0	80.8
	38.00	4	3.7	3.8	84.6
	39.00	2	1.9	1.9	86.5
	40.00	3	2.8	2.9	89.4
	45.00	1	.9	1.0	90.4
	46.00	1	.9	1.0	91.3
	47.00	1	.9	1.0	92.3
	50.00	3	2.8	2.9	95.2
	51.00	1	.9	1.0	96.2
	52.00	2	1.9	1.9	98.1
	56.00	1	.9	1.0	99.0
	61.00	1	.9	1.0	100.0
	Total	104	96.3	100.0	
Missing	System	4	3.7		
Total		108	100.0		

NOTE: This table was developed by subtracting the student's year of birth from 2006.

## DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS-MEANS IN MEAN ORDER

### STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
q3	106	3	5	4.89	.373
q4	108	3	5	4.84	.436
q9	59	1	5	4.80	.637
q25	102	2	5	4.77	.595
q24	102	1	5	4.77	.659
q19	106	1	5	4.74	.718
q40	101	1	5	4.69	.758
q9a	48	2	5	4.69	.829
q17	106	1	5	4.63	.735
q18	108	1	5	4.63	.827
q34	99	1	5	4.60	.781
q27	97	1	5	4.53	.936
q10	107	1	5	4.40	.899
q29	100	1	5	4.39	.863
q41	101	1	5	4.12	.972
q31	100	1	5	4.10	1.243
q16	105	1	5	4.08	1.261
q36	101	1	5	4.06	1.156
q39	101	1	5	3.76	1.335
q33	99	1	5	3.48	1.198
q32	97	1	5	3.42	1.337
q35	100	1	5	3.39	1.355
q37	101	1	5	3.29	1.352
q5	108	1	5	3.25	1.595
q1	107	1	5	3.04	1.352
q15	106	1	5	3.03	1.624
q6	108	1	5	2.96	1.472
q2	107	1	5	2.90	1.434
q26	102	1	5	2.78	1.526
q20	107	1	5	2.64	1.462
q12	106	1	5	2.59	1.406
q38	101	1	5	2.52	1.559
q21	107	1	5	2.15	1.309
q14	107	1	5	2.04	1.352
q7	105	1	5	2.01	1.260
q13	108	1	5	2.00	1.326
q22	108	1	5	1.92	1.261
q30	100	1	5	1.89	1.262
q23	108	1	5	1.77	1.099
q28	101	1	5	1.61	1.086
q11	107	1	5	1.58	1.055

q8a	47	1	5	1.47	.997
q8	57	1	4	1.33	.893
Valid N (listwise)	0				

## DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS MEANS IN ITEM ORDER

### STUDENT LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SURVEY

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
q1	107	1	5	3.04	1.352
q2	107	1	5	2.90	1.434
q3	106	3	5	4.89	.373
q4	108	3	5	4.84	.436
q5	108	1	5	3.25	1.595
q6	108	1	5	2.96	1.472
q7	105	1	5	2.01	1.260
q8	57	1	4	1.33	.893
q8a	47	1	5	1.47	.997
q9	59	1	5	4.80	.637
q9a	48	2	5	4.69	.829
q10	107	1	5	4.40	.899
q11	107	1	5	1.58	1.055
q12	106	1	5	2.59	1.406
q13	108	1	5	2.00	1.326
q14	107	1	5	2.04	1.352
q15	106	1	5	3.03	1.624
q16	105	1	5	4.08	1.261
q17	106	1	5	4.63	.735
q18	108	1	5	4.63	.827
q19	106	1	5	4.74	.718
q20	107	1	5	2.64	1.462
q21	107	1	5	2.15	1.309
q22	108	1	5	1.92	1.261
q23	108	1	5	1.77	1.099
q24	102	1	5	4.77	.659
q25	102	2	5	4.77	.595
q26	102	1	5	2.78	1.526
q27	97	1	5	4.53	.936
q28	101	1	5	1.61	1.086
q29	100	1	5	4.39	.863
q30	100	1	5	1.89	1.262
q31	100	1	5	4.10	1.243
q32	97	1	5	3.42	1.337
q33	99	1	5	3.48	1.198
q34	99	1	5	4.60	.781



q35	100	1	5	3.39	1.355
q36	101	1	5	4.06	1.156
q37	101	1	5	3.29	1.352
q38	101	1	5	2.52	1.559
q39	101	1	5	3.76	1.335
q40	101	1	5	4.69	.758
q41	101	1	5	4.12	.972
Valid N (listwise)	0				

## DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

### ANOVA AGE-ITEMS WITH UNEQUAL VARIANCE

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
q3	1 18 to 24	49	4.96	.200	.029	4.90	5.02	4	5
	2 25-34	26	4.73	.533	.105	4.52	4.95	3	5
	3 35+	29	4.90	.409	.076	4.74	5.05	3	5
	Total	104	4.88	.377	.037	4.81	4.96	3	5
q18	1 18 to 24	50	4.40	1.069	.151	4.10	4.70	1	5
	2 25-34	27	4.81	.483	.093	4.62	5.01	3	5
	3 35+	29	4.86	.441	.082	4.69	5.03	3	5
	Total	106	4.63	.832	.081	4.47	4.79	1	5
q19	1 18 to 24	49	4.53	.838	.120	4.29	4.77	1	5
	2 25-34	26	5.00	.000	.000	5.00	5.00	5	5
	3 35+	29	4.83	.759	.141	4.54	5.12	1	5
	Total	104	4.73	.724	.071	4.59	4.87	1	5
q30	1 18 to 24	46	2.20	1.455	.214	1.76	2.63	1	5
	2 25-34	27	1.96	1.160	.223	1.50	2.42	1	5
	3 35+	25	1.32	.748	.150	1.01	1.63	1	4
	Total	98	1.91	1.269	.128	1.65	2.16	1	5
q33	1 18 to 24	44	3.77	1.179	.178	3.41	4.13	1	5
	2 25-34	27	3.67	.877	.169	3.32	4.01	1	5
	3 35+	26	2.85	1.223	.240	2.35	3.34	1	5
	Total	97	3.49	1.174	.119	3.26	3.73	1	5

**Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
q3	12.274	2	101	.000
q18	11.348	2	103	.000
q19	11.574	2	101	.000
q30	8.543	2	95	.000
q33	4.096	2	94	.020

**ANOVA**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
q3	Between Groups	.892	2	.446	3.282	.042
	Within Groups	13.723	101	.136		
	Total	14.615	103			
q18	Between Groups	5.129	2	2.564	3.912	.023
	Within Groups	67.522	103	.656		
	Total	72.651	105			
q19	Between Groups	4.120	2	2.060	4.174	.018
	Within Groups	49.842	101	.493		
	Total	53.962	103			
q30	Between Groups	12.531	2	6.266	4.144	.019
	Within Groups	143.642	95	1.512		
	Total	156.173	97			
q33	Between Groups	15.136	2	7.568	6.074	.003
	Within Groups	117.112	94	1.246		
	Total	132.247	96			

**Post Hoc Tests**  
**Multiple Comparisons**

Tamhane

Dependent Variable	(I) AGE	(J) AGE	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
q3	1 18 to 24	2 25-34	.228	.108	.126	-.05	.50
		3 35+	.063	.081	.829	-.14	.27
	2 25-34	1 18 to 24	-.228	.108	.126	-.50	.05
		3 35+	-.166	.129	.500	-.49	.15
	3 35+	1 18 to 24	-.063	.081	.829	-.27	.14
		2 25-34	.166	.129	.500	-.15	.49
q18	1 18 to 24	2 25-34	-.415	.178	.065	-.85	.02
		3 35+	-.462(*)	.172	.027	-.88	-.04
	2 25-34	1 18 to 24	.415	.178	.065	-.02	.85
		3 35+	-.047	.124	.974	-.35	.26
	3 35+	1 18 to 24	.462(*)	.172	.027	.04	.88
		2 25-34	.047	.124	.974	-.26	.35
q19	1 18 to 24	2 25-34	-.469(*)	.120	.001	-.77	-.17
		3 35+	-.297	.185	.303	-.75	.16
	2 25-34	1 18 to 24	.469(*)	.120	.001	.17	.77
		3 35+	.172	.141	.546	-.19	.53
	3 35+	1 18 to 24	.297	.185	.303	-.16	.75
		2 25-34	-.172	.141	.546	-.53	.19
q30	1 18 to 24	2 25-34	.233	.310	.838	-.53	.99
		3 35+	.876(*)	.262	.004	.24	1.52
	2 25-34	1 18 to 24	-.233	.310	.838	-.99	.53
		3 35+	.643	.269	.062	-.02	1.31
	3 35+	1 18 to 24	-.876(*)	.262	.004	-1.52	-.24
		2 25-34	-.643	.269	.062	-1.31	.02
q33	1 18 to 24	2 25-34	.106	.245	.963	-.49	.71
		3 35+	.927(*)	.298	.009	.19	1.66
	2 25-34	1 18 to 24	-.106	.245	.963	-.71	.49
		3 35+	.821(*)	.293	.022	.09	1.55
	3 35+	1 18 to 24	-.927(*)	.298	.009	-1.66	-.19
		2 25-34	-.821(*)	.293	.022	-1.55	-.09

\*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

## DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

### ANOVA AGE-ITEMS WITH EQUAL VARIANCE

	N	Mean	Std.	Std.	95% Confidence		Mini-	Maxi-
			Devia-	Error	Interval for Mean		mum	mum
	Lower	Upper	tion	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
	Bound	Bound	Lower	Bound	Bound	Bound	Bound	Bound
q20 1 18	50	3.08	1.496	.212	2.65	3.51	1	5
to 24								
2 25-	27	2.48	1.369	.263	1.94	3.02	1	5
34								
3 35+	28	2.07	1.303	.246	1.57	2.58	1	4
Total	105	2.66	1.466	.143	2.37	2.94	1	5
q38 1 18	46	2.87	1.529	.225	2.42	3.32	1	5
to 24								
2 25-	27	2.78	1.553	.299	2.16	3.39	1	5
34								
3 35+	26	1.69	1.379	.270	1.14	2.25	1	5
Total	99	2.54	1.567	.157	2.22	2.85	1	5
q41 1 18	46	4.00	1.011	.149	3.70	4.30	1	5
to 24								
2 25-	27	3.81	1.075	.207	3.39	4.24	2	5
34								
3 35+	26	4.58	.578	.113	4.34	4.81	3	5
Total	99	4.10	.974	.098	3.91	4.30	1	5

#### Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene	df1	df2	Sig.
	Statistic			
q20	1.684	2	102	.191
q38	2.562	2	96	.082
q41	1.887	2	96	.157

#### ANOVA

		Sum of	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares				
q20	Between Groups	19.379	2	9.690	4.838	.010
	Within Groups	204.278	102	2.003		
	Total	223.657	104			
q38	Between Groups	25.204	2	12.602	5.616	.005
	Within Groups	215.423	96	2.244		
	Total	240.626	98			
q41	Between Groups	8.570	2	4.285	4.873	.010
	Within Groups	84.420	96	.879		
	Total	92.990	98			

**Post Hoc Tests**  
**Multiple Comparisons**

Scheffe

Dependent Variable	(I) AGE	(J) AGE	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound
q20	1 18 to 24	2 25-34	.599	.338	.213	-.24	1.44
		3 35+	1.009(*)	.334	.013	.18	1.84
	2 25-34	1 18 to 24	-.599	.338	.213	-1.44	.24
		3 35+	.410	.382	.563	-.54	1.36
	3 35+	1 18 to 24	-1.009(*)	.334	.013	-1.84	-.18
		2 25-34	-.410	.382	.563	-1.36	.54
q38	1 18 to 24	2 25-34	.092	.363	.969	-.81	.99
		3 35+	1.177(*)	.368	.008	.26	2.09
	2 25-34	1 18 to 24	-.092	.363	.969	-.99	.81
		3 35+	1.085(*)	.412	.035	.06	2.11
	3 35+	1 18 to 24	-1.177(*)	.368	.008	-2.09	-.26
		2 25-34	-1.085(*)	.412	.035	-2.11	-.06
q41	1 18 to 24	2 25-34	.185	.227	.718	-.38	.75
		3 35+	-.577(*)	.230	.048	-1.15	.00
	2 25-34	1 18 to 24	-.185	.227	.718	-.75	.38
		3 35+	-.762(*)	.258	.015	-1.40	-.12
	3 35+	1 18 to 24	.577(*)	.230	.048	.00	1.15
		2 25-34	.762(*)	.258	.015	.12	1.40

\*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

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## VITA

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