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FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD AFRICAN
AMERICAN LANGUAGE

By

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of
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ABSTRACT

Bidialectal African American families are caught in a Family Language Policy (FLP) dilemma in which the goals of belonging in African American communities, and feeling free and relaxed with language, conflict with parents' interactional, relational, and political goals of raising children who are accepted in the wider society as educated, respectful, and powerful. This study brings together research in FLP with research on race and language by looking at African American families and how they socialize their children into using AAL. Researching the relationship between racial identity and language and the role of racism in FLP for African American parents in particular focuses on a missing factor in many FLP studies, family-external racism. By expanding FLP from blanket determinations of success with their streamlining effects, the field can develop a more inclusive approach that blends families' linguistic goals, contribute to understanding how bidialectalism is intergenerationally experienced, and how systemic oppression and human agency interact in the family, as well as add depth and complexity to our understanding of AA families' language policy. To explore the intimate domain of language policy within the 10 AA family homes, qualitative methods – surveys, group family interviews, in-home recordings – and an ethnographic approach to investigating the families' language policy is employed. Interesting patterns emerged in their responses that lead to the suggestion that race and language are inseparable since they are linked to individuals' racial identity. This study concludes that if family language researchers are excluding racism as an external factor in their research analysis, whether implicitly or explicitly, they are not providing a comprehensive account of the rationale behind distinct language ideologies, planning, and practices, they are missing important theoretical and practical constructs, and they are limiting the understanding of what causes parents to make particular language decisions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The field of Applied Linguistics is slightly underdeveloped in the U.S. discourse on anti-racism. It is rather unclear as to what an anti-racist framework in Applied Linguistics would look like; however, by addressing African American (AA) families and Family Language Policy (FLP), this study illustrates how to merge the study of racism with language learning and multilingualism and dialecticism. This study is inspiring, knowing that it is necessary for the field of applied linguistics to include a broader research design and recruitment method in FLP studies that will divert linguists' attention from bilingual and multilingual families to more diverse families (i.e. African American families). With confidence, such a shift will move FLP researchers to start including racism, for it is a family-external factor that influences their language ideologies, planning, and practices. Therefore, there is an urgent need to address the lack of focus on race and racialization in FLP studies and its impact on families from disenfranchised and marginalized communities that practice the use of non-mainstream varieties of American English at home. Focusing on racial identity, racialization, and race on conjunction with language use and their role in families' language policy may raise awareness of linguistic discrimination and alleviate the racial stigmatization attached to the practice of African American Language (AAL).

The Problem

Bidialectal African American families are caught in a FLP dilemma in which the goals of belonging in African American communities, and feeling free and relaxed with language, conflict with parents' interactional, relational, and political goals of raising children who are accepted in the wider society as educated, respectful, and powerful. It is important for African

American parents engaged in language socialization to define their own linguistic goals and desires, from simply developing positive language attitudes, cultivating intra-familial relationships, intergenerationally transmitting cultural history, and supporting their family's success in literacy and education (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984). Parents draw on technology and demographic affordance to achieve their linguistic goals set for their children (Mirvahedi, Rajabi, & Aghaei, 2022) – to refine their language use whether it be their ethnic language, a mainstream language variety, or a language they value more than others. In general, parents value schooling, and desire for their children to have success in literacy and education, which links to language as linguistic competency is often a determiner of academic success (Lo & Kim, 2011). Parents' common goal of maintaining the family's livelihood generates mutual dependence that binds the family members together; for example, parents may count on each other to offer their children new opportunities to be linguistically success just as children typically rely on their parents to provide them with the resources to succeed (Wright, 2020). In the same light, parents trust in their children to carry out their family legacy and foster this familial continuation through the process of language socialization (Poveda, Jociles, & Rivas, 2014). Growing an intimate relationship between parents and children is a principle way of maintaining the family's livelihood (Shin, 2014). Additionally, a shared understanding of past and future stereotypes associated with language as a justification how they plan and practice language can results from close familial relationships (Agha, 2007). Relating to linguistic perceptions, parents' goals are important to focus on, for they impact how they go about expressing their linguistic beliefs, practices, and planning methods.

This study investigates Black parents' and children's perceptions toward African American language (AAL) use in the family and how they negotiate these goals and desires.

Current conversations about AAL and code-switching in public and family life consist of the discussion of discourse strategies, language planning, and contextual use (Boutte, Earick, & Jackson, 2021; Hendricks, Watson-Wales, & Reed, 2021; Johnson, Graves, Jones, Phillips, & Jacobs, 2022). African American families at times discuss their concerns surround language and race; capturing these intimate conversations may allow linguists to gain a better understand of families' decision-making process and how to plan to use language in particular contexts. During intra-familial interactions, it is important to employ intimate methods to better understand each other in that particular context of conversation (Gumperz, 1982) in order to effectively use sociolinguistic concepts to make and implement language policy decisions that aim to deal with linguistic and/or extra-linguistic issues (i.e., classism, racism, linguisticism) at a national or community level (Cooper, 1989), further preparing parents to adequately use language in society.

This study contributes to conversations about race and class by addressing African American parents from Memphis' perceptions towards AAL use across conversational contexts and the methods they employ (i.e., code-switching) to socialize and prepare their children to deal with racism. AAL spoken in Memphis is distinct and unique and this study dives into the context of how it is used in families at home. By expanding FLP from blanket determinations of success with their streamlining effects (Meek, 2011), the field can develop a more inclusive approach that blends families' linguistic goals (Macalister & Mirvahedi, 2017), contribute to understanding how bidialectalism is intergenerationally experienced, and how systemic oppression and human agency interact (Tuck, 2009) in the family, as well as add depth and complexity to our understanding of African American families' language policy. It is important for applied linguists to develop inclusive approaches that blend families' linguistic goals, even when investigating theoretical issues, because it can help researchers connect and engage with

diverse families when controversial topics are being discussed (i.e., racism and politics). There is value in understanding how bidialectalism is intergenerationally experienced since linguistics experiences shape ideologies, practices, and plans. In addition, studying how systemic oppression and human agency interact is relevant to the FLP in the sense that it sharpens linguists' focus on the ways in which oppression may be impacting families' mobility and their linguistic choices, making a difference in their lives. Lastly, to add depth and complexity to our understanding of Black families' language policy leads to an expansion of knowledge about diverse families' concerns when it comes to relevant external factors such as racism and politics and how these forces influence their beliefs, actions, and maintenance at home.

Studying African American families offers a unique lens onto the interactions of family external and family internal process. In relation to language use within the home and among family members, explicitly and overtly planning to provide a frame for examining child-caregiver interactions, parental language ideologies, and child language development (King & Fogle, 2017) is peculiar to African American families since broader societal attitudes and ideologies about language(s) and parenting influence the way Black parents go about making decisions for their household. In this study, I demonstrate how the stigmatization of dialectal language use and its attachment to particular racial/ethnic groups affects interlocutors' language ideologies, planning, and practices and that parents' linguistic concerns are tied to racism, making it an important family-external factor that FLP and socialization studies should consider.

African American Families and Language

African American families are an ethnic group including Americans with partial or total ancestry from Africa who are also referred to as Black Americans; however, it is important to note that not all Black Americans are African American. As of 2020, Black or African

Americans are the second largest racial minority, making up 12.1% of the United States, while White Americans are the racial and ethnic majority, with non-Hispanic whites representing 57.8% of the population; Hispanic and Latino Americans are the largest ethnic minority, comprising 18.7% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The term African American indicates descendants of enslaved Africans who were born in the United States; however, many African Americans also have European, Native American, and other ancestors as well. Focusing on the connection between FLP and AAL brings about the opportunity to discuss what it means to identify as African American/Black since linguists arguably understand that individuals' racial identity impact their ideologies towards language along with how they plan to use it at home (Balogun, 2020). Considering AAL as a part of being Black (Edwards, 2004) further suggests a need to review the social implications of being nationally classified as Black/African American. Being nationally recognized as Black ties into language policy since societal attitudes toward the race clearly influence how parents and children perceive themselves (Wilson, Hugenberg, & Rule, 2017). In general, self-perception may play a role in how one thinks about language (Silverstein, 1979), and how they use it with their family members and others (Pilotti & El Alaoui, 2017).

African American Language. There is a growing body of literature, recognizing the importance of AAL – a variety/dialect of American English generally spoken by urban working-class and by many bidialectal middle-class African Americans (Edwards, 2004). Often referred to by numerous names (e.g., slang, Ebonics, Black English Vernacular, African American English, African American Vernacular English), African American language has unique grammar, vocabulary, and accents, which differ from mainstream American English (MAE) (Grant, Oka, & Baker, 2009). It is important to note that many linguists try to avoid

using the term Ebonics, for it may be considered a colloquial, controversial term (Green, 2002). Alim (2002) explains that AAL has beckoned more debate on the Applied Linguistic and American sociolinguistic field than any other dialect in the U.S. The topic of AAL is at time deeply discussed by linguists because of the complex and intricate connection between language, race, culture, class, and education in the United States. Language in the African American is perceived by many individuals as a direct marker of a speaker's cultural background, political ideology, social class, and education level. AAL use is influenced by distinct factors, including geographical, educational, and socioeconomical background, and the formality of the social setting. Rather than being perceived as an inadequacy, AAL is now recognized by many as a distinct form of American English (Seymour, Bland-Stewart, & Green, 1998). For all practical purposes, speakers of AAL can understand and communicate in standard American English and mainstream American English.

Whilst grasping a better understanding of the FLP of African Americans, it is important to discuss the history of AAL since it has its place in American history as well. AAL's history has its origins in the Southern U.S., being created and spoken by enslaved Africans. According to Winford (2015), African and Caribbean-born slaves interacted through pidginized forms of English as a result of the variations in their native languages. African Americans' use of AAL is connected to their unique experiences of explicit discrimination that restricts access to institutions that underline the mainstream American culture, including schools (Stockman, 2010). Throughout history, this form of communication has remained a part of African American culture regardless of socioeconomic status, age, or gender with an assumption that many African Americans have used AAL at some point in their lifetime (Horton-Ikard & Miller, 2004). A couple of theories exist as to how AAL came about (Louden, 2000). The first is from a creolist

perspective, which explains that AAL is a descendent of the creolized version of English spoken by enslaved Africans within the U.S. Within this theory is the belief that this form of English was created because enslaved Africans did not have a unified form of language to speak. The second theory, the dialect perspective, hypothesizes that AAL was created as a result of the social interactions that first-generation enslaved Africans had with White Americans from the southern regions of the U.S. It is said that as these African Americans came to learn the various varieties of English used by White Americans, AAL became the shared form of American English spoken. Particularly, the comparison between Southern White Vernacular English and African American Vernacular English is utilized as a facilitating assertion for theories like this (Louden, 2000). The large prevalence of African Americans speaking AAL is due to the Great Migration of African Americans migrating from the southern United States to northern metropolitan areas (Wolfram, 2004).

Much research has been performed on the aspects of African-American Language (Smitherman, 2006; Rickford, 1999; Baugh, 2000; Fascol, 1972; Wolfram, 1994; Goodwin, Irvine, Kuipers, Morgan, & Schieffelin, 2002; Green, 2002) and have reported on many grammatical and lexical aspects used by AAL interlocutors. Focusing on how AAL materializes as a language system in youth stands relevant in contemporary linguistic studies; therefore, much of the knowledge gained on AAL aspects used by parents and children are distinct from those utilized by interlocutors of Standard American English (SAE). A cognizant perspective is that in order to distinguish normative linguistic functioning from discontinuous linguistic functioning in AAL speaking youth, there is a continuous need for a better understanding of the fundamental language systems guiding the functioning of AAL grammar as the dialect evolves and shifts throughout generations. Jackson's (1988) famous Cookie Monster Test took historic steps toward

understanding the language systems of AAL which guide its surface level descriptions. She aimed to examine AAL speaking youth's understanding of the particular aspectual properties that embody the meaning of aspectual "be" in AAL. These language properties comprised of habituality, iterativity, imperfective viewpoint, and the marker "be." Jackson found that AAL speaking youth knew the targeted aspectual delineation of the habitual "be" and did not mix up the habitual "be" with SAE regular forms of "be," but instead were capable of identifying the habitual "be" as a distinct additional lexical item, indicating particular aspectual delineations in their language repertoires. Her findings are important in that they explain how AAL interlocutors can efficiently use the habitual "be" in the complex structure of their grammar. Importantly, her findings illustrate that with the exception of the habitual "be," AAL and SAE youth virtually share the same aspectual capabilities. In sum, AAL users capability to distinguish between the two distinct linguistic meanings of "be" in AAL and SAE provide undeniable proof that at a young age AAL speaking youth can to control the complex aspects of their dialect.

There are connections between the theories of AAL's origin and theory of language policy – ideas, rules, and practices intend to achieve planned language change (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997), address an issue that deserves a solution (Lo Blanco, 2018), and are mediated by interpersonal interactions (McCarty, 2011). Although a broad theory, Spolsky (2004) categorizes language policies of families into three components: language practices, language beliefs, and efforts to influence practices through language intervention. As history shows, African American families have been a part of the United States; in the same view, so has their language. The history of AAL helps us understand FLP from the perspective of those who use stigmatized language varieties and who face discrimination not only based on their racial identity but also

their linguistic identity. More importantly, societal perspectives of AAL directly impact families' language policy.

There are a couple of perspectives associated with the current use of AAL (Harris & Schroeder, 2013), that can serve as facilitators for understand African American families' language policy. The third component of Spolsky's model discusses efforts to modify/influence language practice by any kind of language intervention, also referred to as language planning or language management. Interventions for language and literacy impairments of AAL speakers include remediation of critical aspects of language development; for example, modifying accents and focusing on syntax; however, such interventions devalue the African American culture as a whole, and the family and Black community of which individuals are engaged (LeMoine, 2001). Reversing critical aspects of AAL speakers emerge from the belief in the deficit theory – a perspective that defends the ideology that speakers of the dialect present poor language and literacy skills, intrinsically regarding AAL speakers as intellectually inferior. Although this 'deficit' argument is unfounded and potentially untrue, the circulation is these types of beliefs may influence parents' linguistic attitudes. Similarly, the difference perspective legitimizes the utilization of this variety of American English, as linguists point out that speakers have distinct speech patterns but still follow rules of the English language (e.g., semantics, syntax). AAL use and literacy are distinctly difference since an individual can use AAL and still be considered illiterate. Recognizing that AAL use is not related with deficient literacy skills, helps linguists realize that language interventions should not focus on erasing dialectal differences (Stockman, 2010) based on the social context. The distinctions that exist in nonmainstream American English (NMAE) are due to its speakers' social contexts (Johnson, Graves, Jones, Phillips, & Jacobs, 2022). Harris and Schroeder (2013) found that African American children who use AAL

follow similar developmental trends in language learning as White children that speak MAE. Although the working memory structure of African American children that speak AAL is comparable to that of MAE users, challenges may still exist with information processing during code-switching in environments that consider AAL to be inappropriate. This study suggests that researchers who study FLP should understand culturally sensitive language interventions since AAL connects speakers with their community and culture, and dividing these ties will be an immoderate and supererogatory measure.

As we know it, societal attitudes play a direct role in FLP in regard to the external factors of language education policy and linguistic ideology conversations (Hunt & Davis, 2022). Given the normalized expectation of speaking MAE, educators tend to look at AAL users from a deficit perspective (Harris & Schroeder, 2013); however, this study regards the utilization of AAL as a strength. In fact, in the speech pathology literature, individuals who frequently speak AAL are characterized as bidialectal, which means that these individuals can code-switch and have the capacity to use MAE or AAL contingent on the social context. For this study, researchers, educators, and parents can start to think about if the practice of AAL is as advantageous as raising children bi- multilingually is beneficial to their language development. However, these findings have not completely taken hold in the field of applied linguistics in the same manner. More studies should be performed to understand the influence of the stigmatization of linguistic variation on FLP, especially as it relates to African Americans and the racialization they endure. Recognizing racism as an external factor in FLP rather fills a gap where race can be directly discussed as beliefs of parents' from marginalized communities are analyzed.

Family Language Policy and Racism

Family Language Policy is a line of inquiry that examines family members' attitudes toward, planning for, and use of language(s) in the home (King and Fogle, 2006; King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry, 2008). The field centers itself around the explicit, overt and covert (Fogle, 2012) planning of language use within the home and among family members (King & Fogle 2017; Smith-Christmas 2016; Zhao 2018). As an interdisciplinary framework, FLP draws from early investigations on language socialization and examines how language, ideology, and the family interact (Fogle & King, 2017). Within the field, researchers discuss child-caretaker interactions and language ideologies and how they are linked to societal attitudes about language and parenting, and child language development (King & Fogle, 2017). The field of FLP is progressively denoted by critical and qualitative methods (King, Lanza, & Purkarthofer, 2019; Li, 2020; Hirsch & Kayam, 2021). FLP studies commonly turn to methodological approaches that capture communicative functioning within the family; qualitative research with ethnographic approaches are typically employed to fulfill this need (Hirsch and Kayam, 2021). Research in the field of FLP emphasizes bilingual families since it is a critical domain for bilingual development, language maintenance and cultural continuity (Curdt-Christiansen & Lanza, 2018). Although FLP studies have taken up race, few delve into the position that racism plays in families' language ideologies/attitudes and practices (Peele-Eady & Foster 2018). New studies in FLP have taken up language and its connection to talking with respect (Kozminska & Hua 2022, Higgins, 2022; Mirvahedi, Rajabi, & Aghaei, 2022) but few works have tied race into the conversation while investigating dialectal variations of English. Racism is an important external factor in families' language policy that deserves a better understanding since it impacts families by influencing their language-making decisions based on their ideologies and practices (Balogun,

2020). Zhao (2018) discusses language problems in society; but focusing on racism as a factor in FLP can provide some solutions to some societal issues (i.e., stereotyping, linguistic discrimination). There are accusations that mainstream language varieties are given prominence over non-mainstream (Nhemachena, 2022), which implies that language stakeholders deliberately disparage non-mainstream language varieties, leading to discrimination.

Understanding the impact of the family in shaping language use may; thus, deracinate such ideologies. FLPs are determined by external and internal factors both within the family and outside. Some internal factors are family members' attitudes and beliefs, parents' linguistic competence, and family configurations, but it is also important to mention that this study considers cultural values as an internal factor as well. Some external factors are schoolteachers'/administrators' linguistic attitudes, employers' language policies, and the mass media, but once again, this study helps researchers, educators, and parents realize that racial identity, racialization, and racism are very important external factors that are necessary to be considered going forward in FLP studies.

Conflicting Language Ideologies and Practices

African American families' linguistic belief differences can be perplexing for functional policy representation when the internal factor of racial identity and the external factor of racism are force of influence on languages practices and planning at home. Focusing on language ideologies and language practices in this particular study is appropriate since research has rarely reflected the beliefs and manners of African American families. In families, members have diverse perceptions of what the FLP is or should be; these conflicting perceptions often stand engrossed in the daily hustle and bustle of family life and may rarely be explicitly addressed lest some researcher interviews them. Language ideologies can be contradictory and language

policies can be conflicting in families representing certain ethnic groups (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016). In their study focusing on multilingual families in Singapore, they view English as possessing instrumental values and mother tongues as possessing cultural functions. The findings revealed that language choices and practices in family domains are value-laden in everyday interactions and explicitly negotiated and establish through FLP. Curdt-Christiansen's findings leave room for this study to discuss how African American families negotiate their language choices and practices amongst parents and children. Through the lens of FLP, it is important to examine the characteristics of linguistic practices in families, as well as the wide variety of linguistic and non-linguistic circumstances that influence such practices. Focusing on families that represent certain ethno-linguistic make-ups of a particular location helps to explore how language ideologies underly forces that influence parental decisions on which language/variety to practice or not to practice in their homes. Additionally, studying families' language use, noting language practices, and engaging in conversations about their language ideologies help to realize what families do and do not do and what they claim to do and not to do in day-to-day interactions. Analyzing language ideologies can reveal how they are at times power-inflected and tend to become the source of educational and social tensions that shape their family's language practices (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016).

Language ideologies are social constructs that indicate historical roles, economic values, political power, and social functions of a distinct language/variety (Blommaert 2006; Curdt-Christiansen 2014; Gal & Woodlard 2001; King 2000; Kroskrity 2010). Researchers have defined ideologies as language users' emotive perceptions and conceptions of language and language practices that are rooted in their beliefs and assumptions about the social utility, power, and value of a language in a given society (Curdt-Christiansen 2009; Kroskrity 2010; Schiffman

2006). Within the study of FLP, researchers have also described the role of language ideology as the motive/reason and language belief as the cause, governing the formation of an FLP. It is also important to note that FLP is shaped by government policies (Curdt-Christiansen 2014; Lane 2010; Seloni & Sarfati 2013), public discourse (Okita 2002; Garrett 2011), parental immigrant experiences (Curdt-Christiansen 2009; Wei 1994), immigration pressure (Canagarajah 2011), language learning experiences (King & Fogle 2006) and parental ‘impact beliefs’ (De Houwer 1999; Pérez Báez 2013). However within a given family, many ideologies that agree or disagree with each other may exist, at times causing conflicting thoughts about languages and varieties of language and leading to conflicting language practices (King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry 2008; Shohamy 2006; Spolsky 2004). In short, King et al. (2008) mention that “the family sphere can become a crucible for such ideological conflicts.” In sum, ideology conflicts can be enigmatic for practical policy enactment (Kirsh, 2012).

Much research into language practices in FLP address parental discourse strategies and home language models that parents utilize in raising bilingual children. Lanza (2004, 2007), for instance, analyzed several types of discourse strategies that parents utilize to socialize their children into distinct linguistic practices, one being code-switching. Code-switching demonstrates parental attempts in their intentional and unambiguous or inherent language planning decisions in their everyday interactions with their children. Also emphasizing the role of linguistic practices in everyday interactions, Li Wei (2011) set forth that racial identity, language attitudes, and relationships can be accepted or rejected during the process of interactions. Zhu Hua’s (2008) work on bilingual intergenerational talk demonstrates that conflictual sociocultural values and racial identities are vehemently negotiated, mediated, and evaluated in bilingual interactions. The contemporary beliefs of speakerhood have been framed

in bilingual studies, research on language variation, and language shift by facilitating the understanding of language variation as part of the new social conditions that speakers must navigate. (Rodriguez-Ordonez, Kasstan, & O'Rourke, 2022). Variationist sociolinguistics is a methodological and analytical approach to understanding the relationship between language and its context of use (Tagliamonte, 2012). Findings from variationist studies include the realization that linguistic and social factors influence language choices; for example, Stratton (2022) found that in German, the choice of using one adjective over a competing counterpart is structured systematically and heavily constrained by the social factors of age and gender. Their findings indicate that lexis can index social meaning, which can lead to future research on lexical variation. In integration into the field of FLP, variationist sociolinguistics contribute by bringing into the discussion that parents incorporate positive and negative attitudes towards AAL into their parenting through the language socialization of particular linguistic practices such as code-switching. Based on the findings in this study, it can be inferred that parents incorporate particular linguistic practices due to not only the social factors of age and gender but also due to the existence of language prestige and hierarchy.

Understanding the interplay between language practices and language ideologies among family members is important since they at times conflict. This study helps to recognize how and why both linguistic and non-linguistic forces, such as racism and racialization, can be analyzed to explain language choice in home domains by clarifying language and race socialization processes/mechanisms through which racialization and racism come into play and relate to each other. From the data collected in this study, we will see how language and race are discussed by parents and what they believe the connection between race and language means in terms of how they go about child-rearing. Such research will add to our comprehension of how linguistic

practices are created by some Black parents from Memphis. , FLP is done in the context of home and Memphis Black communities, cultural values are passed on through generations, and how AAL and Black cultural practices of southerners are shaped regarding societal changes in West Tennessee and sociopolitical structures in Memphis. It is particularly important to detail why conflictual ideologies exist and how they are formed within a family, and what the implications are of these conflicting ideologies and inconsistencies in language practices, generationally.

Intergenerational Differences in Language

In many bidialectal families, a language shift from the non-mainstream language variety to the mainstream variety takes place over generations. This intergenerational shift is influenced by various factors, among which is the societal pressure to use the mainstream language variety (Verhaeghe, Avermaet, & Derluyn, 2019). FLP studies have found that language ideologies and practices differ according to the generation that the interlocutor belongs to (Bezcioglu-Goktolga & Yagmur, 2022); for example, second-generation Turkish families are more positive about Dutch-oriented language practices of family members than the first-generation. However, the consequences (i.e., conflict between grandparents and parents, parents, and parents and children) of these differences remain understudied. Although it is not this study's primary goal, one issue that emerges in this study is the generational differences in perceptions between parents and children of African American/Black families in Memphis who are bidialectal and how and why different generations of African Americans have distinct beliefs and uses of language despite belonging to the same family. Throughout the data presented, we will see a shift in the FLP between generations of Black families in Memphis towards bidialectalism regarding language ideologies and practices and how different generations of parents show different engagement strategies. The field of applied linguistics may find investigating these differences important

since the contradictive language ideologies and practices of generations complicate the realization of FLP for African American families in particular social contexts.

The Context of Language Use

The set of circumstances that surround linguistic practices, influencing the meaning and effect of language use is a phenomenon that this study is interested in investigating. Language ideologies from social contexts of families, schools, and institutions influence interlocutors' attitudes toward language and the practices they exhibit. Kroskrity (2004) explains that beliefs about language are "context-bound and interwoven" with interlocutors' sociocultural experiences. This means that speakers' linguistic background is linked to their language ideologies, which are driven by their current social context and environment. Hudley (2018) has presented an extensive amount of work dealing with African American English (AAE) and African American Language (AAL) as linguistically and culturally including terminology utilized by educators and linguists to describe dialects of American English spoken African Americans or those who reside and come into linguistic contact with communities wherein Black people reside or historically have resided. She argues that AAL is intrinsically volatile in nature from speaker to speaker and community to community. In addition, her study implies that educators have to be linguistically cognizant in order to teach AAL-speaking students in manners that help them to identify and value the rules, norms, and conventions of SAE in educational contexts while also identifying and valuing the linguistic patterns and sociolinguistic culture that they bring with them from their family. Paris (2009) found that students in a multiethnic urban high school use linguistic aspects of AAL across ethnic lines in deep linguistic and cultural ways. Their findings demonstrate how understanding the utilization of AAL in multiethnic contexts may be applied to linguistic and literacy education and illustrate how linguistic and cultural sharing can facilitate the forging of

interethnic knowledge of dynamic urban schools. From Paris, researchers and educators can learn more about how AAL functions in multiethnic urban schools and realize that there are opportunities for a pedagogy of teaching dialects within and across diverse contexts.

In this study, the context of language use is examined to further understand African American families' attitudes and beliefs about bidialectalism, how and why AAL is used in particular social contexts, and how their ideologies and language experiences are linked to the construction of FLP. It is important to focus on the contexts of language use since it intersects with language attitudes as parents plan how and when to use language contingent on the social situation and is related to how they socialize children into recognizing contexts of appropriate use of standard English and AAL. Understanding the context of use is key to children learning how to code-switch. Additionally, racial identity and self-perception are influenced by language use and the pressure that comes with making contextual-based decisions. Particularly, concentrating on the justification behind why Black families use AAL contextually brings about unique findings that have not been revealed in FLP studies that have not researched this particular demographic's language practices. Regarding family-external racism as a factor in parents' linguistic decisions, researchers can see how this is an important gap to fill in FLP studies since these decisions are virtually based on parents' experiences and beliefs about the racist society wherein their family lives. Overall, context is important and matters to families, for it influences FLP and the language socialization process, calling for a methodological approach that addresses individuals' cultures.

An Ethnographic Approach

This study employs an ethnographic approach that examines the ways that African American families use language and negotiate their FLP goals and desires with other members

and their children in which social patterns are effectively observed and interpreted comprehensively by the researcher (McKinney & Molate, 2022). Such an approach has the capability to demonstrate the role of racialization and racism on FLP, foregrounding language and race socialization processes and permitting a greater understanding of Black families to emerge from participation. With the participating parents and children in mind, this study stands unique since AAL research has rarely been conducted in the family environment. This project provides an important opportunity to advance the understanding of Black families in Memphis, as they are the sole participants who are provided the chance to discuss language issues with a researcher who looks like them. Interestingly during the study, the participants discuss racism while rationalizing their language beliefs and language use. Applied linguists may find studying AAL in the family environment important since family is the primary site of children's socialization (Wright, 2022). This study concurs with Wright but also defends the view that children are just as socialized by the community and school. As language socialization within most families, minority and majority, is synergistically and relationally achieved, parents and children play agentive roles in constructing FLP (Goodwin, 2006). In Memphis, African American parents' perceptions about language are potentially different from teachers and other community members, whether Black or not, since they are concurrently navigating how to raise children in a racially heighten society while dealing with societal pressure and influence from other family members. Taking an ethnographic approach to such an investigation is important considering the focus of explaining racism and an external family factor in their language policy.

African American Culture in Memphis

This study takes place in Memphis, TN that is known as a site of African American history, Civil Rights activism, and also has a specific dialect of AAL (as some participants in the

study note). The place in which this study was conducted then is important to understanding the data and the discussions that the families had about language at home, school, and work. Language and racial identities were closely interconnected for these families as were knowing how and when to code switch. The history of African American Memphis families affects African American families today; as in this city, the Civil Right Movement lives on. For example, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is similar to that of the Civil Rights as it is a decentralized political and social movement, seeking to highlight racism, discrimination, and racial inequality experienced by Black people (Banks, 2018; Rojas, 2020). This movement emerged following the killing of Trayvon Martin. Memphis sets itself apart from other cities in the south (i.e., Atlanta, New Orleans, Birmingham) and Midwest (i.e., Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis) by having its own dialect, a lilt rooted in delicacy and slightly slurred consonants. Memphians' shared phonologically unique dialect creates a sense of community and belonging within the citizens; as a participant mentions in later chapters, they believe that Memphians can recognize each other simply based on their accent.

Social Life: There are very few linguistic studies that look at Memphis' African American communities and the city's social life within African American Culture. Memphis is home to Tennessee's largest African American population, playing an important role in the American Civil Rights Movement. Memphis is the second-most populated city in Tennessee, after Nashville. In Tennessee, this city has the largest Black population; in the United States, it has the 7th largest Black population. The fact that Memphis is also noted as an affordable place to live may be erroneously linked to crime issues in the city; thinking of affordability and poverty together may be the cause of this association. Memphis is the third most dangerous city in the United States in regard to crime rates. Nationally, cities follow similar trends, and crime rates

tend to be patterned. Other heavily populated cities also suffer from crime; however, it is not yet clear whether the crime rates are made worse by a city's poverty Anser, Yousaf, Nassani, Alotaibi, Kabbani, and Zaman (2020) recently examined the relationship between poverty and crime rates and found that there is no/flat relationship between per capita income and crime rates.

Despite its social issues, Memphis is a center for media and entertainment, notably a historic music scene (Mariani, 2015). Private social clubs, similar to those of the New Orleans Mardi Gras, coordinate annual series of parties and festivities held in early summer to address various aspects of Memphis and its industries. Carnival Memphis began as the Memphis Cotton Carnival in 1931. Springing from the Cotton Carnival festivities is Memphis in May, which began in the early 1980s. The month-long celebration fosters Memphis' musical and culinary heritage and features a different country each year, underlining aspects of the honored nation's history and culture. Another social feature of Memphis is the annual Cooper-Young Festival; one of the city's most anticipated events that observes the arts, people, culture, and Memphis heritage. With blues clubs on Beale Street creating the unique Memphis blues sound, the city has earned the moniker "Home of the Blues". Beale Street as a national historic landmark actively exhibits the influence Memphis has had on American blues. The important role that Memphis has played in shaping Jazz music nationally and internationally is fostered by the Memphis International Jazz Festival. It is interesting to look at the connection between Memphis' music and language. Just as music has rules for ordering elements and transforming them into complex structures that convey meaning, so does language (Tulio, 2022). The particular variation of AAL that Black Memphians use is distinct from other African American communities in the United States. In later chapters (Chapters 2 and 4) these distinctions are elucidated.

As explicated above, the African American community in Memphis is particularly important because of its contributions to American history and the English language along with the role it has played in social rights, American business economics, and American culture. The African American communities in Memphis are different from other Black communities. Their experiences with racism and oppression have been particularly challenging, yet as we have read in Memphis' history, Black Memphians continue to overcome obstacles and contribute to society in exceptional ways.

CONCLUSION

The study presented here provides one of the few investigations into how the family-external factor of racism and racialization influence the FLP of African American families in Memphis, Tennessee. Through the thematic data analysis of group family interviews and in-home recordings taped by parents, this study provides new insights into the connection between racial identity and language that continually affect marginalized communities. Gaining insight on the connection between racial identity and language is important for linguists to better understand why parents of particular communities believe, practice, and plan in the manner in which they do, aids educators in culture awareness and avoiding linguicism, and supports parents in thinking through childrearing while considering the effects of racism on their family's wellbeing and freedom.

It is interesting to note that in many families of this study, parents make the decisions about language, for instance, whether or not to speak AAL with parents. On the question of when and how to use AAL, the parents teach their children about social context grounded in the

parents' language experiences and perceptions of the racialized and racist society wherein their children must interact with other Black people and non-African Americans. Together the results of this study provide important insights into how parents are constantly worried about racism, how race and language are connected, and how regulating language at home is affected by external racism. This study's findings have important implications for the understanding of how racism influences parents' language ideologies, practices, and planning. FLP studies should recognize and investigate racialization and racism as an external factor; studies on other English-speaking families (i.e., Latinx, Somalian) really talk about racism. Additionally, the opinions of educators worried the parents in this study, pointing to the important of the school to FLP particularly when parents' way of managing language are different from the manner in which educators teach language. Researching the relationship between racial identity and language and the role of racism in FLP for African American parents in particular focuses on a missing factor in many FLP studies, family-external racism. Regarding racism and racialization as a problem for worrying parents points to the need for educators to help soothe their concerns by valuing parents' children's linguistic diversity and non-mainstream language use. Racism is an important factor in parents' language making decisions at home that should not affect the self-perception and racial identity of their children or themselves regardless of whether they are at home or at school.

There are several important areas where this study makes original contributions to research on FLP and investigations of AAL. Researching the FLP of African Americans engages in the field's conversation about focusing on using language variations in contrast to named languages. Also conducting this research calls attention to the role that fears of racism and racialization play in family language planning. Furthermore, this study directly deals with racism

in a way that not many studies explore. This study contributes to the investigation of AAL as it is demystified by focusing on Memphis parents in particular and how their ideologies and attitudes toward non-mainstream dialects are distinct to their community. AAL can be regarded as another language and not just “slang” and can be given its own space in the family environment. In the family’s space, members can make decisions on when and how long they want to use each language. In general, therefore, it seems that this population is understudied and historically disadvantaged in many ways (e.g., left out of being researched and not having their voice heard and understood. Understanding the link between racialization and language beliefs, planning, and practices will help linguists expand their comprehension of bidialectal African American families and why they FLP in the manner in which they do – having the ideology that AAL use expresses freedom, authenticity, and being relaxed and comfortable around family and a sense of belonging in their community; practicing language includes balancing how to speak respectfully and correctly with free self-expression of racial identity and being Black; and planning to use language in particular context based on who is around and the consequences of using language.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In African American communities, African American language is important (Baugh, 2000); however, the stigmatization of AAL makes it difficult for parents to know how to formulate their language ideologies, how to practice using language in particular contexts, and how to plan to use particular linguistic practices at home (Baratz & Shuy, 1969). Spolsky's (2009) tripartite model of language policy, i.e., language ideologies, language practices, and language management, is employed in this study, indicating family as "the critical domain" of language policy (2012). Additionally, the value of studying FLP of African Americans is that the societal stigma of the use of African American Language (AAL) is so great it potentially influences parents' use of AAL at home or at least increases stress in trying to decide when and how to use it for some parents. FLP research talks a lot about code-switching and language ideologies, but it doesn't deal as much with this issue of stigma and oppression in the family external environment for children and parents. By turning the focus to investigating minority families, the influence of racism and racialization on AAL use, and particular social contexts, I aim to deepen modern understandings of the role of familial internal and external factors along with how linguistic practices connect with methods of language learning, language maintenance, and language shift. Investigating language among families generally calls for putting family language practices in a specific context within a comprehension of social dynamics in communities in order to realize what families do. This study is therefore more inclusive by researching African American families in terms of their concerns with racial identity and racism, education, self-perception, culture, and AAL; nonetheless, the majority of FLP studies have focused on bilingual families and do not directly address racism. For example, Rubino (2022)

conducted an FLP study and investigated Italian migrants, underlining the importance of linguistic stratification in their repertoires about the coaction between language ideologies and practices, the extent to which they talk of agency of choice via linguistic stratification, and the role of education. She found that Italo-Australian families' language policies call attention to the challenges that dialect speakers have to face regarding language maintenance. While some of these studies have mentioned race, dialects, and language ideologies, neglecting to directly address racism as a family-external factor limits linguists' understanding of how families make particular language decisions. Linguists know much less about FLP in social contexts where racism is a factor and a dialect is often stigmatized and discriminated against. This study aims to take a step toward balancing this problem and building up the phenomenological infrastructures of FLP in terms of minority families, modes of AAL use, and parental concerns about racism. Seeing that the prejudicially existing doctrine that inherent differences among racial groups determine cultural/individual achievement, involving the ideology that a particular race is superior, and has rights to dominate another, and that a particular racial group is inferior to another is a sensitive subject, FLP research has avoided dealing with the topic of racism; this is a glaring omission because racism evidently affects the way families use language. In addition, researchers, educators, and parents need to know more about how decisions about AAL are made at home and are influenced by external factors such as racism.

FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY (FLP)

Family, the social unit that has its own norms for language use (Wenger, 1998), serves as a community of practice – groups sharing a concern about their actions as they interact regularly (Wenger-Trayner, 2015) – and provides a focus on praxis which is a cornerstone for language

socialization (Lanza, 2007). Families are microcosms of a macro society, mirroring the larger sociocultural environment wherein they are situated, and families invariably mesh with others in sociolinguistic, sociocultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical contexts (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018). The established patterns of choosing among the varieties that make up linguistic repertoires, the beliefs about language and language use, and any particular attempt to modify/influence language practices by any kind of language intervention, planning, and management are components categorized in the broad interdisciplinary academic field of language policy (Spolsky, 2004). The study of family language policy further examines family members' attitudes toward, planning for, and use of language(s) in the home (King and Fogle, 2006; King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry, 2008). The field of family language policy is centered around the explicit, overt and covert (Fogle, 2012) planning of language use within the home and among family members (King & Fogle 2017; Smith-Christmas 2015; Zhao 2018). The field of FLP's relevance lies in the fact that it materialized to provide needed and missing information between surveys on child language acquisition and language policy and planning (LPP). In this section, the literature review further explains language policy and socialization as theories that support the understanding of African American families' language policy and how they socialization their children. Concepts within language policy and language socialization that are utilized in the study are defined and presented in this section. Language policy, also referred to as language planning and policy (LPP), is an interdisciplinary domain of inquiry that stems from sociolinguistics (Johnson, 2013). Sociolinguistics, as defined by Fishman, Gumperz, & Hymes (1986), refers to the study focusing on language behavior and language attitude in society. Others have defined sociolinguistics as a complex sociocultural process constituted by cultural phenomena socially, historically, and comparatively across time and space (McCarty, 2011). At

the same time, this researcher discussed how language policy bridges knowledge in sociolinguistics, educational or applied linguistics, the sociology of language, and linguistics and educational anthropology (McCarty & Warhol, 2011).

Spolsky's Framework. As previously stated, this study's inquiries are grounded in Spolsky's three-component language policy framework; according to this researcher, the language policy of a speech community has three interrelated components: language practices, language beliefs and ideology, and language intervention, planning/management (2004). Spolsky defines the first component, language practices, as what individuals do with language, more specifically, the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire. The next component, language ideology, refers to what individuals think about language and their beliefs about language and language use (Spolsky, 2017). Language ideology is someone's belief about whether or not the language should be used (Abtahian & Quinn, 2017); these parental beliefs tend to influence and shape FLP at home. Language intervention, planning/management, the third component of language policy, is what individuals try to do with language and includes any specific efforts to modify/influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management (King et al., 2008). Research on language policy incorporates the historical and cultural events and processes that have influenced societal attitudes and practices regarding language use, acquisition, and status (Ricento, 2000). Later, Ricento furthers the conversation on language policy as he explains how to advocate specific policies for language use, language shift, and language revitalization/maintenance while empirically and conceptually demonstrating issues surrounding language by drawing from data from a wide range of disciplines in social sciences and humanities supporting particular policy recommendations (2006). On this topic, Ricento made the statement below.

When we begin to think of language issues as personal rather than abstract and remove them from daily concerns, we quickly see how we all have a stake in language policies, since they have a direct bearing on our place in society and what we might (or might not) be able to achieve. Schools, the workplace, the neighborhood, families—all are sites where language policies determine/influence what language(s) we will speak, whether our language is “good or acceptable”/” bad or unacceptable” for particular purposes. (p. 21)

With a focus on families’ attitudes toward dialect variations such as African American language, this study illuminates how Memphis parents’ language choices within the home influence the children. Within the family domain, parents’ beliefs and ideologies about language may be shaped by their educational background, which in turn affect what language(s) or variation(s) parents choose to use at home and how they make this choice (Spolsky, 2009). Parents’ ideologies towards language impact their childrearing methods, whether or not to raise their children as monolingual, bilingual, or even multilingual. For the African American context, ideology coupled with attitude shapes FLP at home when it comes to making decisions on whether or not to speak a certain dialect variation and when to use it; hence, raising their children to be bidialectal or simply speak standard American English only. Investigations on language policy take importance as stakeholders such as researchers and educators have learned how much of an impact it makes on children’s language development and language use. Studying language policy supports researchers’ and educators’ understanding of the mechanisms that influence families’ language choices and how their ways with words are covertly and overtly exercised through language policy processes. Another key component of language policy in the home is language socialization processes that explain the parent-child’s language-mediated activities. The

sociocultural framework for analyzing language development, currently known as language socialization, was proposed in linguistic research in the 1980s by Ochs. Sociological, anthropological, and psychological approaches to the study of social and linguistic competence within social groups are drawn on by the notion of language socialization. As an interdisciplinary framework, FLP draws from early investigations on language socialization and examines how language, ideology, and the family interact (Fogle & King, 2017). In Ochs' language socialization research, socialization is referred to as an individual's continuing process of personal identity acquisition and appropriate social skill comprehension through language and socialization to use language (1986, p. 2). Garret (2005) added to this definition as they defined socialization as the process through which a child or other novice acquires the knowledge, orientations, and practices that enable them to participate effectively and appropriately in the social life of a particular community. Linguistic socialization in Fischer's framework concerns the learning of the use of language in a manner in which to maintain and appropriately and progressively change an individual's position as a member of society (1970). Ochs and Schieffelin perceive and propose that "language socialization begins at the moment of social contact in the life of a human being". Research on language socialization has revealed that various features of discourse – phonological, morpho-syntactic, lexical, pragmatic, and conversational – carry sociocultural information, and that language in use is a major resource for conveying and displaying socio-cultural knowledge. As a theory and method of investigating language development, language socialization filled gaps in integrating the study of socialization and cultural context with the study of language acquisition along with integrating a focus on language in anthropological considerations of socialization (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011). Reviewing language socialization is important for these practices are

contextually situated and cross-culturally different and diverse families may follow distinct socializing procedures. Cross-cultural research on child language development has demonstrated the impact of culture, in this study's case Black Culture, on the experiences of youth. African American language uttered between Black parents and their children is culturally organized. Vocal and verbal activities involving parent and child interactions are also socially organized and embedded in cultural systems of meaning. These activities can be interpreted as cultural phenomena, embedded in systems of ideas about what it means to be Black, knowledge of Black history, and the social order of African American families into which the child is being socialized.

Many FLP studies have focused on how language socialization processes play out in the parent-child language-mediated practices. This study narrows its focus on parent and child interactions within bidialectal African American families, for their language practices vary from those typically studied in research investigating bilingual families. In early language socialization studies researchers revealed how the process of language socialization facilitates children becoming competent members of certain social groups with the family's desire for social mobility. According to Ochs and Schieffelin (1984), language socialization research is founded on the notion that children learn language through culture and culture through language. What it means for African American families is that their children are bicultural since they acquire their family's culture, which is different from the language and culture learned at school. Ochs (1988) presented this theoretical approach with a basic premise; language is not acquired without culture. Through continued investigation on language socialization, it was also revealed that children acquire knowledge of social order and systems of belief by participating in language-mediated interactions (Ochs, 1986 & 1988; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008 & 2012). These

developments of language socialization have expanded to discuss literacy socialization and to offer insights into connections between home and school contexts for children of different ethnic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds (Heath, 1983; Michaels 1981). The documentation of these results led to the expansion of the language socialization field in the 1990s and early 2000s when researchers started investigating second language socialization, bi- and multilingual language socialization, and heritage language socialization (Fogle, 2012; Kulick, 1992; Lanza, 1997; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011; Zentella, 1997). Expanding the field of language socialization carved out new avenues for empirical investigation of multilingual contexts and FLP. Language socialization research in bi- and multilingual families aimed to understand the distribution of different languages across intergenerational family communication along with the overtone for language maintenance/shift. Thus, language socialization has provided a theoretical framework for researching societal language shift (Fogle & King, 2017) as well as bilingual utilization and development from a sociocultural point of view, integrating the interactional, ideological, and political aspects of these processes with the study of language acquisition. Language socialization studies that take on an ethnographic approach tend to focus on the language practices of families, including children. These studies can set the stage for novel interpretations and understandings of families' language practices and show how different family configurations compare with assumed norms (Fogle, 2012; Wagner, 2010).

In connection with this study, we see language socialization and parent-child interactions among African American families. Analyzing the ways that the Black community's norms are expressed is important to the field of family language policy since African American families' and their children's prelinguistic and linguistic behaviors are continually and selectively judged by values and beliefs held by those members of society who interact with the children (e.g.,

teachers, employers, other adults). The cultural process of African American families influences what their children say and how they say it. The framework of language socialization has incorporated theoretical and methodological perspectives and will benefit from incorporating objectivity from researchers who share the same/similar cultural background as the participants. Focusing on how Black children are socialized through the use of mainstream and non-mainstream varieties of American English as well as how they are socialized to use one or the other in certain social situations, can further our understanding of the functional and symbolic interface between African American language and its shift in Black culture.

Language Shift. Commencing the discussion of language shift – when a community of speakers replaces one language/dialect with another, or *shifts* to another variety (Grenoble, 2021) – has value as it occurs within bilingual as well as within bidialectal families. For example, a generation may grow up speaking a language/dialect but then systemically change their language use phonetically over time due to fluctuations in social contexts. The way generations of African American families use mainstream and non-mainstream varieties of American English changes over periods of time, and within the African American community, we have seen how mainstream American English, which is perceived to be of higher status than non-mainstream American English, is stabilized and widely used and accepted by society while AAL is perceived to be used by those of lower-status. Nichols (2017) discusses linguistic stability versus instability in her chapter as she programmatically investigates various types of stability that linguistic elements can feature and various degrees to which they can feature them. Spolsky (2004) talks about how FLP is a critical element in home language maintenance in ethnic minority contexts and is actively impacted by a myriad of linguistic and non-linguistic elements, variables, and factors. Nichols demonstrates how linguistic stability/instability is a matter of conflicting forces

and explains the diversity of reflexes across a set of daughter languages, necessitating separately researching languages' inclination to be inherited, their inclination to be restructured, and their inclination to be borrowed. Linguistic diversity emerges when elements are relatively unstable and therefore subject to replacement through language shift. FLP studies have discussed how language shift has impacted the language policy of bilingual families, but it is important to further the discussion by including race and racism in the conversation.

Globalization and multimodal media in the United States has created a phenomenal opportunity to compare and contrast bilingualism and bidialectalism from an FLP perspective. Conducive to describing the context in which this study is dedicated, it is necessary to define *bidialectal speakers* as those who possess the faculty to utilize two dialects of the same language. Oswald, Schattin, von Bastian, and Souza (2018) refer to *bidialectalism* as a broad term consisting of speaking a dialect – a language variety that is casually and closely connected to their originating language(s) that yet has a distinct grammar and phonology (Chambers & Trudgill, 1998) – in addition to a standard language. Bidialectal FLP is relevant to the field of applied linguistics since only a few studies have related bidialectalism to bilingualism – the more prominent topic in child acquisition and LPP research. Language studies have suggested that bidialectalism may comprise of related language control demands – uses that refer to the cognitive mechanism that allows bilinguals to accurately speak in one language, preventing impedance from the nontarget language (Branzi, Della Rosa, Canini, Costa, & Abutalebi, 2016) —as in bilingualism (Kirk, Fiala, Scott-Brown, & Kempe, 2014; Antoniou, Grohmann, Kambanaros, & Katsos, 2016) and may, thus, result in similar language experiences. However, there is an issue when it comes to language ideologies and attitudes toward dialects, which tend to be different from attitudes toward bilingualism. For instance, Craig (1996) used surveys to

examine the relationship between English-speaking and Spanish-speaking parents' attitudes toward bilingualism, which connects to their reasons for enrolling their children in a two-way immersion program. She found that most parents agree on the positive effects of bilingual competence. The English-speaking parents saw three primary benefits of bilingualism: cultural diversity, early second language acquisition, and future job opportunities. The Spanish-speaking parents also favored bilingualism for it promotes linguistic and cultural maintenance, instills racial pride in their child, and they believe bilingualism will increase future employment opportunities for their children. Positive attitudes toward bilingualism reinforce researchers' need to need the topic, encourage educators to promote bilingualism, and further parents' desires for their children to become bilingual; however, attitudes towards bilingualism are different from those toward dialects. For example, not many people associate bidialectalism with intelligence or as a way of increasing future job opportunities. In fact, there are beliefs that racial identity and dialect perception may negatively impact an individual's perceived intelligence (Wardhaugh, 2002) and employability (deGraw & Patrick, 1996). Carlson and McHenry (2006) designed a study to discover how racial identity, the amount of noticed dialect, and comprehensibility affect an interlocutor's employability. They found that when the interlocutor's dialect was minimal, perceived racial identity did not affect employability; however, the interlocutors with maximally noticed dialects were given a lower employability rating. These types of findings may reinforce researchers' preconceived notions that dialects are inferior to standard languages, may cause educators to subconsciously discourage the use of dialects in the classroom, and findings on dialectal perceptions and their effect on intelligence and employability may cause parents to believe that dialects are incorrect; thus, influencing them to socialize their children into standard language use.

When examining language, linguists at times discuss how language embodies and is embodied by its interlocutors; in other words, that language is ideological (Blommaert, 1999; Woolard, 1998). Language ideologies and language attitudes have been comprehensively investigated in the context of English (Lippi-Green, 2012). Silverstein (1979) defines language ideologies as sets of beliefs about language expressed by speakers as a rationale/explanation of recognized language structure and use. A particularly shared language ideology is the standard language ideology (SLI), which defends the perception that there is a “correct or canonical” form of a given language (Milroy, 2007, 134). Current research on language ideology has found standard language ideology (SLI) to be an imperious ideology, at times relating distinct spoken and written language varieties to idealized written standards (Lippi-Green 2012). The SLI is commonly endorsed, particularly in the context of education, employment, and media (Lippi-Green, 1994), and ergo, the view and opinion of language varieties and interlocutors are at times effectuated against SLIs. Virtually, the standard variety is granted power, economic, and social value, whereas dialects are stigmatized and linked with low socioeconomic status and negative values (Giles & Billings, 2004; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010). Particular positive attitudes connected to solidarity qualities; for example, authenticity and social attractiveness, are also linked with dialects (Giles & Edwards 2010). Masculinity is another quality that is at times associated with dialects and utilized to explicate the underhanded prestige and the continued utilization of dialects by some male interlocutors who establish heavily in this certain quality (Trudgill, 1972). Although much research emphasizes the positive functions of dialects in terms of building up in-group solidarity, Fuertes, Gottdiener, Martin, Gilbert, and Giles (2012) show that dialects and their interlocutors are typically considered lower on aspects of status, solidarity and dynamism. Such attitudes towards dialects are shaped by SLIs, while at the same time,

underlining and reflecting ideological schemas connected with standard language varieties.

Language ideology links back to language policy, for it is a component of how families plan and use language at home.

To my best knowledge, this study is the first to investigate how bidialectal parents' concerns about the family-external factor of racism influence their language planning. There is much research on the language policies of bilingual families but not many studies on how bidialectal parents plan and manage their language use. Studies that have focused on bidialectal FLP have found that family language policies shape children's development, are related to students' formal school success, govern primary dialect maintenance, and affect identity projection (von Essen, 2023). Von Essen found inconsistencies between conservative family language policies and linguistic production – what families attempt to do with language does not always match their own linguistic performance. Their study suggests that linguistic accommodation or second dialect acquisition does not always follow a direct path to assimilation, but it is connected to early stages of exposure and formal education in the space wherein the secondary dialect is spoken, takes place to develop mutual intelligibility, evolves from both instinctive and intentional decisions to shift the primary dialect, and supports interlocutors in showcasing distinct identities through adjusting for various social contexts or diversity. For speakers of racial/ethnic groups, this means that despite the stigmatization of dialects, there is value in bidialectalism that is comparable bilingualism: the increase in cultural diversity, safeguarding linguistic and cultural maintenance, and the bolstering of racial pride. Because of families' social nature, researching linguistic maintenance with regard to FLP eclipses parenting at home to include various domains linked to family decisions, such as

education, and the public linguistic space (Spolsky, 2009) as well as a myriad of aspects in individual family members' everyday life, encompassing language attitudes, racial identity, and cultural and political deference (Curdt-Christiansen 2009, 2014, 2016; de Houwer 1999; King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Piller, 2002; Tannenbaum, 2012). Therefore, studying bidialectal African American families and their concerns with language and race can expand linguists' understanding of FLP in general, for it causes us to look at racism as an external factor that consequentially influences parents' beliefs, practices, and plans for language use with their family at home.

Historical Development of FLP

The major findings from FLP studies that include language, culture, and family will be emphasized in order to review the need to raise not only bilingual children, but also bidialectal with an FLP in mind, along with a discussion of the historic omission of racism as an external factor in FLP research. Particular perspectives on FLP, including One-Parent-One-Language – OPOL – (Altinkamis, 2022), child bilingual development (Indriani, Silvhiany, & Mirizon, 2021), and explicit language planning (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry 2008), have shaped how FLP is studied. In an effort to continue to shape the field, this study aims to discuss parents' need for an FLP to raise bidialectal children while including a discussion on racism as a family-external factor influencing internal factors such as racial identity, parental ideologies, and language attitudes (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020). Spolsky (2004) considers language attitudes as “the beliefs about language and language use.” Other researchers have also defined language attitudes as evaluative reactions to different language varieties (Dragojevic, 2018). For instance, participants may believe that AAL has value since it is a part of Black Culture and helps to relate

to those within the community; while on the other hand; other participants may feel that using AAL/slang is disadvantageous and harmful to the way the speaker is perceived variety (e.g., uneducated/immoral) by others who may have a negative attitude toward the language variety/dialect. Under this view and in this study, the language attitudes of African American families are regarded as the beliefs/feelings about and reactions toward AAL and its use across social contexts. Different research methods produce different insights into language attitudes and sociolinguistic structure, contributing to a multi-faceted account of the 'subjective life' of language varieties (Garret, Williams, & Coupland, 2007). Many ethnographic studies that aim to discuss language attitudes include interviews and observations as methods of collecting data (Rezaei, Latifi, & Nematzadeh, 2017; Rezaei & Bahrami, 2019). Research studies on attitudes have claimed that they have a tripartite structure: cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Edwards, 1982). Attitudes are cognitive in that they contain/comprise beliefs about their community; for example, that AAL use is valuable and used as a language to share commonality between African Americans. They are affective in that they involve feelings about an attitude object; for example, enthusiasm for music sung/rapped in AAL. And attitudes are systematically linked to behavior because they predispose language use to act in a certain way; for example, to code-switch.

Language attitudes have been studied using three main approaches: direct, indirect, and societal treatment (Garrett, 2010). The direct approach involves explicitly asking participants to report their language attitudes through surveys or interviews. For example, the participants may be presented with a list of language varieties (e.g., African American Language) and/or speakers of those varieties (e.g., African Americans) and asked to rate each using evaluative scales (Coupland & Bishop, 2007). The indirect approach involves subtly asking participants to report

their language attitudes. The speaker evaluation paradigm is the dominant method in this approach where participants listen to a series of different audio recordings of language varieties and evaluate each using evaluative trait scales, open-ended questions, or other methods (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, & Fillenbaum, 1960; Campbell-Kibler, 2011; Kinzler, Shutts, DeJesus, & Spelke, 2009). Qualitative ethnographic studies fall under the societal treatment approach (as in Hammine, 2020) and this study uses the societal treatment approach where participants are not asked to report their language attitudes; instead, the researcher engages in direct observation or analyzes existing language attitude “artifacts” (e.g., interview and/or in-home recording transcriptions) to infer language attitudes. Mixed-method FLP studies have shown that speakers of minority languages/varieties express positive attitudes toward their ethnic language and/or dialect through the Likert-type questionnaires and semi-structured one-on-one interviews (Mirhosseini & Abazari, 2016); on the other hand, qualitative studies using interviews and observations suggest that speakers of minority languages/varieties have hesitations toward using their home dialect in certain domains (Mirvahedi, Rajabi, & Aghaei, 2022). Furthermore, Goodz (1994) found that parents in her study who utilized a language or mix of languages with their child held a more flexible as opposed to a less tolerant attitude toward the use of the particular language. De Houwer (1999) explains that parents can have a positive, neutral, or negative attitude to particular types of language choices. Parents who decided to use two languages in the home with their children were seen to have a neutral or positive attitude toward bilingualism; on the other hand, parents who frowned upon the use of mixed utterances or accepted them without comment were said to have a positive, neutral, or negative attitude to particular types of language choices. The upcoming chapter further discusses the value of this

study, considering the unique semi-structure group interviews including parents and children where they are asked about their views on race and language, particularly AAL and racism.

FLP and Language

A central goal of this study is to directly address race and racism's impact on FLP; many FLP studies have investigated minority languages and child bilingualism (Smith-Christmas, 2015), but not many of these studies directly talk about racism as an external factor and how it affects internal factors like racial identity and language. Language is important because the participants in ethnographic studies are ranked in society in line with how and what they speak (Brown & de Cassanova, 2014). Smith-Christmas solely authored an eight-year FLP ethnographic study centered around a Scottish family from the Isle of Skye whose minority language is Scottish Gaelic. Within each context, she aims to answer why some children acquire and use more of the minority language than others by investigating children's experiences in the Scottish family as the locus of analysis. Through a microinteractional analysis of their naturally occurring interactions, the researcher found that the way the Campbells used language shifted over the years and in turn changed their family's language policy. Her study argues for the connection between various contexts in FLP research, the OPOL context, the immigrant community context, and the autochthonous minority language community context. In terms of racism and race, this study expands FLP lines of inquiry further by examining African American, bidialectal families whose parents openly talk about their concerns with racism during interviews and self-reported recordings. Including racism and race in conversations about minority languages may facilitate the understanding of families' language choices.

According to Smith-Christmas, there are few studies that emphasize autochthonous minority languages such as Scottish Gaelic and involve extended families like grandparents and

other relatives. In a way, this study fills this gap even though AAL would not be considered an autochthonous language; it can be considered a minority language since it is spoken by a minority of the population in the United States. In addition, a family including the maternal grandmother is interviewed and a family including three sets of mothers is interviewed – two are siblings and the other mother is the child participant’s aunt. During these interviews, AAL as a language spoken by many African Americans is heavily discussed in relation to racism and how racialization affects the way these families think about language.

There were historical changes in the Campbell’s Gaelic-centered FLP which contributed to Smith-Christmas’ diachronic perspective of how their language policy came about. Less Gaelic was used by the family as generations passed which may indicate where their language interests lie, especially those of the children. Although the second generation of their family grew up speaking Gaelic, they no longer use that language very often; thus, it can be inferred that this language shift from the first to second generation causes the third generation to use Gaelic even less. Language shift from generation to generation within African American families may interest linguists as well while investigating how external factors influence this change. Hua and Foong (2020) investigated the language shift of a dialect of a minority Chinese community in Malaysia in order to rationalize the language shift of dialects into standard languages. Their research was grounded in both the linguistic variation framework and the *acts of identity* framework, which facilitated the close examination of external and internal forces that caused the linguistics variation, and the labeling of the younger generation’s attitudes of the dialect speakers toward the dialect. They found that the younger generation of dialect speakers participated in the process of language shift from the dialect to the Chinese language and displayed more negative attitudes than positive ones towards the dialect. Although the younger generation did not look

highly upon the dialect, they still thought it was important to know it. The most relevant finding of Hua and Foong's study was that external factors – demographics and mass media – greatly contributed to the rate of language shift. Although this study agrees that demographic and mass media are important, also focusing on the external factors of racialization and racism may have brought to light even more interesting findings such as the distinctions between the generations' concerns about and attitudes toward language and race. Therefore, it is important that this study makes it a point to inquire about such concerns in order to reveal aspects of FLP that have rarely been investigated in regard to racism.

Value judgements and attitudinal expressions are natural reactions that individuals have towards various varieties of language. Most individuals react evaluatively whether implicitly or consciously when speakers utilize any distinctive form of a language and linguistic expressions, including dialects and registers. The concept of 'attitude' in general has been a pivotal concept in sociolinguistics; however, it is challenging to define it straightforwardly. Some researchers generally define it as a way to "describe all the objects we want to measure that have to do with effect, feelings, values and beliefs." (Henerson, Morris & Fitz-Gibbon 1987). A speaker's attitude towards a language or variety of language may be how they feel about it, whether they value it, and/or how much they believe in it. Nonetheless, there are more elaborate definitions as stated by Oppenheim (1982).

[attitude is] a construct, an abstraction which cannot be directly apprehended. It is an inner component of mental life which expresses itself, directly or indirectly, through such more obvious processes as stereotypes, beliefs, verbal statements or reactions, ideas and opinions, selective recall, anger or satisfaction or some other emotion and in various other aspects of behaviour. (39)

With regards to language and one's attitude towards it, more specifically towards language varieties, the quote above can be interpreted as how someone feels about the language variety, whether they value the language variety, and if they believe it is an effective means of communication based on how it directly or indirectly affects their language identity. For my present purpose, I will take a general and simple definition of language attitudes: a disposition to react favorably or unfavorably to a variety of language (Sarnoff 1970). Typically, language attitudes reflect social stereotypes and/or social categorization as listeners infer interlocutors' social group membership based on linguistic cues like accents and pronunciations. For example, an individual may hold a negative attitude based on the stereotypic trait associated with Memphians who speak with a distinctive southern accent. On the other hand, that same listener may possess a more positive attitude towards the mainstream variety of English that reflects how society perceives language. Language attitudes reflect the way a speaker categorizes and values a variety of language based on their linguistic identity. As a researcher who identifies as African American/Black, my language attitude towards African American language may be that I feel it is socially categorized for Black people even though people of other races speak it. Also, I may express my attitude toward African American language by claiming that speakers of this variety are stereotyped since it is automatically inferred that those who speak "Black" are lower-class citizens.

This section has attempted to provide a brief review of the literature linking FLP and language by presenting findings in relation to minority languages and making a point that these studies would have greatly benefitted from directly addressing race and racism while investigating the families. Both studies mention language shift in their findings and aimed to

identify the root of the linguistic changes, pinpointing that internal and external factors made a difference in the families' language ideology and practices. Distinctly, in Kulick's (1992) study over language and cultural change he examines why families abandon their vernacular despite their attachment to the language as a source of racial identity and sense of belonging. He found that the participant families were sometimes unaware of changes in their language practices, or the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up a family's linguistic repertoire, and that these changes are not necessarily attributed to explicit policy decisions made by families but rather to changes in the situation, conditions, and pressures. Nonetheless, the external factors of racialization and racism are glaringly omitted, resulting in a limited understanding of families' FLP. In the next section focusing on FLP and culture, a further review of literature will be presented and opportunities to fill gaps where important family external factors should be brought to light are shared in order to further assert the need to directly address race and racism in FLP studies.

FLP and Culture

Many applied linguistics and sociolinguistics studies in the field of FLP include bi-multilingual and transnational families and focus on overall patterns of language shift and language maintenance in their culture. This study adds to the discussion of language maintenance and shift in cultures by including bidialectal families' and addressing their diverse experiences with race and language while considering the external factor of racism as an important influencer of the families' language-making decisions. Zhu Hua and Li Wei (2016) performed a sociolinguistic ethnography study on three multilingual and transnational families from China that moved to Britain. The purpose of their research was to explore how the families dealt with language policy, children's language socialization, linguistic ideologies, symbolic competence

and changing linguistic hierarchies among their living languages as well as the challenges and aspirations in maintaining contact with China and Britain. The researchers found that being transnational may have strengthened their desire to clarify aspects of their cultural identity, which in turn influenced their language maintenance decisions, making it an interesting case of the complex relationship between language and racial identity as internal factors. Regarding external factors, they found that globalization and continuous social changes within the community make maintaining a high level of multilingualism a challenge for their participating families; however, their belief that maintaining a high level of multilingualism is advantageous in creating future job opportunities for their children encourages them to continuously push for multilingualism. Lastly, they found that being transnational and losing direct contact with their homeland has negatively impacted the families' cultural memory of their first language. Smith-Christmas (2016) and Zhu Hua (2016) have looked at language shift in bi-multilingual families and found that external factors such as pressures from dominant cultures may have influenced the participants' rate of language shift, yet there are some important differences between the studies' findings. Although both sets of researchers focused on bi-multilingual families, only Zhu Hua mentioned globalization as an external factor and major force, driving the families' FLP in a particular direction, which is important because, as this study mentions, worldwide integration and development lend grand opportunities to investigate diverse families.

Overall, Zhu Hua and Li Wei (2016) assert that bilingualism and multilingualism have disparate meanings contingent on the generation in Chinese families based on their exploration of the different generations and individuals' experiences, and how they deal with bilingualism and multilingualism and how these experiences affect the way the family members perceive social relations and social structures, and construct and present their own identities. Needless to

say, their findings are contributive to the field of FLP, but it would have been interesting if these researchers straightforwardly dealt with the transnational families' racial identity as an internal factor and how racism as an external factor may have influenced their language policy, process of socialization, and beliefs about language. Racism is an important force to consider while exploring how families deal with language policy in their culture because it can cause a lot of damage to both individual family members and the community, creating a society where individuals do not trust and/or respect each other. To fill this gap, this study heavily discusses respect in terms of language practices and AAL use, as participating parents perceive interfamilial dialect usage in distinct ways, shedding light on their various language attitudes – positive and negative – that are impacted by the external factor of racism in diverse families.

Much research that has investigated heritage language practices – practices of a language of a family/community that an individual may not speak/understand, but identify with culturally (Kelleher, 2010) – and maintenance have focused on the space of the classroom and suggest that the heritage language practices of children are intimately bound to their construction of social identity in the school context; for example, their gender, age, peer networks, and roles in the classroom (Fuller, 2007, 2010; Potowski, 2004). Tyrell, Guijarro-Fuentes, and Blandon (2014) sought to explore how and why bilingual parents' and children's language practices differ in the home space and outside the home, and the ways in which these language practices are rooted in senses of identity and belonging. While studying language practices within Spanish-speaking families in Britain, they found that bilingual parents discuss language and cultural values with their children, and that their family identity informs their heritage language practices. The intertwining of language and identity has been explored in bilingual homes in the United States and other countries, focusing on cultural identity and family attitudes toward languages, but there

has been very little research on the linkages between the language practices of dialectal variation maintenance and family identities in the home spaces of African American families. One of the aims of this study is to investigate the Black parents' and children's accounts of their language practices not only at home, but also in public spaces. Different facets of individuals' identities come to the fore in various social spaces and situations in regard to language practices.

Pennycook (2010) discusses how poststructuralist understandings of language have come to be regarded as fluid resources in everyday practices, not as static codes within impermeable boundaries. Language, locality, and practice are the elements that Pennycook explores to make the suggestion that language emerges from the activities it performs and challenges the assumption that language is just a system or a countable entity. Additionally, poststructuralist understandings of identity have shown to be multiple, fluid, and relational along with spatial and social activities (Block, 2007; Dowling, 2009). Although heritage language practices and identities in school and home contexts have been explored in research, it is also important to study the development of family identity in relation to language practices. The sense of identity and belonging influence parents' and children's language practices through our social world and at home, specifically. Given the need for more research on language practices in the home of Black families, this study finds it important to investigate how the African American families in this study use African American language in particular.

FLP and Families

Although FLP studies have discussed race (Ding, 2022;), few explore the role that racism plays in families' language ideologies/attitudes and practices (Peele-Eady & Foster 2018). Developing a positive sense of racial identity (RI) – an enduring, fundamental aspect of the self that includes a sense of membership in an ethnic group and the attitudes and feelings associated

with that membership (Phinney, 1996) – poses a challenge for many African Americans in the United States, particularly Black children since they grow up in an environment where mainstream society at times marginalizes and discriminates against them based on their language and physical appearance (Lesane-Brown, 2006); therefore, the African diasporic community deserves a closer look when examining the FLP of the families that were birth from such a traumatic migration to the United States. In few ways has living in America strengthened Black families' strides to make aspects of their African identity respected and not oppressed, and Boutte, Earick, and Jackson (2021) talk about the importance of shedding light on these differences since at times families' racial identity limits their choice to use their primary language variety in any social space. Mirvahedi, Rajabi, and Aghaei's (2022) study strengthens this notion as they base their argument on their observations that show how choices ostensibly made at the household level are inevitably connected to forces in the public sphere. These researchers studied the FLP of Turkmen-Persian bilingual families in order to investigate the ethnolinguistic vitality of a dialect and its maintenance/shift processes from parents' perspectives. Alike Hua's (2020) study, Mirvahedi et al (2022) analyzed linguistic and nonlinguistic factors such as their city's demographic make-up and its impact on FLP and language learning, religion, and gender-specific language ideologies and practices (Schwartz & Verschik, 2013). More specifically, Mirvahedi found that (1) the families' formation processes in their dialect-speaking community relied on internal factors (e.g., racial and religious identity), (2) factors external to the domain of home (e.g., demographics and media) influenced the family's maintenance, vitality, ecology of the language, (3) the lack of supportive educational policies for the language variety led to a decline in the family's literacy, turning the language into one mainly spoken in the context of home, and (4) that some parents believed that their home

language had no benefits as far as societal use. Similarly, Luu (2020) talks about how some African American families have gradually shifted from their heritage dialect, not in efforts to uphold the mainstream American variety of English, but in an attempt to withstand the societal stigma against AAL. Discussing differences in how some Black families shift to using mainstream American English adds color to the role that race and racism play in their linguistic experiences by emphasizing that these factors external and internal in the family home are constantly on parents' minds as they make decisions about language.

In short, the field of Family Language Policy field has evolved in four phases that significantly changed the field of applied linguistics and language policy (King, 2016): phase one, popularizing OPOL (Ronjat, 1913); phase two, distinguishing between bi- and monolingual language development trajectories; the nature and role of linguistic transfer; and the relationship between bilingualism and particular cognitive traits and functions (Swain, 1972); phase three, delineating FLP as explicit (Shohamy, 2006) and overt (Schiffman, 1996) planning with respect to language use at home and with family (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry 2008); and phase four – the current phase, examining language competence as a way through which families construct themselves, their roles, and life. In sum, this section has given historical context to the field of FLP so that current studies that consider race and racism (such as Kaveh, & Sandoval, 2020) can build from them and grow our understanding of how bidialectal families imagine and concurrently construct themselves as a family unit. Furthermore, these studies largely illustrate current directions in the field of FLP, both independently and synchronically.

Review of Current Studies on FLP

The field of applied linguistics has conventionally devoted efforts to real-world issues, but in recent years, there has been a socially-oriented shift that regards issues including language policy and language acquisition, describing social issues and recognizing societal inequities in order to deliberately address them. Avineri's volume (2022) heavily focuses on language and education, language, race, and racism, heritage language socialization, and heritage and indigenous language education using critical discourse analysis, participatory action research, narrative inquiry, ethnographies, and case studies. A critical approach to family multilingualism might contribute to the development of FLP by allowing for a direct engagement with debates that have only been lightly tapped into in present FLP philosophy, for example, intersectional aspects of external factors such as racism, racialization, and politics. Furthermore, approaching FLP studies critically grants a fitting framework to investigate the language concerns of families by integrating perspectives that tend to privilege the cultural sphere as a locus where domains expand context (Gomes, 2019). A critical approach to FLP takes steps towards shifting focus to the existing marginalization of language varieties/dialects in sociolinguistics. This critical approach is important as it is utilized to uncover the reasons for the imbalanced power and bring those causes to the attention of the oppressed so that they can push for power equalization in their community. Further, many important FLP volumes and studies have addressed not only how families navigate language use at home, but also what influence social, economic, and political forces have on family language practices (e.g., view Curdt-Christiansen & Lanza, 2018; Curdt-Christiansen & Want, 2018; Macalister & Mirvahedi, 2017; Lanza & Curdt-Christiansen, 2018; Lanza & Li, 2016; Revis, 2019; Smith-Christmas, 2015; Fogle, 2012); additively, this study finds it relevant to address the influence racism has on particular linguistic choices. This

shift in focus is, in many ways, a progressive and organic transformation as the broader fields of socio and applied linguistics have increasingly been involved in themes of diverse families, modalities, and language varieties.

Diverse Families, Modalities, and Languages

Researching African Americans as diverse families is relevant since they can be considered groups of relatives who do not fit a traditional, hegemonic family model in which a standard communication pattern is solely researched (Fishman, 1991; Spolsky, 2012). Black families are unique in many ways; for instance, they are not descendants of native Americans or Europeans like White families; they are descendants of enslaved Africans who were involuntarily transported to the United States and who brought parts of their language and culture to the nation (Forson, 2018). In recent years, applied linguists have explored the FLP of diverse families and modalities – family communication, digital, signed, and spoken, as well as the modalities through which research is run; for example, visual & digital data (Mckee & Smiler, 2017) – and factors that impact families’ language maintenance decisions. Research has shown how media plays a relevant, external role in FLP and that the manner in which diverse families make use of information and communication technology (ICT) to maintain connections within the home has been investigated extensively (Wright & Higgins, 2022); however, the role of language varieties and language practices in these practices has been rather overlooked. Diversifying language and contexts that have been studied in FLP reveals the important role of racism and racial identities in FLP processes as well as an urgency to take up perspectives on how focusing on racism as a family external factor can help reinterpret FLP and language planning. As a whole, the studies reviewed below show how diversifying languages and communities in FLP broaden theoretical perspectives by recentering the role of racism and

racialization in language policy and planning and refocusing the importance of language and race in the discussion of parental concerns about the racialization of their children and other family members.

As stated in the previous above paragraph, diverse families are those who do not fit a hegemonic family model such as adoptive families, divorced and single parent families, transnational, multisited families, and new speaker families (Wright & Higgins, 2022, pp. 4). Higgins researched how families express their Hawaiian language commitments to *ohana*, or family of choice, based on communal cultural and linguistic perception and found that these visions are not always included in their biological relatives' beliefs. Her study also reveals that instead of the family constructing their FLP, it is the FLP in the shape of a communal worldwide, communal practice, and a communal reciprocal responsibility that constructs the *ohana*, understood as the individuals in the family's lives with whom they value and spend time. Thus, the families portrayed in this study are also diverse since many can be considered diasporic and include blended families, divorced families, parents who co-parent their children, and single parents. Being a diverse family is relevant to FLP; family-external factors like demographics, media, politics, and racism affect them distinctly since their internal factors such as their racial identity and heritage language are separate from the norm.

In this study, diverse modalities refer to written/spoken language digitally communicated within nuclear, co-parented, or single-parent families. These modalities may come from families of diasporic descendants of multiple generations or families with just two generations. The use of multimodal resources in family interactions is highlighted in a study conducted by Abdullahi and Li Wei; Wright (2022) where they collected data from ten Somali families in order to investigate how the interactional gap between parents and children, and between grandparents and

grandchildren, forged by the intergenerational language shift is dealt with and maintained in the course of narrative talk and task-oriented talk in family communication. They found that the families' linguistic repertoire echoes the parents' heritage language, the dominant language of their current country of residence, and the multiple-speech community. For this study, the findings of Abdullahi and Li Wei suggest that cultural and language shift are natural and important for the self-actualization of younger generations (Zhu Hua, 2008) and through the embodiment of multimodality and language brokering – when an individual functions as a provisional interpreter for someone else in instances where someone is dealing with a language that is unfamiliar to them – families can bypass language barriers and construct meaning and knowledge by storytelling and completing tasks together. Specifically, diverse versions of AAL can be brokered by the younger generation for older generations and vice-versa, facilitating language and cultural maintenance within African American families. Considering another review of diverse modality, King-O'Riain (2014) presents data on the emotional aspects of Skype calls in diverse families and found that mothers maintain modality in communication because they perceive language modality as important in order to manage the linguistic and cultural connections between their children and other family members when they are not at home. For diverse families, digital communication/digitally mediated language practices are relevant systems for creating a family space where multilingualism can expand, family members can develop language skills, and racial identities can be shaped (Lanza, & Lexander, 2019). Lanza and Lexander (2019) identify the likely results of digital interaction on racial identity, heritage language use, and language choice in diverse families, the choice of medium suggesting a choice of spoken/written modality, and digital practices as facilitating children's informal language learning. In relation to the experiences of bilingual families studied in FLP, the

understandings acquired from research on diverse modalities that contribute to the field are important as the area of study moves forward to discuss the daily language experiences of not only bi-multilingual families, but also bidialectal Black families in contexts that are continuously becoming more political and racist. The external factors of racism and politics in the media fuel discrimination towards AAL speakers and their language practices.

Family-external Factors: Racism and Politics

FLP as a field has not dealt directly with topics of race and language which creates an important gap in research that could potentially explicate intersections of ethnolinguistic identity, home language, and societal language ideologies and practices by emphasizing issues of racialization and racism connected with home language use (Wright & Higgins, 2022). This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the family language policies of African American parents who speak two dialects, African American Language, and the more standardized version of English and how family external factors influence internal language policies. The presence of policy suggests the presence of politics, and politics suggests power. The locus on family as a diverse and dynamic political unit that is generally realized by distinct kinds of physical relations open to be influenced and influence other aspects of other factors, allowing linguists to better connect linguistics practices to the continually developing recruitment, assemblage, and entanglement of huge social, cultural, and material infrastructures (Haraway, 2004). These diversities in family descriptions and understandings also point to the embedding of emerging descriptions of language choices and language maintenance desires concerning racism and politics between and within diverse families and communities in diverse spaces, as well as politics of race, language, and racism.

Reviewing family language policy and bidialectalism in connection with racism and politics helps to explain contrasting relationships between the exclusive family and the public spheres in the maintenance of linguistic and multilingual resources; therefore, intense focus should be given to diverse families' linguistic experiences, parental language practices, and the planning and discourses utilized to undertake the challenges of dealing with racism and politics while upholding families' language ideologies. Srhir (2021) examined discourses of heritage languages and their development and maintenance within transnational families by merging critical sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. Focusing on parents' perceptions of the role their cultural heritage plays in their children's language socialization, Srhir found that families use a range of strategies, actions, decisions, and linguistic practices. The families in Srhir's study desired to promote the intergenerational transmission and use of both their standard and non-standard language varieties and to face and resist linguistic hegemony in the diaspora. Srhir's study lightly touches on racism and policies, introducing the topic through the discussion of how racism and securitization policies determine processes of decapitalization and exclusion, particularly the loss of social capital. The entitling of academic Standard English spawns problems for researchers whose participants use a stigmatized language. Linguistic perceptions may be a contributing factor to the reason African Americans have to strategically and uniquely manage the way they use language not just within the home but also outside the home and among other people in society. Researching language variations such as African American Language play an essential role in the field of family language policy since some Black families speak this variety, along with others, at home and in public spaces (Brown & de Casanova, 2014). In Brown's (2014) article about AAVE/AAL, they discuss how ethnographers undertake diverse languages in texts, especially when studies take place across dialects of the same

language, and why language matters in the creation of ethnographic texts. Their article is one of the few studies that deal with racialized languages – AAL and standard English (Chun, 2001) – and racialized classes of people, which stand important since studies typically do not directly investigate how racism plays a role in language use. Writing ethnographic research without mentioning literature, theory, and insights of sociolinguistics who study racialization can be limiting for both the analysis and the reader, jeopardize the accuracy of the ethnographic study, and stifle the voices of the bi-multilingual participants represented in the text.

Bilingual and Bidialectal Families

In multilingual homes, raising bi-multilingual children and language choice is a central concern of FLP, which Curdt-Christiansen and Lanza (2018) describe as a critical domain for bilingual development, language maintenance and cultural continuity. Bi- and multilingualism in families where children grow up with two or more languages is the norm in many contexts across the world (Garcia and Lin, 2018), inside and outside of the United States. Universally, bilingualism is characterized as the capability to speak two languages in shifting degrees across contexts (Brice, 1997); this characterization can be expanded to include bidialectalism, which is the capability to speak two language varieties across contexts (Lee-James & Washington, 2018). Furthermore, bidialectalism, or bilingualism involving closely related linguistic varieties where an indigenous variety operates alongside more widespread norms in a community of speakers (Brouwer, 2017), is the norm in many minority families. However, there are relatively few studies of language socialization and family language policy in such social contexts. Social variables functioning as internal factors of demographics—class, gender, age, race—define social contexts along with the speaker’s social identity (Finkbeiner, Meibauer, & Schumacher, 2012). For example, being a middle-class African American is a type of social variable that is

influenced by external social environments such as demographics, multimedia, politics, and racism. The influence of context parameters on language use has been studied in terms of language variation and researchers found that language use is affected by the linguistic setting (Pietikainen, 2021). The data collected in this study supports the assumption that families adapt properties of their language use to the current communicative situation. In Chapter 4: Findings, I further discuss adaptations in formulation (i.e., intonation, lexical choice, syntax), suggesting that AAL use is more or less appropriate and effective in a given social context; nonetheless, this study dives into how language ideologies, particularly those surrounding the context of language use, are driven by forces external from families' homes.

As we dive deeper into this study and start to explore the language learning process among bidialectal children, it is important that we look at how language attitudes affect this process. In their study, the researchers also describe how language learning processes are developed in educational environments, not just at home, which may conflict with a speaker's previous language ideologies and attitudes. Bidialectal children's thoughts about language varieties and attitudes toward specific language varieties, like African American language, may have been influenced by their experiences as a youth (Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity 1998; Garrett 2003). The impact of these experiences further proves the fact that bidialectals language development is impacted by language ideologies and attitudes towards language. Craig, Kolenic, and Hensel (2014) have research that also exemplifies how language attitudes intersect with language use when the bidialectal family member has to make the decision whether to use their home variety or a more standardized one depending on the social context. Growing up speaking African American language and then attempting to shift varieties of language when in an educational environment by cause of the academic expectations of educators impacts the

language attitude of said speakers. The societal stigma that AAL has compels students to style shift contingent on the social situation. In the past decade, researchers have defined style shifting as when speakers change their variety of English in response to their social environment (Cutillas-Espinosa & Hernandez-Campoy, 2012). Being a bidialectal Black student brings challenges to face when navigating how to and when to use mainstream and non-mainstream American English in certain situations based on societal expectations. School's language practices and beliefs about language conflict with those of the bidialectal family member, which affects the active process of language learning and development within the bidialectal child.

Language Practices. This study expands on the idea of language/linguistic practice and how the social context of the language use plays a part in this language-making decision when the speaker is concerned with how their language use affects their language identity, how they are perceived by others based on the variety of language they speak. For example, when parents are aware that their children are subject to racialization in school based on their use of African American language, the parents may encourage them to shift languages contingent on the educational environment. There is connecting FLP research concerning language attitudes, linguistic practice, and multilingualism. Much research on bilingual families' beliefs about language shows that their language attitudes play a role in the intersection between their feelings about language and how they use it (Garcia & Otheguy 2017); this is also true in bidialectals. Some sociolinguists (Henderson, Wilson, & Woods 2020) have found that people's belief about language, and attitude toward it, directly impacts their identity as a language speaker when they are confronted with the decision of whether to use their home language or the language spoken by the majority of society. Similarly in this study, accounts made by the participants discussing issues surrounding race and language evoked topics centering around language attitudes that are

influenced by society's expectations. Making a connection between the language attitudes of bilingual and bidialectal individuals, facilitates the inference that language attitudes intersect with language learning in bidialectal families when they make language-planning decisions based on how they feel the language or variety of language will impact their child's language development.

Growing up bidialectal and speaking multiple varieties of American English is the norm rather than the exception in many African American communities, but in certain social spaces like school and work, these same individuals are expected to practice using mainstream American English. The language practices of African Americans differ from those of bilingual families, for these individuals must navigate how and when to use a given dialect contingent on the social environment and expressing oneself inappropriately may result in a lack of affordance to vital resources in our society (e.g., intellectual, social capital). Language practices, more formally known as linguistic practices, are defined as language used to shape and reshape meaning and express knowledge (Sun, 2015). According to Sun, discourse analysis is an effective method to understand culture through language and to show how language practices shape the characteristics of one's culture. Therefore, it is important to explore the under-researched language practices of Black parents and children in marginalized bidialectal families who speak a non-mainstream variety of American English.

Code-Switching: Auer (2010) defines code-switching as the use of more than one language or language variety concurrently in conversation. Spanglish is an example of code-switching where Spanish and English are used simultaneously in the same discourse. Morini and Newman (2019) define code-switching as the mixing of two languages while speaking; The oral use of two or more languages either within or across sentences (intrasententially or

intersententially) in ways that are syntactically coherent. For example, a bilingual [English/Spanish] may say “Te voy a *textear* porque no me gusta to talk on the phone.” In this example, the bilingual speaker has borrowed an English word, *text*, and converted it into a Spanish verb, *textear*; also, the bilingual speaker switches from Spanish to English towards the end of the utterance. Most research regarding code-switching is centered around bilingual families, but it is important to include African American bidialectals in this conversation to understand how they code-switch and why. Because of language’s oppressive nature, African American families tend to alternate between discourses and switch codes when moving from public spaces to the home and vice versa. This may be caused by the ideology that the English African Americans tend to speak at home is inferior to the English that is spoken in more neutral settings like schools, meetings, and other social gatherings where diverse people communicate. Findings from current research indicate that African Americans are metalinguistically aware of their family language policies and the way their household manages discourse, beliefs, ideology, and practices (Spolsky, 2004, Pittas & Nunes, 2018). Spolsky also discusses the factors that contribute to why and when families choose to code-switch, or alternate between languages, at home and in public spaces. From this source, I can infer that AAL speakers may alternate between varieties at home and in public spaces because it alleviates the concern of racism and racialization by allowing them to communicate effectively while maintaining their cultural identity, being respectful, and earning respect when speaking African American Language.

African American families’ language and race play important roles in their language policy and language practices, which may include code-switching. Many FLP studies discuss code-switching as a linguistic practice stemming from bilingual families’ opportunity and ability to use multiple languages in various social spaces without prejudice and racial judgement. Lanza

(1997) asserts that parental strategies shape young children's bilingual outcomes and that children as young as two code-switch. Parent-child interactions are examined in this study but illustrate more than how language socialization shapes their children's language development. These interactions also shed light on the parents' and children's differences in opinion when it comes to language issues. Dialectal variation is unique apart from language differentiation, for it comes into play in Black children's initial interaction with any non-African American individual. The language practices of code-switching appear more crucial to African American families and result from the language planning decision of parents that are impacted by race and racism. Lanza's study is important to the field of FLP since it examines code-switching through a sociolinguistic lens, yet it leaves room to examine how racism and racialization play a relevant role in families' language policy. Altman, Feldman, Yitzhaki, Lotem, and Walters (2014) also conducted an FLP study on Russian-speaking immigrant parents and their Russian-Hebrew bilingual preschool children that showed the field's connection to code-switching. After interviewing 65 parents and questioning their language use, choice, proficiency in Russian and Hebrew and code-switching, they found that the children reported more code-switching into their second language than their home language. Altman et al's study differs from that of Lanza's as they argue that language shift may be influenced greater by their peers and siblings than their parents. The importance of differential debates over language shift stands relevant in this study, and the later chapters that discuss findings that reveal how school and employers add to the pressures Black families endure as parents and children navigate various social spaces, not just daily, but hourly. The ethnolinguistic methods forged in this study are contributory to the field of FLP as group family interviews held virtually is an untapped method in sociolinguistic studies that explore language attitudes. Additionally, the results of such methods may evoke interest and

prompt researchers and educators to examine the language practices of Black families even further in FLP studies to see if other African American children possess similar language attitudes toward AAL and why.

Not many FLP studies have grappled with bidialectalism before; however, it is necessary to examine families who use two or more language varieties and dialects considering the distinct difference between bidialectalism and bilingualism. In bilingualism, FLP studies have investigated the practice of code-switching – the alternating utilization of two or more languages within one conversational episode (Auer, 1998). There is a difference between bilingual code-switching and code-switching in the African American community, using different “codes” in distinct domains and social contexts. Although there is some overlap (e.g., the use of multiple languages), bilingual code-switching never means using one language at home and another language in public such as at work or at school. Bilingual code-switching means speaking two languages in the same conversation, whereas bidialectal code-switching means changing the spoken language variety contingent on the social context; it occurs when an interlocutor’s social environment changes and is done to express oneself appropriately for a particular audience. In order to work around a language deficiency, interlocutors may code-switch to express themselves efficiently in a different language, which may trigger them to continue in the other language or variety for the rest of the utterance (Clyne, 2000). Switching to a minority language or dialect can be commonly used to express solidarity with a particular family or community (Heller, 1992). Such a linguistic change may indicate to the listener that the interlocutor shares a particular background (Li Wei, 1998). Then, if the auditor answers with a similar code, they have begun to establish a particular degree of social rapport (Sebba & Wooton, 1998). In addition, code-switching may be used to indicate an interlocutor’s attitude toward the auditor;

this attitude may be positive, negative, reserved, disparaging, or lighthearted (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Bidialectals of distinct varieties of English communicate these effects to some extent by varying the level of their speech formality such as switching from AAL to SAE (DeBose, 1992), whereas bilinguals code-switch by changing languages such as from English to Spanish (Auer, 1998). In sum, there are several uses of code-switching: conveying relevant concepts, expressing solidarity to foster a rapport, clarifying concepts when there are not appropriate words in one of the languages or varieties, expressing racial identity, marking emphasis while making a request/command, avoiding the distortion of morphology, fitting in, getting better treatment, relaying a coded message, avoiding effects of implicit bias, and/or code-switching unconsciously when triggered by a specific occurrence (Woolard, 2004; Reyes, 2004; Mills & Washington, 2015).

Code-Meshing: Code-switching differs from code-meshing in the sense that code-meshing is blending language codes instead of switching from one set of linguistic codes to another (Young 2014). Young explains that code-meshing involves the intentional incorporation of more than one language within speaking and writing to “exploit and blend those differences” in a way that frees students to exercise identity and agency within their language use. Its purpose is not the separation of languages according to audience or context. Rather, it encourages the use of multiple languages within a text. For instance, a bidialectal speaker of the “standard” variety of English and the African American Language may say, “What you did was green, but I’m going to keep it 100 with you. I’m not gon’ front because I respect you as a brotha’ and an individual.” Here the bidialectal speaker uses English terms that have disparate meanings depending on the variety of English and the context wherein they are used. In African American Language, the term *green* means wrong or unfair, the phrase *keep it 100* means to be honest, and

the utterance *I'm not gon' front* means I am not going to lie. These language practices used among African Americans and their families may have resulted from the societal perception of African American Language and its speakers. Code-meshing involves speaking multiple languages varieties and dialects concurrently such as how African American Language can be blended with Standard American English to create one mixed language (Alim & Smitherman, 2012). Young (2014) states that one difference between code-switching and code-meshing is that code-meshing, or language blending, is more-so a combination of language variations used in one discourse to enhance communication and maintain identity. For example, Past President Barack Obama code-meshes in his speeches to effectively engage all members of his audience, not just the majority, Standard American English speakers. Language practices such as Code-switching and meshing rather define the lives and trajectories of African American families since they are emphatically incorporated into the language policy. Research studies about African American families and how they use language have found that starting at a young age, African American children are implicitly capable of effectively communicating in their primary discourse, AAL, and shifting to standard American English in official places like school. Being bidialectal in African American Language and Standard American English can serve as beneficial in and outside the home. Based on research that has found that there are rich elements of African American Language that are overlooked, I can infer that there are benefits of using both varieties of English through linguistic practices like code-switching and code-meshing. Additionally, I interpret that African American Language can be adequately represented in public spaces; thus, creating more opportunities for it to be used advantageously. For example, African Americans can mesh African American Language and Standard American English into one discourse in order to communicate effectively with multiple audiences simultaneously. This

indicates that being bidialectal can be advantageous because it allows the speaker to synchronously communicate in multiple varieties of English in various settings such as at home and in school. Studying code-switching and code-meshing contribute to our understanding of FLP of Black families since these language practices are explicitly and implicitly maintained multigenerationally.

It is important to note that the terminologies code-switching and code-meshing are namely used by audiences of researchers and educators; parents may are may not have a sense of the difference between the two in their own minds. Nonetheless, Alim and Smitherman (2012) and Young (2014) promote the usage of code-meshing over code-switching because of its advantageous characteristics and how it maintains a cultural identity while conveying messages not only appropriately but more meaningfully. Smitherman along with Alim (2012) also mention that even if one succeeds in this attempt to switch to and standardize language variety, their primary discourse may still “squish out of the edges” because attempting to hide one’s linguistic identity is challenging and exhausting. Therefore, it can be inferred that suppressing one’s linguistic identity acts as a component of code-switching because of the way dominant ideologies outline its usage. Furthermore, code-switching “characterizes the teaching of language conversion” (Young, 2014); whereas code-meshing helps avoid the devaluation of linguistics diversity. The pressure of knowing when and how to switch between discourses can put precedence over one’s primary discourse since they are code-switching. From these findings, I can infer that blending language varieties together, such as African American Language and Standard American English, can raise certain varieties from an inferior label. Young uses Past President Barack Obama as a primary model of how code-meshing can be used for African Americans’ benefit, especially while communicating in public spaces. Researchers who have

investigated code-meshing presented situations where prominent political figures have code-meshed while speaking in public with mixed audiences (Park & Henderson, 2014). An instance where “in a crowded room, over the voices of people from many different races, the waitress asks Obama if he wants the change from the twenty-dollar bill he’d given her. “Nah, we straight”, he replies. This example shows that speakers do not have to completely switch or abandon their primary discourse just to communicate appropriately in a certain situation. It also shows how it is beneficial to use all of the language varieties in a speaker’s repertoire to communicate effectively while maintaining their cultural identity. According to Krichevsky (2015), code-meshing equalizes marginalized languages with other standard discourses when the two are infused in order to create one efficient discourse. Through a sociolinguistic lens, the study analyses the findings that code-switching, within some African Americans’ family language policy, can exhibit inferiority in the minority language since it suggests that an individual has to switch languages/varieties situationally (Fisher, & Lapp, 2013). Attempting to avoid using a certain language variety out of concern of racialization and racism; thus, reducing speakers’ effectiveness to communicate. Past President Barack Obama’s use of code-meshing exemplifies its beneficiality. As to be seen in later chapters, data shows how the oppressive nature of language (contingent on its users) causes African Americans may code-switch and code-mesh to utilize their entire language repertoire and convey meaningful messages (as in Beneke and Cheatham, 2015). Code-meshing presents an untapped language practice that values blending discourses to convey a message effectively, maintaining cultural identity, and gaining respect while using African American Language in various spaces which are all factors that contribute to discussions about when African Americans use AAL.

AFRICAN AMERICAN LANGUAGE (AAL) AND MEMPHIS

What is AAL?

African American language is a critical resource for researchers and educators who should understand the nature of Black culture and the cultural knowledge and beliefs of African Americans are transmitted both from generation to generation and in everyday child-caregiver interactions. African American language (AAL) can be defined as a non-mainstream variation of American English that is spoken by many self-identified African Americans in the United States. According to Craig, Thompson, Washington, and Potter (2003), it has its own set of grammatical, morphologic, and syntactic rules that are different from the more “standard” variety of English spoken by Americans. AAL’s name has changed with the times from slang to Negro Nonstandard Vernacular English to Black English, to Ebonics, to African American Vernacular English (AAVE) to African American English (AAE), and then AAL; nonetheless, Lanehart (2015) found that it is a rule-governed language variety that many Black people in the U.S. speak. Green’s (2002) research aligns with that of Lanehart as they claim that AAL has its own form, phonology, morphology, grammar, syntax, and function, and has a unique way of being spoken and communicated. Many studies refer to the variety of American English that some members of the African American community speak as African American Language or AAL (Hartman & Machado, 2019; Morales & Hartman, 2019; Farrington & Schilling, 2019). Hartman (2019) writes “AAL, which is a variety of English spoken by many African American and others across the globe, is a “Black-originated English that is intimately connected with a history of oppression, resistance”. This non-mainstream variety of American English started to develop during the middle passage by the African diaspora – the collection of communities predominantly in the Americas that descended from Africa. Smitherman’s (2006) definition of

AAL slightly differs from that of Morales (2019); therefore, it is important to include her research in order to understand why we should study the language policy of African American families. She describes “Black or African American Language (BL or AAL) [as] a style of speaking English words with Black flava-with Africanized semantic, grammatical, pronunciation, and rhetorical patterns” (2006). Her book provides background information about African American Language and how it is tied to the Black race. Below is an excerpt from the first chapter titled *African American Language: It’s so Good it’s Bad* that mentions the history of Black Language:

AL comes out of the experience of U.S. slave descendants. This shared experience has resulted in common speaking styles, systematic patterns of grammar, and common language practices in the Black community. Language is a tie that binds. It provides solidarity with your community and gives you a sense of personal identity. AAL served to bind the enslaved together, melding diverse African ethnic groups into one community. Ancient elements of African speech were transformed into a new language forged in the crucible of enslavement, U.S. style apartheid, and the Black struggle to survive and thrive in the face of dominating and oppressive Whiteness.

It is important to understand how the modern features of African American Language connect to the Black race and its history and Smitherman’s discusses this in her research along with some of AAL’s key features. One feature is the use of puns. *It’s So Bad It’s Good* is an example of a Black Pun as it is a play on words; in African American Language *bad* means good. Smitherman ties in history about the negative connotation associated with African American language, it being bad, with an African American play on words in the chapter’s title by counterarguing that it is so bad that it is good. Another example of the use of Black Puns is in

a scenario where a speaker may compliment someone by saying, “That’s a bad man, right there.” In this phrase the speaker is expressing that the man is one to be admired and is doing something spectacular; it does not actually indicate that he is bad. Those who grew up Black and speaking AAL understand this phrase completely because of the shared experiences Smitherman mentions above. African American language is not just commonly spoken but also commonly understood among the Black community because of its systematic patterns of grammar. Smitherman describes African American Language as its own language and that “Language is a tie that binds”. A tie that binds is a shared belief or shared anything that links people together. Therefore, I interpret this quote as saying that Black language is an ideology shared amongst its speakers and is a language that is connected to their identity. Because it is connected to their identity it is important to understand what AAL is and why it is important to the FLP of African Americans. In African American families, like the ten who participated in this study, AAL is a part of their language identity; and thus, a multilingual identity (McKinney & Molate, 2022). This idea relates to the bilingual families in Mckinney’s case study about a multilingual African family. They collected data through interviews, observations, and recordings by the parents which revealed how the parents deliberately placed their children in different schools to suit their children’s cultural interests and linguistic and academic needs.

African American language distinguishes itself from the language variety of mainstream American English, recognized as a distinct linguistic system that has unique grammatical structure, pronunciation, and vocabulary. For example, the most prominent grammatical aspects of AAL that differ from that of the more “standard” varieties of English are in tense and negation. As far as the present tense, AAL has unique features such as the *habitual be*, the intensified continuative of the word *stay*, the past participle *been* used with the perfect

progressive tense, and the near future tense. Regarding negation, AAL speakers tend to use the word *ain't* and use double negations. Standard English speakers express the frequency and habituality of an action by using the simple present conjugation of the verb, but in AAL, habitual and continuative actions are expressed with the habitual use of the word *be*. For example, to express the phrase “He works every day” an AAL speaker may say “He be workin’ every day”. Another difference between standard and African American English is how to express an intensified continuative action. For example, instead of saying “He is always working” an AAL speaker may say “He stay workin’”. Additionally, AAL speakers use the perfect progressive differently than standard English speakers; the perfect conjugation of *to have* is omitted when followed by the past/passive participle *been*. For instance, instead of saying “He has been working all day” an AAL speaker may say “He been workin’ all day”. Another verbal tense usage that differs in AAL is the way the near future is expressed. An AAL speaker may use the word *finna* instead of *about to* or *going to* in order to express what will happen in the near future; for example, “he finna go to work” versus “he is about to go to work”. The use of negatives in negation is used differently in AAL than in other varieties of English, especially the standard. *Ain't* is the most general, negative indicator used in AAL and replaces the words *am not*, *isn't*, *aren't*, *haven't*, and *hasn't*. Also, *ain't* may be used instead of *don't*, *doesn't*, or *didn't*. For example, instead of saying “He is not going to work today” an AAL speaker may say, he ain't goin' to work today. It is also common for AAL speakers to use the negative concord, also known as the double negation, to express a negative statement. In an African American conversation, one may often hear the phrase “He ain't go to work none this week.” to express the fact that he has not gone to work at all within the past seven days. There are other grammatical characteristics of AAL that are used such as the dropping of the *copula be* in the present tense to

express a current action. For example, an AAL speaker may say “He workin’ today” instead of “he is working today” to express that he is working at the present moment. The dropping of the copula *be* is often heard in questions too such as “You work today?” instead of “Are you working today?” Nonetheless, standard English and African American English are similar in a sense that neither allow the omittance of the words *am*, *was*, or *were* when using the present tense. For instance, AAL speakers may say “I ain’t know where he is” and standard English speakers say, “I do not know where he is”. In both expressions, the verbal conjugation *is* is still used at the end of the sentence. You may have noticed that when providing examples of AAL speech, I omitted the letter “g” at the end of gerunds, this is because in AAL the genitive –s’ ending may or may not be used. This is one of the many morphological differences between standard American English and African American Language. The morphological omittance of the letter ‘s’ is also common in possessive structures such as “My momma sista’ versus “mother mom’s sister”. AAL features like the *habitual aspect with be*, negative concord, and the lack of inflection on words also differ from standard English syntactically because these words are placed in disparate parts of AAL speakers’ articulation. The rules for the formation of grammatical sentences in AAL are important to the study of African American Language because they inform the language planning of Black families, particularly those from a distinct region such as Memphis, Tennessee.

African American History. Integrating a review of ethnic origin contributes to FLP scholarship by furthering our understanding of how an individuals’ socioeconomic background is ostensibly connected to the ways their language is conceptualized, practiced, and planned (Moore, 2016). African-American history commenced in the 1700s, with Africans being sold to European slave traders and shipped to where we know now as the United States. After

arriving, they were sold as slaves to European colonizers and mandated to work for free on plantations, particularly in the southern parts of the country. Although the majority of those who were enslaved came from various parts of Central and West Africa and spoke various language, they managed to communicate with each other and build families. In short, AAL – derived from West African languages, particularly those belonging to the Niger-Congo Family – started to form.

Formal political, economic, and social discrimination against African Americans has existed throughout American history. Even after the colonials became the United States, most Black people were still enslaved and most remained in the South. During the Reconstruction Era, they became recognized as citizens and gained the right to vote, but due to the widespread policy and ideology of White supremacy, they were still treated as second-class citizens and disenfranchised in the South. This treatment including discrimination based on the way they spoke, referring to it as colloquial and Ebonics (Edwards, 2004). It is presumable that racist ideologies, resulting from culture and language differences, fueled the rationale behind the way colonizers treated and disenfranchised minority individuals (Feder, 2020). Saito (1998) asserts that political rights have been circumscribed by race, class, and gender since the founding of the United States, when the right to vote was restricted to White men of property. Throughout the history of the U.S. race has been utilized by White Americans for legitimizing and creating differences and social, economic, and political ostracism. Although African Americans' employment rates have increased and they have gained representation in the highest levels of American government (e.g., Barack Obama being elected the first African American President of the United States), racism is still an issue that continually undermines the development of their

social status (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2018); thus, impacting their thoughts and behaviors (Perez-Leroux, Cuza, & Thomas, 2011; Purkarthofer 2017; 2019).

Culture and language are important elements embedded in families' language policies (Shin, 2014), considering that individuals' ways of living built up by their community are transmitted from one generation to another through language. African-American culture has an important impact on worldwide culture, making critical contributions to visual arts, literature, philosophy, politics, music, and the American English language variety. The African American contribution to popular music is so profound that virtually all American music has its origins at least partially or entirely among African Americans. African-American literature is a major genre in American literature and many famous African-American authors (i.e., Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison, and Maya Angelou) have written stories, poems, and essays impacted by their experiences as African Americans. African-American music genres are the most important ethnic vernacular tradition in the United States, as they have developed independently of African traditions from which they arise more so than any other immigrant groups, including Europeans; make up the broadest and longest lasting range of styles in America; and have, historically, been more influential, interculturally, geographically, and economically, than any other American vernacular tradition. African Americans also have an important role in American dance. A prominent form of dance, Stepping, is an African-American tradition whose performance and competition has been formalized through the traditional Black fraternities and sororities at universities; many of the participants in this study are a part of a Black fraternity/sorority. Lastly, African American have long contributed to the manner in which mainstream American English is written and spoken, leading to the compiling of the first Oxford

Dictionary of African American English (Verma, 2022). Based on this fact, Verma also contends that understanding the social context behind AAL's origins can broaden the understanding of English as a whole.

The way African American families are perceived and talked about has changed through the generations. In the 1980s, Jesse Jackson popularized the term *African American*, which carries important social implications (Wilkerson, 1989). Earlier terminology (i.e., *colored*, *person of color*, or *negro*) utilized to characterize Americans of African ancestry referred more to skin color than to ancestry. It is theorized that this terminology was included in the wording of various laws and legal decisions as tools of White supremacy and oppression (Baugh, 1999). There are many other purposely disparaging terminologies, many of which were in common utilization (e.g., *nigger*) by White Americans from older generations (Good, 2010). Before the end of the 20th century this term had become socially offensive to the newer generation of Black Americans in normal discourse. A special case is the utilization, among the Black community, of the racial slur *nigger* rendered as *nigga*, delineating the enunciation of the word in AAL. It is not necessarily disparaging and, when utilized among Black people, the term is often perceived as a form of endearment to mean "friend" or "partner" (Rahman, 2012). Although the term has established a foothold among younger generations., approval of intra-group use of the word *nigga* is still argued by older generations. This usage has been popularized in music and is utilized as a part of an in-group lexicon and speech within AAL. Controversial terminology within the Black family, particular those in Memphis, is important to look at as it lends researchers a deeper understanding of the distinct language ideologies and practices across generations.

Memphis' History. Memphis – a historically African American populated city that has been consistently and majorly occupied by people of African descent for centuries – has its own particular vernacular that is rooted in the city's historical development, which makes emphasizing the historical aspects of the region extremely relevant. For African Americans, the city of Memphis is tantamount with one of the most important events in United States history – the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Long before the Civil Rights Movement brought Dr. King to Memphis, the city had already become one of the most important cities in the southern United States. Although other southern states participated in the Civil Rights movement, the Civil Rights Movement is important to Memphis because this city is where Dr. King's was assassinated. After the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, Memphis became an appealing municipality for Black people, who came to seek economic opportunities (Frommers, 2022).

Memphis, with its excellent location on the Chickasaw bluff, has always been a magnet for people with various cultural backgrounds (King, 2002). In the first turn of the century, the people of the Mississippian culture were salient. Their culture was said to be “sophisticated” as they expressed their culture through building complexes and burial mounds (French & White, 2013). Believed to be their descendants, are the Chickasaw people who later settled in this location. The Chickasaw Native Americans monolingually spoke *Chikashshanompa*, the Chickasaw language (Munro & Willmond, 2008). The Chickasaw Nation populated the space until European colonizers stumbled upon the area in the 16th century (Green, 2022). Affording aegis from the Mississippi River's floods and with a shelf of sandstone ideal for boat landing, the land atop this bluff was superbly suited for commerce and began Memphis' business success. In the wake of the Jackson Purchase in 1818, West Tennessee was opened for colonization by

White Europeans. On May 22, 1819, the city of Memphis was founded by a group of investors – John Overton, James Winchester, and Andrew Jackson – who named the area after a city in Egypt on the African continent (Stewart, 1970).

Even in the 1800s, Memphis had a high population of African Americans, some who were free people of color and others who were enslaved by White Protestants of British ethnicity. With an economy principally funded by the Cotton Industry, early Memphis depended profoundly on the labor of enslaved Black people for its accomplishments and followed this model for its economy until after the Civil War (Knowlton, 2015). The war years conducted major changes in the city's population as the presence of the Union Army drew in many fugitive slaves who sought protection; thus, Memphis' Black population increased even more by over 17,000 residents; many settled in South Memphis. The demographic change contributed to the stress of war and increased tension between police officers and Black Union soldiers after the Civil War; this resulted in riots (Carden & Coyne, 2014). During the Memphis Riots, White mobs of policemen, firemen, and other Irish Americans (bilinguals who spoke Irish and English) attacked and killed almost 50 African Americans, hurt almost 200 of them, raped several Black women, and destroyed churches, schools, and hundreds of houses in South Memphis, but only two White people were killed in the riot (Ryan, 1977). Afterward, approximately 3,000 African Americans left Memphis since Freedmen's Bureau could not protect them during the city riots (Carden & Coyne, 2014).

Post-Civil War Memphis, which had been a very important place for most of the war following the apprehension of the city in the Battle of Memphis, presented an opportunity for African Americans to obtain their share of Memphis' wealth. Renowned businessman Robert Church, Sr. founded the first African American-owned bank in the city and purchased real estate-

including land on Beale Street – that he utilized to construct a novel cultural epicenter for African Americans (Young, 2019). Although Black Memphians endured great economic strides in the years following the Civil War, they found themselves disenfranchised in a repopulated Memphis following the Yellow Fever Epidemic. The epidemic left the poverty-stricken, the working class, and the Black community at risk the most. The epidemic bankrupted Memphis and resulted in a loss of approximately \$15 million. The most important effect of the Yellow Fever Epidemic on Memphis was in demographic changes since most of the city’s upper and middle class left; then the poorer Black citizens made up the city.

In the early 20th century, African Americans in Memphis only made small gains in their economic status and did not see any real change until the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s (Goudsouzian & McKinney Jr., 2018). During the 1960s, Memphis was the center of the Civil Right Movement since it had such a large African American population that had been affected by state segregation practices and disenfranchisement. Following the deaths of sanitation workers Echol Cole and Robert Walker, Memphis sanitation workers went on strike in February 1968 to protest the years of prejudicial treatment and demanded better working conditions. With encouragement from the Black community, the strikers marched for months and called on Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. who was known for his leadership in the non-violent movement came to lend his support and joined them in their protests. Unfortunately, after giving his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech, on April 4, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated by James Earl Ray on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel (Richard, 2014). To avoid rioting, the Memphis Mayor at the time, Henry Loeb, who initially neglected to meet with African American strikers and exercised methods to subvert them, reached an agreement with the strikers, officially ending the strike on April 16, 1968 (We Are Memphis, 2022). The National Civil Rights

Museum is now a site at the location of the Lorraine Motel. Since the civil rights era, Memphis has become one of the country's dominant commercial centers in transportation and logistics (Greater Memphis Chamber, 2018). The city is home to the Memphis International Airport and has taken the place of the Hong Kong International Airport as the busiest cargo airport in the world. The International Port of Memphis also hosts the 5th busiest inland water port in the U.S. Memphis is home to three Fortune 500 companies: FedEx, International Paper, and AutoZone (Hussung, 2014). Mid-South Pride, a non-profit corporation located in Memphis, is Tennessee's second-largest LGBT pride social event (Richard, 2019). Also, the largest Pentecostal denomination in the United States is located in Memphis, the International headquarters of the Church of God in Christ. Memphis is home to the largest Orthodox shul in the United States, the Baron Hirsch Synagogue. Recently in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Memphis held protests leading to confrontations with police (Stennett, Burgess, Weathersbee, Kennedy, & Hardiman, 2020). Last year, on June 2nd, 2021, Confederate General and Ku Klux Klan leader Nathan Bedford Forrest's remains were removed from Memphis' parks (Jackson & Sayers, 2021). Unlike in Virginia, the taken down of the monument occurred without much violence, which speaks to Memphis' uniqueness as a southern state. With Memphis being a historical Black city, the Black community developed uniquely in terms of the language, racial identity, and the manner in which the natives socialize.

AAL and Identity – Raciolinguistics

Alim, Rickford, and Ball (2016) present an emerging and separate field of study called raciolinguistics where they discuss how the relationship between race, language and racism plays a key role in reflecting and defining the way human societies are structured. They found that race

can be shaped through the lens of language; for instance, just as the standardized language is at times associated with the ideology of Whiteness. Flores and Rosa (2015) critique American language education and assert that the standardization of appropriate language – a language defined by the dominant culture as a formation of raciolinguistics ideologies that promote particular language practices as normative and other linguistic practices as deficient (Ramjattan, 2018) – in U.S. schooling constructs distinct language experience for racialized students. Within raciolinguistics, the theory of transracialization is encompassed as it deals with how individuals forgo racial categorization and use it to manage racism justice (as in the Black Lives Matter movement). Incorporating intersectionality in theorizing how distinct racial identities within families impact language experiences of race, raciolinguistics deals with race and its relationship to language while drawing from sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (Smitherman, 2017). The main focus of raciolinguistics is to better comprehend the intricate contexts and suggestions of the language spoken and used by racialized individuals. Thus, a family's use of a minority language and the FLP efforts tied to multilingualism can be related to the construction of racial identities or, concomitantly, concerns of racialization and racism outside of the home. Just like bilinguals, bidialectals may be racialized and expected to speak in ways other than standard English. We see this in bilingualism as Latinxs are at times expected to speak Spanish fluently and are at times criticized by other Spanish-speaking bilinguals for not being bilingual or labeled as unable to speak any language well at all by monolinguals of the dominant language in the particular domain (Rosa, 2016). In a similar way, bidialectal African Americans may be racialized with the expectation of being uneducated if they speak AAL or described as acting/talking White if they do not talk Black. Reflecting perceptions of race and language in context, Native English speaking is at times connected to Whiteness (Flores & Rosa, 2015). It is

important to point out that AAL is used for belonging in the Black community and expressing one's racial identity. Nelson and Flores (2015) discuss how raciolinguistics ideologies are defined by White listening/speaking individuals in that language-minoritized students are expected to talk like the White speaking individuals while overlooking raciolinguistics ideologies that the White listening individuals utilize to position them as racial Others. In later chapters, we will see that the ethnolinguistic identity-- Black identity-- of the African American participants changes their family identity as some of their language attitudes reflect those of society. Despite racialized groups' fluency, they may be perceived as not being able to speak a language (Ramjattan, 2018); however, Baugh (2000) argued that not everyone regards African American Language as inferior to the "standard" English and there is current research used to show that hearers of AAL tend to fall into two broad categories: (1) those who dislike the language and hold it in low regard or (2) those who find it appealing and hold it in high regard. Another important distinction between African American families and their AAL use as opposed to bi-multilingual language use is that Black families are not always able to be a part of and assimilate with the majority population if they do not fluently use the dominant language variety. However, Black individuals who are more metalinguistically aware and adequately code-switch have a better chance of expanding their social networks beyond the contacts they are afforded initially and post-enslavement (Greene & Walker, 2004).

A more in-depth study of the factors that contribute to how and when African American parents plan and manage how they use African American Language with their children is needed. The study of this phenomenon is important as African American families are "worried" about the way their language is perceived by the outside world out of concern of judgement, the desire to communicate clearly, and the desire to maintain cultural identity (Godley & Escher,

2012). These factors have clear consequences for how and when Black parents use African American Language (AAL) with family. Based on the findings centered around raciolinguistics that have been reviewed up to this point, it is appropriate to suggest that the parental concerns of racialization and racism, the desire to communicate clearly, and the desire to maintain cultural identity directly influence the language policies of African American families. In sum, raciolinguistics investigates how language and dialects are spoken and utilized to create race and how ideologies of race and racism influence language practices and explores how the connection between race and language influences factors such as politics and education (Crump, 2014).

AAL and Education

Discussing the educational experiences of AAL-speaking children is important when considering African American language as a topic worth studying. Linguists understand the influence that school has on families' language policy, for it plays a vital role in language planning (Spolsky, 2012). Schools have a lot of soft power/influence over family language decisions, the advice they give to parents is likely to be respected and followed for the most part (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013). Also, the school's attitude towards bi-multilingualism clearly affects parental decisions, particularly for parents who spoke languages considered a lower status; for example, non-mainstream varieties of American English (Nhemachena, 2022). There is a substantive body of research on AAL that legitimizes it as a language; however, schools in the United States have yet to incorporate a language policy regarding African American English learners (AAELs). Research that analyzes existing policies such as the *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children et al. v. Ann Arbor School District* and the Ebonics Resolution adopted by the Oakland California Board of the Oakland Unified School District

(OUSD) are important to mention when making a connection between AAL, student experiences, and FLP.

Ebonics Debate. Peele-Eady and Foster (2018) conducted a study on the Ann Arbor Decision and the Oakland Ebonics Resolution where they performed a critical discourse and policy analysis in order to examine these two major language policies related to AAL and AAELs. They comment that “African American students] recalled their experiences in the school, where they [the boys] spoke as they did at home in African American English, their teachers simply assumed they couldn’t do schoolwork...” Here lies the issue where far too often AAL speakers are perceived as uneducated because they practice a nonstandard language variety. Peele and Foster suggest that African Americans are convinced the children were being discriminated against because of their African American English. Through this research, it may also be inferred that AAL can be a marker of belonging in an ethnic community and a marker for assumed attitudes, coming with implied criticisms that African Americans have to carry with them as they speak in public spaces. Despite the stigma and critique of AAL, it is important to African American families and plays an important role in their language policy. After evaluating these policies, Peele-Eady and Foster (2018) found that both theories refer to AAL as a ‘home and community language’ in its own right, charge instructors who teach AAELs to take ‘appropriate action’, and distribute knowledge about from where AAL stems. Naming AAL a home language is relevant as it ties into the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) statement about home language education for children and linguistic human rights. UNESCO has been addressing and pushing for the multilingual education of home languages from the earliest years of education. Research shows that the education of home languages is an important factor for inclusion and quality learning, and it also enhances learning

outcomes and academic performance. This is relevant, particularly in elementary education to prevent knowledge gaps and augment the speed of learning and understanding. Multilingual education of home languages capacitates all learners to become part of the community in all respects. It furthers mutual understanding and respect for one another and facilitates the maintenance of the wealth of cultural and traditional heritage that is globally encapsulated in every home language. Historically, AAELs have not been provided equal opportunities to educate themselves and then when in school they have been prejudicially required to take remedial courses. Peele-Eady and Foster present two major policies surrounding these issues.

The first, *MLK v. Ann Arbor* (1979) involved a court decision in favor of several African American parents whose children were being disproportionately placed in special education classes and ultimately denied access to literacy. The second, the Oakland Ebonics Resolution (1997), represents a decree established by the school board to directly and overtly address the needs of AAELs who continued to face unequal access to educational opportunities even 20 years following Ann Arbor.

Geneva Smitherman and John Baugh (2002) refer to the Ann Arbor case as ‘the shot heard around the world’ in their discussions of African American Language. Just as this phrase refers to the opening shot of the battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775, which started the American Revolutionary War and led to the creation of the United States, I can infer that the Ann Arbor case in 1979 made AAL a topic of serious interest in the field of sociolinguistics and FLP and the Ebonics Resolution led to the creation of many conversations surrounding Ebonics and Black Phonics. The dissemination of knowledge about African American language can soothe issues like those presented in the cases above, change the attitudes toward bidialectal students

and ideologies about AAL, and show the connection between bilingualism and bidialectalism and how AAL should be considered a home and heritage language.

In school settings within the Black community, we have seen situations where teachers comment on bidialectal, African American/Black students' academic ability as a result of the difference in the way the student writes and speaks. The teacher may ask the student, "How often do you study? Because you are making low grades on your writing assignment." And the student may respond, "I be studyin', and I be doin' my homework, but I stay getting' bad grades on my essays anyways." Here, there is a distinct difference in the grammatical structure of the two speakers yet both utterances are understood; however, if the student is writing in their home language (because this is the variety they have learned and used growing up) then their style may contradict with that of the school's writing expectations. It is not that they are writing incorrectly, just differently. As a consequence, the bidialectal, African American/Black student may change the way they write to conform to the school's expectations and starts to speak in a more mainstream manner with her siblings (who tend to play a similar role as friends). They notice a difference in her language style and question why she has shifted her style of speaking, which creates additional peer pressure along with the academic pressure the student is already experiencing. Linguists like Craig et al. (2003) discuss features of what they call African American English (AAE) in order to argue the importance of understanding how the Black bidialectal youth use English in contrast to speakers of other varieties. This study overall provides a phonological inventory for examining AAE growth and change with schooling and how it relates to youth speakers of AAE's reading acquisition. In this experiment, Craig aimed to examine the production of phonological features of African American English for Black children in the 2nd – 5th grade by having them read passages aloud written in Standard American English.

These researchers observed how; although the passages were written in SAE, the utterances were produced in 8 different phonological features. They found that the phonological features of AAE were more frequent than morphosyntactic features. These findings are important to this review of literature because they can be used to understand how the study of African American Language contributes to not only the research on bidialectal children and schooling and, vice versa, but also the perspectives on FLP.

Black students' experiences with their teachers impact the way they use language in certain environments, their attitude towards African American language, and their relationship with their peers, which all affect their cultural identity. Research has shown that language attitudes intersect with language use and language learning in bidialectal families when the choice is made whether to use the home language or the more societally accepted standardized variety of English (Henerson, Morris & Fitz-Gibbon 1987). An individual's attitude toward language reflects how they feel and value it, the active process of language learning, specifically in children, is impacted when there is conflict between these two feelings (Lee 2020). For example, bidialectal children learn the home language first and primarily use it since they spend most of their time with their family; however, this process is interrupted when they must shift their style of speaking to accommodate their educational needs such as speaking English in a more mainstream form. This causes bidialectals to strategically plan when to use which variety of English based on their social context. Language attitudes of bidialectal families affect their children's language learning processes; however, their attitude towards their home language may change when it comes to conversing at school. Laughton and Hasenstab (1986) describe the process of language learning, which develops as people use different varieties of English to communicate their thoughts and feelings with family members, friends, and others. As we dive

deeper into this study and start to explore the language learning process among bidialectal children, it is important that we look at how language attitudes affect this process. In studies we have seen how the language policies in official settings like schools inform FLP planning and practices of parents; for instance, in Sevinc and Dewaele's (2018) study, they investigated language anxiety, comparing the levels of heritage language anxiety and the majority language anxiety across family generations, and linking language anxiety to sociobiographical and language background variables. These researchers note that individuals within the family experience different language-use anxieties, or distresses, about the manner in which they speak caused by racism and racialization, at school and/or work, affecting language practice patterns within the family. This signifies that the concept of language anxiety expands beyond the dimensions of the classroom, encompassing minority communities' daily interactions. Laughton and Hasenstab (1986) describe the process of language learning, which develops as people use different varieties of English to communicate their thoughts and feelings with family members, friends, and others. Preston and Prikhodkine (2015) define language varieties as distinctive forms of linguistic expressions that include dialects, registers, jargon, and idiolects. So, for instance, if a person speaks the "standard" variety of English and African American Language then they would be considered as bidialectal and a speaker that is capable of using more than one variation of a language. Although most FLP studies focus on bilingual families, it is important to understand the language policy of bidialectal families because of their differing and similar characteristics. According to Barron-Hauwaert (2004), a bilingual family is one that uses a mixture of a least two languages or dialects and two or more cultures, indicating that bidialectal families may also be considered bilingual. Baugh (2000) found that some believe using alternative language varieties like African American Language is only appropriate in certain

environments and situations. In educational environments like schools, the use of alternative dialects is frowned upon, but this is also the case of named languages – using Spanish at school for example – This issue comes to light in the study of African American families but is also relevant for bilingual families.

The academic and peer pressure that Black bidialectal students feel impact their language development and influence the way they community with family, teachers, and their peers. Research studies about African American families and how they use language have found that starting at a young age, African American children are implicitly capable of effectively communicating in their primary discourse, AAL, and Standard American English in public places like school. Hartman's (2019) research found that examining AAL helps make a connection between language and race/ethnicity by examining interactions between teachers and their students. More studies have proven the use and study of AAL as a resource and as valuable (Morales & Hartman, 2019). Morales utilized positioning theory and language learning theory to analyze how elementary Black children used AAL in their language arts classrooms. They found that it is important that teachers support African American students' AAL use in classroom settings by including it in the curriculum and promoting its use on assignments. Findings, such as these effectively demonstrate the connection between African American Language and the educational experiences of youth, and bilingual family language policy by showing the importance of understanding bidialectal speakers of AAL and how the family's language planning decisions impact how their children use the language.

Godley and Escher (2012) documented perspectives of bidialectal African American high school students on how to develop their mastery of formal spoken Standard English, while building upon their knowledge of other dialects, and encouraging them to participate in

classroom discussions. Their methodology consisted of in-class writing tasks to elicit the students' perspective on this topic. Through a multinomial logistic regression analysis, Godley found that students with high academic achievement believed that only standard English should be spoken in class. The researchers comment that these students seemed to be driven more by a perception of negative judgments of AAL by mainstream society; in other words, these students believed that the use of African American Language is deemed acceptable at home but not in public spaces due to the inferior labeling that has been put on this variety of English. Their findings are similar to Dickar's (2004) who also researched bidialectal African American students' views on using AAL and SE in school. Additionally, current research has found that AAL is casually and comfortably used at home, but children are taught to switch languages when they go to school in order to be respected (Fisher, & Lapp, 2013; Lee & Handsfield, 2018; Pittas & Nunes, 2018). Fisher and Lapp (2013) presented a contrastive analysis instruction to 91 AAL speaking, high school students in order to help them understand the words, phrases, and sentence-level differences that exist between their home and school language registers. They succeed in improving their students' test scores to a 97% passing rate. Through their analysis they found that Academic language learning is enhanced when students understand why the register of school is one they may need for some life interactions, Academic language learning develops naturally when the home registers of students are valued and respected, Academic language is acquired as students engaged in language-based social and academic interactions, and that language expansion is important to students when their teachers provide scaffolded language and conceptual experiences. Fisher and Lapp's findings relate to and support the view that Applied Linguistics is lagging in the national conversation on anti-racism, and it is unclear what an anti-racist research agenda in AL would look like. By focusing on African American

families and FLP, this study demonstrates how to integrate the study of racism with language learning and multilingualism/dialecticism.

Lee and Handsfield (2018) consider code-meshing as an instructional approach that invites multiple languages within the classroom and argue that AAL or Spanish speakers are encouraged to use those languages at home but not in official spaces like school. In this study, the researchers also compare classrooms, which continue to accept only dominant forms of English as the correct and appropriate language choice for all students, to a linguistic sieve. Pittas and Nunes (2018) conducted a longitudinal study on 404 first-grade children who used a vernacular form that systematically differed from the standard form of their language in hopes of promoting the development of dialect awareness, the appreciation of the systematic differences between the standard and the vernacular form of a language (Wolfram, 1999). They argue that the more aware a dialect user is of the systematic differences between the standard language and the vernacular, the easier it will be for them to connect the vernacular form with the standard written form. Through their research, they found that dialect awareness is positively correlated with literacy outcomes, indicating that children's literacy will improve as their awareness increases. This study is important as it adds to what we already know about children's learning of literacy in bidialectal settings. Although these studies discuss in detail the connection between understanding one's dialect and acquisition of the dominant, standard variety, they do not mention how race plays a role in how the vernacular they speak is perceived by the listener. I aim to fill this gap by adding race to the conversation while still modeling the same theoretical and methodological approaches used in these studies.

The recent U.S.-wide anti-immigrant fervor causes bilingual education and multilingual use in school to be limited, sometimes to only three out of the many years immigrant children

spend in U.S. schools. Although there is not enough data to argue that linguistic intolerance reflects the ideology of African Americans as they feed into the belief that non-standard Englishes do not belong in certain public spaces like academia even though that vernacular may be widely used, it is an issue in the field that needs to be understood. African American families' language policy is based on language ideologies that they pass on to their children, so they won't be negatively judged, so their speech is clearly understood, they maintain their cultural identity or Blackness, and share a mutual respect with their audience. In other words, through further research on linguistic discrimination and intolerance, linguistics can grasp a better understanding of why African American parents accommodate other speakers in style-shifting. This calls for further study on linguistic intolerance towards AAL and how it potentially causes African American parents to internalize these kinds of anti-immigrant and racist language ideologies. It could lead to knowledge centered around the causes of concern and worry about using AAL. Understanding the language policy of African Americans can help us train teachers and better equip them with the tools to instruct diverse students who speak minority dialects in educational settings. Although there is much research on maintaining home language for bilinguals in order to promote academic achievement, it is also important to know how maintaining home dialects affects bidialectal students' academic performance. As Vandal (2016) explains, African Americans are disproportionately placed in remedial courses which may be caused by the language barrier between bidialectal students and their uninformed instructors. Through research on bidialectalism, African American Language, and FLP of Black families, we hope to bridge the educational gap while also contributing alternative perspectives to the field of FLP while keeping in mind that dialects are at times contradistinguished based on doctrines grounded in partiality.

Linguicism. The societal stigma of the use of African American Language (AAL) is so great it potentially influences parents' use of AAL at home or at least increases stress in trying to decide when and how to use it for some parents. Linguistic discrimination impacts bidialectal family's language-making decisions, for they are aware of how the parents will impact their children's language practices to maintain and plan language use within their household. The term linguicism was coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (2018) who defined linguicism as "ideologies and structures that are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language. In other words, linguistic discrimination is linguistically argued racism based on language or dialect. Factors that contribute to linguicism are race, racism, systemic oppression, and the marginalization of African Americans. The study of linguicism against AAL is important since the language discrimination that African American families endure impacts their language policy at home.

Understanding AAL's definition aids in the assertion that studying AAL in regard to the FLP of African Americans is important to the field of family language policy because AAL speakers may face linguicism (Boutte and Johnson, 2013), or discrimination and oppression based on the intersection between the language they speak and the color of their skin, in various official spaces like schools. Language in itself can be seen as oppressive when the dominant language ideologies cause African American families to be concerned about being racialized by others based on the variety of English they speak. Boutte and Johnson (2013) found through their research that concern of linguistic judgement can be perceived as a form of oppression by focusing on the development and experiences of AAL speakers. Using critical race theory, Boutte analyzes a composite counter story of two Black girls' language and found that they had positive perceptions about AAL, which is contrary to other perspectives and narratives about

AAL. Farr (2011) authored a review centered around Plurilingualism or the use of more than one language, or variety of a language, by an individual speaker (Clyne, 2003). She argues that competing language ideologies underlie plurilingual practices while laws and language policies promote standard English use (Silverstein, 1996). She supports this claim by reviewing the linguistic history of Chicago, illustrating plurilingual practices in various places, and discussing language policies and ideologies in Chicago. Drawing from foundational studies on the linguistic marketplace (Bourdieu, 1977; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003), Farr states that dominant ideologies link a codified standard English with modernity, clarity, and rationality whereas vernacular varieties are linked with uneducated and irrational thinking. Through her research, she found that standard English is the symbolic capital of global, public institutions and is promoted by public policy whereas vernacular ways of speaking only comprise the symbolic capital of local linguistic markets. In other words, Standard English is valued more than AAL. This finding propels the study of AAL since gaining a better understanding of non-mainstream American English varieties may aid in the realization of its importance to families and teachers in public and private institutions. Farr's findings show how the United States holds a language policy that accepts multiculturalism but not so much plurilingualism despite its abundance in history. This perspective is particularly important to the current study because while movements such as Black Lives Matter and antiracist dialogues have begun across the U.S., few discussions involve topics of language (Alim & Smitherman, 2012) despite the importance of language to African American identity and culture.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, empirical research that investigated family language policy, language socialization, and African American language was reviewed. The theoretical foundation of the study positions itself in language policy and language socialization while viewing AAL as a home/heritage language and as an asset to Black children's language development. Studying the family language policy of individuals who identify as African American/Black and consider themselves speakers of the vernacular typically used to communicate with the Black community is important to the framework of language policy and language socialization. The research reviewed demonstrates how little we know about African American families and how they go about socializing their children and maintaining language use within the home. Many of the FLP studies we have seen focus on bilingual and multilingual families, which furthers the importance of adding Black bidialectal families to the conversation as they mention language issues. There are many gaps that have the opportunity to be filled; this study aims to permeate and expand the field of FLP by considering how race and racism play a role in language policy and the process of language socialization.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study are theoretically framed in the three-component language policy framework explicated by Spolsky (2004) while the data collected that supports the hypothetical answers to the research questions are analyzed based on the interdisciplinary framework of FLP which is informed by the theories of language policy (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018; King et al., 2008; Spolsky, 2012) and language socialization (Duranti, Ochs, & Schieffelin, 2012; Lanza, 2007; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Through the discussion of the African American families' language ideologies, the practices they take on,

and the language socialization that occurs in the Black families that use AAL, researchers and educators can better understand the impact that language policy and socialization have on child language development.

The purpose of this research study was to show how to integrate the examination of racism with language learning and multilingualism/dialecticism – the speech and influence of a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by features of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, and spoken by a group who are socially and regionally set off from others – through the investigation of African American families and FLP. The study also sought to explore the impact of the family-external factor of racism on the language choices made by African American parents in Memphis, Tennessee. More specifically, this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. How do African American parents make decisions about what language(s) or language varieties to use at home and in other contexts?
2. How do African American family members view their own bidialectalism and how do they see AAL as a resource for meaning-making across contexts in their lives?
3. How do members of African American families talk about their conversations at home?
4. To what extent do African American parents, especially Black mothers, talk about their continuity in language choice over time?
5. How do family members who use AAL talk about code-switching in different contexts and over time?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Family language policy is a line of inquiry that examines family members' attitudes toward, planning for, and use of language(s) in the home (King & Fogle, 2006; King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry, 2008). The study seeks to widen the margins of modern understandings of FLP by bringing this field of researching together with language and race studies, investigating how Black parents socialize their children into using (and not using) African American language (AAL). Theoretically grounded in Spolsky's (2004) model of language policy, FLP studies naturally rely on methodological approaches that capture practical functioning within the family; qualitative research with ethnographic approaches usually fulfills this need as in Hirsch and Kayam's (2021) study where they examined relationships between immigrant and transsettler transnationalism and found important relationships between temporality factors that differentiate immigrants and transsettlers, their host language attitudes, and their reported FLP planning and practices. Qualitative research methods (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2007; Laherand, 2008; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) with ethnographic approaches (Tedlock, 2003) focus on obtaining data through open-ended and conversational inquiries/communication by asking participants questions about their experiences of occurrences that happen in their lives, enabling researchers to obtain insight into what it feels like to be another individual and to understand the world as others experience it.

The current research study employs surveys, interviews, and in-home recordings as a means of collecting and thematically analyzing data on ten African American families that live in Memphis, Tennessee to gain a better understanding of their experiences with and concerns about racialization and racism along with how it impacts how they FLP. Surveying through Qualtrics,

an online questionnaire platform, profile information is obtained and the preliminary question, inquiring about their experiences with talking to their children about race is posed. The profile information helps to determine how the parents' ideologies align with their practices and planning methods while the preliminary question prompts the discussion of language and race. The principal method of data collection – virtually interviewing families in groups to elicit their concerns about racism's influence on their beliefs, practices, and plans for language use (specifically speaking AAL) at home – aims to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the role that racial identity, racialization, and racism influence how the families FLP. Self-reported audio recordings – what the participants discussed absent of the researcher – is an expansion of what was discussed during the interview and a useful and effective approach for understanding why racism is a concern for the families and how it impacts their decision of when and where to use language. These methods contribute to the field of applied linguistics on FLP since linguists rarely inquire about and analyze African American concerns on racism and how it influences their language use with their families. A new understanding of the language policy and planning of African American families will affect the overall language trend of Memphis; thus, under a sociolinguistic context, is particularly important to realize how racialization and the stigmatization of AAL impact the participants' language ideologies and practices at home with their family members

A Qualitative Ethnographic Approach

FLP studies at times fall under “ethnographic” research but are not in fact traditional ethnographies (Danjo, 2021). Ethnographic studies are systemic in the way they examine individuals' perceptions and practices while also examining participants' behavior in various

social situations (Barabas, 2022). On the other hand, ethnographies are one of the major methodologies in qualitative study rooted in the discipline of anthropology (Guillen-Galve & Bocanegra-Valle, 2021). Ethnographies are used to describe and interpret the shared patterns of a group within a specific social and cultural context (Creswell, 2007; Tedlock, 2003). Ethnography is an approach included in qualitative research, a form of naturalistic inquiry for understanding and interpreting human action in social contexts that focuses on why actions occur (Roulston, 2019). This form of research relies on data obtained by the researcher through observations, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, participant-observations, recordings made in natural settings, documents, case studies, and artifacts while also relying on humans' experiences as meaning-making agents (Lazaraton, 1995). Together, qualitative ethnographic methods aim to understand everyday social practices from an emic perspective – an insider's view that comes from within the culture where studies are situation (Mostowlansky & Rota, 2020); for example, linguistic perspectives of parents who live in Memphis and are concerned about racism and racialization– as researchers examine local racial categories, identities, and practices as well as how social actors variously reproduce/resist the structures, processes, and effects of racism (Hudley, Mallinson, & Bucholtz, 2020). An ethnographic approach is important for examining racism and language since such an approach has the ability to show how racialization and racism foreground language and race socialization processes and permit a greater understanding of how families' beliefs, practices, and plans can be based on societal perceptions of their racial identity and language use.

Based on the three-dimensional language policy theory which includes language ideology, language practice, and language management (Spolsky, 2004), this study investigates the FLP of thirty-four African American participants from ten families with children ages seven

and up who also identify as African American/Black. Trilaterally, this study's methods address linguistic practices by surveying whether or not the parents have talked to their children about race, interviewing the families in groups, inquiring about their racial concerns and how their concerns influence their language policy, along with obtaining self-reported audio recordings that further grant the opportunity to discuss language issues amongst themselves. Through inquiries directed towards racialization, racial identity, and racism and by analyzing the data collected from survey questionnaires, interviews, and in-home recordings, I connect FLP and language and race research to help linguists, educators, and parents realize the importance of the family-external factor of racism's impact on ideology, practice, and planning.

I chose to undertake an ethnographic study of FLP because there is very little in-depth, close-up research on the perceptions and practices of African American families. Recent studies have focused on African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and how Dual-Language (DL) conjointly where the DL students translanguage during informal assessments at school and explore what translanguaging practices reveal (Baur, Colomer, & Wiemelt, 2020). The researchers found that "translanguaging lens illuminated how students mobilized all their resources when their lived experiences were valued." (351). Nonetheless, even the researchers believe that "it is important to extend these investigations into the home". Exploring the intimate domain of language policy within the African American family home, I employ an ethnographic approach to investigating the families' language policy as the rationale for methods aimed at answering the research questions for this study.

Research Context

Memphis, Tennessee, the setting for this study, is the most African American populated city in Tennessee and the second-most populous city in Tennessee, after Nashville. In America,

it is ranked seventh for having the highest percentage of a Black population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). I chose this setting not only because over sixty-four percent of Memphians identify as African American/Black but also because Memphians tend to speak a very distinct variety of English and utilize unique language practices that are distinctly different from the language practices used by African Americans in other cities where the majority of the citizens identify as African American/Black.

Memphis natives tend to articulate and accentuate their words differently from other southern cities. Unlike Nashville or other southern cities heavily populated by African Americans, Black people from Memphis usually do not drop their “-r’s” due to the presence of the Appalachian influence. There are articles that positively comment on the way Memphians speak; a couple describe the “Memphis accent” as *delicate* (I love Memphis, 2011; Evans, 2014) while other editors have ranked Memphis sixth on Travel + Leisure’s list of “America’s Most Charming Accents” (Arnold, 2013). Typically, Memphians can be identified based on certain words they may use in their casual dialogue. Memphians can uniquely pronounce vowels and deftly slur consonants. The Memphis dialect is peppered with words like “mane”, “junt”, “bruh” and other expressions that have particularly elongated vowels. These words may be coupled with other urban utterances like “ain’t it mane”, “wassup bruh”, and “You wanna hit that junt?” In these contexts, “mane” is a synonym for the word *man*, “bruh” is an expression short for *brother*, and “junt” is a noun used to describe any person, place, or thing. Words and phrases like these are understood and spoken uniquely and solely by Black people who were born and raised in Memphis; thus, making Memphis a prime setting for conducting research on the language policies of African American families.

Research Design

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate how ten African American families that live in Memphis, Tennessee socialize their children into AAL, helping join studies in FLP with studies on race and language, focusing on racism as an external factor that is rarely explored. Further investigations on racism and how families think and talk about racial and language discrimination shed light on the doctrine's influence on language planning specifically. To address the research questions of this qualitative study, an ethnographic research design is used to collect data and analyze the information thematically. I choose to take an ethnographic approach in order to gain a better understanding of the language policy of the ten participating African American families. By disseminating questionnaires, conducting semi-structured group interviews, and collecting self-reported audio recordings from the parents, I was able to effectively and thoroughly explore and discuss the ten families' language policy, highlighting the role that racialization and racism play in their language choices. Instead of relying on results from a questionnaire sent to a multitude of individuals, I find it important to also interview families in groups, for these types of interviews have been virtually overlooked by sociolinguistic researchers and by ethnographic investigators in particular (Frey & Fontana, 1991); typically, participants are interviewed individually. This study's group interviews are semi-formal with a specific, structured purpose – to discuss parents' concerns about racism and interpret how such worries impact their language policy. These group interviews uniquely take place virtually via Zoom because during that time (2020 – 2022) we were at the height of the coronavirus pandemic; nonetheless, I stimulate a group discussion with topical questions about language and race. The data generated is qualitative with an ethnographic approach and I employ the group interviews as a more efficient use of resources and as a means of adding valuable

insight to the interpretation of the social context. On the cautionary side, studies have found that the lessons from group dynamics such as the characteristics of the group (e.g., size) and background of participants (e.g., gender, education, socioeconomics) can impact the interaction and response patterns within the families. Still, group interviews have great potential for FLP research.

This study is one of the few qualitative studies to specifically, and solely, examine the FLP of African American families while taking an ethnographic approach. Although current researchers have employed qualitative methods and ethnographic approaches to examine the FLP of bilingual families and obtain data from participant observations, fieldnotes, and semi-structured interviews (Rizki & Al Fajri, 2021), many have not explored bidialectal households specifically families who identify as African American. Further examination of diverse families is important, for it gives researchers the opportunity to inquire about particular concerns that parents may have about sensitive subjects like racial identity, discrimination, and racism. Current researchers have analyzed the FLP of multilingual families based on semi-structured interviews (Küün,2022); however, there are very few studies that specifically ask about how family external factors such as racism influence their FLP, particularly their language planning. Gaiser (2021) conducted qualitative research on the FLP of a bilingual and bidialectal family that combined longitudinal observations and informal interviews with a family focus group; however, their case study failed to categorically talk about race and racism, with it being such an impactful factor in FLP. There are many more FLP research studies, yet this study remains unique since I, a researcher who is an insider of the participants' community, employ questionnaires inquiring about how parents talk about race with their children, semi-structured group interviews that include those hard questions about racism and its impact on the thoughts and beliefs of the

family, and in-home recordings self-reported by parents to investigate how they plan to use language amongst themselves at home and outside the home.

Virtual group interviews, including parents and children, have rarely been used in ethnographic qualitative research studies. This unique approach resulted in the evocation of the parents' language ideologies, practices, and planning strategies. Through this untapped method, I was able to inquire about families' concerns about racism and how they talk about language and race amongst each other. Five out of ten of the interviewed families also voluntarily submitted self-reported audio recordings. Most of the recordings include interactions between the parent and child(ren), absent of the research, where the children felt more comfortable speaking more and freely. The only role the researcher played in the in-home recordings was prompting the participants to review the transcriptions from their interview and have a conversation centered around topics that came up. Both the interviews and recordings are thematically analyzed in the next chapter, but first it is important to profile the participants and provide background information about them.

Participants

Ten African American families participated in this research study totaling thirty-four participants. Each family identified as African American, lived in Memphis, TN or the surrounding Shelby County area, and had at least one child that was at least 7 years old who also participated in the interview. The participants were mainly recruited via email, social media, and by reaching out to organizations. The official recruitment flyer, designed with writing approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), was published on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Taking on a rather collaborative effort to recruit participants for this study, these posts were shared by members of these sites. The official recruitment email

was sent to various organizations, many of the National Pan-Hellenic Council—the collaborative umbrella council composed of nine historically Black fraternities and sororities (e.g., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated). The recruitment message contained a link to the Qualtrics survey that was used to determine the criteria of the respondents. When referring to respondents, I am referring to the people who actually completed the Qualtrics survey; each respondent has a family who participated in the interview as well. Forty-four respondents filled out the pre-interview survey; only twenty-four of those respondents provided their contact information and were reached out to; and only ten respondents scheduled and participated in the semi-structured group interview with their respective family members via Zoom Meetings.

Table 1: Participant Information Log

Families	Parent/Adult Participants	Child/Minor Participants	Highest Education	Annual Income
Family 1	Nathan Sitter Nicole Sitter	Ariel Sitter Ashley Sitter	Master's	\$75,000 - \$100,000
Family 2	Dr. Omar Banks	Aleyah Banks Amy Banks Eric Banks	Doctoral	\$100,000 – and up
Family 3	Luis Teller Amanda Ranger	Anna	Master's	\$45,000 - \$75,000
Family 4	Nicholas Wheeler Eliza Wheeler	Nolon Wheeler	Master's	\$100,000- and up
Family 5	Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys Elizabeth Keys-Gardner	Rachel Wise Yvonne Gardner	Doctoral	\$45,000 - \$75,000
Family 6	Nia Handler-Wright Ivan Wright	Emily	Bachelor's	\$30,000 - \$45,000
Family 7	Ellen Freeman	Erica Lawrence Savant	Master's	\$45,000-\$75,000
Family 8	Officer Luke Constable	Hannah Constable Roger Constable	Bachelor's	\$75,000 - \$100,000

	Autumn Constable			
Family 9	Dr. Yusef Kibitzer	Nelson Kibitzer	Doctoral	\$100,000 – and up
Family 10	Stephanie Rhonda Sage Norman Sage	Natasha Sage	Bachelors	\$45,000-\$75,000

About The Families. This section of the participants contains more specific information about the families including their educational background and career fields. The parent participants whom all lived in Memphis, TN or a surrounding town were highly educated and gainfully employed. They all possessed a bachelor’s degree or higher; forty percent of them had a master’s degree and thirty percent of them obtained a doctoral degree. The participants’ economic class ranged from lower- to upper-class; three families reported their income over one hundred thousand dollars annually. In comparison to Memphis’ median household income of \$41,864 (2020), the families’ household income ranges from a little under sixty-six thousand dollars annually and up, showing that each parent has established a sustainable socio-economic environment for their children. Although I have used the terms Family 1/first family, Family 2/second family, Family 3/third family, et cetera to refer to the families and names of the members and their relationship with each other, I have also provided each participant with a pseudonym, reflecting one of their characteristics (i.e., career, personality). The numbers allocated to the families are in chronological order in which they were interviewed but the numbers have no meaning in the actual study except to identify the families.

Family 1: The Sitters. The first African American family I interviewed consisted of two parents – Nathan and Nicole Sitter – and two daughters – Ariel and Ashley Sitter – who are Memphis natives. Nathan, the father age fifty-four, and Nicole, the mother, were born and raised

in inner-city parts of Memphis but moved to a suburban area to raise their daughters, Ariel and Ashely. Both parents obtained college degrees; the father has a master's degree and the mother has a bachelor's in nursing. The father holds the job title "Senior Advisor", or "Board Administrator", and the mother is a nurse at a local clinic. The two daughters who participated in the interview went to the same high school; one was a senior and the other was a sophomore. The father has what he referred to as a "bonus son", but he did not participate in the interview.

Family 2: The Banks. The second family I interviewed consisted of a father, Dr. Omar Banks, and his three children—two daughters (Aleyah and Amy Banks) ages eleven and eight and one son (Eric Banks) aged seven—who were born and raised in Memphis. Although the mother of this family who is also a Memphis native did not participate in the interview, I will add that she shared occupational commonalities with Nicole Sitter, the mother of the first family; she too is a nurse but for babies. Dr. Banks' wife received her bachelor's in nursing and he received his Ed.D. in Higher Education from a nationally ranked higher education institution; he currently works at a bank and holds a high-level position in human resources. The three children all attend a public but exemplary high-performing institution that was awarded as a National Blue Ribbon School for academic achievement by the U.S. Department of Education.

Family 3: Luis Teller's family. The third family consisted of three members including both biological guardians – Luis Teller and Amanda Ranger – who co-parent their fourteen-year-old daughter, Anna. The parents also have a three-year-old daughter together but due to her age, she was omitted from the study. The father has a master's degree in information systems with a concentration in network management and works as a Senior Technical Learning Analyst at a multinational conglomerate holding company based in Memphis, TN. The mother obtained her master's degree in education and works as a Response to Intervention (RTI) Coordinator at a free

open-enrollment college-preparatory school that is among America's largest charter schools. The participating daughter also attends the award-winning school where her mother works.

Family 4: The Wheelers. The fourth family I interviewed consisted of a fifty-two-year-old father – Nicholas Wheeler – and a forty-nine-year-old mother – Eliza Wheeler – who had been married for almost a quarter of a century at the time of the interview. Although they have two children, a nineteen-year-old daughter and a fifteen-year-old son at the time, only the son, Nolon Wheeler, participated in the interview. This family is highly educated; the mother has obtained a master's degree in Reading and Literacy ESL, the father has a master's in Operations Management, and their daughter is working on her bachelor's in education. The mother works in education as an ESL teacher for Shelby County Schools and the father is the Senior Assistant Controller of a large corporate company based in Bartlett, TN, a small suburban town on the outskirts of Memphis.

Family 5: Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys' family. The fifth family I had the pleasure of interviewing is unique because two matriarchs of the same family participated along with their daughters; in total four women were interviewed. I will briefly discuss the mother, Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys, who was the respondent to the Qualtrics survey, and her daughter, Rachel Wise, first and then her sister – Elizabeth Keys-Gardner, the other mother, and her daughter, Yvonne Gardner, secondly. Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys, the mother who responded to the Qualtrics survey and scheduled the interview with me, obtained her doctoral degree in education and works as an assistant director at the same nationally ranked higher education institution as Dr. Omar Banks. She only has one biological daughter, Rachel Wise, who was twenty-six at the time and is now married. Rachel is also educated with a master's in social work and is the senior manager of social justice and advocacy for one of the oldest and largest multicultural nonprofit organizations

in the United States. Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys is divorced, she and her ex-husband separated when Rachel was seventeen years old. Although Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys stated that Rachel “grew up with them”, indicating that her ex-husband is still a part of Rachel’s life, the father did not attend the interview. Elizabeth Keys-Gardner, Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys’ sister and Rachel Wise’s aunt, obtained her master’s degree in public administration and is a senior coordinator at the same nationally ranked higher education institution as Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys. She has three children—two sons and a daughter; only the daughter, Yvonne Gardner, participated in the interview. Yvonne is also educated and received her bachelor’s degree from a private online college.

Family 6: Nia Handler-Wright’s family. The sixth family I interviewed was also unique since they are a blended family that is originally from St. Louis but moved to Memphis in 2015 after they got married. The parents, Nia Handler-Wright and Ivan Wright, have one daughter named Emily together, but both have other children from previous relationships. Although they have five children combined, only their seventeen-year-old daughter – Emily – the biological child of the mother, participated in the interview. The mother, thirty-eight years old, obtained her bachelor’s degree in interpreting and business management from a private university and reported that she works as a Sign Language interpreter for Shelby County schools. The father, forty-two years old, graduated from a trade school and works as a machine operator. The daughter was a junior in high school, planning to major in forensic science at a four-year institution.

Family 7: Ellen Freeman’s family. The seventh family I interviewed was the case of a single mother named Ellen Freeman. Ellen has four children but only the oldest two participated in the interview. Her fourteen-year-old son’s name is Lawrence Savant and her fifteen-year-old

daughter's name is Erica. The mother obtained a master's in Business Administration from a private evangelical Christian university and works as a community outreach coordinator.

Family 8: The Constables. The eighth family to participate in an interview consisted of four members, a father – Luke Constable – a mother – Autumn Constable – a daughter – Hannah Constable (eleven years old) – and a son – Roger Constable (seven years old). The father, referred to as Officer Constable is thirty-four years old, has obtained a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and serves the local community as a crisis intervention team coordinator for the Memphis Police Department. The mother, thirty-two years old, received an associate's degree in education and works as a tax examiner.

Family 9: The Kibitzers. The ninth family interviewed only had two participants, a father, forty-two years old, and his son named Nelson Kibitzer who is eleven years old. The father, Dr. Yusef Kibitzer, also has a six-year-old daughter who was a year shy of qualifying and giving assent to participate in the interview. Collectively he and his newlywed wife, who did not participate in the interview either, have three children. Dr. Kibitzer is originally from Los Angeles but moved to Memphis in the year 2000. Several years later, he obtained an Ed.D. in Curriculum and Leadership; now he works as the aviation security systems technology advisor for an American multinational conglomerate holding company and occasionally teaches as an adjunct faculty member at a Christian university.

Family 10: The Sages. The tenth and final family interviewed stands the most unique, for it consists of three generations: the maternal grandmother named Stephanie, the mother named Rhonda Sage (age 42), the father named Norman Sage, and their daughter named Natasha Sage. Rhonda is originally from Little Rock Arkansas but moved to Memphis as a young adult where she met her husband Norman and they have been married for over twenty years. Stephanie, the

grandmother, is originally from Little Rock Arkansas as well and is a retired kindergarten teacher; she lives with the parents and their four children. Rhonda works at the same nationally ranked higher education institution as Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys and Elizabeth Keys-Gardner as a program coordinator and is working on a graduate certificate in instructional design and technology. Norman is originally from a suburban area in Chicago and moved to Memphis in the year 2000 where he currently works as an information technology support specialist at a local non-profit organization. Norman has a Bachelors of Business Administration with a concentration in business commerce and his daughter, Natasha, was in the seventh grade during the time of the interview.

In the next chapter, we will see how the parents' commonalities and backgrounds interestingly connect with their language ideologies, practices, and planning strategies and how their profiles rather align with their overall language policy. All parents and their children identify as African American and hold at least a bachelor's degree. Although not all were born and raised in Memphis, they all were raised within a Black cultural family/community and currently live here in Memphis. Additionally, they all speak English primarily, but as I will discuss in future chapters, each parent knows how to speak a non-mainstream variety of American English, formally known as African American language. The next section discusses the principles that guided my research design and practices, including voluntary participation, informed consent and assent, anonymity, confidentiality, and results communication.

Ethical Considerations

Parents and children could choose to remain in or withdraw from the research study at any time during the process of my data collection. I created pseudonyms based on their characteristics to help the reader remember the families and did not use the real names of any of

my participants for I desired to maintain their anonymity and confidentiality. While conducting interviews and gathering in-home recordings, I took the required ethical considerations by minimizing the risk and harm of the participants, obtaining informed consent from the adults and assent from the minors, protecting anonymity and confidentiality, avoiding deceptive practices, and providing the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I asked each parent and child the same questions and did not reserve certain questions for particular families; however, to maintain a natural flow of conversation I asked for further explanation when participants brought up important topics about language and race and how their experience with racism and linguicism has impacted the way they perceive themselves and their language practices. I made sure to avoid causing any participants distress while discussing difficult topics about race, racism, and language by disclaiming that they do not have to respond to any of my questions that made them feel uncomfortable or overly emotional. Although some personal topics came up during the interviews, there was very little risk to their privacy and confidentiality.

During the process of my data collection, the privacy and anonymity of the participants were of paramount importance. In the parent consent form, I stated how I did not include the participants' real names in the study and other identifying information was separated from the interview transcript. The transcribed interviews were sent back to the participants for review, for instance, if they wanted to request any part of the interview struck from the transcript. Moreover, to ensure anonymity, the interviews and in-home recordings were stored on the OneDrive account created by the University of Memphis for saved research data. To ensure the data's privacy, all the computers and files associated with the study were password-protected and no files were printed. Dr. Lyn Wright, the University of Memphis approved dissertation chair of this study, was the only other person to see the transcriptions of the interviews and in-home

recordings. Taking these steps exemplifies the importance of maintaining participant privacy and anonymity in such a qualitative ethnographic study.

The voluntary participation of the respondents was very important to my research study; therefore, I gave the participants the right to withdraw from the study at any stage if they wished to do so. In the consent form that they signed, it is explained that “there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decide to withdraw your participation.” [see appendix]. It also states that their decision to withdraw from the study will not affect their relationship with me, as the researcher, or the University of Memphis. In the assent form that the minors signed, the purpose and procedures of the study as far as the interviews and in-home recordings are explained. The children between the ages of seven and eighteen, who are considered a vulnerable population, expressed their comprehension of the research study they were partaking in and expressed their willingness to participate in the interviews by signing the assent form [see appendix]. By the end of the assent form, it specifically states that “you do not have to take part in the recordings if you do not want to”. All participants whether an adult or a minor participated in the research study on the basis of informed consent/assent. The consent and assent forms verify that the families nor their children are obligated to participate in the interviews or report in-home recordings and that participating in this study is completely voluntary.

The principle of informed consent and assent involved providing sufficient information and assurances about taking part in the study to allow the participants to understand the implications of participation and to reach a fully informed, considered, and freely given decision about whether or not to do so, without me exercising pressure/coercion. However, I am associated with some of the participants; nonetheless, I did not obligate any of them to

participate. Nine of the participants and I are a part of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, a council that seeks to promote the obtainment of higher education and doctoral degrees. Therefore, it is possible that the nine participants agreed to be interviewed based on the principles of our shared organization, not because we were associates. As an African American ethnographer, it is a privilege to gather data solely from people who look like me, so I made sure to respect all my participant families who volunteered to spend their time participating in my field research.

Data Collection Procedures

Customarily, linguistic data collection is comprised of conducting interviews with participants in close proximity (Leemann, Jeszenszky, Steiner, Studerus, & Messerli, 2020). The safety precautions related to the coronavirus pandemic brought this study's plans for in-person interviews and observations to an abrupt halt due to the enforcement of social distancing. The pandemic caused linguistic fieldwork to involuntarily hibernate in many parts of the world; however, such circumstances inspired this innovative methodological approach – virtually interviewing families in groups and collecting in-home recordings instead of in-person observations. Trilateral methods of collecting data were employed—surveys, interviews, and in-home recordings—to achieve the goals of the study: discuss racism and linguistic discrimination and attempt to explain how they impact African American families' linguistic ideologies, language use, and ways of socializing their children. The data from the surveys are important for understanding what aspects of race the parents talk to their children about. Analyzing the interviews serve to aid in realizing how racism as an external factor concerns the families and how this factor influences what the participants do with language. Findings that emerge from the

in-home recordings were important for getting a better understanding of how families FLP, but with the researcher being absent due to the pandemic, grasping the beliefs, practices, and planning strategies that the participants may not routinely notice or mention in the interview makes this study's methodology unique from other similar studies.

Contemporary studies have also used trilateral methods – observations, field notes, and semi-structured group interviews – to investigate how FLPs are shaped and developed (Rizki & Al Fajri, 2021). Language attitudes and other factors are analyzed to focus on how these factors influence parental ideologies and patterns of practice within the families. Their inductive analysis approach is similar to this study's approach as they categorized the texts related to their study's purpose; however, they found that parents' language ideologies are driven by their experiences, their children's education, language choice, and language acquisition abilities. Rizki and Al Fajri's realization that their participants used less of their heritage language the longer they lived in their current environment is interesting to this study since it makes room to dive into whether the same result could occur with AAL – less of it will be used the longer the families live in White spaces where mainly standard American English (SAE) or another mainstream American English (MAE) variety is written and spoken. In addition, recent FLP studies have used an interview framework coupled with a questionnaire in order to study multilingual families (Kuun, 2022), aiming to examine their language ideologies and choices along with language and culture maintenance. This researcher finds that parents' desires influence their language choices and that their language management and culture are in focus alongside the language variety spoken at school. Kuun's methodology is similar to this study's methods in that questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are utilized; however, their findings do not map the FLPs of the studied community. This study fills a gap of importance as it

aims to represent and delineate the root of the families’ beliefs, practices, and language planning by bringing up external factors that may cause the parents to hold particular ideologies that influence their language choices and planning.

The following table contains more specific data pertaining to the methods this study employs, starting with the length of the interviews and in-home recordings, then sequencing into details about the procedures used to gather the survey questionnaires, conduct the interviews, and obtain the recordings.

Table 2: Data Collection Log

Families	Number of Participants	Length of Interview	Length of in-home recording
Family 1	4	0:54:02	N/A
Family 2	4	0:40:30	0:17:17
Family 3	3	0:51:42	N/A
Family 4	3	0:56:31	N/A
Family 5	4	0:53:57	0:28:51
Family 6	3	1:04:30	0:22:31
Family 7	3	0:43:13	N/A
Family 8	4	0:40:03	0:05:00
Family 9	2	0:59:00	N/A
Family 10	4	01:05:00	01:07:16
Totals:	34 participants	08:48:28 hours	02:19:55 hours

Pre-qualifying Survey Questionnaire

The procedures for data collection commenced by creating a survey questionnaire via Qualtrics that contained eighteen items [see Appendix]. Through voluntary response sampling, I sent out recruitment emails and text messages and published the recruitment flyer with the caption on social media in order to procure participants for the study so that individuals could decide whether or not they wanted to complete the survey and participate in the interview. I

received the first survey response on Tuesday, August 10th, 2021, and the last response on Monday, June 20th, 2022; the survey period lasted for a few days less than ten months. The criterion sampling strategy was used to select the participants who met the criteria that had been determined (Palinkas, Hortwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015). This strategy also aimed at narrowing the range of considerable variation (Palinkas et al, 2015) since many African American families live in Memphis and forty-four of these individuals responded to the survey. The main criterion of the participants was that they identified as African American/Black, lived/had lived in Memphis, and had children at least seven years of age. The rationale for selecting these participants was that they have experience in raising African American children who potentially have shaped their family language policy.

The link to the Qualtrics survey was included in the recruitment email that was sent out via listservs and embedded in the recruitment flyer. The announcement of the research study was attached to the emails sent out and published on social media platforms. The goal of the survey was for the recruited respondents to agree and participate in an interview while also determining if the respondent met the criteria for the research study—being African American, having at least one child over the age of 7, and living/having lived in Memphis or the surround Shelby County area. The survey begins with an explanation of the study’s purpose—to explore how racism tied to linguistic discrimination affects African American families’ linguistic ideologies, language use, and ways of socializing their children. Within the survey, the question of whether the respondent has talked to their children about race is posed and utilized as analyzable data. By the end of the questionnaire, there was a place for participants to leave their email and/or phone numbers if they were willing to be contacted later for an interview. Analysis of the data coming from the survey started instantly in order to schedule an interview and prompt the conversation

about language and race. Forty-four people responded to the survey questionnaire but only twenty-four respondents left their contact information; these respondents were contacted either via email and/or text message contingent on the contact information provided. Although fourteen people responded to the initial contact made via email/text message, only ten of those respondents actually scheduled and participated in an interview via Zoom. The interviews were conducted via Zoom due to the current circumstances regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Semi-structured Group Interviews with African American Families

Ten of the Qualtrics survey respondents participated in a group interview via Zoom conducted by me, the primary researcher (PI), with either their spouse, relatives, and/or child(ren) that ranged from forty minutes to an hour and five minutes, resulting in a total of thirty-four interviewed participants for a total of eight hours and forty-eight minutes. The first interview was conducted on Sunday, August 22nd, 2021; the tenth and final interview was conducted on Friday, July 8th, 2022; the interview period lasted for approximately eleven months. To schedule the interview, I created a calendar invite via outlook with the Zoom meeting link, meeting ID, and password attached and shared it with the participants. Once the participants accepted the calendar invite and/or confirmed that they will be able to attend the virtual interview at the agreed-upon time, I sent the parents/adult participants the consent form and each child, participant eighteen or younger, the assent form via DocuSign [see appendix]. Each participant signed the consent/assent form via DocuSign before entering the virtual interview via Zoom.

In order to obtain in-depth qualitative data about African American parents' experiences and concerns with racism, I conducted semi-structured group interviews with ten families who identified as African American. Conducting semi-structured group interviews as an ethnographic

approach to collecting qualitative data is an uncommon yet effective method of research in studies over FLP; usually these types of studies conduct individual interviews only with parents. Individual interviews are typically employed to gain a deeper understanding of the selected participants' FLP. The desire to not only understand parents' language ideologies, practices, and planning strategies, but also the beliefs and language choices of children, inspired me to conduct group interviews. Participants were also encouraged to expand on particular topics such as their experiences with AAL, their beliefs about language, and other aspects of trials and tribulations in life that appeared important to them. In some interviews, I had known the families over multiple years, while in other instances, we were recent acquaintances; nonetheless, I explained to all of them that I am a linguist who is interested in their life as an African American parent living in Memphis who has to deal with racialization and potentially linguicism on an everyday basis.

Within applied linguistics research, interviews have a long history and have mainly been treated as research instruments (Talmy, 2010) and as a means for examining particular contexts, beliefs, and attitudes; however, this study treats the research interviews as a social practice wherein both the context of the conversation and the interactional process between the researcher and families constructing the context are analyzed (Zilles & King, 2005). In particular, I approach interviews as sense-making events in which the families and I participate with various levels of social contexts, being applied. Further, the interactions between the families serve as a site for self-positioning with respect to racial identity and cultural issues. For example, during the interviews I tended to align myself with the families and attempt to build on community. As evident in the excerpts in the next chapter, I mainly listened and at times expressed empathy with the concerns the parents mentioned regarding potential racialization and racism that influences how they think about language. For the most part, the families at times seemed keen to establish

a positive rapport with me, given our shared concerns about the topic of racism. However, the level of concern varied according to how the parents felt about AAL; therefore, the participation framework of interviews is unique and it was interesting to capture the nuances of familial interactions while discussing issues surrounding language and race. Yet, it is important to emphasize that discussions concerning language and race with the families infer, elicit, and affect social processes and language practices relevant to African Americans' lives along with language ideologies about being Black and using AAL. Such talks in turn impact the construction of racial identities since the families and I deal with circulating images of what it means to be an African American parent, a Black student, or alternatively a Black researcher, and adjust to one another in order to negotiate the self-perceptions that the participants want society to see.

My premise is that employing group interviews combined with a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach is new and feasible in methodological triangulation since it illuminates the variation of viewpoints held in a family, particularly when used in combination with other methods such as questionnaires and in-home recordings (Bojlen & Lunde, 1995). Group interviews provide data in a social context; unlike individual interviews, and are valuable in linguistic research. Conversations in which the researcher asks the participants a few predetermined questions while the rest of the questions are not planned in advance describe semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews permit the obtainment of optimal amounts of data through freer uses of the interview framework and add naturalness to the communication between the researcher and participants; thus, allowing the semi-structured interviews to be conducted as freely as possible (Küün, 2022; Laherand, 2008). This approach is similar to that of Hu (2020) who investigated the FLP of Chinese urban middle-class families in

hopes of gaining a better understanding of thirty Chinese parents' family language ecology. Although the semi-interviews of my study were virtual via Zoom, the fact that the participants were interviewed with their family members by a researcher who looked like them fills a gap where participants are often interviewed by an outsider of their community; this is important because being interviewed by an insider of the community makes the interviews both more stress-free and comfortable for the parents (Kanuha, 2000). Closely examining thirty-four Memphis citizens who identify as African American provides richer data collection for ethnographic qualitative studies such as this one. Through this method, I effectively and objectively compared data collected from the participants concerning their language ideologies, practices, and planning strategies.

In-Home Recordings in place of observations

After I concluded the interview and stopped the recording, I asked the participants to perform an in-home recording at their leisure. Five out of the ten interviewed families agreed to use their own personal recording devices (e.g., phone, computer, recorder) to capture the natural dialogue between them, the parents, and their children. Recording family members communicating with each other is conducive to obtaining natural, vernacular speech, as the fact that speaking to people they know very well minimizes the effect of the recording device's presence. (Labov, 1972). With the observer's/participant's paradox in mind and due to COVID-19 protocols, I was not present during the in-home recordings (as in Lanza, 2004; Mensel, 2018). Being absent while the participants recorded themselves communicating about the interviewed topics aided in the minimization of the paradox and made the conversations between the parents and children feel safer. During these recordings, the families mainly talked about their beliefs about AAL and how they use it with each other and non-family members.

Half of the families submitted an in-home recording via email. The first in-home recording was submitted by the Constables on Wednesday, December 29th, 2021, over four months after the first interview was conducted. The final in-home recording was submitted by the tenth family on Wednesday, September 14th, 2022; the in-home recording period lasted for nine months. The captured post-interview dialogue centered around topics of racism and race, language use, and in-the-moment language socialization among the family between the parents, their children, and other family members. I requested that the in-home recordings last at least 15 minutes; all but one recording met my request. Five of the families— The Banks, Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys’ family, Ellen Freeman’s family, and the Constables—submitted in-home recordings that lasted up to fifty minutes long, totaling over two-hours worth of self-reported audio recordings.

This study adopted three methodological approaches to investigate the concerns of ten African American families. The trilateral incorporation of surveys, interviews, and recordings served as suitable methods to compare contrasting results between the various participating families’ and children’s language experiences. The quality of ethnographic research depends on multiple sources of information to gather rich and comprehensive data (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). Therefore, to contribute to the validity of the study through triangulation, I take into account the respondents’ answer to whether or not they have ever talked to their children about race prior to the interview, analyze interview transcriptions about how the participants’ experiences with racialization and racism have influenced their linguistic beliefs, practices, and planning strategies, and collect self-reported audio recordings that captured familial conversations over these topics absent of the research to see if they expressed additional

attitudes about AAL. Triangulation has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources such as observations at different times/places, or interview data collected from individuals with distinct perspectives, or from follow-up interviews with the same people (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this reason, these three qualitative tools were employed. This exploratory process encouraged the development and progression of the research questions that led to the employment of these methods. Analyzing the data thematically facilitated the comprehension of the collected content and helped derive meaning from the transcriptions.

Data Analysis of Surveys, Interviews and Recordings

In particular, FLP researchers argue for a close analysis of interview talk as a way of gaining important perceptions of an issue (King & De Fina, 2010). In order to understand how language policy is formed through individuals' accounts of quotidian experiences and constructed within the constraints of current language politics and ideological discussions of issues, King and De Fina drew from data collected in interviews. Thus, how the data is analyzed in this study draws from past research, illustrating how interviews embody interactional occasions in which participants talk about their personal knowledge about language, their experiences with language use, relatively position themselves to social contexts through their linguistic choices, and project their racial identities. Researchers in the field of applied linguistics have argued that through the negotiation of personal experiences and social contexts, individuals can build personhood and racial identities (De Fina, 2003; Triandafyllidou & Wodak, 2003; De Fina, Schiffrin, & Bamberg, 2006; Krzyzanowski & Wodak, 2008); therefore, I decided to

identify and thematically analyze narrative fragments – recounts of past experiences focused on language and race.

Thematic analysis is one of the major data analytic methods in qualitative research that effectively links themes to the data collected (Patton, 2002). Thematic analysis was adopted as the primary tool for analyzing the transcripts of the data collected through the semi-structured group interviews that were held via Zoom to examine the beliefs and attitudes toward African American language. Howlett (2022) discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic has forced ethnographers to re-think their approaches to research and how conducting interviews via Zoom has allowed researchers to continue to studies while social distancing. For example, Alghoraibi (2022) engaged in ethnographic sibilings in order to gain a better understanding of how an English as an Additional Language (EAL) learner made meaning of L2 undergraduate content. The methodology of this study illustrates how conducting a thematic analysis facilitated the investigation of the FLP of African Americans. The in-home recording data provided by five of the ten sets of parents, absent of the observer's/researcher's interference, was crucial in realizing the participants' true ideologies and practices when a researcher is not present because it provided researchable space to talk about racially sensitive topics. Contextualizing and interpreting the families' discourse is particularly useful in analyzing language use patterns among family members and linguistic interactions during family activities and conversations (Li, 2006). Analyzing recordings of family conversations is a crucial ethnographic tool for examining participants' language practices; thus, interpreting the language policies of African American families. Implementing thematic analysis of in-home recordings reported by the parents facilitated the investigation of how the language planning strategies were actualized through familial conversations about language and race. Thematically analyzing the transcripts from the

interviews and in-home recordings that were transcribed verbatim was a useful methodological approach. Through this analytical approach, I was able to inquire about the families' concerns about language and race and interpret how their worries may be influencing their FLP. The semi-structured group interviews permitted the exploration of the rarely queried concerns about racism and racialization which were coupled with in-home recordings that gave insight into how the parents think and talk about racial identity, racism, and language. Moreover, transcribing the data verbatim provided an authentic view of how the participants' interchangeable use of the more standard American variety of English along with the not-so-formal, AAL, variety of English.

Transcribing Dialects from interviews and recordings

The manner in which I transcribed the interviews and in-home recordings for analysis took on an emic perspective; like Nofal and Seals (2022), I aimed to strengthen the emic perspective and minimize my external assumptions by further consulting the parents about some interpretations. I included verbatim colloquial, African American language, spelling, and grammar of the participants' statements. Words from African American Language such as "mane" and "finna", colloquial spellings that excluded the final letter -g in gerunds and participials, and the use of the habitual "be" were transcribed as spoken by the participants. I did not exclude colloquial language, nor did I correct the participant's grammar as spoken. I transcribed the dialogue the best I could, verbatim, as it was heard and recorded, exhibiting value in the participants' experiences, privileging their voices, and the ways they make meaning of their life experiences. Analyzing the data in such a manner helped me to understand the families' rationale behind the way in which they go about planning their language use with their children and other members as they express themselves using more than one variety of English and not just the standard.

At times, the participants either spoke in AAL or provided examples of AAL in order to further explain their feelings towards language varieties. Transcribing dialects presents challenges, given a lack of orthographic norms for many dialects; therefore, Ghyselen, Breitbarth, Farasyn, Van Keymeulen, and van Hessen (2020) addressed how to effectively transcribe dialects; I arbitrarily adhered to their advice for the most part. First, the phonological variations of the AAL words that also exist in SAE are to be spelled according to the official standard language orthography. I followed their advice as a saw fit, leaving room for adjustments; for instance, when a participant pronounced the standard language word *man* with a diphthong (e.g., the ae-sound) I wrote *mane* instead of *man* for reasons of intertranscriber authenticity. Next, the AAL words that do not have an equivalent in the standard language were written down following the principles of SAE spelling as closely as possible. For example, the word *yeen*, meaning *you ain't even*, was transcribed how it sounds and then translated to thoroughly explain the meaning of the content word. These non-standard lexemes are of interest to dialectologist and the precise translation of these AAL words are often open to debate; however, considering that I am an in-group member and expert in AAL, I can rightfully assert that my interpretations are correct based on my linguistic experience and upbringing in the Black community. Third, the function words (i.e., inflections, appositions, auxiliaries, determiners, negation participles, conjunctions, and pronouns) were transcribed as close to the rural/urban dialect as possible, with an orthographic rendering of deletions and insertions of consonants (Moreno et al., 2016). For instance, if the speaker pronounces *talking* without the final -g, the deletion was also written down to maintain speaker and cultural authenticity. Then, Ghyselen et al. advise that non-standard clitics (e.g., *da/dat* for standard English *the/that* as in *the man* or *that man*) are written down as clusters of elements, utilizing hashtags to mark the different elements'

part of the cluster (e.g., *da#man/dat#man*). Since they mention that the hashtag analysis is not a fixed fact, but has the status of a first guess (Barbiers & Vanden Wyngaerd, 2001), I arbitrarily chose when to adhere to this advice. Often, I translated these utterances to the standard English article determiners for reasons of readability. Lastly, AAL syntactic constructions (e.g., subject duplication or alternative word orders) were transcribed as close to the dialect as possible to maintain authenticity. Transcribing the dialect based on contemporary sources allowed me to effectively analyze the families' language practices.

Inductive and Deductive Coding

The process of data analysis was recursive as I applied inductive and deductive approaches to the coding, categorizing, and theming procedure (as in LeCompte & Schensul, 2013). Both inductively and deductively analyzing data provides flexibility in approaching research patterns (Hayes, 2000). Using researcher insight, I reassembled the codes into categories that reflected emerging patterns that could be classified and developed into themes. I began by deductively coding for positive and negative AAL attitudes: excerpts were coded as positive when participants spoke highly of the dialect (e.g., "I use [AAL]"; "[AAL] is a part of our culture", & questioning whether AAL use is "wrong"); excerpts were coded as negative when participants used disparaging terms to describe AAL (e.g., ghetto, improper/incorrect/broken English). Then I inductively coded the excerpts verbatim for words that stuck out while the participants talked about their concerns regarding language and race; for example, the most common and prominent verbatim codes that emerged were "...Black people talk...", "... the way that you speak...", "...around my White friends...", "relaxed", and "respect(ful)". Through the integration of Spolsky's (2004) three-component language policy model, I finally deductively coded for themes centered around participants' thoughts on what

they believe about language (e.g., many started off by saying “I feel that...”), what they do with language (e.g., several participants uttered the phrase “I speak/talk differently around...”), and how they plan their language use (e.g., most parents used the phrase “I/we encourage/teach...” at least once during the interview). I found it significant to undergo several rounds of coding and categorizing before generating the final themes in order to analyze the families’ language policy.

Based on Lanehart’s (2015) handbook, I coded for AAL by studying how she analyzed both traditional and contemporary work on language utilization in the Black community and cross-references her data with mine. Reviewing works by Green (2002) and Rickford (1999) helped the coding for AAL – what counted and what did not count. Their research combined points out distinct grammatical aspects that AAL has and where standard American English differs: aspects that are habitual/continuative, intensified continuative (habitual/non-habitual), perfect progressive, and irrealis. The table below, adopted from AAL researchers (i.e., Fickett, 1972), clarifies these distinctions and served as a rather coding guide as I distinguished between AAL and SAE utterances.

Table 3: African American Language’s Grammatical Aspects (Lanehart, 2015; Green, 2002; Rickford, 1999; Fickett, 1972)

Aspect	AAL Example	SAE interpretation (loose)
Habitual/continuative aspect	Daryl be teachin’ on Tuesdays and Thursdays.	Daryl (frequently/usually) teaches on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
Intensified continuative (habitual)	Daryl stay writin’.	Daryl is always writing.
Intensified continuative (non-habitual)	Daryl steady’ writin’.	Daryl keeps on writing.
Perfect progressive	Daryl been teachin’.	Daryl has been teaching.
Irrealis	Daryl finna go teach.	Daryl is about to go teach.

In sum, I thematically analyzed the social concerns of the ten families which led to unique and unexpected findings regarding how racism influences what they believe about language, how they use language, and how they plan to use language.

I coded the data collected from the interviews and in-home recordings based on theme and topic according to how they talk about their language ideologies, practices, and manners in which their family plans to use language. I also engaged in a general analysis of these recurring topics and themes in order to compare and contrast the ways in which the parents talked about AAL in accordance to race and racialization. I agree with King & De Fina (2010) in that it is important to analyze transcripts verbatim since looking closely at identity construction and culture management can shed light on how families FLP. Although the responses to the survey were taken into consideration while interviewing the participants, the data analysis focused mainly on the transcripts from interviews and self-reported in-home recordings, for these transcripts sufficiently aided in the examination of the families' language policies, including their beliefs, practices, and plans for AAL and SAE use, respectively. NVIVO 12, the qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software that I accessed via UM Apps, aided in the organization and coding of the data from the semi-structured group interviews and in-home recordings. These methodological approaches, which facilitated a thematic analysis of each family interview and recording and comparative analysis of broader themes and trends, provide the background for this study's analysis, focusing on the role that racialization, racism, and racial identity play in the FLP of the families.

This section began by discussing how FLP researchers have closely analyzed interviews from qualitative studies by taking an ethnographic approach while justifying the importance of performing a thematic analysis to investigate the bidialectal families. Discussing how researchers have transcribed dialects serves as important since this study largely deals with Black families' concerns about language use due to the external factor of racism. Also, this section has attempted to explain how the qualitative data were coded inductively and deductively to construct categories based on the topics discussed during the interviews and recordings. The next section that follows moves on to consider the acknowledgement of how my racial identity, gender, social class, language experiences, and privileges influence the research methods and methodology of the current study in order to strengthen the validity of the empirical data presented as well as this study's theoretical contributions.

Positionality

It is important that linguists recognize that researchers' understanding is exigently partial and positioned and researchers' positioning accordingly shapes the research process and the information that is sequentially presented and enacted. Linguists' distinct awareness and critical analysis of their positioning and how their positioning may resolve the political, epistemological, and practical effect of researchers' knowledge production act in linguistic research; thus, becoming both an ethical and practical necessity (Lin, 2015). Researchers' worldview and the position they adopt about a research task and its social and political context both describe the terminology positionality (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; & Rowe, 2014). When conducting ethnographic research, clarifying the researcher's positionality is essential since it shapes what and how a researcher perceives and understands the data that has been collected. The

positionality of the researcher also affects how the researcher explains and interprets the participants' point of view and makes meaning of the participants' statements through the lens of the researcher's knowledge, experience, and language practices. According to Frank (2000, pp. 354), a researcher's stance "requires self-consciousness about how the fate and choices in your life have positioned you in the world and with whom you have been positioned", indicating that I must exhibit awareness of how my predetermined fortune and what I chose to do with the agency I inherited upon birth is related to my mental and emotional position that I adopted with respect to language and race. I, the researcher, am the principal tool for this ethnographic research study; therefore, I must understand myself in order to understand the participants and I must understand how my racial identity influences, and potentially biases, my understanding of the participants' statements made during the interviews and in-home recordings. In this particular study, I held dual positions both as an ethnic insider and an outsider of the families I interviewed, and these similarities and differences inform my positionality and perspectives toward language. I share certain features with the participants such as my race, ethnicity, social class, linguistic and educational background and overall being a parent of two young Black boys. On the other hand, I recognize that the participants, particularly the children, may view me as an authority figure, knowing that I am a highly educated linguistics professor with a masters in TESOL who is currently a Ph.D. candidate in applied linguistics at a nationally ranked university that has been named an R1 institution by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Further, I have similar and divergent attitudes toward language, and I have different life experiences from the participants that created some distance between African American families and me.

As an African American ethnographer and a speaker of African American language while living in predominately White spaces within the city of Memphis and the United States for my entire life, I am aware that positioning myself as a bidialectal individual informs how I negotiate various linguistic contexts. I grew up in a suburban area on the outskirts of Memphis but was also exposed to inner-city Memphians and urban dialects as I participated in family functions and communicated with other African Americans in my community. In my household, we spoke casually, and my parents permitted the use of AAL at home, but my family also emphasized the importance of being able to and needing to speak a more formal, standardized English in certain environments and situations. For example, my father and I practiced formal speech when performing educational activities such as completing homework assigned by the public school system and preparing to speak in front of audiences with mixed linguistic backgrounds. Additionally, I have memories of being taught how to write by my mother and being corrected when I used non-standardized grammar. Furthermore, my parents made it a point to explain that it was okay to use colloquial language at home and with family, but I should switch to standardized English or at least blend casual speech with formal speech when participating in class discussions and when communicating in public and/or with professionals at work. My upbringing influenced my attitude towards language; thus, I possess a positive philosophy on alternative dialects: African American language should be permissible in all contexts and can be utilized to teach and convey messages across disparate audiences. The capacity to code-switch is also of value due to this language practice's benefits of being able to connect with multiple audiences consisting of a variety of demographic features.

In qualitative studies, the terms emic perspectives are used by anthropologies to describe researchers' positionality in ethnographic research studies. McCarty (2015) discusses emic and

etic perspectives in reference to insider and outside knowledge; linguists in ethnographic studies take an emic perspective. Since I have a more positive attitude towards AAL, a higher level of education, and a higher socioeconomic status than some of the participants, I too had an emic perspective while analyzing the data. The “respect” code is emic because that’s the word parents used verbatim. My emic perspective helps me understand the language policies of African Americans based on my own family’s language policy.

Reflexivity

It is important to reflect on my position as an insider and the biases it may have brought about in this study centered around the language policies of ten African American families. In this section, I aim to explicate my judgements, practices, and belief systems during the data collection process that may have impacted the research study. During qualitative ethnographic studies, researchers play an integral role in the data collection process and influence the outcome of the results. Therefore, the following passages reflect on my essence as an insider researcher, my relationship with the participants, the language ideology I hold, and how these beliefs impacted the manner in which I thematically analyzed the data.

I did not have to verbally state that I identify as an African American in order for the participants to be cognizant of the fact that we share the same ethnical and linguistic background. Being a researcher of the same race eased the participants which made way for a more comfortable conversation. Undoubtedly, if I were a researcher of a different ethnic and/or linguistic background the conversations that transpired between the families and I would have been affected. Additionally, and as mentioned in the ethical considerations section, I was associated with nine of the thirty participants; I was associated with at least one participant in seven of the nine families interviewed. I must emphasize that I did know many participants

beyond our association with the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC); however, and admittedly, I was able to interview more families due to my ties with the NPHC; thus, granting richer data collection.

While collecting and analyzing the data thematically, there was a shift in my language ideology after conducting the first round of coding. Realizing that my attitudes towards African American language did not align with each participants' attitudes toward language is significant to the data collection. As stated in the data analysis section, I emically coded the transcription for positive and negative attitudes and then etically for themes. I believe it was suitable to code for attitudes first since there would be multiple codes within the participants' dialogues. I recognized more patterns in codes that tended to appear in dialogues coded as negative attitudes towards AAL partially because there were more dialogues coded as negative than coded as positive. I believe that I have a more positive attitude towards AAL in that I understand how the language variety can be used as an educational tool. Presumptively, my positivity towards AAL impacted the manner in which I coded for attitudes; thus, impacting my approach to analyzing patterns of the data collected.

In sum, my language philosophy and position as an insider and outsider informed this study's research design, recruited population sample size, and data collection and analysis. I see value in using more than one variety of English across social contexts to express oneself efficiently. Being an African American parent inspired my decision to study other Black parents in order to shed light on how the family external factor of racism influences language policies and attitudes within African American families. As an expert in the field of applied linguistics, I am able to see the realities of language use amongst other African American families so that I

could objectively analyze the data collected from the interviews and in-home recordings and explain the findings in terminology that is appropriate to a community of external scientific researchers and educators rather than those who are within the African American community. Ultimately, I position myself as a member of the researched community and a staunch supporter and advocate of code-switching in order to convey messages clearly across multiple audiences while realizing that racism and the linguistic discrimination that others who look like me must endure, inform the language practices and planning strategies that African American families possess and impose upon their children.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I presented the methodological details used to conduct this qualitative ethnographic study on the FLP of African Americans living in Memphis Tennessee. Theoretically, I based the methodology on Spolsky's (2004) three dimensional language policy suggesting that the families' language ideologies, practices, and planning are impacted by the role that racial identity, racialization and racism play in their FLP. In an attempt to answer the research questions, I trilaterally employed surveys, interviews, and recordings as methods of exploring the ten participating families' language policies. Taking into consideration that the participants and I share the same ethnic and linguistic background, I acknowledged the potential bias that comes with being the researcher and an insider of the participants' community. With language and race in mind, I furthered linguistic research by discussing data on parents' concerns about the external factor of racism and how factors like these are constantly on their minds as they FLP. Thematically analyzing the data collected through the trilateral methods I employed, I was able to effectively examine the patterns I recognized after transcribing the interviews and

recordings verbatim. Before moving on to discussion of this study's findings, it is appropriate to conclude with the challenges I faced while collecting the data.

Challenges

Online linguistic data collection comes with challenges, mainly building rapport with participants over the course of the interview. Rapport and empathy are crucial to an effective linguistic interview, as researchers want participants to trust them and feel comfortable enough to open up to them (King & Horrocks, 2010). Studies are open as to whether virtual interviews enable the same quality of rapport as interviewing in person (Cater, 2011). While participants can see and hear the interviewer, they cannot necessarily make eye contact – a crucial indicator of comprehension. In addition, my association with some of the participants allowed for a larger voluntary sampling pool, nonetheless, there were still challenges during the data collection process. It was challenging collecting the recordings, a required part of the study to triangulate the data collection. In the proposal, I committed to interviewing thirty participants and collecting two hours of in-home recordings without providing monetary incentives. Despite the fact that no monetary incentives were offered for participating in the research study, ten respondents volunteered and participated in the interview with their family. Although I offered the optional opportunity to conduct an in-home recording at the end of each interview, only five out of the ten families took the opportunity. As mentioned in the data collection procedures section, it took over four months to receive the first in-home recordings. In total, it took almost six months to receive the five in-home recordings from participants. Recruiting families to participate in a research study that does not provide monetary incentives is challenging since, typically, some sort of incentive, such as gift cards, is offered.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Previous studies of family language policy – the examination of child-caretaker interactions, language ideologies linked to societal attitudes about language and parenting, and child language development (King & Fogle, 2017) – have not dealt with race and racism, crucial topics that deserve further investigation. Racism, serving to preserve status and power of dominant groups, is an immense external problem that influences the language policy of African American families. Findings in this study show how actions and behaviors fostered in racial discrimination and coupled with linguistic bias toward Black people shape the way parents use language with their children. Not only does this form of prejudice against influence the participating parents’ language use and the manner in which they socialize their children, racism impacts their families’ language ideology and language planning. There are many variables that to go into language and racism; independently, linguistic bias is caused by a group’s doctrine that their language/variety is more superior than others. We often see this belief reflected in families’ language policy through how parents use language and socialization their children. There is much research on bilingual and multilingual family conversations surrounding language choice, code-switching, and ethnolinguistics identities (Taqavi & Rezaei, 2019; Zeshan & Panda, 2018; Higgins, 2022)); however, very few studies have captured conversations held in virtual group interviews and home interactions between parents and children about African American language (AAL). Sociolinguistic research has consistently demonstrated that some grammatical features of AAL differ from varieties spoken by people who are not Black and are not easily interpreted by people who are not familiar with AAL (Hendricks, Watson-Wales, & Reed, 2021). This lack of understanding of the grammatical structures of AAL is one factor—along with

larger societal anti-Black racism—that leads to a persistent prejudice toward AAL in the United States of America, where AAL varieties are often belittled and considered to be somehow less important than varieties considered more standard, “correct”, and/or “proper”. (Rickford & King, 2016). African American families’ perspectives on language are important because they highlight the role of racism and racial identity in FLP processes. By virtually interviewing African American families in groups and obtaining in-home recordings chronicled by the participants, the data is able to further address racism and how it impacts the FLP of Black families. In this chapter, I will focus on how participants define African American language and how they consciously and subconsciously use language contextually and respectfully and talk about these processes. Language discrimination (such as the lower prestige associated with AAL use in certain contexts such as school) causes individuals to hold certain attitudes toward non-mainstream varieties of English. In attempt to make connections between the parents’ responses to the fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey “*Have you talked to your child(dren) about race? If so, how, and what did you talk about?*”, their answers are embedded within the discussion of the findings that demonstrate their linguistic ideologies. The findings from this study contribute to FLP research for they show that the outside world’s language ideologies matter to families and impact how they think and use language (Rizki & Al Fajri, 2021; Mirvahedi, Rajabi, & Aghaei, 2022; McKinney & Molate, 2022). Understanding the complexity of the issues that Black families deal with surrounding language and racialization is important to digest as the external problem’s influence can help to inform educators on how to approach bidialectal students from marginalized communities.

Parents’ language ideologies are at times galvanized by language practices and beliefs grounded in unconscious theory (folk linguistics) instead of tested hypotheses (Niedzielski &

Preston, 2000). Folk linguistics is an important concept to understand since, at times, linguists' illations about language act contrarily to interlocutors' language ideologies (Rimalova, 2020). This concept is kept in mind as, in the following sections, I focus on how the participants define AAL, the context in which they use AAL, how participants perceived AAL use as respectful/disrespectful, and ultimately their overall attitude toward AAL. These findings point to the importance of fears about and experiences of racism in relation to AAL use in making FLP decisions.

AFRICAN AMERICAN LANGUAGE (AAL)

Studies have defined African American Language (AAL) as a rule governed, non-mainstream dialectal variation of American English that is spoken by individuals who either identify or associate themselves with African Americans/Black people (Green 2002; Craig, Thompson, Washington, & Potter 2003; Lanehart 2015); however, some participants in this study believe that AAL is improper English and incorrect grammar. This study aims to compare and contrast the participants' beliefs about what AAL is to linguistic definitions in order to better understand their language practices and their rationale behind they manner in which they go about planning. Through the participants' definitions of AAL, linguists can access particular language ideologies; however, these findings will be interpreted with caution, for the participants' definitions shall not be taken as "truths" about AAL. In connection with folk linguistic ideology, at times non-mainstream varieties of American English (i.e., AAL) are perceived as inferior, resulting in interlocutors suffering from linguisticism even though linguists virtually agree that such dialects have similar grammatical complexities as standard American English (Groschel, 2009). For example, interlocutors may value SAE while considering other

dialectal variations as morphologically imperfect. The findings from this study add to the argument that the field of applied linguistics has just seen AAL a homogenized language variety that Black people speak (Hudley 2018); when in fact, AAL can be regionally based (Jones, 2020). This section reveals the parent and child participants' definitional beliefs about AAL as it is spoken in Memphis. Understanding Black families' definitional beliefs about AAL may help educators effectively approach and instruct speakers of this language variety by raising their awareness of its semantical differences to avoid discriminatory practices against those who speak this dialectal variation (ASLHA, 2003).

The terminology, AAL, has been refined and substituted with many names – Ebonics, African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Black English (BE), African American English, non-mainstream American English (NMAE), slang, and et cetera. It is important to mention that most of these terms are used by linguists while terms like “slang” are generally used by others, which indicates a difference in formality of language choice. Linguistically, the term slang has been synonymized with AAL and described as a dynamic language of a colloquial type that is often used by individuals partly to indicate membership of a group (Davies 2016). In this study, almost all of the participants appositively refer to AAL as slang, not necessarily in a negative manner, but more so to describe the dialectal variation's informality. Although the term slang was used by the participants 59 times in my corpus during the interviews and recordings, I, the researcher, did not refer to AAL as slang while engaging with the participants. Many participants positively referred to AAL as a language recognized by African Americans, a part of Black culture, and a dialectal variation understood by most Black individuals. A few participants neutrally define AAL as different and distinct to African Americans while a few participants refer to it with a rather negative connotation as slang, ghetto talk, improper/incorrect English,

and/or broken English. This section begins by presenting collected data from the participants' interviews and in-home recordings where they implicitly define AAL. Discourse differences within the participants' language ideologies is a result of the collected data as some participants believe that AAL is important to their family belonging to the Black community while other participants believe that not using AAL is "talking white." Following the definitional beliefs about AAL, data excerpts show how some participants exemplify AAL use, AAL features, and AAL expressions. These language practices are at the heart of our understanding of AAL, for they result from the participants' language ideologies. Through discussing practices and beliefs, we gain a deeper understanding of the participants' ethnocentricity that is linked to their ethnolinguistic identity.

Participants' Perspectives On What AAL Is

It is important that researchers and educators understand that since the participants regard AAL as a part of Black culture, we can imply that AAL use is also a part of the Black families' language policy. Across five interviews, the data shows how participants define AAL as a recognizable language/dialectal variation that is widely understood by many individuals who identify as African American/Black, making it a part of Black culture. These quinate excerpts best illustrate the participants' definitional beliefs about AAL since they include their ideas on what constitutes an utterance as being of an African American variation. In this section, we will see the participants use various labels to describe AAL – different and distinct, slang, African American Vernacular English (AAVE), colloquial, Ebonics, ghetto, improper, and broken.

Defining AAL as Different.

Across two interviews and an in-home recording, the data reveals how participants neutrally define AAL as distinct and different from MAE. Dr. Omar Banks, the father from the second family interviewed who received his Ed.D. from a local college and now works as a Chief Talent Development Officer, and has three children (two daughters and a son), makes a complex statement regarding AAL as the same language as MAE, yet different due to the semantics of AAL. In response to the fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey, Dr. Omar Banks noted “yes” he talks to his children about race; although he did not specify the exact nature of their conversations, his statements during the interview add color to his thoughts about race and language.

Excerpt 1: The Banks’ interview, “Different and distinct to African Americans”

Omar Banks:

1 So, I think it's just the dialect of the language and not necessarily the language, the language is
2 the same, I guess it's the predominant language if there is one in the United States, but the, the
3 way in which we use the words or the phrases that we use, I think is different and distinct to
4 African Americans, particularly [...] So, I, I just think we have different meanings sometimes for
5 the words, especially, you know, how they put together. And then sometimes the choice of
6 words, we are a little bit different than just the, the standard registry of American language [...]
7 but it's all the same language for the most part.

Defining AAL as the same language as MAE, yet different from it should matter to researchers and educators because AAL can be misinterpreted by those who are not of the Black community. Misinterpretations may lead to discrimination when judgements are passed instead of questions being asked. Using the same word with a different meaning may cause a disconnect between the AAL speaker and non-AAL speaker when trying to convey messages back and forth in a classroom or workplace environment (Fitton, Johnson, Wood, Schatschneider, & Hart, 2021; Dacon, 2022; Hankerson, 2022).

It is challenging to simply associate AAL with the way Black people communicate amongst each other when there is a population of African Americans who did not grow up speaking AAL. This is the case in the ninth family who participated in the study, where during their interview the father, Dr. Yusef Kibitzer – who received his Ed.D. from the same local college as Dr. Banks and who works as Global Security Systems Tech Advisor and has one son – expresses his concerns with how his son communicates with other children of color because he raised him outside of the Black community and amongst individuals who do not speak AAL. In response to the fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey, Dr. Yusef Kibitzer wrote “yes” he talks to his child about race concerning the “differences in identifiable races based on American culture”, yet the excerpt below reveals how Dr. Kibitzer finds himself socializing his son, Nelson, for what he may encounter while communicating with other Black children.

Excerpt 2: The Kibitzers’ interview, “They have different speakings”

Dr. Yusef Kibitzer:

1 When you're in this group, you may, you know, hear different, you know, terms you may hear
2 different, you know, ways of speaking, you may hear some things that may not be clear.”

3 Nelson Kibitzer:

4 Sometimes I don't really talk to other Black people because they're like, they have different
5 speakings.

What can be clearly seen in this excerpt is a connection between racial identity and the Black community. Although AAL is widespread throughout the U.S., it should not be assumed to be the native dialect of all African Americans (Wheeler, 1999). Particular findings like from the excerpt above imply that researchers nor educators should assume that just because an individual appears to be African American/Black means that they speak AAL. Nelson is the first child participant that we see imply that they do not speak AAL like their Black counterparts. The way the Kibitzers define AAL as “different” adds to the data collected from the Banks and the fifth

family who participated in the study's definition as Dr. Kibitzer states that AAL "may not be clear" to those who did not grow up speaking it (excerpt 2, line 2). Defining AAL as "not clear" is important to emphasize since it contradicts the data seen from the Banks and the third, fourth, and tenth family who participated in the study where the participants from these families claim that most Black people understand AAL. From the Kibitzers, we notice a distinct point of view, illustrating a difference between this family and other participant families. Nelson Kibitzer's point of view is interesting because he is not a native AAL speaker, although he identifies as African American.

Defining AAL as "Black talk" – a spoken language, opposite of "White talk" or a written language

In the excerpt below, Amanda Ranger, the mother from the third family interviewed who received her master's in Education and currently works as an Instructional Advisor and has one daughter, describes AAL as a language that only African Americans "really understand" (excerpt 3, lines 1-2).

Excerpt 3: interview, "Certain things that we can say"

Amanda Ranger:

We have that, certain things that we can say that only, I feel like African Americans really understand because we, we're used to hearing it or we say it and it's just, it's, it's just, like you said, what we all, what we just know, just growing up around is what we know.

In Amanda's definition, she implies that an individual may not understand the pragmatics of AAL unless they had grown up around AAL speakers and communicated with them using the dialectal variation since such experiences would have contributed to their ideology and afforded them a subconscious understanding of the situational context within which the utterance is made. Amanda's claim is important in that it contradicts the ideology that non-African American

individuals who were not raised in a community where AAL is the primary discourse can still speak and understand AAL, fluently. Being Black and growing up speaking AAL is an important aspect of AAL since they contribute to the relation between the listener and speaker. In later excerpts, we will see how her definition differs from other participants who assert that AAL can be spoken and understood by non-African Americans as well. Norman Sage, the father from the tenth family interviewed who works as an information technology support specialist at a local non-profit organization and has four children, expresses very similar statements to Amanda Ranger and Aleyah Banks, Dr. Omar Banks' daughter – an 11-year-old who attends a public yet exemplary high-performing institution that was awarded as a National Blue Ribbon School for academic achievement by the U.S. Department of Education.

Excerpt 4: The Sages' interview "A way that we speak"

Norman Sage:

- 1 There's a way that we speak amongst each other as Black people.

Linguists and cultural anthropologists have concurred with the ethnolinguistic theory that AAL is a mix of West African language traditions and English vocabularies (Dillard, 1972; Mufwene, 1998, Lyn, 2022). So far, this study's participants' definitions of AAL are similar to linguists' in that they believe it is a part of African culture that is characterized with American English words and phrases. The way children define AAL is especially important in that their language ideology may be seen as a mixed reflection of their peers' and family's perspectives on AAL. Also, I find that the children participants' language ideology seem to overlap with their relative's, from older generations, beliefs.

Alike Aleyah Banks, Nolon Wheeler, the son from the fourth family interviewed, mentions how he preferentially uses AAL with his Black friends, only. The excerpt below also

reveals how Nolon’s father, Nicholas Wheeler who works as a Senior Assistant Controller at a large corporate company based in Bartlett, TN – a small suburban town on the outskirts of Memphis – responds to Nolon on the topic of understanding AAL and how easy it is to recognize where an AAL speaker is from, originally.

Excerpt 5: The Wheelers’ interview, “They don’t use all the like, long words”

Nolon Wheeler:

1 So, I can say the difference between them and like my Black friends are, I understand my Black
2 friends more because they don’t use all the like long words that I don’t understand [...] Cause
3 really all the, all my Black friends talk the same cause we’re around each other a lot.

4 Nicholas Wheeler:

5 There's a population of black men and women that sound like they are from Shelby County. You
6 can be on vacation, or you can be anywhere. This is like, “Ooh, that's Shelby County right
7 there!” I know it when I hear, hear that flat.

This excerpt points to the fact that the son can code-switch, using SAE and AAL but feels more comfortable using AAL – a variety that his White friends may find challenging to understand. Nolon is the second child participant who discloses that they use AAL and defines it; however, not all of the child participants affirm this language practice. The data not only illustrates a distinct difference between the language spoken by his White peers, mainstream American English (MAE), versus the dialect spoken by his Black peers, AAL, but also further denotes how AAL is tied to his and his peers’ culture and identity because they were raised speaking this vernacular. Furthermore, possessing a recognizable type of AAL is also contributive to the definition of AAL, for this implies that AAL is not homogeneous and is composed of features and elements that are regionally based (i.e., AAL from Shelby County).

Through the data we start to see overlap in the child participants’ language ideology toward AAL in that their way of speaking is different from many of their peers who look like them. These findings reveal to educators that not all Black children want to associate themselves

with AAL. Hannah Constable, the daughter of the eighth family 8 interviewed, holds a similar language ideology and practice as Nelson Kibitzer and the children from first and tenth family interviewed; Hannah affirms that she does not talk like the majority of her Black peers. She does not agree with the derogatory terms that many of her African American classmates use amongst each other.

Excerpt 6: The Constables' interview, "They say the N-word a lot"

Hannah Constable:

- 1 They say the N-word a lot and it's like getting thrown around and I just, I just think it's like
 - 2 really weird. I don't talk like them, but I just think it is really weird that they say that. And it's
 - 3 because it's mostly Black people at that school. And my mom told me it would be thrown around
 - 4 a lot cause they're Black, but I'm also Black too, so that doesn't make a difference. But I'm, I'm,
 - 5 I'm glad I don't talk like that.
-

Language socialization is exemplified above; her mother prepares her to encounter the N-word spoken by her African American peers so that she is not caught off guard. Across more excerpts, we will see child participants like Hannah Constable and Nelson Kibitzer disassociate themselves with AAL and the way Black youth talk. The data reveals contradictions between how children participants align themselves with their African American peers and the way their classmates talk. The difference between the child participants' AAL use, or lack thereof, is telling in the fact that educators may have mistakenly classified the majority of their Black students as AAL speakers (Diehm & Hendricks, 2021). Hannah Constable's perspectives help educators understand that this is not always the case.

Defining AAL as "slang", positively and negatively

Luis Teller, who has a master's degree in information systems with a concentration in network management and works as a Senior Technical Learning Analyst at a multinational conglomerate holding company and co-parents with Amanda Ranger, claims that African

Americans possess a distinct way of speaking in which he impartially refers to as slang and is not regarding the possession of slang positively or negatively.

Excerpt 7: interview, "We say certain words"

Luis Teller:

- 1 As far as African Americans, it's kinda like, you know, we have that slang, or you know, people
 - 2 can hear, you know, the way that we say certain words.
-

This excerpt is important because throughout the collected data, we recognize how the term slang is appositively utilized to refer to the way Black people speak. In the Banks' in-home recording with Dr. Omar Banks and his daughter, Aleyah Banks also refers to AAL as slang but reflexively regards it as African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Nonetheless, her main claim is that it is a part of African American culture.

Excerpt 8: The Banks' in-home recording, "African American Vernacular English; oh, slang!"

Dr. Omar Banks:

- 1 So, you talked about slang. Why do you think slang is important?

2 Aleyah Banks:

- 3 That's just kind of part of our culture and that's like how we speak around each other.

4 Dr. Omar Banks:

- 5 So, what do you think slang helps to do?

6 Aleyah Banks:

- 7 So, that's just kind of how we communicate towards each other.

8 Dr. Omar Banks:

- 9 In terms of, so when code switching happens, right, so you have, what's called a language that
- 10 may be on, you may have language that's on, what's called a proper register, which you said is
- 11 quote unquote, "correct English", right?

12 Aleyah Banks:

- 13 Uh huh.

14 Dr. Omar Banks:

- 15 And then you have language that's on an informal register, which you called what?

- 16 Aleyah Banks:
17 African-American Vernacular English; oh, slang!
-

Aleyah’s use of both labels, AAVE and slang, demonstrates the processing of her language ideology in real time – she is associating AAVE with slang in her response to her father. We see a connection between Aleyah Banks’ and Amanda Ranger’s definitions – AAL is a language that belongs to the Black community and solely used by those who are a “part of our culture” (excerpt 8, line 3). Importantly, Aleyah is not the only child participant who discloses that she uses slang, but in later excerpts we will see that not all of the children participants make this same disclosure.

Switching from one dialectal variety to another appears to be a solution for Rachel Wise, the daughter from the fifth family interviewed who is twenty-six years and is educated with a master’s in social work and is the senior manager of social justice and advocacy for one of the oldest and largest multicultural nonprofit organizations in the United States, as she strives to avoid misunderstandings between speakers. Furthermore, Rachel is the third child to state that she speaks the colloquial language of AAL that she defines as slang, which is important as we will see later on how other child participants disaffirm their use of AAL. Below, Rachel and her mother, Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys who obtained her doctoral degree in education and works as an assistant director at a nationally ranked higher education institution, discuss language issues during their in-home recording while also defining the way their family speaks as African American vernacular English (AAVE) and Ebonics.

Excerpt 9: in-home recording, “Versus book talk or way of the White man”

Rachel Wise:

- 1 I’m talking about like me speaking in a colloquial language, like talk like speaking with slang. I
- 2 had to like switch from like talking the way we do at home or talking like, you know, more black
- 3 or whatever we wanna call it, African American vernacular English or whatever, versus...

- 4 Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys:
5 That's what they call it, Ebonics.
6 Rachel Wise:
7 Or like whatever that is, whatever we choose to call it versus “book talk” or “way of the white
8 man” and whatever.
-

This excerpt may interest linguists since the participant is making a distinction between “literate” language that is written and Black language that is primarily spoken. This data suggests that Rachel consciously chooses to use “colloquial language” (excerpt 9, line 1) and to talk “more black” (excerpt 9, line 2) because she believes that AAL use at home is applicable and correct in familial settings. We also see the similarity of referring to AAL as slang in the way Rachel Wise defines AAL and how Dr. Omar Banks describes it; however, Rachel is more specific in claiming that “standard” American language is the “way of the white man” and is “book talk” – meaning that typically literature and White people use this variety. Regarding AAL as the opposite of “book talk” implies that African Americans do not speak English as taught by the book or as taught in school, making it an important dialectal variation to be further understood by educators of Black students who do not primarily speak or understand AAL and who have not grown up in a Black community where AAL is fundamentally spoken (Edwards, 2004). The concepts of AAL as a language that is more so spoken than written is central to this study’s findings as we see Rachel perceiving a difference between SAE and AAL in this manner. The clarity of AAL is brought into question with the claim that it is the opposite of “book talk”, which makes AAL a more challenging language variety to define. There is room for the dynamic language variety to be further researched and defined by native AAL speakers.

Alike Nelson Kibitzer, Ariel Sitter – the daughter from the first interviewed family – exclusively defines AAL as slang and explicitly states that she does not speak slang; however,

Amber contradicts herself as she explains how she perceives AAL/slang as a permissible dialectal variation to use in particular social context like with members of her group. Drawing on the data, we can imply that her language ideology includes the belief that she talks like she has “sense”.

Excerpt 10: The Sitter’s interview, “I talk like I have sense”

Arie Sitter:

- 1 Like I don't speak, I don't know the word for it, yes, slang. Oh, well, that's kind of like
 - 2 sometimes, well haha I can code-switch. I don't know if that's like a good or bad thing, but when
 - 3 I'm with my friends, I talk, I, I guess slang, but when I'm around other people I talk like I have, I
 - 4 don't wanna say common sense, but like I talk like I have sense.
-

At times, self-contradiction occurs within a single breath because people can have different perceptions and self-attributes are subject to flux. Context plays a role in Ariel’s self-contradiction as she corrects her claim, explaining that amongst friends she does use slang. The data helps us understand that it is reasonable for individuals to have multiple language ideologies since participants do not only appear to others, but also appear to themselves. The appearing in this study shows that participants’ language ideologies are at times in agreement/disagreement with they think their language practices are versus what they actually are. Under particular circumstances (i.e., being interviewed), participants’ utterances may get ahead of their cerebral thoughts that cause them to embellish, exclude, or alter facts. It appears that she desires to avoid judgement by White people; therefore, Ariel makes a valiant effort to talk in way so that she sounds like she has “sense”.

Defining AAL as “ghetto”

Across three interviews, data excerpts show participants defining AAL in a rather negative way as they refer to it as slang as well, along with other terms such as Ebonics, ghetto talk, improper/incorrect English, and/or broken English. After asking Nia Handler-Wright – the

mother in the sixth family interviewed who obtained her bachelor's degree in interpreting and business management from a private university and works as a Sign Language interpreter for Shelby County schools – what she thinks about the connection with language and race, she responds by associating AAL with a disparaging term, ghetto. In connection with her response to the fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey, Nia Handler-Wright answered “yes” and wrote, “we usually [have] a casual conversation... How black [people have] to be 10 times better! How to present [yourself] with class at all times and how manners will get [you] really far in life!” Her response helps us understand why she associates AAL use with being ghetto and SAE use with being of a higher social class.

Excerpt 11: interview, “Ebonics, ghetto talk, improper English”

Nia Handler-Wright:

- 1 Black people in particular are mostly known for their slang, their Ebonics or I know you could
 - 2 call it so many things, Ebonics, ghetto talk, improper English or whatever.
-

Equivalently to Dr. Helmer-Keys’ definition, Nia impartially refers to the way African Americans speak as Ebonics but adds in definitions of a more negative connotation to further describe Black people’s manner of communication. In particular, this is different from the definitions we have seen in earlier excerpts, which suggests that not all African American parents perceive AAL use in a positive light, yet Nia is still expressing the ideology that knowing AAL is important. It is important to emphasize how the term “ghetto” is a disparaging term as Nia associates this form of speech with Black people. By defining AAL as “ghetto talk”, Nia is inherently stereotyping individuals who use AAL as those who are impoverished and lack education. Also using the term “ghetto” but not so negatively, Officer Luke Constable – Hannah Constable’s father who serves the local community as a crisis intervention team coordinator for the Memphis Police Department – expands AAL’s definition while narrowing down a type of

AAL used by Black people who reside in Memphis. In response to the fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey, Officer Constable wrote “yes” he talks to his children about race, but he did not specify exactly what he has talked to them about; therefore, making his interview statements even more important to analyze in order to understand his beliefs about language.

Excerpt 12: The Constable’s interview, “The Memphis Dialect”

Officer Luke Constable:

- 1 You have your just ghetto down talkin’, and so people will understand it. I guess it’s the
 - 2 Memphis dialect, if you will.
-

With Memphis being within Shelby County, we see a connection between the manner in which Officer Constable and Nicholas Wheeler define AAL. Nicholas perceives the way that Black people from Shelby County speak as easily recognizable while Officer Constable furthers AAL’s definition by categorizing the “Memphis dialect” as a form of AAL that is “ghetto”. Although some participants regard AAL more positively/negatively than other participants, there is a definitional pattern in the participants’ definition – AAL is slang spoken by some Black people who lack economic, social, and educational capital. Additionally, we see a pattern in the families’ practice of code-switching – it is encouraged to do contextually. It is important to emphasize that only some participants believe that African Americans fall into the classification as those who speak improperly/ghetto, and some child participants make it a point to disassociation themselves with the pocket of Black students who speak in this manner. Different from the child participants: Aleyah Banks, Nolon Wheeler, and Rachel Wise, but alike the children participants: Ariel Sitter and Nelson Kibitzer, Natasha Sage – Norman Sage’s daughter – implies that she does not talk like most of her Black peers and defines the way that the majority of them speak as improper and ghetto.

Excerpt 13: The Sage’s interview, “Improper or ghetto”

Natasha Sage:

1 I know specifically in my school there's, there's a pretty good amount of African American
2 students now, but it's majority white, but the thing is most of those kids there, like I think there's
3 only like out of the 30 or 40 or so black kids there. I think that I know of there's maybe like five
4 that speak like the same way that I do. And that like share the same kind of attitude towards
5 language. The rest of them, like the way that you would describe the way that they speak would
6 be improper or ghetto.

These families/participants may have distinct language ideologies due to their educational and/or socioeconomical background – they are being educated in school with more resources and are around peers who more so use a mainstream variety of English rather than the opposite.

Defining AAL as “broken”.

Broken English is the last defining term that two parent participants used to describe AAL. Dr. Helmer-Keys not only defines AAL as broken English but also briefly provides a history lesson during the interview about her beliefs on AAL’s origin.

Excerpt 14: interview, “Broken English”

Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys:

1 Some of our languages as Black folk actually came from the old English when those folk were
2 thrown over here, you know, when we were at slaves. So, we picked up a lot of whatever
3 language from whites, poor whites on plantation, you know, so just thinking it, speaking in
4 broken English or whatever haha.

Although Dr. Helmer-Keys’ perspective of AAL’s origin is not exactly the same as the published theory, the dialect perspective by Loudon (2000), her definition of AAL is still important to discuss since the dialectal variation is one that is stigmatized and associated with individuals of a lesser class. Revealing this theory that AAL was created as a result of the social interactions that first-generation enslaved Africans had with White Americans from the southern regions of the U.S. stands unique against how any other participant discussed it, and is important since the origin of AAL is rarely discussed by educators. However, presenting the theories of

AAL's origin can serve as an opportunity to facilitate a connection between teachers and students while also serving as a tool for learning. Rhonda Sage, Norman Sage's wife who works as a program coordinator at the same university as Dr. Helmer Keys, also describes the manner in which many African Americans speak English as "broken" but adds to the definition provided by other participants when she mentions features of AAL that are similar to those of mainstream American English.

Excerpt 15: The Sage's interview, "The -er and -g"

Rhonda Sage:

1 I think back to [daughter], when she was little, she went to a childcare center that was majority
2 black, you know, it was black owned and most of the students were black. Teachers were black
3 and she spoke, you know, like any, I guess, any black kid would – with broken English, you
4 know, slang and, you know, slurring some words and leaving off, you know

5 Norman Sage:

6 The -er and -g

Many of the parents' and children's beliefs about what AAL is line up with linguistic definitions, it being a variation of American English particularly spoken in urban communities by not only working but also middle-class Black people (Edwards, 2004). However, the participants do not particular talk about the nuances of AAL grammar like linguists do (Green, 2002); the participants mainly focus on Black words and phrases. Nonetheless, many participants perceive AAL as an in-group code (Rahman, 2012). Interestingly, we see some participants describe AAL as "broken" or "slang", perhaps labeling it in this manner as a way of expressing their belief that it is an inferior form of American English. While previous studies have only found that folk linguistic beliefs view AAL speakers as uneducated, lethargic, poor, rube, or other disparaging terms (Groschel, 2009), this study reveals new findings of ideologies about AAL use as being ghetto, yet a way of connecting with the Black community. There is importance in how the collected data not only reveals how the participants define AAL but also

how they exemplify AAL use, some features of the dialectal variation, and common expressions that their family says. Presenting how the participants exemplify AAL along with how they define it gives researchers and educators a better understanding of the context in which AAL is used.

Examples of AAL Use

Studies have shown that educators, even those who are Black, may benefit from increasing their access to training and materials to further develop their cultural competence of African Americans (Boutte, Earick, & Jackson, 2021; Diehm & Hendricks, 2021); this includes the ways in which many African Americans speak. Across several families, participants talk about exemplifications of AAL to complement their definitional ideologies about the dialect. All the data including examples of AAL are found within five interviews and three in-home recordings; they give researchers and educators insight on how children use AAL with those in their family and people at school. Additionally, the results from the data collected within four interviews and an in-recordings reveal how AAL has changed throughout family generations.

Special AAL Terminology

The following excerpt from The Banks' interview briefly shows Aleyah's explanation of how she believes that a particular AAL term is used in the "real world".

Excerpt 16: The Banks' interview, "They're not used in the real world"

Dr. Omar Banks:

- 1 Like when they excited about something, they be like "this is bussin", like, you know something
- 2 like, I don't know...
- 3 Aleyah Banks:

4 that's the wrong term It's African American Vernacular English, but they use the wrong term.

5 Researcher:

6 Okay, so can I talk to you a little bit about that? So, you I heard you use the terminology, African
7 American vernacular English. What does that mean to you?

8 Aleyah:

9 It's basically African American slang or African American terms that are in, that are not, they're
10 not used in the real world, more so they're used as words African Americans, African-Americans
11 use to talk to each other like "bussin" and other types.

In addition to providing her definitional belief about what AAL is, Aleyah is attempting to make a point about expressing her belief about how some AAL terms are not "real", meaning they are not factual words used outside of the Black community. According to Aleyah, real words are found in the dictionary in written form; although, the term "bussin" is found in the Urban Dictionary, it is not typically written in formal literature, making it unreal in her eyes. This depiction of AAL contrasts with the language ideology of several of the other families, questioning the legitimacy of AAL. We have seen participants claim AAL as a language outside of American English recognized by the Black Community; however, Aleyah's ideology contrasts this statement, asserting that "bussin" is just a term spoken by Black people, solely.

Lawrence Savant's, the son of the seventh family interviewed, statement connects with how AAL is defined by some participants while also contrasting with definitions from Amanda Ranger as she claims that only African Americans really understand AAL (excerpt 3, lines 1-2).

Excerpt 17: interview, "I say 'ion'; I don't say I don't"

Lawrence Savant:

1 Anybody can use slang. It don't really gotta do with what race you are, but I know people of
2 different races that use slang. Some people don't, they don't use the same words that I use. Like,
3 like like I say "ion", I don't say "I don't."

"Ion" is an AAL way of saying "I don't" and is considered a part of this dialect by the younger generation; however, according to the participant "Black talk" is not restricted to

African Americans. The Lawrence’s statement is complex and worthy of examination since although he claims that non-African Americans use slang, he points out that is AAL use stands distinguished. He is implying that slang is not restricted to African Americans, but certain slang words are typically expressed by youth that look like him. Rachel Wise also presents “ion” as an AAL term during her family’s in-home recording along with other terms, expressions, and utterances that consist of grammatical features particular to AAL.

Excerpt 18: in-home recording, “You didn’t even, yeen”

Rachel Wise:

1 And I like, I would talk that way. Like, I would say like, you know, “oughta” or you know, “they
2 be doing this” [...] I talk to black people and I say, “oh yeah, he always be doin this”, this, that,
3 and the third or whatever. And like certain slang terms. Like if I say “you cappin” or whatever,
4 then like black people understand that instantly [...] there's certain terms that like, if I say I'm
5 around black, like majority around black people, they're gonna understand what I'm saying.
6 Certain phrases that I use, that they're gonna understand what I'm saying[...] Also think about
7 the way that black folks like just shorten like Southern black folks, just shorten up words like
8 “ion” there's not a D in that, but you know what I'm saying?[...] And then “yeen” is also a really
9 good one. Like, “you didn’t even”, “yeen have to do all that.” [...] you know how like old black
10 folks be like, “whew chile!”

This excerpt above is unique and important since Rachel is pointing to aspects of AAL grammar and vowel pronunciations that are not mentioned by the other participants and aligns with collected data from other studies that found that AAL has its own forms, phonology, morphology grammar, syntax, and functions (Green, 2002). She exemplifies how the *habitual be* is used in AAL with the expression “he always be doin’ this” (excerpt 17, line 2). The *habitual be* has a synonymous function as expressions in the present perfect aspect; for example, “he has been doing”. Although “oughta” is not phonetically distinct to AAL, it is a Black, southern version of the standard auxiliary modal “ought to” and exemplifies the unique Memphis accent that some Black people in the South possess. When a helping verb is followed by the word “to” that signals an infinitive phrase, the words are combined and the letter “o” in the word

“to” transforms to an “a”, making the /ta/ sound. Like “oughta”, the term “y’all” – the contraction of the pronoun “you all” – is not necessarily distinct to African Americans either but is has a unique Memphis AAL enunciation. An important contribution to our understand of AAL use is revealed through the data, further explaining how this particular family practices the *habitual be*, drops the -s at the end of words (i.e., third-person singular verbs, possessive pronouns). Comparing and contrasting AAL use within generations is seen in the data above as the participant presents the terms “cappin’”, “yeen”, and the older expression “whew chile”. “Cappin’” is the present progressive form of the infinitive verb “to cap”, meaning to lie. This verb form is typically used by AAL speakers who are or associated with the millennial generation (Powell, 2020). “Cappin;” is coupled with the subject “you” in the sentence “you cappin’”. Noticeably, the copula *be* verb is dropped in this example; it is often omitted when speaking AAL in the present tense to express a current action – “you are lying right now”. Although she etymologically explains the meaning of “yeen”, it is important to mention that the phonological, morphological, and grammatical distinction of this AAL word is spoken across generations. I can contest to this based on my lived experiences growing up in Memphis since birth and speaking AAL as my primary dialect of communication with older and younger generations in West Tennessee. The Black Memphis community recognizes that the gerund “cappin’” is specific to the younger generation while “yeen” is uttered by AAL speakers of younger and older generations. The same is true for “whew chile!”, a phonetic spelling of “child”, representing dialectal speech of the Southern U.S. and AAL, and an interjection that has resurfaced within the millennial generation, almost equivalent to the standard interjection “Oh my goodness!” (Asmelash, 2021). Rachel clearly has a wealth of AAL linguistic knowledge (e.g., *habitual be*, dropping the copula *be* verb, AAL terminology) and understands generational

language change and the complexity of AAL. Her quote fits with what we know about this participant – she is between the younger and older generation of AAL speakers, educated with a master’s degree, and fits into/belongs with the Black community.

The Memphis Dialect

Virtually, Memphis has its own unique dialect that many African Americans speak and it is safe to assert that the dialectal variation spoken in Memphis is its own type of AAL. As a marker of AAL, other participants focused on the word “finna” – a phonetic spelling representing the AAL version of the southern verbal expression “fixing to”, a phrase generally spoken in Southern U.S. dialects to mark the immediate future while denoting preparation/planning already in progress (Asmelash, 2021). During The Banks’ in-home recording the father and daughter also discuss slang terms like “finna” along with others that are distinct to AAL.

Excerpt 19: The Banks’ in-home recording, “Junt, finna, bout to”

Dr. Omar Banks:

1 What kind of slang does daddy use?

2 Aleyah Banks:

3 Oh, uh, ‘mane... sup”

4 Dr. Omar Banks:

5 Mm-hmm, “Y’all, junt... finna...bout to”

This quote is interesting because Aleyah is only 11 years old but is already showing cultural and linguistic awareness of the AAL dialect, which can infer that AAL is comparable to heritage languages – minority dialects learned and spoken while growing up at home (Valdes, 2000) – and home languages – primary dialects that individuals are exposed to from birth (Bloomfield, 2023). Kelleher (2010) found that even individuals who have a cultural connection

with a dialect but do not speak it may consider the dialect to be their heritage language. Regarding her ideology about slang, she believes that it is not just reserved but younger generations since her father often uses it as well. The newly exemplified noun “junt” is regionally distinct to the Memphis version of AAL that Officer Constable refers to. “Junt” stands for any noun – person, place, or thing. The noun “mane” that is synonymous, yet phonetically distinct from the noun “man” and “mane” is orthographically distinct from other southern states’ spelling (i.e., Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia) . More exemplifications are, “Sup” – the shortened form of the greeting “What’s up” and “’bout to” – the shortened form of prepositional phrase “about to”.

While interviewing Ivan Wright, Nia Handler-Wright’s husband who graduated from a trade school and works as a machine operator, he also claims “mane” as a noun distinct to Memphis AAL but adds educators to the conversation as speakers. With the Nia, he was discussing the importance of education and being taught by teachers who speak proper versus improper grammar. Ivan believes that being educated by a teacher who speaks proper grammar will result in the student having a better chance of acquiring proper grammar as well.

Excerpt 20: interview, “Mane”

Ivan Wright:

- 1 The teachers in Memphis say “mane”.
-

It matters that linguistic educators realize that in my data, participants mention that terms like “mane” are not just restricted to Black families; the morphology of AAL in Memphis is used by those who teach African American students as well. Nolon Wheeler talks with his mother, Eliza Wheeler – who obtained her master’s degree in Reading and Literacy ESL – about how his Black teachers use AAL with him in the classroom as well.

Excerpt 21: The Wheeler's interview, "Cuh"

Nolon Wheeler:

1 I've had black teachers and they speak a little different to the black kids than the white kids.

2 Eliza Wheeler:

3 In what way?

4 Nolon Wheeler:

5 It's just like, you know, like we say, like, "cuh" and stuff like that?

6 Eliza Wheeler:

7 "Cause"

8 Nolon Wheeler:

9 You know what I'm talking about? Like "cuh" ...

10 Eliza Wheeler:

11 Are you saying "cause" instead of because? "Cause this, cause that, why are we doing this?

12 Cause this"? [...] Oh like, "cuz" like cousins, like, "cuz" like that kinda "cuz" like "come here
13 cuz."

14 Son:

15 Na, not with a -Z with an -H.

That excerpt above points to an interesting finding – Nolon notices that his teacher also code-switches. It also demonstrates that communicative relationships between students and teachers may impact children's language development through negotiations of which dialect is appropriate contingent on the individuals' connection with each other. The data above not only illustrates additional AAL locution but also reverse teaching from child to parent that can occur during group family interviews. In Excerpt 22, we see Dr. Helmer-Keys introducing AAL terms to her daughter during their in-home recording where they were discussing language practices. Rachel and her mother are exemplifying how Southern Black people often shorten their words while creating new meanings.

Excerpt 22: Family 5 in-home recording, "Stutin"

Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys:

- 1 I ain't stutin' you.
 - 2 Rachel Wise:
 - 3 I am not studying you as in I am not paying attention to you?
 - 4 Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys:
 - 5 I'm not bothered, right.
-

Demonstrating AAL exemplification through parent-child interactions matters to FLP studies for it shows how these conversations can reveal individuals' language ideologies and practices. Having discussed examples of AAL terms, the next part of this section addresses how AAL use has changed across younger and older generations.

Generational Change in AAL

Nathan Sitter, Ariel Sitter's father who is a former assistant principal, further exemplifies AAL use and how it is not only used in educational environments but also how it has development generationally throughout Black families.

Excerpt 23: The Sitter's interview, "Two generations using it differently"

Nathan Sitter:

- 1 I've noticed within the school system, that term has changed to, from "what's up bruh" to "what's
 - 2 up my nig-" same it's same, it's the same introductory welcoming phrase from one person to
 - 3 another person, but two generations using it differently.
-

These excerpts present interesting data concerning children's awareness of linguistic change. Linguists are interested in what children are aware of because of its impact on self-identification (Balogun, 2020) and experiences of Blackness of bidialectal children and individuals. Being aware of their racial identity may be one of the factors influencing their language choice (Kozminska & Hua, 2022). Children can gain awareness by being bi-multilingual – including knowing multiple dialects – (Cazden 1974; Vygotsky, 1962), using

technology to maintain relationships with family and friends (Lee, 2022), along with through intrafamilial communication and language and race socialization performed by their parents. Being aware that the way AAL is used is contingent upon the generation of the speaker is important for educators who teach in higher education institutions and communicate with AAL speakers from various generations. Within a few more family interviews, AAL terminology uttered by older generations is illustrated with a focus on rural familial references and phonological differences (i.e., granny, paw paw).

Excerpt 24: interview, "Paw paw"

Luis Teller:

1 I don't see a lot of people from other races calling their grandparents, maybe like "granny" or
2 "paw paw". I think those are like African American terms words.

3 Amanda Ranger:

4 Well, I think "paw paw", I used to, before I met you all, I used to just hear "paw paw" from of
5 course Caucasian people. I never, I never heard black people refer to their grandparents as, I
6 mean, their grandfather as "paw paw" until I met you all. And you will call, you know, your
7 granddaddy "paw paw". We normally called our granddaddy "granddaddy". That was it. Or we
8 just had "granddaddy" or "granddad" or that was it. Or sometimes I know in African American
9 families, they called their grandparents, "mom" and "dad", especially if they were raised by
10 them. So that, and I think of a word that I use in that I use amongst our family. I called the girls,
11 especially the younger baby, I called her "mommy", you know, and especially when we were
12 trying to get her to, you know, say "mommy" to me. So that's one word we use a lot around here,
13 "mommy" or "mama".

Amanda explains her conceptualization of the familial as family members who played a large role in raising her and her children. Unlike the Luis, she refers to grandfathers as "granddaddy" not "paw paw" and describes the familial references of "mommy" and "mama" as a term of endearment for her daughter. These familial references contrast with other family's associations to younger generations. Below, Dr. Helmer-Keys' narration demonstrates additional generational differences of AAL within Black families to show how the dialectal variation is still understood by various generations despite the age difference.

Excerpt 25: interview, “I knew what they meant – soon”

Dr. Yolanda Helmer Keys:

- 1 I feel like there are, there are several dialects because growing up as a, a child, we spent
 - 2 summers with my grandparents. And so, there was a dialect unique to country sharecroppers
 - 3 there were things that they said, like “the youngin”, I knew that was a young person. My children
 - 4 were referred to as “youngins” or they may say I something happened “yestadeh”. So, but I knew
 - 5 they were talking about yesterday. So, we had to learn how to interpret those things too. They
 - 6 would, my grandmother would say things like I'll be there. I'll be there “dawreckly”. It's not
 - 7 directly at, but I knew what they meant - soon.
-

It is relevant to mention how in her response to the fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey, Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys wrote “yes” she has talked to her daughter about race; with Rachel she discussed the Civil Rights Movement, her childhood experiences, her time spent with her grandparents in Mississippi and how “Black folk” were treated, discrimination, cotton picking, and shared stories told to her by her parents and other family members. Her survey response aligns with her talk about her language experiences and speak to how they have impacted her linguistic beliefs – intergenerational language shift is tolerable by children and they understand their parents’ language use despite the age difference.

Very similarly, Ellen Freeman, Lawrence Savant’s mother – a single mother of four who obtained her MBA from a private evangelical Christian university and works as a community outreach coordinator – narrates how her grandmother spoke AAL differently, yet her speech was widely understood amongst the family. Like Dr. Helmer-Keys, she knew what the older relative meant. It is important to disclaim that these terms are not only spoken by rural Black people but also shared by White individuals from older generations (Hutcheson & Cullinan, 2017).

Excerpt 26: interview, “I knew how to retch around”

Ellen Freeman:

- 1 My grandmother, she used to say, “retch around and get something from yonder.” And I mean,
- 2 only, I, I didn't even know what it meant, but I knew, you know, how to “retch around” haha and

3 what she was trying to say was “reach, reach around and pick something up for”, you know, far
4 distant in a, in another room or something.

Examining the generational differences in AAL is important as it further proves to researchers that despite the age of the speaker, their AAL is still widely understood by members of the African American family since everyone grew up hearing and speaking similar, if not the same type of AAL.

Language ideologies are important to FLP because they motivate language practices and parental methods of language planning. So far in this analysis, the following ideologies about AAL have predominately emerged within various participants’ quotes: it is unquestionably distinct from other varieties of American English, it is the antithesis of language mainly written by White people, it is extraordinary, elliptical, and special to the African American community, and AAL fosters a sense of belonging. The language ideologies discovered in this study are important because they help linguists understand the difference between AAL and SAE, which leads to further comprehension of Black families’ overall language policy. Definitional ideologies about and examples of AAL from the participants’ point of view have been analyzed, which show researchers and educators a distinct difference between how AAL has been defined in applied linguistics and what it actually means to be Black and use AAL. From the data, we can imply that being Black and speaking in AAL indicates that you have been raised around other AAL speakers and belong to the Black community. It can also be interpreted that being Black and using AAL does not just mean that an individual understands the “lingo” but also understands the social context behind Black phrases. The contextual comprehension of Black talk has been exemplified as participants talk about their preference in communicating with their Black peers versus non-African American individuals (excerpt 5). Although some participants

see AAL as slang and incorrect English, most agree that it is separate from MAE but different from talking white. The data suggest that even if the speaker does not speak in AAL, they are not necessarily talking white and African Americans have a particular language choice. Participants explicate this ideology as they talk about how they interact with other Black people in various social settings (excerpts 4, 9, 10, 21). For instance, one may understand an AAL utterance and choose to either respond in the same level of discourse or in form of English that is in between AAL and the standard. The following section will help readers understand why and how the participants make the decision to either speak in AAL or not contingent on the social context.

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF AAL USE

In discussing the context of AAL use and its relationship to the language policy of the African American families, the participants remark on the importance of race to language as a guide for communicating in private and public settings; however, not all participants see a strong connection between language and race. The findings from the following excerpts reveal the similarities and differences in the participant families' language ideology concerning how to use AAL with family at home versus, with peers versus teachers at school, and with colleagues versus bosses at work. The family domain is expected to be a safe context in which members may communicate (Nofal & Seal, 2022). Among bidialectal families who identify as African American/Black and speak a non-mainstream variety of American English, home becomes an even more critical domain in which, parents, children, and other family members become key participants influencing language choices and beliefs (Spolsky, 2012). The results of the interviews and in-home recordings are important in that the data all point to African American-based viewpoints that underscore marked situations and conditions in social relationships.

AAL Use with Family and Friends

Several participants talk about their ideologies concerning the contextually use of AAL in informal settings with family and friends/peers. The main aim of this section is to compare how and why some participant parents discourage AAL use, even while at home, while other participants support it. The data reveals differences in beliefs between parents and children, which leads us to understand the challenges in generalizing how AAL is used in social context even with other Black people. It is important to commence the presentation of data concerning

contextual language use with a quote from Dr. Helmer-Keys because she particularly categorizes the language varieties she speaks and how they are related to Black culture. Through this discussion we can expect to see common social settings wherein many Black interlocutors interact: home with family, in the community with friends, and in public with others.

Excerpt 27: interview, "Three types of language"

Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys:

- 1 So, I'm looking at three different types of language for me, the among my friends, there were
 - 2 things just like Rachel said, you spoke a different language with your friends and colleagues in
 - 3 African American community and then you, but you knew correct English - the King's English, I
 - 4 won't say correct because you know, that doesn't mean one is right or wrong, it just is haha it's a
 - 5 culture thing.
-

It is important to understand what it means to be “a culture thing” in reference to AAL and the Black community. African American culture is like a Black iceberg; there are aspects that individuals think drive Black culture (i.e., perspectives, planning, shared values, goals, practices, policies, frameworks) and there are elements that actually make up the culture (i.e., ideologies, shared assumptions, perceptions, traditions, individual values, norms, unwritten rules, stories, and attitudes). What really make up Black Culture are invisible out-group members are lie beneath the surface level. Culture defines what people do in the community when no one is researching them. Consistent Black culture is demonstrated when individuals answer similarly to one another to questions like “Is there a connection between language and race” or “Do you code-switch? When, where, and why?”. While families’ language choices can be guided by values and morals, culture is more than just values discussed during recorded conversations and displayed in the media; Culture is powerful and is intentionally planned by parents from childhood through adulthood. In the following excerpts we will similarly see how the participants discuss the contexts in which they use AAL as far as with their friends, family members, and co-workers as well. During the interview with Nathan Sitter, he explicates his

ideology towards his daughters' AAL use at home and outside the home. Towards the end of the excerpt, the importance of collected data is seen as he reveals why he encourages his daughters to not use AAL "even when in the relaxed setting of family." This is different from Dr. Helmer-Keys' language ideology as seen in the above excerpt, for she believes in code-switching contingent on the social context.

Excerpt 28: The Sitter's interview, "Even when in the relaxed setting of family"

Nathan Sitter:

1 A lot of times I have a conversation, and as a father or two African American girls, about the
2 verbiage and how they use their verbiage cause a lot; cause as teenagers, they feel comfortable
3 just like Ashley stated, Ariel and Ashley just talking natural and not really using, um, proper
4 grammar, proper English, because they feel more relaxed within our home setting, and that's
5 fine. But we, as a father and as mother, we encourage them to practice using proper English and
6 correct grammar, even when in the relaxed setting of family. So, when you are outside of our
7 home, it wouldn't be so difficult to go back to use the, the term that Ashley used, to code-switch.
8 Cause if you have to code-switch, then it would be easy to code-switch versus having to code-
9 switch, and not knowing the language to use.

Nathan remarks on the value of "using proper English and correct grammar" as opposed to using AAL. His statements imply that AAL is improper English and incorrect grammar, which is different from what research has found about AAL, it is a distinct variety of English with its own grammatical system (Craig et al, 2003). Nathan mentions code-switching after his daughter exclaims that she "can code-switch" (excerpt 9, line 2). The discussion of code-switching – the use of more than one language/variety concurrently in conversation (Auer, 2010); mixing of two languages while speaking (Morini & Newman, 2019) – is important to point out in the data for it suggests that this language practice is a part of Family 1's language policy. "Not knowing the language to use" refers to the importance in being proactive in possessing the capacity to readily code-switch when it is necessary instead of being reactive and attempting to code-switching unpreparedly. The data is revealing language socialization as a practice performed by Nathan; these are language rules or preferences that can be socialization,

but just choosing to speak a certain way without any rules is also language socialization (it can be explicit and implicit). He encourages his daughters to practice using MAE, preparing them to use “proper English and correct grammar” outside the home. In response to the fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey, Nathan wrote “yes” he talks to his daughters about race centered around the discussion of “how important their heritage is and how to always be proud of who they are and where they come from.” His response to the survey question aligns with his statements during the interview; he values racial pride and his family’s perception.

Not all parent participants share the same language ideology regarding the context in which AAL is used. Some parents discourage AAL use at home while others support the liberation of speech when among close relatives and/or other African Americans within the community. For instance, Ellen Freeman discusses how she not only permits AAL use at home but also encourages it when interacting with audiences of sharing a common racial background. Additionally, in response to the fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey, Ellen Freeman answered *yes* and indicated that she has talked to her children about “history, present and future events” dealing with race. The contemporality of her response is linked to how she talks about social media being a prompt to use “slang trendy words” and the subject of context.

Excerpt 29: interview, “Speak in just regular English”

Ellen Freeman:

1 When we're home, we are a bit more lax. So, we use a lot of Ebonics, occasionally and, and
2 slang trendy words that may, that we may find on social media, but we also we speak English
3 and I try to encourage my children when they're out in public or even in school settings to speak
4 in just regular English language so that no matter what race everyone can understand them. I
5 encourage them not to, to talk, you know, above someone's head where, you know, so that they
6 may not understand break the word down cause you have to kinda gauge the audience that you're
7 talking to. So, my 12-year-old. He, he doesn't have a, a sense of that. Sometimes he'll talk above
8 someone's head, and I don't know if it's a way to make them feel idiotic or something, but he
9 does do that and I, I try to encourage him to, to just know his, his crowd cause if we, and if
10 you're at school, then it's fine. You can talk the way that you normally talk. But if we at the

11 corner store and you speaking to someone saying certain words, then they just gonna look at you.
12 Like, you know, “why are you speaking to me that way?”

This excerpt presents findings on how this parent participant socializes her son and daughter into contexts of use for both SAE and AAL. By commenting on when and with whom to use a less mainstream American variety of English, she is able to effectively socialize her son. Additionally, she effectively corrects her children as a form of socialization when they use an ineffective dialectal variation in a given social context; for instance, she discourages him from talking “above someone’s head (excerpt 29, lines 7-8), meaning speaking in SAE in the wrong social context. It can be implied that the mother understands the sociolinguistic context of her neighborhood and her language ideology shows how important it is for her children to be able to comprehend social contexts as well. She is explaining how she has passed down her language policy and practices to her children to the point where they mostly use SAE even in the Black community with other African American people. The monologue suggests that the Black people in her community associate this sort of talk with smartness and educatedness and look upon her and her family as if they belong to a higher social class. Speaking mainstream or a middle-class variety of American English does not necessarily equate to “smartness”, but the data makes it clear that the mother desires her son to fit in and not be perceived as pretentious in the community. In connection with the discussion of literacy in the “African American Language” section, this data suggests that the societal language ideologies in this area of Memphis; for example, the belief that possessing the ability to speak standard English signifies the individual’s level of education, play a role in the way the mother discusses language use with her children, specifically her son.

AAL is the dominant language variety used in Frayser, where Ellen grew up, and those who do not speak in this variety are viewed as outsiders. She expresses the desire for her children

to be perceived as those who belong in the community, blend in with the Black locals, and communicate effectively with them by “gauging the audience” and adjusting their speech accordingly, even if that means avoiding talking “above someone’s head” or in SAE (excerpt 29, line 5). In this context, to “talk above someone’s head” is the African American version of the idiom, “talk over (one’s) head”, which means to use language in a way that one cannot follow, understand, and/or comprehend. The difference in the Black version of the idiom is that Ellen is not suggesting that the locals in the community cannot understand her son; this is not a language barrier issue, she is explaining that when they hear her son, they perceive and characterize him with the assumption that he is educated. This parent does not equate the use of AAL with being less educated or intelligent as we see in other parent participants’ language ideologies; instead, she just simply wants her children to belong in their Black community. Through the data, we see an example of how Ellen socializes her son by deterring the act of talking above individuals’ heads and using SAE to communicate with locals in the community since it is inappropriate and ineffective to use such a mainstream variety of American English in efforts to build relationships in, fit in with, and develop a sense of belonging in the Frayer community. The way Ellen socializes her son to use AAL outside the home but permits the use of SAE at school further reveals her positive attitudes toward the nonstandard variety of English. We can assume that her son primarily speaks standard English at school, which she feel’s is “fine”, but it is not okay to talk his normal way with the locals in more casual settings like the store. Ellen further explains by bringing up how African Americans normally communicate in casual environments such as “the corner store”, a business establishment located at the corner of a street in an urban area in Memphis that is typically ran by non-African Americans such as middle eastern or Asian business owners. These business establishments typically sell all needs for the local community

including toiletries, food, drinks, and tobacco products. In these locations, SAE is rarely used if ever and it is most appropriate to communicate in an informal variety of English in order to relate to be understood by the locals.

The field of family language policy encompasses various family configurations and has primarily focused on normative families while non-normative families have remained on the margins (Obied 2010; Poveda et al. 2014; Wright 2020). Ellen is a single mother, who raises her children as the primary/sole caretaker. The pressures single mothers undergo are well-documented (Klett-Davies, 2016; Millar, Coen, Bradley, & Rau, 2012) and due to societal oppression, being Black and a single mother causes these pressures to increase. Ellen's monologue reveals her beliefs on the context of AAL use through the expression of her language ideology and practices. The findings show that she believes AAL use is more appropriate around other African Americans and SAE should be reserved for school and other formal environments. The data also indicates that the mother maintains AAL by socializing her children to use it with the locals in the Frayser community in Memphis. The data suggests that she possesses bidialectal language practices at home. Her children's bidialectal abilities illustrate the family's language use; her children primarily use SAE while the mother is aware of when and where to use AAL and SAE. These findings demonstrate parents' awareness of their own code-switching and societal expectations for code-switching, as well as the value the parent participants placed on both AAL and SAE. We can interpret that Ellen's positive attitude toward AAL is based on how she values the maintenance of racial identity (RI)—an important aspect of human development that represents an individual's personal identification with their racial/ethnic group (i.e., African Americans/Black) and the sense of meaning they draw from this affiliation (Durkee, Perkins, & Smith II, 2021) —and sense of belonging in their community.

The data reveals that some participants perceive the extreme version of not belonging to the Black community due to a difference in the way an individual speaks as acting/talking white. In the next excerpt, we see how a participant discusses another form of not belonging or fitting into the Black community because they are accused of speaking/talking white. Nicholas Wheeler discusses not only the context in which he uses and not uses AAL but also how his family reactions when he does not speak in a way that they find “socially acceptable” in that particular context. Important topics of professional voices, White voices, and not being able to talk are present in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 30: The Wheeler’s interview, “What do you mean, you talk white?”

Nicholas Wheeler:

1 I think for us though, as black people, I think it's more socially acceptable to speak in a more
2 relaxed setting, tone, you know, or in a more relaxed manner and within our own race I know, I
3 know we can give each other a hard time for trying to sound white if we use our professional
4 voices just at home over at your cousin's house and all of that, because we, you know, we've
5 heard, “oh, you got, them kids sound white”, or “you tryin’ to act white.” Somebody said that to
6 me at the, at the, at the Lemoyne Owen Garden picnic. They was like, “Oh, don't be tryin’ to
7 sound all white! You, you don't live here anymore?! You tryin’ to talk all white!” it's like, “what
8 do you mean talk white?!” It's like haha, I don't know. I think that internally we might put some
9 internal pressure on each, on ourselves to be more relaxed when we're talking amongst our
10 family and friends and peers. I think there is some peer pressure to try and fit in and to sound
11 like, you know, people that look like you. And then if you, I've gotten it before too. It's like, “oh,
12 why are you trying to talk white?” It's like, “what does that mean to talk white?” Just because I
13 want my subjects and verbs to agree? But then we understand like, like [friend’s name] has even
14 said it like, “oh, you got your white voice on. Call me back when you can talk. You can't talk
15 right now.” And so, you know when you're at work or whatever, and it's like, “aw, okay.” But
16 then if I just talk to 'em at home, it's like, “oh, what's up, mane?!”. ”

It is important to point out how this parent is narrating his experience with being called out for “talking White”; therefore, not belonging at the family picnic. While discussing the context of AAL use, within the data above Nicholas contributes to this study’s findings by also shedding light on the issue acting and talking white. He believes that AAL is incorrect American English that does not have subject-verb agreement (excerpt 30, line 13). Racial identity in

minority youth and adults is hindered by exposure to culturally invalidating experiences that challenge/undermine how African Americans express their cultural identities (Durkee, Gazley, Hope, & Keels, 2019). The accusation of “acting White” is one of the most common cultural invalidations Black people face (Neal-Barnett, 2001). The “acting White” accusation (AWA) is a type of cultural invalidation that challenges the perceived authenticity of African Americans who demonstrate non-stereotypical behaviors and/or display attributes that are believed to be prototypical of White Americans (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). The phenomenon of “acting white” is prevalent in the lives African Americans in the sense that racial perceptions are based on sound and sight (Carbado & Gulati, 2013). There is a distinct difference between being anti-AAL and anti-talking white; Nicholas seems to be anti-AAL because he believes it lacks subject verb agreement; on the other hand, he seems to be anti-talking white because his family and other Black families ridicule him at a community picnic for not talking like them. The findings above indicate that Black family members who talk white are given a hard time by those who use AAL, which is important to the analysis of FLP within African American families since it demonstrates how AAL is perceived by participants who claim not to use it.

So far in the data, we have seen three parent participants discuss the context of AAL when in home/safe environments where they are “relaxed”. It is important to also take into account the children’s perspective on contextuality of language when it comes to NMAE use at home with family/friends. Rachel Wise brings up similar topics to Nicholas Wheeler in regard to talking white and talking in a more colloquial manner at home.

Excerpt 31: in-home recording, “I think it has its place.”

Rachel Wise:

- 1 I was at home and, or I would like, not be in a place where I had to like, be on my Ps and Qs. I
- 2 knew what the like “White folks talk” was, but I ain't, you know, I wasn't like in a, like, I was

3 just talking colloquial. I was talking like, you know, like, “normal”, how I do outside of
4 professional environments. Like, me speaking in a colloquial language, like, talk like, speaking
5 with slang, like, I think that it has its place. This is how they want you to speak in a professional
6 setting. This is how White people are gonna want you to speak. This is how you speak in your
7 own free time. This is how you speak when you feel safe, this is how you speak when you are
8 around safe people. And when you like Black, like Black people around this person will
9 understand what you sayin’.

The data above illustrates Rachel’s language ideology concerning the contextual use of AAL. Her claim that “it [AAL] has its place” is clearly reflects language ideology about the context in which the language variety is used; in her eyes it has value, and she utilizes it as a tool to navigate various social spaces (excerpt 31, line 5). It can be inferred that places where she felt that she “had to be” on her “P’s and Q’s” include environments where non-African Americans, specifically White people, could hear her speech (excerpt 31, line 1). The P’s and Q’s expression, meaning mind your manners and language, demonstrates a part of her language beliefs. She believes that she should use a more standardized variety of English while in public such as school and work, which are typically places consisting of mixed audiences such as African Americans and Caucasians. She also associates being on her P’s and Q’s and speaking “correctly” with “white folks talk” (excerpt 31 line 2). Rachel is expressing how she does not see a need to use “white folks talk” while at home since there is no one there to judge. Alike Ariel Sitter, Rachel Wise uses the terms “regular” and “normal” when referring to her AAL use and talking “normal” at home. More importantly, she feels that she should be able to talk “normal”, “regular”, and like herself while at home; she feels comfortable using her normal voice while not in “professional environments” (excerpt 31, lines 3-4). Her discussing these language issues with her mother holds importance as it helps us understand how the child participants use AAL situationally. Much the same as Natasha Sage, Rachel Wise regards school as place of professionalism (excerpt 32, line 5); it is not coincidental that these social spaces majorly consist of individuals who are not people of color.

AAL Use at School

Studies have shown how the agency of children play a vital role in families' language policy (Smith-Christmas, 2021). In the next four excerpts, the way the child participants express their ideologies on how AAL should be used at school is crucially represented. Natasha Sage adds to the discussion on the context of AAL use while also showing a difference in language ideologies on AAL use across the child participants from three separate African American families. It is important to realize that Natasha claims there is a difference between her "casual" speech and other participant's version of "informal register" (excerpt 32, lines 7-8).

Excerpt 32: The Sage's interview, "There's no difference on how I speak"

Natasha Sage:

1 So, depending on like, when I'm at home, when I'm at school, there's no difference on how I
2 speak, how I orchestrate my words. At school, I get teased for being, they, they nickname me the
3 human dictionary, human source and at home, it's like a similar thing. They say, I, the way that I
4 speak with my words is like, it's not necessarily like unnatural, but it's just very, like, it's a lot of
5 big words and it's like, it is what you would use in a more professional environment. And I, I
6 speak like that no matter where I am, I could be talking to my friends just online and I'd be
7 speaking similar to that. Like, there is, there is a bit of a difference, like when it's casual, but still
8 kind of in that professional kind of thing, like I'm not gonna be using like these big words, stuff
9 like that.

Natasha's ideology is different from Rachel's in that she does not change the way she talks contingent on the social setting. The point of presenting Natasha's remark is to show that the child participants do not all use AAL in the same social context or same manner, which sometimes results in adverse reactions within their family and peer groups – Natasha gets teased for speaking professional outside of professional spaces. It is important for educators to realize how the language ideologies of parents often reflects those of schools, which in turn impacts the way parents socialize their children at home. The social context of AAL use is expanded in the

data pulled from the next excerpt as Emily, Nia and Ivan’s daughter – who is a junior in high school, planning to major in forensic science at a four-year institution – briefly expresses the situational difference between how she communicates with her Black friends and teachers while at school.

Excerpt 33: interview, “You talk a certain way with your Black friends.”

Emily:

- 1 You necessarily wouldn’t talk the same way with like your principal, your White principal or
 - 2 whatever, but like you talk a certain way with your Black friends.
-

The key element to notice in the short excerpt above is the emphasis Emily puts on the race of her principal, White. Her emphasis furthers Nolon Wheeler’s about the difference in the way they speak to their teachers contingent on the instructor’s race (excerpt 21, line 1). This finding is important to educators who share the same racial background as their students and to those who do not as it appears that Black student may use AAL across the educational environments when they feel related to the auditor. As an additional the conversation on defining AAL and using it in context, Aleyah Banks defines the opposite of AAL use as her “presenter voice” in the excerpt below. Through her quotes, it can be interpreted that talking White is associated with talking professionally and talking in a voice that is not her own.

Excerpt 34: The Banks’ interview, “It’s just how I’m usually expected to do”

Aleyah Banks:

- 1 I don't have a way I speak in front of my family, but more so when I'm like presenting or when
 - 2 I'm with my teachers, I'll speak like that. I have more like presenter voice, or I'll make sure that
 - 3 I'm not, not trying to, but more so not using slang or I'm not using how I would talk when I'm
 - 4 with my friends. What makes me feel like I have to do that is it's just how I'm usually expected
 - 5 to do like what I'm presenting or when I'm talking to people or stuff like that.
-

Consistently, the data reveals child participants’ similar expressions about AAL use with their family and friends versus their teachers; however, this child makes a unique statement.

Aleyah explains that there's an expectation placed on her as a student to speak in a certain language variety due to who the audience is. This expectation can be associated with the pressure other participants feel when having to communicate with various audiences. During The Banks' in-home recording, Dr. Omar Banks further questions his daughter, Aleyah, about this topic, which led to her providing an example of what her presenter voice does not sound like.

Excerpt 35: The Banks' in-home recording, "I wanted to use my big projective voice"

Aleyah Banks:

- 1 For example, I did a project at my school, and we had this really big night and I wanted to use
 - 2 my big projective voice instead of being like, "What's up y'all, my name is [her name]" and stuff
 - 3 like that. I use like, like I finished my words, not, I'm not trying to say in a bad way, but like, I
 - 4 will finish my words instead of just, uh, instead of just squishing them together. Like I usually do
 - 5 and stuff like that.
-

It seems possible that in low-stakes social contexts, as opposed to at school, Aleyah may use AAL, uttering un-finished words that are squished together. Her exemplification not only adds to our understanding of how she contextually uses AAL but also how she defines it.

Whether or not to use AAL at school is quiet similar to the participants' beliefs about when to use it in other public settings. The next part of this section explicate these similarities as we see overlaps of speaking professionally and blending AAL with SAE and/or avoiding the use of AAL in professional settings completely.

AAL Use in Professional Settings

Historically, the workplace does not encourage African Americans/Black people to truly be themselves (Santiago, Nwokoma, & Crenstil, 2021), and this is true with regards to appearance, social context, and language. Across five interviews, the collected data reveals the language ideology of parent participants in terms of AAL use in work and professional contexts.

Nicole Sitter, Nathan Sitter’s wife and Ariel Sitter’s mother who is a nurse a local clinic, compares her AAL use at work to how it is used in educational environments, showing the similarity between the two contexts.

Excerpt 36: The Sitter’s interview, “We can talk differently among ourselves”

Nicole Sitter:

- 1 Well, I was just thinking at work, it's similar to school when you're around, uh, African
 - 2 American, sometimes at work, you, you may use slang like ‘thuggin out’ or whatever, because
 - 3 you're, I, I really had to think about this. My manager, who's African American. We can talk
 - 4 differently among ourselves, but when we get in a broader different room with other people, we
 - 5 do talk differently. We, we address things. We, our verbiage change, and I think certain words
 - 6 have a little more spice to it that you, people understand what you're meaning. Is it right? I was
 - 7 thinking about it. Is it really right in certain situations? I mean, using correct grammar; however,
 - 8 the certain words that we use in slang, is it anything really wrong about it?
-

Reviewing this excerpt, it is important to realize that this mother believes that when an African American boss is in charge, the language of the office changes and that questioning AAL use is really wrong. Contextually, Nicole speaks “differently” at work with her bosses and managers than she does with her family and friends. In this context, to talk differently is synonymous and associated with AAL use within the African American community. However, the data excerpt above presents the parent participants’ language ideology including the belief that AAL can be used at work in conjunction with the more standard variety of American English. While at work, it appears that Nicole sometimes changes her spoken language variety to adapt to her audience; she explains how; instead of completely avoiding using AAL, she blends AAL and SAE into one discourse to add “spice to it” (excerpt 36, line 6). Canagarajah (2011) also found that individuals sometimes merge “local varieties with standard written Englishes” and refers to this language practice as code-meshing. Within the data collected from Nicole, there are three rather epiplectic inquiries posed. A possible explanation for these rhetorical

questions asked and phrased in such manner may be that she is attempting to make a responsive point to her claim rather than to elicit a rebuttal.

Nicole Sitter expresses her beliefs about the context of AAL use when she states that “sometimes at work, you may use slang” (excerpt 36, line 2). Although she did not explicitly state that her language policy for work is allied with her language policy for school, it seems possible that she believes in using AAL in professional environments when the audience shares the same racial background as the locutor. The quotation above also sheds light on Nicole’s language ideology as it includes her exemplified narrative about her relationship with her Black manager. During one-on-one communications, Nicole and her boss use AAL, which is apparently a different variety than what they use when talking to non-African Americans at work; in the monologue above, she refers to them as “other people”. It can be interpreted that she talks “differently” with the other people simply because they do not share the same racial background as her and are not African American. Nicole states that her and her manager code-switch when around non-African Americans and they change their verbiage. Santiago, Nwokoma, and Crentsil (2021) conducted a study focused on code-switching and found that African Americans/Black adults and professionals share this same language practices when at work, around and interacting with non-African Americans. This is important because it shows consistency in Black adults’ and professionals’ language practices at work, indicating that there is a shared belief amongst African Americans concerning issues of language policy within the workplace. Dr. Yusef Kibitzer also mentions contextual use of AAL as he discusses how there is a difference in his speech when he is at work; “I’m definitely not as English proper when I may be at home as opposed to being in a work setting working” (quote from The Kibitzer’s interview, Luis). Two other mothers indicated that the father of their children changes his speech while at

work: “Luis changes his voice sometimes when he’s on work calls” (quote from interview with Amanda Ranger); “I see a big difference in him. I think I can definitely tell how he speaks at work versus at home” (quote from the Wheeler’s interview, Eliza). We see that Nicole Sitter feels comfortable using AAL with her manager since they share the same linguistic and racial background. This could signify a few of ideologies: AAL use at work is permissible around other African Americans but should be adjusted when with more general audiences, language practices at work depend on who is in power, and/or we should question if AAL use at work is actually wrong. Considering that Nicole grew up in a more urban part of Memphis, received a bachelor’s in nursing, then moved to the suburbs with her husband to raise her daughters, her beliefs line up with her background since she has experience in interacting with AAL and SAE speakers.

Parts of The Sitter’s language ideology is revealed as Nicole discusses how her manager and she code-switch when the audience changes. Her statement sheds more light on her beliefs as she feels that blending her natural language variety with the standard improves her communication since “certain words have a little more spice to it” (excerpt 36, line 6). She is referencing words in AAL, and her contextual use of the noun “spice” illustrates her diversified language policy and her dynamic language practices as opposed to only expressing herself in monolithic utterances. The “spice” reference can be analogous to food references; people of color tend to mix many spices and pungent/aromatic substances of vegetable origin, like salt and pepper, garlic and onions, and seasonings and preservatives in their dishes just as AAL speech tends to blend piquant, interesting linguistic practices like code-switching and code-meshing to convey messages to mixed audiences.

In Nicole Sitter’s monologue, she is positively expressing that code-switching as a language practice can be used as a tool to enhance the variety of English spoken and that

speakers can use words from non-Mainstream American English (NMAE) dialects and still be understood by their audience (Hendricks & Adlof, 2017). She concludes her monologue with three rhetorical questions; the “it” she is referring to is African American language: (1). “Is it right?” (2). “Is it really right in certain situations?” (3). “Is it anything really wrong about it?” (excerpt 36, lines 5-6). Here, she effectively uses epilexis, a sequence of rhetorical questions used to elicit an emotional response, with her family and me. It is confirming the fact that parents see the use of AAL as contextual and perhaps when the power in the office shifts, so does the perception of “correctness”. She was attempting to start a conversation surrounding whether slang is “wrong” or “right”. The omission of room for rebuttal to her rhetorical question suggests that there is room in research for further study and discuss on the topic of AAL and correctness in certain contexts. The data from this family’s dialogue illustrates how race can influence parents’ feelings toward NMAE dialects. The intersectionality between being Black, a woman, and a mother are factors that play into Nicole’s possession of positive attitudes toward AAL. The interconnected nature of Black middle-class mothers creates overlapping and independent systems of discrimination and disadvantage; the same systems that discriminate against AAL.

Additionally, we can interpret that Nicole’s contextual use of AAL is reflected in her language policy and how she socializes her daughters. Working in professional environments while interacting with other African Americans, especially when the employer identifies as Black, influences the mother’s language ideology; thus, impacting how she uses AAL at home with her family. Parental language ideologies are passed down at home and to the children where language socialization occurs. Regarding race and language in FLP, findings of language ideologies about dialectal variations are unique and important to study since very few investigations of bilingual families consider race as a factor when analyzing language policies

and ideologies. It is important to understand that Nicole’s language ideology is directly related to race and not ethnicity. Her beliefs may be attributed to her identity as an African American, specifically a woman and mother, and having that sense of belonging in public spaces.

Ivan Wright (the machine operator with three kids) shares a similar language ideology as Nicole sitter; contingent on the individual’s race, he may speak in AAL even though the social environment is considered a professional one.

Excerpt 37: The Wright’s interview, “Talk the way he talkin’ to me”

Ivan Wright:

1 I had two different job interviews, one was with a White supervisor and at the time getting
2 interviewed, we were having conversations and I basically was talking like this and then, and
3 that's because he was talking like this. So, you know, it's like talk the way he talkin’ to me, I'm
4 gonna talk the same way back to him. Then I had an interview with a Black guy and when he,
5 when I came in the room to sit down, he's like, “What's going on, man? You Good? How you
6 feelin’?; “Aw yea, I'm aight bro.”

In the excerpt above, Ivan adds to the discussion of AAL use in social contexts as he provides examples of AAL use along with his language ideology. The findings from this family suggest that the race of the auditor directly impacts the interlocutor’s decision of whether or not AAL use is appropriate and/or effective in the given contexts. The language ideology of the parents from The Sitter’s and The Wright’s and the manner in which they situationally use AAL differs from Dr. Omar Banks’ ideology and contextual use of AAL; he believes that AAL should not be used in professional contexts.

Excerpt 38: The Banks’ interview, “The context and meaning of words”

Dr. Omar Banks:

1 The way in which we use the words or the phrases that we use, I think is different and distinct to
2 African Americans, particularly. And then just the context and meaning of words and how
3 people share them, I think is, is different too. At the end of the day for me is about who are you
4 trying to communicate with and what method are you gonna use to communicate with them. So,
5 for instance, if I got, if I went to the bank first horizon and started speaking to most of my

6 colleagues who are 85% white and, and I'm trying to get a message across to them, I probably
7 would not go up there and say, "Look mane, all y'all need to get y'all self together. Y'all need to
8 come look at these results. And then we gonna get all this info together. We gonna ride out and
9 take care of this business." That's not what I'm gonna say like. They would not, that would not
10 resonate with them well and they probably would struggle to understand a little bit of what I'm
11 saying and why I'm saying it that way. But instead, you know I would have to think about the
12 words that I use to really get the message across to them. So, I think that's important, but that's
13 not to say, you know, if we went out for a drink or something like that, I am who I am, you
14 know, haha right? I am who I am. So, I'm gonna speak as I am and, and I'm gonna be fine with
15 that and they should be as well.

Within Dr. Banks' explanation, we see how he furthers the conversation surrounding the social context of, defines, and exemplifies AAL along with providing context in which is deems it inappropriate to use a non-mainstream variety of American English. It is important to emphasize how he claims that if he were to use AAL with his colleagues at work, they would not understand, but he contradicts his statement at the end of the excerpt, claiming that they should accept his AAL use with the same audience but in a different social context. His viewpoint on the social context of AAL use is different from what we have seen expressed from other participants thus far – his audience does not so much matter as much as the social context where the dialectal variation is used. In a similar vein, Luis Teller's comments on the connection between African American men and how that impacts the terms they use to refer to one another.

Excerpt 39: interview, "Because of the connection"

Luis Teller:

1 I think as African American men, you know, sometimes we refer to other African American as,
2 as "bro, bruh, or brother", you know, in that context because of the connection. But if I'm in a
3 meeting and like, my VP in there, or my director in there, I don't wanna come off like, using
4 slang. So that's why I said, like, I really be trying to think of certain words because you know,
5 you can talk, and certain words may just come out with that slang on it, and you don't want it to
6 do that. So, I think I just be more nervous about what the things I have to say.

Luis expresses the desire to not use AAL around his superiors in professional environments and how the avoidance of using his primary dialect causes him. It is apparent that he has to concentrate on not using AAL while at work, which suggest that the avoidance of using

one's primary language variety is a challenging and abnormal speech behavior. He admits that he sometimes accidentally uses AAL at work as "certain words may just come out with that slang on it"; he prefers for this not to happen, which makes him nervous (excerpt 39, lines 6). The data from the excerpt implies that even if an individual desires to rather suppress their heritage language and the way they normally talk at home by code-switching at work, it is almost impossible to complete shift to a mainstream variety without blending in their primary dialect. In response to the fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey, Luis claims that he has not talked to his children about race. There appears to be some correlation between his nervousness toward AAL use and the fact that he has not talked to his daughter about race.

Comparable to the data collected from The Sitter's interview, the mixture of Luis' speech utterances with "slang on it" is an example of subconsciously code-meshing outside the home. Like Luis Teller and The Banks', Officer Luke Constable holds the ideology of not using AAL when attempting to perform professional actions, but he also briefly states the root of his language ideology.

Excerpt 40: The Constable's interview, "Depending on what you need to get done"

Officer Luke Constable:

- 1 It's just depending on what you need to get done, in my opinion, you know, if you gonna go to
 - 2 the bank and you askin' for loan, I wouldn't suggest that you use curse words or anything like
 - 3 that. You gonna have to speak your professional voice and know what you're talkin' 'bout. You,
 - 4 you have, you have to delete the, "you know what I'm sayin's" and the "ya feel me" all those
 - 5 different pieces because that may lead someone to believe that you are a lot less educated.
-

According to Officer Constable, the consequence of misappropriately using AAL in certain social contexts is misrepresenting oneself as uneducated. He presents examples of AAL phrases that must be omitted in professional setting when talking to show how AAL use of this caliber is inappropriate and inefficient.

The main point in these examples presented is that workplace language shift in relation to who is present and in charge. The findings in the data above imply that organizations should encourage their employees to bring their full selves to work and researchers should consider cultural and lifestyle norms of minorities in the workplace. In particular, parents may still evaluate their children's speech to determine whether or not their utterance is an appropriate and effective means of communicating in the given context. These findings and implications tie into the next section where the data will further illustrate how the association of AAL with being less educated leads some participants to discuss whether or not AAL use is a denotation of respect/disrespect.

RESPECTFUL/DISRESPECTFUL

Contemporary studies in FLP have discussed language in regard to respect (Kozminska & Hua 2022, Higgins, 2022; Mirvahedi, Rajabi, & Aghaei, 2022), but few projects have tied race into the conversation when dealing with dialectal variations of English. Kozminska and Hua's participants regard respect as an important attribute for their children to have, Higgins emphasizes how mutual respect is associated with traditional understandings of family, and Mirvahedi et al address equity with respect as they discuss speakers of non-mainstream languages. In connection with these studies, it is safe to say that respect is important to family language studies since it can be linked back to parents' beliefs about their offspring's future and how they use language. The relationship between valuing an individual's own language variation and not using the non-mainstream language varieties is not always one to one (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008); in other words, dialectal variations may be treated with respect while not being used. For example, an individual may consider AAL as a valued language variety, yet avoid speaking it because of internal beliefs about the way it is perceived by others. In terms of respect, this study is referring to the sense of worth of an individual and their language use while showing them courtesy. The theme of respect/disrespect emerges from conversations with the parent and child participants.

Using AAL Respectfully

In the first two excerpts presented, we see data collected from daughters who mention respect and how they use AAL in various social contexts. Ashley Sitter discusses how her father feels about her AAL use at home while she contends against the ideology that children using AAL with parents and teachers is disrespectful.

Excerpt 41: The Sitter's interview, "T talk to them respectful"

Ashley Sitter:

1 I feel like I can talk the way I usually talk at home, but then my parents will come and correct me
2 and say, and I would be like, "well, I'm at home. Nobody's gonna know nobody's gonna, I don't
3 have to, like, I'm not affecting anybody the way I'm talking." But then my dad would say
4 something, and he'll be like, "well you, well, you can't like talk like that all the time. You still
5 need to fix it. Like, even though we're, I'm your parent, you still need to talk to me like I'm
6 somebody important" or something like that. And and I feel like, I feel like it's kind of a big
7 thing at my school to like kinda switch it out because I have this, I don't know. I don't know. Just
8 like I said, other, other, um, black people at my job are comfortable talking to other black people.
9 I feel like I kinda, I do that to, with my teachers if I have, like I ever so often have a, a black
10 teacher or something I'm more comfortable. And um, like, I don't know. I just, I'm more
11 comfortable in talking with them and um, I'll, I'll talk my regular self, well, not during class, but
12 like just talking to them one on one, I will talk my regular self because they're black. And like, I
13 don't know. I just don't feel like I talk to them. Like I, I talk to them respectful, but I don't really
14 talk to them as proper as I would one of my other teachers.

Ashley discusses how her family's home is both a social environment for the her and her sister to express themselves freely but also a place to learn respect. Nathan Sitter's implementation of language rules demonstrates his beliefs about AAL use between parent and child. Nathan's reasons behind correcting his daughters when they spoke to him in AAL can be interpreted as him feeling that this sort of language use from child to parent exhibits belittlement and makes parents, specifically fathers like him, feel insignificant. Although Ashley Sitter stated that it is "kind of a big thing at [her] school" to code-switch, her next choice of words indicated that she feels differently from her father (excerpt 41, line 6-7). It can be interpreted that she feels comfortable talking like her "regular self" at her job with her Black co-workers and at school with her Black teachers, simply because her co-workers and teachers share the same racial background as her. The comfort behind talking like her "regular self" could mean that when she is forced to speak a more standard variety of English to non-African American peers and teachers, she feels detached from her true identity (excerpt 41, line 12). She exclaimed that she talks to her Black teachers "respectfully" but not "properly" as she would with one of her "other

teachers”, assumably her non-Black teachers (excerpt 41, lines 13-14). Regarding the defining aspects of respect, this distinction may indicate that this child shows a higher regard for other teachers than Black teachers. These contrasting feelings toward AAL between the father and youngest daughter illustrates that he associates interactions where children are speaking AAL to adults, specifically their parents, as a way of saying that the adult is not important enough to be spoken to in a more “correct”, “proper”, and/or standard fashion. Through the data we see that Ashley does not share the same attitude towards AAL as her father; she feels that you can still speak in AAL to adults while still showing respect. Rachel Wise furthers the conversation on respect and AAL use as she challenges the notion of AAL use being disrespectful when utilized in professional environments like work. In comparison Ashley Sitter, Rachel Wise holds a similar language ideology on respect and AAL use – she believes that she can still use the language variety while being respectful towards the listener.

Excerpt 42: interview, “When I go to work... I’m respectful”

Rachel Wise:

1 When I go to work, I’m still like, I’m respectful. I speak in a professional manner, but I also work
2 in social justice, and I talk about race relations and race issues. So, like they know I’m Black.
3 They know like, I, I don’t like... The “oughtas” the “ions”, the “aint’s”, they all come out. And I
4 don’t mind that. I still say “y’all” when I’m at work And I feel like I have that little bit of leeway
5 because they can’t really say that much because it’s like, I am the person who’s, who’s like in
6 charge of teaching about racism and what you’re gonna do? Like, be racist? Correct my English?
7 Or like, try to judge me for the way that I speak? Like, that’s racism.

This excerpt suggests that Rachel equates correcting language with racism. While providing examples of AAL, she makes important rhetorical moves by posing rhetorical inquiries toward the end of her explanation, similarly to Nicole Sitter. The effect of raising the subject of language and racism helps researchers and educators rethink language policy regarding Black families, and African American language. As Rachel mentions, a dialectal variation of American English spoken by mostly Black individual is respectfully utilized in

professional contexts. Additionally, Rachel associates intolerance towards AAL use in professional situations as language discrimination, or linguicism. Linguicism impacts language policy across generations as it influences whether or not the children and parent participants perceive AAL use as respectful/disrespectful. Officer Constable adds to the conversation of AAL use and respect as he and his wife, Autumn, who received an associate's degree in education and works as a tax examiner, discuss recurring themes that were also found in other parental participants' conversations. Emerging from the topic of language, race, and parenting, are respect and at-home versus school talk.

Excerpt 43: The Constable's interview, "We teach them to be respectful"

Officer Luke Constable:

1 We teach them to be, you know, respectful, really respectful. And, and while you're at home,
2 you kinda, you know, they kinda, they can say they can speak a lot freely here, but you know,
3 when you're at school, you know, it's "yes ma'am" or no, "ma'am" when you dealing with, you
4 know, law enforcement or someone who's not your parents, it's always the, the respect aspect to
5 get what you need.

6 Autumn Constable:

7 I was just pretty much saying the same thing to, you know, to be respectful when you're out
8 respect your elders at school, or even if you just out in public. So, we let them speak a little
9 freely here.

In the midst of discussing the social context of AAL use, respect emerges as a common theme as many of the participants emphasized this concept in conjunction with language and race (as seen in Higgins, 2022). The findings from her study revealed that younger Hawaiians demonstrated respect to "the next generation", their neighborhood friends, and others who were not related to them yet were older than the younger Hawaiians by referring to them as familial names like aunty, uncle, and cousin. The Constable's associate respect with politeness towards officers of the law and non-family members teachers; it can also be assumed that they expect their children to generally use 'yes ma'am' and "no ma'am" with anyone who may be seen as

superior and older. The use of ma'am and sir are not necessarily features of AAL but are common societal language practices in southern cities like Memphis, which shows how The Constable's language practices reflect those of society in the southern region of the U.S. There is no coincidence that Officer Constable mentions the utilization of polite ways of affirmation when dealing with law enforcement (excerpt 43, lines 3-4). He serves the local police department with a high-ranking position and therefore places value on respect towards police officers. In the current U.S. climate regarding police brutality towards African Americans, he is well aware of the fact that the way young African Americans present themselves and speak to police officials are important. Speaking disrespectfully by not regarding a police officer as ma'am or sir, and perhaps using less formal speech with them, could be detrimental and result in a negative social outcome. His ideology on the way his children should regard law enforcement reflects that of many African American parents in today's society but differs from major social concerns of non-African American parents (Henward, Lyu, Jackson, 2021). There are articles that discuss how non-African American families do not regularly tell their children how to interact with police officers (Brunson, 2007; Williams, 2019).

To speak freely at home represents the African American home as a safe space and a place for the parents and children to be themselves and speak how they naturally would. Through the data above, we see a difference in The Constable's language ideology from other parents who believe that it is less respectful for their children to use AAL with adults, but a similarity between the beliefs of Ariel and Ashley Sitter and Rachel Wise – they do not perceive AAL use as disrespectful no matter the context. The data also shows how context matters as The Constable's explain how they socialize and instruct their children to use language contingent on the social environment. The manner in which the parents contrast their children's language use at

home with how they utilize language “out in public” implies that these parents give their children agency in choosing whether or not they want to use ma’am and sir with family. It is important to understand that southern families and children are often required to use ma’am and sir with their parents and other adults; this language practice is most common in the southern states and less common in the eastern, northern, and western parts of the United States. The data from this excerpt ultimately reveals a part of these parents’ language ideology; it is permissible to speak freely at home, but children should speak in a more respectful and southernly polite manner in public with others who precede them in age. Lastly, the data from the excerpt above illustrates how the language ideologies amongst parents often is a direct reflection of societal influence.

Using AAL Disrespectfully

Amanda Ranger and The Sage’s directly discuss the perception of disrespect and language use between parents and children. It is important to keep in mind that Amanda is highly educated with a master’s degree and works as a Response to Intervention (RTI) Coordinator at a free open-enrollment college-preparatory school; her educational and occupational background align with her belief about respect as language since her jobs calls her to train educators to better serve underrepresented students.

Excerpt 44: interview, “She doesn’t get disrespectful”

Amanda Ranger:

- 1 We have girl talk Wednesday and she's free to say whatever she wants to say, but she still, she
 - 2 doesn't get disrespectful, but she says it how she wants to say it. Like, it's like a no judgment
 - 3 zone between the two of us. Haha what we talk about - Girl time.
-

In the excerpt above, Amanda emphasizes that her daughter does not use language disrespectfully even though she allows her to speak freely. Similarly to The Constables, she makes a point that casual and informal language use between parents and children in their family

is done with politeness and deference. Solely, The Sage’s interview includes three generations of women along with the presence of the father. The maternal grandmother, mother, and daughter bring up topics surrounding language correction and freedom of speech while discussing of language issues with the researcher, but this excerpt crops to a snippet of the conversation where the maternal grandmother, Stephanie – a former schoolteacher – reminisces about the manner in which her and her family respectfully used language amongst themselves while fellowshiping over food. Stephanie and her family’s liberty to speak freely around their grandparents, the great grandparents of Rhonda Sage, came as a surprise to Rhonda as she asks if their language was corrected. Rhonda’s inquiry sheds light on her language ideology – that it is disrespectful for children to use AAL with their parents and does not allow her children to go without correcting if they use slang around her.

Excerpt 45: The Sage’s interview, “It was respectful, it was not gonna be disrespectful at all”

Stephanie:

1 When I was coming up, we spent a lot of times with, a lot of time, there goes that “s”, anyway,
2 still lot of time with my, with my grandparents and my grandfather, he, he came to the head of
3 the table and we all arrived at the table once he got there at the head and he, you know, blessed
4 the food. And we, we were all sitting around the table, cousins, siblings, and there we were you
5 know, we could just talk, we just, we ate, but we talked, talk, talk, talk, talk. And that was, that
6 opened up I guess a whole big world of vocab and, you know, just communicating. And we
7 were, we were free to do that. You know, just, just talk, talk, talk about the day, talk about
8 whatever we wanted to talk about...

9 Rhonda Sage:

10 Nobody corrected ya’ll???

11 Stephanie:

12 No, that was the setting, you know, but I mean, it, it was, it was respectful it was not gonna be
13 disrespectful at all, you know, cause my grandfather, he would, he would come start the
14 conversation off, you know, and we just followed his lead, you know, and that’s the way, that’s
15 where we came up. You know, communication was key. It was very important to do that, you
16 know, and we, we left the table, you know, you, you, you’re full of history. You’re full of
17 laughter. You’re full of, oh, you know, it was just well rounded. And that’s what I really
18 appreciated coming up with that. Cause some households, you know, you, you couldn’t, you

19 know, you couldn't talk around your grownups a lot and you couldn't talk, you know, just
20 couldn't really express yourself like you wanted to, but we were given that.

Stephanie claims that her family's language policy is different from "some households" since they could talk in the midst of the older generation, a language practice that is typically forbidden within older generations of African American families (excerpt 45, line 18). This holds importance in that Stephanie inherited her grandfather's language ideology, but the language attitude towards correction was not inherited by Rhonda. Rhonda perceives AAL use and speaking none-mainstream varieties of English with parents as disrespectful, whereas Stephanie and her grandfather, Rhonda's great-grandfather, understand that AAL can be used respectfully and grants freedom of speech while fellowship over family meals at home. What educators and researchers can take away from these conversations is that respect/disrespect in regard to language use is distinct per families' language policy – a result that is uniquely found through interviews with multigenerational, Black families. In connection with language policy, the following section finds that the participants' beliefs about respect/disrespect stem from their language attitudes overall that is distinct between parents and children.

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES: DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S POSITION ON AAL

It is important to dive deeper into parents' ideologies on AAL to determine whether their attitudes are negative or positive so that linguists may gain a better understanding of the participants' rationale behind their language practices and planning strategies. The data collected from the interview and in-home recording transcripts reveal that each family held both positive and negative attitudes towards AAL, but the children tended to perceive AAL use in a more positive light than their parents.

Positive Attitudes Toward AAL

Participants from each interview express some positivity toward the use of AAL; similar results have been found in other FLP studies that focused on language varieties (as in Espinoza & Wigglesworth, 2022). In this section, I highlight statements that illustrate parents' and children's positive opinions on AAL that show how they value it as a dialectal variation and feel comfortable in their language use. These findings on African American family's positive attitudes toward AAL show that although AAL is a stigmatized variety, it is valued by parents and important for children in their peer groups.

Parents' Positive Attitudes Toward AAL

Dr. Helmer-Keys unapologetically avows to her use of AAL even in work setting, yet in the same breath admits that the language variety she uses is adjusted.

Excerpt 46: interview, "I'm not apologizing for it"

Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys:

Even in my work now, I don't feel as confined to the traditions. I will use colloquial language around my colleagues and I'm not apologizing for it. I have modified, you know, myself in the years of being around people and, you know, depending on the situation.

Dr. Helmer-Keys is associating colloquial language with AAL and expresses her positive attitude towards it by showing no remorse in the social context in which she speaks Black. It can be believed that she reveals her attitude in such a way to demonstrate ownership of the language as it is a part of her identity. Although colloquial language is divergently used in professional environment, she makes it a point to break out of this traditional mold. The data goes to show how positive attitudes towards a non-mainstream variety of American English can trump what an individual knows about social norms in such a place of professionalism. Parent participants also implicitly express positive attitudes toward AAL with the use of possessive pronouns when referring to race and language. In the excerpt below, The Sage's discuss the distinct between their feels about Black people from their daughter's attitude towards them.

Excerpt 47: The Sage's in-home recording, "They made her feel like she didn't belong"

Rhonda Sage:

1 So, it reminds me kind of, of Natasha because she feels most comfortable when she's around her
2 white friends. When she's around her black friends, she feels uncomfortable. She doesn't feel
3 welcome. She doesn't feel like, "Okay, now I can relax, I'm with my people."

4 Johnathan Sage:

5 But what happened was she was judged, or she had a bad experience at camp when around black
6 people

7 Rhonda Sage:

8 And they made her feel like she didn't belong because of the way she talked!

9 Johnathan Sage:

10 The way she talked, but then it was like her Eczema, I don't know something.

11 Rhonda Sage:

12 Yeah, her skin. It was, it became about the, the surface things were pointed out. The flaws were
13 pointed out the, the physical surface flaws were emphasized in the black group, and that's
14 unfortunate, which made her seek solace with her white friends who think. "Oh, her eczema is
15 cool! Oh, her, her twist out is just so awesome! Oh my gosh her hair, Oh my gosh your hair. We
16 love your hair!" So, it's like they welcome and embrace her, and the black people shunned and
17 judged her and that's unfortunate that our children are doing that to each other.

Above we see how the Sage's are comparing the way they feel about interacting with other African Americans opposed to their daughter's attitudes towards her Black peers. The parents' private conversation creates an opportunity for researchers to understand why their daughter's negative attitude towards communicating with other children who look like her and who partially or fully identify as African American differ from her parents' positive attitude – it is because her Black peers tease her for talking white and having a skin condition. This excerpt sheds light on common situations in African American families where parents have positive attitudes toward engaging in Black culture and language, but their children prefer to interact with those outside the African American race. African American children's thoughts and attitudes toward their race matter as they must consistently endure pressure from family and peers to physically and verbally present themselves in socially acceptable ways at home and at school. Natasha's language practices are in direct conflict with the parent's language ideology. The parent's language ideology consists of the belief that Black people should naturally communicate more effectively with individuals who look like them as opposed to non-African Americans. Coming to the realization that their daughter favorably communicates with non-African Americans is unsettling for them and heart-breaking. The parent's come from a background where individuals of the same race stick together and mesh better with those in their own community. Like an individual's skin complexion and hair texture, language use is a surface level difference in terms of identifying with others who share these same characteristics. These differences are important to the parents as they are aware of the fact that people are treated

differently based on their physical appearance. However, the parents' ideology is in conflict with reality as we see that even though their daughter is clearly African American, she is not easily accepted by her classmates who share the same racial background simply because she talks white and has eczema. Ultimately the data reveals how at times within the Black community language is characterized by appearance and vice versa. This is exemplified as their Natasha's African American peers "shun and judge" her due to her skin condition and the way she speaks, in a more mainstream variety of American English (excerpt 47, lines 16-17). The familial discussions of issues centered around race, language, and physical appearance are unique concerns of the parents. With their children, bi/multilingual parents rarely have to discuss how to be accepted by other kids within their own community., which implies that there is an important difference between the way African American parents have to approach language socialization with their children when it comes to interacting with other children within their community. Since racism is a factor in language socialization, understanding the dynamics of how Black parents socialize their children to be socially acceptance by their like-raced peers is important for researchers as they theorize the concept of race and language socialization. Furthermore, educators must understand the differences in the way Black children treat each other in educational environments based on the way they speak, whether white or black, and their physical appearance beyond skin color.

Children's Positive Attitudes Toward AAL

So far, this section has focused on parents' positive attitudes toward AAL; the following part will discuss children's positive attitudes toward AAL. Ariel Sitter expresses positive feelings toward AAL while connecting with the topic of being respectful/disrespectful while

using non-mainstream varieties of American English with individuals of older generation brackets.

Excerpt 48: The Sitter's interview, "Our parents might take it as disrespectful"

Ariel Sitter:

We might be talking and then we might say something within our friend groups or even to each other, they might, and our parents might take it as disrespectful or like something that's inappropriate. But the way, like the way the saying was we don't think it that way or like what it was didn't come out that way, just the way they heard it.

Ariel is referring to intercommunication between her and her younger sister when explaining her language ideology. It is important to bear in mind that The Sitter's children have distinct beliefs about language from their parents since these differences result in positive attitudes like we see above. These positive attitudes are similar to those expressed by Aleyah Banks. The data from the in-home recording submitted by the Banks is of the father interviewing his daughter. Dr. Banks based his interview questions on the questions I posed to him and his children. After reading over the transcript that I provided the father for verification of correctness, he recorded himself re-interviewing his daughter's centering his inquiries around the topics that arose from the interview. His questions elicited responses that illustrated his daughter's language attitude towards AAL. She expressed positive attitudes as she described AAL as a "tool" and how this "tool" has helped her parents ascended to a higher social class.

Excerpt 49: Family 2 in-home recording, "I use it as a tool"

Aleyah Banks:

- 1 I think I use it [AAL] as a tool, cuz I know that you and mama, it's not that y'all started code-
- 2 switching and it helped y'all but it's more so that y'all like, I remember we used to, we went from
- 3 living in Waynoka and we went to here and like y'all made a lot of progress. Like you were on
- 4 TEDx, momma has had her job for a long time, you've been like a lot of stuff. And code
- 5 switching helped y'all do that because, and because they're like, "Oh..." I don't, like some people

6 may, may or may have not realized that, but like, “Oh, these African Americans have made this
7 big success and they weren't thinking of code switching”. But that's what helped y'all get there.

Aleyah expresses positive attitudes as she described AAL as a “tool” and how this “tool” has helped her parents ascended to a higher social class. She also provides reasons why she sees AAL use as a “tool” by expressing how she understands the language practices of her parents and the reason behind them. Aleyah narrates how code-switching aided her parents’ ability to excel in their career; thus, mobilizing her family upward in social class as she reminds her father that they “went from living in Waynoka and we went here” (excerpt 49, lines 2-3). Her words suggest that their family is now in a higher class and more comfortable living situation due to their language practices. Aleyah implies that perhaps her father has not realized how his language practices have impacted their family when she states, “Some people may or may have not realized that” (excerpt 49, line 5-6). She did not desire to offend her father by directly saying “you don’t realize that”; however, her decision to utter this claim after she reminds her father of how far their family has come illustrates positive emotions towards using AAL may also be coupled with code-switching when it is incorporated to benefit the family.

This section has analyzed positive attitudes of AAL from the parents’ and children’s perspective. The positive attitudes of parents’ and distinctly different from those of the children in a few key respects. The parents view AAL positively as they find comfort in using it since for many of them, it is their primary discourse. Additionally, it is a relatable means of community within the Black community. By contrast, children view AAL positively as they believe it can be used respectfully and as a tool to achieve their goals. In summary, the findings in this section suggests that participants take a positive stance toward AAL because they value it as a language used to relate with other family members and African Americans in their community. The

section that follows moves on to analyze negative attitudes towards AAL and why participants have taken such a position.

Negative Attitudes Toward AAL

Despite the linguistic validity and social value of dialectal variation, attitudes toward AAL use are persistently negative (Hendricks, Watson-Wales, & Reed, 2021); these attitudes have been said to stem from anti-Black racism. In this study, negative attitudes are regarded as the participants' dispositions that were not cooperative or optimistic toward language varieties of English that the majority of American society deems informal or improper. African American language, or slang as many of the individuals in this study called it, evoked adverse feelings and reactions within some of the participants, predominately the parents. Many of the children participants regarded this way of speaking as AAVE; in this study we contemporarily refer to this variation of English as African American language. But due to their parents' ideologies, attitudes, and management of language use, many of the children grew to adopt the language policy of their parents and speak "proper" or at least more "correct" and standard English than some of their friends that looked like them. The parents' desire for their children to not speak AAL and speak "properly" and "correct" can be interpreted as negative feelings and attitudes toward the variety they regarded as "incorrect grammar" and "slang", AAL. Although, some the children in the study expressed negative attitudes towards AAL, the parents were far more expressive of their negative feelings toward this particular English variety.

Parents' Negative Attitudes Toward AAL

Arising out of the data collected from The Wheeler's interview is an important point that language attitude, physical appearance, and language/dialect act jointly. In response to the

fourteenth question on the Qualtrics survey, Eliza Wheeler wrote “yes” she talks to her son about race and explicated “how [her son] may be perceived by others outside his race.” Her response directly ties into what we see in the next excerpt. The following quote, we recognize how a parent participant expresses the necessity to “speak well” and not in AAL since prejudice causes individuals to associate Black males’ hair style and language use with being “dumb”, “scary”, and “angry”.

Excerpt 50: The Wheeler’s interview, “It’s important for him to be able to speak well”

Eliza Wheeler:

1 If he can speak well, then, you know, somebody will not perceive him as a dumb Black kid or,
2 you know, a criminal because when they're just looking on the outside, I know my son and I did
3 not initially like it, and I see your hair. He, when he started with the twist, I was like, “oh my
4 gosh!” You know, because when we see that on TV, a lot of times when they show a mugshot,
5 it's someone with, you know, the dreads or something. And, and so they see him as, you know,
6 scary, you know, angry Black man or whatever, and that's totally not him and not his personality.
7 So, I, I also let him know that he, how he should carry himself by being a black male and that it's
8 important for him to be able to, you know, speak well. So, they know, “hey, you know, I'm not
9 who you may feel that I am.”

Regarding Eliza’s belief about language, she is attempting to make a point about hair in relation to racial and language discrimination and how one’s hair style coupled with the way they speak affect how they are perceived and treated by others. Previous studies on raciolinguistics – research focusing on the construct race and how ideas of race influence language and language use (Alim, Rickford, & Ball, 2016). – have not dealt with family, an important social unit that impact race and language. Studies have discussed how individuals are mistakenly taken for being a speaker of a certain language because of racialization, viewing individuals from a racist perspective (Alim et al, 2016). Alim argues that transracial subjects can change their race and their raciolinguistics practices have the potential to transform the oppressive logic of race itself (2016). Race and ethnicity vary in context since ethnicity describes the culture of people in certain regions, like Memphis, including their language, heritage, and traditions, while race is

more of a concept of division based on physical characteristics, mainly skin color and hair texture. Just as African American experience linguisticism based on the language variation they speak, they also experience discrimination based on their hair style, especially if they wear dreads or locs. Findings within the study suggest that language, race, and hair are connected in a sense that Black people are discriminated against based on these features. With hair being one of the first physical features that individuals notice, it serves as a precursor for how an individual may prejudge a Black person, especially if they wear locs, before discriminating against the language variety they speak. Eliza feels that her son's hair style may set him back although he can publicly speak the mainstream American variety of English. She expressed her awareness of how young Black boys/men are stereotyped based on their hairstyle regardless of how they speak. This finding is important in that negative perceptions can be doubled when Black people not only use AAL but also possess hairstyles associated with criminality. Eliza's concerns about her son's hair and language use initiate socializations about presentation and speech. According to her, since her son has locs it is even more important that he can speak well so that he is not prematurely categorized as "a dumb black kid" and/or a criminal (excerpt 50, line 1). For this reason, she primarily did not approve of her son's locs. It was not because she does not like the style of locs that she did not like them; it is because she is aware of how young Black men with locs are perceived by not only non-African Americans, but other Black people as well. Eliza made it a point to not offend me, the researcher, when she states, "And I see your hair" (excerpt 50, line 3). I wear very long locs that were very visible during the interview although we were on Zoom. I can assume that my ability to express myself, simultaneously using mainstream and non-mainstream English prompted this conversation and contributed to her already held negative attitudes towards AAL and locs, two factors that intersect with race and racialization.

Ivan Wright's negative feelings toward AAL, his metalinguistic awareness of his language use, and how he came to orally present himself the way he currently does are shown in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 51: The Wright's interview, "That's a real hard thing to break"

Ivan Wright:

1 I'm very aware of why, you know, how I talk and why I talk the way I talk because I went to
2 school my entire life around all Black kids, inner city, Black kids, teachers that use slang in
3 class. You know, I can't even, I probably had two White teachers my entire life and they were
4 ghetto, you know, to be honest, you know what I'm saying? Like my teachers were ghetto. My
5 schools were ghetto. I lived in the ghetto, grew up there. All my friends obviously were just like
6 me and use and, and just how kids are. We use all, the same slang or, you know, if I went to prep
7 school all my life and I was around White kids, not even White kids, but properly talking
8 children, you know what I'm saying? Then I would be a proper talking adult. And that's a, that's a
9 habit, hard to break too, as well to break that, "Yeah, what up doe?" Instead of, "hey, how you
10 doing?" You know, and, and that's a real hard thing to break when you said it all your life. You
11 know what I mean? When it's something that you've done all your life.

The point Ivan is trying to make is that he is aware of his AAL use and its origin but does not feel good about it. He wants to emphasize that regardless of his teachers' racial background "they were [still] ghetto"; thus, him speaking in a "ghetto" manner. The reason behind his explanation is not to claim that his educational experiences were negative; instead, he wants us to understand that he is a product of his environment. However, regarding the language he, his peers, and his teachers spoke as "ghetto" gives off a negative attitude towards AAL as he compares what his life would have been like if he had been raised around those who spoke "properly" and how he would currently speak differently if he had the opportunity to attend a private school instead of a public school. The expression of his beliefs is reflective of those we see at schools that are granted with more educational and resources of privilege. Because of his educational background, he still uses AAL phrases like "what up doe" as an adult and incorporates grammatical features of AAL even while attempting to imitate the way White people talk, or the way those who are not "ghetto" and did not grow up in an impoverished social

and educational environment talk. For example, in the data above he mimics them by saying “how you doing” but still subconsciously omits the verb “are” in his mimicry. From this excerpt, researchers and educators can recognize the impact that teachers have on individuals’ language attitude even towards their own primary discourse.

Children’s Negative Attitudes Toward AAL

So far, this section has focused on parents’ negative attitudes toward AAL; the following part will discuss children’s negative attitudes toward AAL. Both parents and children share a number of key features as well as distinctions. Erica, Ellen Freeman’s daughter and Lawrence Savant’s sister, uses the term ghetto by way of explaining why she feels so negatively toward the way her Black peers speak.

Excerpt 52: interview, “I don’t get ghetto”

Erica:

- 1 I have a lot of white friends, so whenever I'm around, I'm around my black friends. I don't get
 - 2 ghetto, but I talk differently. I don't, I don't wanna say I don't like Black people, but I don't like
 - 3 hanging around them cause they ghetto haha.
-

From the excerpt, researcher can understand that some participants disdain AAL for they deem it as ghetto and language used by those who speak improperly. Although Ivan Wright associates AAL with being ghetto too, he does not explicitly state that he prefers not to loiter with other Black people like this child states. Areas where important differences are also found in data collected from Hannah Constable as she discusses how she deals with her peers who “sound Black” even though she apparently does not speak this way.

Excerpt 53: The Constable’s interview, “I have to get down to her level to speak”

Hannah Constable:

- 1 Mostly at school, I have to like bring it down to the girls’ level where they can actually
 - 2 understand me because they’re asking “why you sound so proper? You don't sound Black.”, but
 - 3 it’s my voice. But mostly like I will talk to my friends in my normal voice, but but the girls, the
 - 4 other girls in my class, I have to get down to her level to speak.
-

Drawing from the data above, this study finds that not all African American children “sound Black” when they speak, nor do they necessary want to. What can be clearly seen through the children’s perspectives is that they do not have the desire to use AAL no matter if their audience uses it, which indicates negativity in their attitudes. Overall, this section displayed negatived attitudes of both parents and children in the study. Through the data we can see that there is still a distinction between their language attitudes. The findings in this section suggests that the parent participants take a negative stance toward AAL because they do not want themselves or their children to be stereotyped with being uneducated and incorrect. On the other hand, the children participants take a negative stance toward AAL because they associate it with being ghetto and not a part of their “normal voice”. Additionally, the data reveals that there is a distinct different between having negative attitudes toward AAL and being proper/talking White

Station Middle School. Speaking properly and White is more so along the lines of attempting to mimic the words and pronunciation of the participants' counterparts, whereas having a negative attitude towards AAL is shown when the participants describe AAL as being not speaking well, talking improperly/ghetto, and/or communicating at a lower level of discourse than their normal degree of speech.

This section connects to the previous parts of the chapter through providing a distinction between participants' beliefs about language and the origin of their practices and planning. It began by demonstrating positive attitudes towards AAL and arguing that participants held this position because they perceive AAL as a valuable tool used to communicate with family, relate to others who share the same racial background, and excel in life. Then it went on to show participants' negative attitudes toward AAL and argue that they hold negative stances because they believe AAL is incorrect English and using it makes them and their children susceptible to linguicism. Hesitations to use the ethnic language variety/dialect has found its way to the critical domain of homes in Memphis and the results from this study show how it leads to the African American parents' and children's shift to a normal/regular version of American English. From the data collected, researchers and educators may better understand that parents and children have distinct attitudes towards AAL and reasons why they feel such a way, which is impactful to their family's language policy and ideology, making it a dynamic and complex form of planning and practicing language with each other. It is important to emphasize that this study's findings are novel in that they are situated more so within the family than within different languages. For example, parents negotiate the issues of language attitudes and family relationships with their children by allowing their children to express themselves freely and speaking in a relaxed manner at home or in designated social contexts such as talking freely on

particular days and times - “girl talk Wednesdays”. Although in other studies there are findings associated with positive and negative attitudes towards language varieties and dialects, not many of them present attitudes and practices socialized in families by parents such as those who participated in this study. In addition, FLP studies have rarely found that parents make language planning decisions based on family external racism and racialization.

CONCLUSION

This chapter delves into African American language and analyzes how it connects with language policy and socialization. AAL is a dialectal variation distinctly defined by its speakers and used varies in social context, perceived distinctly with deference, and evokes certain feelings contingent on individuals' language ideology. Examining how AAL is defined by Black people, how they use it in social contexts, whether or not it is perceived as respectful/disrespectful, and investigating positive/negative language attitudes stands important for through the data we see how these topics impact the families' policy and manner in which they socialize their children. This study's participants have a complex understanding of the different aspects of AAL and the context of language use. Many associate AAL use with "freedom", being their authentic self, and being relaxed and comfortable around family and their community. Many participants think and talk about AAL, wondering if the dialect is all wrong. By noting contextual differences in social settings, generational groups, and racial environments, they have deep conversation about language issues and the effect of racism on their family's lives. Importantly, this study finds that parents have to balance "respect" and "correctness" with allowing their children to be themselves and express their identity freely. Parents permit freedom of speech by incorporating particular practices in their homes – communicating in a relaxed manner, setting aside time for special dialogue with their children (i.e., girl-talk Wednesday), and socializing their children to speak respectfully, but not necessarily "correctly". Although some bi- multilingual families (i.e., Latinx, Asian, Middle-Eastern) share the same concerns as African Americans and these concerns are tied to racism, not many FLP studies explicitly make this argument. Additionally, rarely do multilingual families have to ask themselves, "Which language should I use with this person?", perhaps because it is typically clear whether or not the listener can understand the

interlocutor's native language. This illustrates a distinct difference between the worries of bilinguals and bidialectals – bilinguals rarely have to mute their accent or dialect, whereas bidialectals may have to constantly be aware of the language variation they are using and whether or not it is appropriate or acceptable in that particular social setting.

The survey responses, interviews, and recordings gave the families the opportunity to discuss language issues that they rarely discuss in a home setting by eliciting their thoughts and beliefs about African American language. Discussing language attitudes demonstrates metalinguistic knowledge within the parents, which further proves how this metalinguistic talk about their feels is prevalent in the families. It is clear that their attitudes towards language are on their minds, whether consciously or subconsciously. Research capturing conversations held within bilingual and multilingual families concerning their language attitudes exist; but few FLP studies take a group-interview approach. Further with AAL being a stigmatized variety, these parent-child interactions differed from bilingual and multilingual families. Although bilingual and multilingual families discuss language with their children, very few have to plan how they will use their primary language variety outside the home. Exploring how the participants used language helps researchers make a connection between language use and attitude. Language use in the field of FLP is defined as the “practiced”; thus the “real”, language policy of the family (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012; Spolsky, 2009 & 2012). The importance of language practices lies in the fact that they are how the language is actually used, which ultimately provides an authentic view of that particular family's language policy in certain situations. Language practices refer to “the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire (Spolsky, 2004). Under this view, language practices of African American families can be defined as patterns of AAL use between the family members. In this study, the reported data collection of

the participants' language use at home illustrates how the societal stigma on AAL as a nonstandard dialect of English has clearly played a critical role in how parents socialize their children. Although nonstandard dialects like AAL are regarded as slang, incorrect, and uneducated talk, it is still used amongst the African American families mainly due to the fact that speaking AAL is more comfortable for face-to-face small-scale interactions at home, and more importantly, with immediate family members. However, some families dialogues show that African American parents still want their children to know how to use both standard and nonstandard English varieties, not only in public, but also at home. African American parents' tendency to promote the use of "correct" English, not just in the wider society but even at home, and consequently leading in the change of FLP may be due to the negative stigma placed on AAL use and Black people's historically lower social position in the United States of America and the entire globe. This may also contribute to the reason why some of the African American parents encourage their children to strategically code-switch as a means of moving up the social ladder, reap the advantages of being able to shift gears for specific audiences, and achieve socioeconomic gains and acquire symbolic capital. However, from analyzing the data, "talking white" appears more important to the participants than talking about their definitional ideologies about what AAL is. As we can see by the length of the excerpts, the participants had more meaningful and interesting discussions about talking White than about defining AAL.

Every family mentioned code-switching as a tool to speak to certain audiences outside the home. Most of the parents and children were familiar with this language practice but not every participant felt the need to code-switch outside of the home. The parents from several families explained how they encourage their children to speak a certain way when talking to teachers or other adults. To shed light on the children's attitudes and beliefs toward AAL is also

important in that their attitudes are impact by their teachers and peer groups. They felt like this was important so that their children will present themselves in a more congruent palatable identity representation (Pegram & Bonner, 2021). This suggests that African American families' concern with language use may be a social class issue and one that is a unique burden to Black parents and children. The final chapter of this study goes into further implications as so why African American families' attitudes toward AAL are of great importance to educators and research since their attitudes are a reflection of those held by many teachers at within public and private school systems.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Bringing together FLP research and studies on race and language while focusing on Black families and how they socialize their children into AAL use has been the study's main point. Undertaking racism, racialization, and racial identity in the study of bidialectal African American families raises questions about how to expand on the topic of family language policy and language policy as discussed by researchers studying bi-multilingualism in households. Focusing on bidialectal families and racism changes the perspective for linguists who are studying FLP for it may help to understand how American society (and others) is hyperracial and hyperracializing (Alim, 2016), indicating that when an individual is speaking, listeners are at times attempting to determine the speaker's race and educational, and family background. Elucidated in this study, is evidence that family external factors (i.e., racism) are on family members' minds and influence everything they do with language.

Spolsky (2004) argues that there are three key aspects to language policy: language ideologies, planning, and practice. Language planning by the parents in this study is different from what bilingual studies show and have considered, for they tend to look at language development and not so much on parents' attitudes toward the languages themselves. Much FLP research focuses on the connection between families' language ideologies and practices, but in this study, I broaden the view of those who study ethnolinguistics by dealing with racialization and racism's contribution to FLP. This study is valuable for it shows that the issue of language choice is central to how African American families decide when and where to use AAL. Sociolinguist studies found that some bilingual students do not practice their home language at school due to fear of being racialized and perceived in a different way (Zavala, 2011). Based on

this fact, the external factor of racism is important for bilingual families too; however, not many research studies present findings on parents explicitly stating their concerns about language choice and the social context of language use like this study does (Kaveh & Sandoval, 2020; Nogueron-Liu & Driscoll, 2021; Escamilla, Shannons & Garcia, 2022). Unlike many researchers, this study found that parents worry about using their language outside of their home, making it stand unique amongst other investigations in this field.

Although racism is grounded in an individual's beliefs, it is distinct from ideologies since it is based on racial discrimination. In the same light, even though racialization consist of intra-personal interactions; unlike language practices, it is viewed and acted upon from a racist perspective. The Black families' connections to their communities and African American language discussed in this study reveal that parents are influenced by racism and racialization, societal and familial ideologies, and their linguistic experiences, and children negotiate the linguistic parameters and pressures asserted by their parents' past, present, future plans for language use and choice, along with their linguistic and racial identities in complex and contradictory meta-discourses of sense of belonging. This is important for FLP because it shows conflicting language ideologies within families and that an entire community can possess different ideologies towards their language. Parents' socialization methods matters for the children's socialization, and their linguistic knowledge and education matters. These different views show us that certain parents, contingent on the context and situation, have different ways of socializing their children.

This study finds that family external racism is very important to how these parents plan to use AAL. Other FLP studies have not really considered how parents view the outside world; they mainly focus on parents' desire for their children to gain competence in two languages which

drives their decision to speak a particular language with their children at home. In this study, the parents desire their children to be competent members in the Black and the mainstream society, which drives their decision to use two varieties of American English and encourage their children to perform particular language practices, such as code-switching. This finding is in accord with recent studies indicating that the act of racialization and doctrine of racism impact families' language policy (Perez-Leroux, Cuza, & Thomas 2011; Purkarthofer 2017; 2019). However, these researchers investigated bilingual families – families who spoke two languages, not bidialectal families – families who speak a dialectal in addition to a standard language (Oschwald, Schattin, van Bastian & Souza, 2018); the difference lies in their language experiences impacted by language stigmatization coupled with racialization.

Additionally, the findings corroborate the ideas of Wright & Higgins, who suggest that parents' decisions are influenced by microlevel practices and macrolevel ideologies in their daily interactions. For example, Ellen Freeman exhibits microlevel practices when she uses Ebonics with her children while at home, which influences her decision discourage the use of SAE while in the Black community and with those whose home variety is AAL (excerpt 29, lines 1-9). In this study, parents had to balance respect and correctness with letting their children be themselves; we see this as Nathan Sitter's linguistic decision to discourage AAL use even at home is influenced by his macrolevel ideology – children speaking in AAL to their parents is disrespectful (excerpt 41, lines 1-6). These findings accord with earlier observations, which show that racialization influenced by racist perspectives impacts racial identity (Balogun 2020) and racism fosters discrimination that affects how parents feel about language (Hicks 2011).

On the other hand, this study's findings are distinct since they demonstrate differences between African American parents'/families' concerns for their student children and other

bilingual families of color concerns for theirs. The standardization of “appropriate” language in American schooling creates distinct experiences for racialized students (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Ramjattan (2018) explains that the dominant culture’s language defines “appropriate” language as a construction of raciolinguistics ideologies that vindicate particular language practices as normative and other language practices as deficient. Although both sets of parents may worry about their child’s success in education, Black parents are more so concerned with their child being prejudicially discriminated against based on their physical appearance and language use since AAL has been historically perceived as deficient (Harris & Schroeder, 2013). For example, there is a difference between being a Spanish-speaking 5th grader of a teacher who is also Spanish-speaking and being an AAL-speaking 5th grader of a teacher who identifies as Black and also uses AAL. The Spanish-speaking student is expected to only speak English since that is the language being taught, whereas the Black student is expected to not speak AAL, for it is stigmatized and often deemed as “improper”. Although we do not know if African American language is more stigmatized than other minority languages (Spanish, Chinese, Arabic) since there is much anti-Spanish speaking attitudes in American schools in American culture (Fuller, & Leeman, 2020), this study presents evidence that this is certainly an issue Black parents are thinking about when coaching their children about which language variety to use and where to use it (excerpt 31, lines 5-9). Racism clearly influences parents’ decisions about language in terms of their attitudes toward the non-mainstream American variety of English known as AAL, how they define it, use it in context, and why they deem it as respectful/disrespectful.

Overview of Findings

AAL is at the center of the families' language policy and overall findings reveal key aspects of how families talk about language. The single most striking findings to emerge from the data is that the participating parents clearly and openly state that the way their children are viewed in public, in schools, and other spaces matter in their FLP policy (excerpt 50, lines 1-8). Although other studies have illustrated the language practices of families focusing on how parents encourage their children to speak the "school language", virtually English, rarely, if any of these studies, focus on language planning based on perception and acceptance in the community where parents explicitly encourage their children not to use their home language in public to avoid being viewed in a different light (Saeed, 2021). It is important to mention a possible reason behind parents' concerns about how their child's language use is perceived; there is a belief that since a particular language is being used in public, the use of the home language is no longer necessary (Sophie Li, 2020).

Language and Race are Connected

The parents talk about their beliefs about race and language's connection; they are interwoven and linked to individuals' racial identity that causes them to undergo racialization and racism. For example, a couple of parents question whether or not AAL use is right or wrong; participant Dr. Helmer-Keys explains that it is a "culture thing" (excerpt 27, lines 4-5) while participant Nicole believes that "people understand what you are meaning" (excerpt 36, line 6). The participants' attitudes towards AAL. Resulting from the collected data, discourse differences within the participants' language ideology are revealed; some of the participants believe that AAL use is a significant contributory factor of belonging in the Black community while others believe that the avoidance of AAL use is talking/acting white. "Talking white" seems more

important to the parents and children than talking about their definitional ideologies about what AAL is. As we can see by the excerpts' extensiveness, the parents and children had more substantial and provocative discussions about talking White than about defining AAL.

Racialization appears to majorly influence the families' language policy as the parents show concern about the factor of racism against themselves and their children. The parents' concern about the way their children appear to authority figures (i.e., professionals, work managers, schoolteacher) is a factor that is responsible for how they define AAL.

AAL is a Stigmatized Language

The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that all the parents seem to believe that AAL is stigmatized in public/White spaces but some of them talk about it in a different way, demonstrating a dividing distinction between the study's families' ideologies. For example, Dr. Banks' ideology on language is different perhaps since he seems to not have such a negative attitude towards it. He even talks to his daughter about the way she examines and thinks about AAL (excerpt 8), which is a different attitude from participants with a more negative view of the dialect. Dr. Banks sees AAL as a different language (excerpt 1) whereas some other participants such as Nia Handler-Wright and Natasha Sage, just view AAL as ghetto (excerpt 11 & 13). Linguistic definitions of AAL see it as a distinct language; in addition, this study's findings show parents saying that AAL is a part of Black culture, primarily recognized/understood by African Americans/Black people, often referred to as slang, and at times perceived as improper, incorrect, broken English, and/or ghetto.

The differences between the participants' language ideologies also have implications for how they are perceived outside of the home by others and how they self-identify outside of the home. For example, in Nofal's study (2022) we see parents encourage their children to embrace

linguistic and cultural elements of their parents' identity, while their children accept/resist these efforts as threatening to their sense of family/peer belonging. Another example of distinctions between the families' language ideology come from data collected from the single mother; Ellen Freeman's ideology about AAL is different from Dr. Banks for different reasons, he presented his ideology more intellectually and affirms Black culture language (excerpt 38) whereas Freeman feels like she needs to belong in the Black community and emphasizes the importance of being able to speak like the other people in their community language (excerpt 29), which implies that using AAL is more important to her than other participants. The manner in which she values AAL may be impacted by the intersectionality between her marital and parental status and geographical location – she is a single mother in a place where the way her children speak and them fitting in matters. She needs a network and a community that is going to help her, and she needs to feel like she belongs there. Another important finding was that some children believe that AAL use is important in their peer group's language (excerpt 5), but some do not want to identify with AAL at all because it's "different" language (excerpt 2, lines 4-5) and/or "ghetto" language (excerpt 52) and that their language practices do not include the use of AAL language (excerpt 10, line 1). The findings help to infer that language ideologies between participants differ distinctly since some, particularly the child participants, are less concerned about racism and more concerned about the way they appear to their family and friends.

Reserving AAL in Social Contexts

In this study we see parents discuss avoiding being perceived as uneducated by reserving AAL use for more casual settings like home and either code-switch, code-mesh, or shift to using a more standard register when in public, markedly around non-African Americans. Regarding language shift, AAL has the potential of becoming lost since it at times get shunted off into

smaller and smaller context (Green, Yu, Neal, Whitmal, Powe, & Ozyildiz, 2022); for example, not using it at school, in public life, and reserving it for home. The reservation of AAL for particular context may lead to the next generation not using even at home, making AAL more so symbolic than an actual used language. These implications connects with Labov's (2010) findings where he did a residential study where he looked at cities that had residential integration; his study presented cities that had Black and White people living in the same neighborhood and cities where African American neighborhoods were cut off from White neighborhoods. Excerpts from this study show how more AAL is spoken within community that are majority African American than those that are integrated community. This connects to Labov's argument since we see that as Black families move up in social class and class differences level off, we may lose AAL because it is centered in African American communities. Participants talk about how they do not use AAL as much when they participate in more White spaces, leading to the teaching of their children not to use AAL (excerpts 33). If more individuals start to do this, it could cause AAL to become used much less and/or lost. On the other hand, we do have youth culture with music that have a rich linguistic world to them, which makes AAL seem like a family and community language. In essence, this ties into Weldon's (2022) findings dealing with social class and language, where she interrogates the concept of the linguistic lame and giving greater attention to patterns of code-switching and the manner in which talking Black/sounding Black gets defined. In sum, this language shift may imply that the variety of AAL is changing.

Professional settings (i.e., work, public) and educational social contexts (i.e., school) appear to matter the most to the participating parents, causing them to plan when and when not to use AAL. For example, parent participant Nathan Sitter saw language planning as preparing for

the future by encouraging his daughters to use of SAE “even when in the relaxed setting of family in order to improve their ability to code-switch with ease and be understood “outside of [their] home” (excerpt 28, lines 6-7). In the same context, another parent participant saw the issue of language planning differently; Ellen encourages her family to speak “regular English”, the English that she believes all races understand, in public and at school; although while at home in more relaxed setting, they can use “Ebonics” and “slang” (excerpt 29, lines 1-4). Excerpt 43 presents another example of parental language planning differently; the participant named Luke talks about teaching his children to say “yes ma’am” or “no ma’am” to someone who is not [their] parents (lines 3-4). Nonetheless, all parents have a shared goal – being understood and heard – and agree that they want their children to talk respectfully.

In the study some parents had different language concerns from some children participants. Parents show concern when mentioning discrimination based on appearance and language use; For example, in Excerpt 50, Eliza says that “somebody will not perceive [her son] as a dumb Black kid or ... criminal” based on his looks “if he can speak well” (lines 1 -2). Whereas children mention rejection from their peers due to how they speak, too White or too Black; for instance, in excerpt 32, Natasha talks about getting teased at school for using “big words” but believes that she does not use the same “big words” when the context is “casual” (lines 2-7). Furthermore, a connection between the concern of the racism factor and language practices and attitudes is illustrated in the findings since some parents saw AAL use as disrespectful since it is considered informal, whereas others believe that AAL can be spoken respectfully even though it is considered improper English.

The ideology of whether AAL is correct English or not also ties into language attitudes, raising intriguing questions regarding the nature and extent to which AAL is valued, with some

participants perceiving AAL as a part of Black culture while others seeing it as ghetto. For example, Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys and The Sages seem to have more positive attitudes toward AAL because there are individuals in their lives with whom they feel comfortable speaking in a more relaxed manner, whereas Eliza Wheeler and Ivan Wright appear to express more negative attitudes toward AAL perhaps since the mainstream society perceives it as a deficiency.

Regarding language attitudes, the participant's educational background, socioeconomic status, gender, and marital status matter considering both Dr. Helmer-Keys (divorced) and Rhonda Sage (married) are lower-middle class Black women who work at the same higher education institution and Eliza and Ivan are upper-middle class parents that are married to spouses who are the primary providers of the family. The results reveal that there is a correlation between participants with negative feelings about AAL as they also perceive AAL use as disrespectful and avoid using it in public or at all. There is also a relationship between participants who view AAL in a more positive light and their belief that using AAL amongst each other creates a sense of belonging and community. The inclusion of African American families in FLP studies exposes the complex ways in which belonging, for both children in the family and parents, intersect with ideologies and planning. The inclusion of social contexts expands discussions of language practices in families across cultures and their relationship to language ideologies and planning. Further investigating bidialectal contexts suggest more variable accounts of language repertoires across multiple sites of family interactions. Bodily, the African American families and contexts researched in this study involved ethnographic methodologies, emerging perspectives on bidialectal repertoires, and engaged discussions about race, racism, racialization, racial identity, and belonging as important aspects of African American family life that influence family language policy. These approaches lead to potential areas in which family external

processes (e.g., racism, racialization) connect with the family internal, interactional, and ideological processes FLP research has so effectively investigated. The parents' conflicting language attitudes towards AAL are important to their FLP, for they emphasize how much their language competence and SES matter to what they believe about AAL.

There are still myths about AAL that are pervasive in American society and the study's findings contribute in several ways to our understanding of family language policy and provide a basis for understanding how racialization, racial identity, and race play a role in FLP. Presenting what AAL means to the participants goes some way towards enhancing our understanding of what AAL actually is, not just to linguists but to African Americans, and how and why it is used in marked social contexts. It is interesting to note that participants expressed the belief that AAL use is not limited or restricted to African Americans, which denotes importance as it explicates a difference in generations' ideologies and informs linguists that not all African Americans claim to use AAL/slang. This is contrary to previous studies that claim AAL is mostly spoken by individuals who identify/associate themselves with Black people (Green 2002; Craig, Thompson, Washington, & Potter 2003; Lanehart 2015).

Explaining the social context of AAL adds to arguments asserting that language use is affected by linguistic settings (Hymes, 1967; Labov 1997; Pietikainen, 2021). Since this study focuses on how racialization, influences language ideologies and practices, topics minorly dealt with, the collected data contributes to the extensive research on language and respect (Kozminska & Hua 2022, Higgins, 2022; Mirvahedi, Rajabi, & Aghaei, 2022). In addition to Boutte and Johnson's study, analyzing the empirical data provides a new understanding of parents' concerns about language discrimination influenced by racism that occurs outside the home (2013). Specifically, parents in this study are concerned about their family's AAL since it

is at times stigmatized by others who racialize individuals prejudicially. Dealing with a distinct understanding of linguicism and how it influences parents' language-making decisions should help to improve predictions of the impact racism has on FLP. For example, participants talked about code-switching to avoid being perceived as uneducated stereotypically. Having overviewed the study's findings, the following section will connect these results to the theoretical and practical issues in FLP and why they are important to researchers, educators, and parents.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study emanates from the need for more comprehensive research designs and recruitment methods in family language studies that will shift the focus from bi-multilingual families to more diverse families. I have argued that such a shift will spearhead new movements led with suggestions for dealing with racialization, racial identity, and racism with respect to bidialectalism that are applicable to diverse families. Dealing with family external factors such as racism are important for it can circumvent language discrimination and alleviate unnecessary worries. The findings from this study suggest that racism can have a lasting effect on families' language policy as they develop their own language ideologies and practices.

Theoretical Implications for Researchers

Together the results of this study provide important insights into how parents are constantly worried about racism, how race and language are connected, and how regulating language at home is affected by external racism. This study's findings have important implications for the understanding of how racism influences parents' language ideologies,

practices, and planning. Linguists need to do more research on bilingual families to see if parents are concerned that if their children speak their home language outside of the home they will be racialized and perceived differently. Parents in bilingual studies rarely address the issue of racism with their children but African American parents certainly do perhaps because of the history of racism and types of racism that these parents know they will face as opposed to other families of color in the United States. FLP studies should recognize and investigate racialization and racism as an external factor; studies on other bilingual families (i.e., Latinx, Somalian) rarely talk about racism explicitly. The principal theoretical implication of this study is that racism influences parents' decisions about language use; racism is an issue in FLP as it is prejudicial and damaging to both the individuals and the community. In this study, we have seen the effects of racism as participants talk about balancing speaking "correctly" and "properly" without compromising their true selves. The effects of racism may curtail individuals' ability to perform at the workplace or study at school, and to achieve their goals of being successful in life. Racism towards any family even impacts the FLP of others as it shapes a society wherein individuals do not trust and/or respect each other. I focus on African American parents because these families represent a group and have different experiences from those who speak Latin, Asian, and/or middle eastern languages and because they are subjected to prejudice and racialization (Boutte, Earick, & Jackson 2021) in which the trustworthiness of the family unit, the language competences of parents and their children, and their civility are questioned. Although some of the families investigated in the study may be considered marginalized and disadvantaged in terms of racial identity, social class, and education; all of these families represent the majority population in Memphis, Tennessee and are acquainted with higher education and have college degrees, which calls into question the preconceived notions and standardizing approaches in

family language research. Studying African American FLP adds to the discussions in the field as it focuses on dialect use vs. named languages and brings to the foreground the role that concerns about racism and racialization play in family language planning. There are non-African American families that are not included in this study who are stereotyped and racialized while being seen as inauthentic, uneducated, and unsophisticated (i.e., Latinx, Asian, middle eastern, and even Caucasians); these families endure stereotypes and racialization as well. But it is important to look beyond these family types and solely include Black families in this study to expand the discussion to the language socialization issues and problems African American families face more generally and to conduct complementary research to studies that do not include any Black participants' voices. Although the participating families in this investigation are not technically considered "bilingual", they are still important to include in FLP studies for they bring distinct language experiences to the conversation of language planning. Focusing on race and racism adds to FLP conversations by shifting linguists' views on racialization, particularly when parents base their planning on how their family will be perceived. Family members should be asked about their experiences with racism and language and how they deal with issues of race when socializing their children to help researchers understand the role that racialization, racial identity, and race play in FLP.

In connection to this study's results on AAL use and belonging, we can imply that individuals' racial identity and language practices facilitate communicative meshing and belonging to a social community. The parents in this study discuss their ideology on the connection between race and language; interesting patterns emerged in their responses that lead to the suggestion that race and language are inseparable since they are linked to individuals' racial identity, which may subject them to racialization and racism. It can be suggested that

researchers facilitate the recognition of the role that racial identity plays in FLP by investigating more participants who identify as African American and speak multiple varieties of English. Researching African American families stands significant since the language issues concerning AAL use within Black families are not the same as language issues concerning families of other racial backgrounds (i.e., Latin, Asian, middle eastern, etc.). In accordance with some of the participating parents' beliefs, it can be suggested that AAL links individuals to the Black community and helps build a sense of belonging since it grants the interlocutors to bond in a distinct way, separate from how they connect with individual who do not speak AAL. Unique from participants in other studies, these participants talk about racism while justifying why they make certain decisions about language. Although few researchers have focused on racism for bilingual families, the connection between language and families, creating a sense of belonging, may apply to other racialized groups by facilitating communal bonding.

The findings about the relationships between racial identity and language and the role of racism in FLP for African American parents in particular points to a missing factor in most FLP studies. FLP studies, even those involving Black families in different contexts, rarely consider family-external racism as a factor in the linguistic decisions parents make at home. In this study, I have found that parents make rules about language (whether to use AAL with parents for example) and coach their children about when and how to use AAL based on their prior experiences and perceptions of the racialized and racist society in which their children need to participate. Sociolinguists who study families may be interested in what Black parents believe about AAL and the reason why they decide to encourage/discourage its use at home and in various spaces since how African Americans are perceived not only matter to the parents but also to those passing judgment based on the participants' race. Overall, this study strengthens the idea

that racism is an issue that some FLP studies have neglected to explore thoroughly. In general, therefore, it seems that FLP studies should take into account the role that racism plays in FLP because it influences parents' decision about language. Primarily, this study suggests that researchers think deeply about bilingual families concerns about racism and consider inquiring about how racialization influences their language planning as well. Having addressed theoretical issues in FLP, it is necessary to discuss the study's findings in connection to practical issues in FLP and why the results are important to parents and educators.

Practical Implications

The findings from this study and analysis have implications for parents and educators who are raising and teaching bidialectal children who identify as African American and are faced with racialization on a regular basis. In accordance with other studies' findings, receiving socialization messages about language and race that focus on group membership, pride, and language may result in positive racial identity and protection from internalizing negative racial stereotypes (Marshall, 1995, Parham & Williams, 1993; Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Sanders Thompson, 1994). In relation to multilingualism in the family, the study has argued that African American parents have different experiences with language and race than other parents, and that the findings from and advice given to non-African American families who are monolingual or bi-multilingual do not fit bidialectal families where the process of language socialization is different. In terms of language policy and families, unseemly advice for Black families makes a difference in how they FLP since they must rely on their own illations when deciding who and what to believe, when to speak, and how to prepare their families for implicit and explicit bias that they may face once they leave their home space and community. Nonetheless, bilingualism advice that is applicable to bidialectal families does exist. Seppik and

Zabrodskaia (2022) discuss the One Parent One Language (OPOL) policy where it is suggested that one parent can use a particular language with the children while the other parent uses another; for example, the mother can speak SAE with her child while the father uses AAL. If the mother and father both speak AAL, they can use it with their child at home (i.e., heritage language as a home language) and choose to use SAE with them outside the home. Further, parents can tell stories, sing songs, dance, and play music in their heritage language and standard variety to expose their children to both languages (Wang & Hamid, 2022). Community activities can also serve as facilitators (Srhir, 2021); parents can engage their children in bidialectal programs with other children who speak AAL and SAE and participate in cultural activities to tap into the family's cultural heritage and racial identity (e.g., MLK Day, Black History Month). Although the child may use SAE at school and in public, facilitating understanding in both languages is ideal so neither parent feels left out when speaking their language variety to the child.

Often, African American families who speak AAL primarily have experienced prejudice and racism, causing them to thoroughly plan how and when to code-switch contingent on who is around. Prejudicial attitudes at times are endured by Black families even before speaking simply because they may wear their hair naturally or physically present themselves distinctly. This assertion connects to that of other language studies that state standard American values and beliefs may contradict the realities of Black families; consequently, the interplay between this system and the others may be more complicated for Black families whose experience within the macrosystem differs from mainstream society (Lesane-Brown, 2006). In sum, this study suggest that since standard American language use is based on a mainstream ideology and rarely considers the beliefs of racialized families, linguists should consider shifting their focus to

racism and asking the challenging questions that so many have failed to include in their interrogations.

Implications for Parents

Black parents in the United States must socialize their children to understand Black culture, and how to interact with other Black people, how to get along with other racial groups, and how to cope with their oppressed minority status (Boykin & Toms, 1985). Studies have found that children are active agents of language socialization meaning that they not only participate in socialization with their parents, but also with their siblings and grandparents (Wright & Higgins 2022).

Granting that not everyone views AAL as a stigmatized language, it is still important that Black parents know they should not have to worry about racialization when making language decisions at home because racism is erroneous, not in accordance with what is morally right, and is not correct in action, judgement, or opinion. Not to say that individuals should use any language they want; instead, this study suggest that individuals are aware of their language use in various context in order to communicate most effectively with any audience. However, teachers and parents should be concerned about the role that racism plays in FLP since when coupled with racialization, it impacts their language ideologies and practices. In correlation with these implications, Hughes and Chen (1997) found that parents' experiences of racial discrimination influence the types of messages about race parents transmit to their children. These kinds of messages may be about language use in particular contexts, which call for the issue of racism to be inherently mentioned as a rationale for language adjustment may at times be justified. Bidialectalism and AAL can be fostered through professional networks, parent-child and teacher-student interactions, and other social contexts of language use as discussed in Chapter 4 of this

study. In the family environment, AAL can be considered another language; thus, suggesting that it is not just slang as some participants described it. Adopting the ideology that AAL is not just slang and is its own language, parents may then begin to give AAL its own space wherein to be spoken. Additionally, families who speak AAL can find routine activities during the day when it feels comfortable and safe to use non-mainstream varieties of American English. King and Mackey (2007) imply that families can decide when and how long they desire to use various varieties of English. Such routine events provide space for bidialectal conversation and an expected time of use where code-switching and code-meshing are and are not necessary. Black parents can also feel reassured in their exclusive use of AAL with family and in public and the value this input makes in raising bidialectal children.

Another aspect of being Black and a parent that is important for African American families to be aware of is that socializing and preparing their children on how to deal with racialization and racism can help them feel valued and smart while at school and using language. This notion is based on the theoretical perspective of researchers who study socialization of race which consists of transmitting values, attitudes, and behaviors that prepare children for possible negative race-related experiences (Lesane-Brown, 2006). Regarding language, a negative race-related experience may involve being perceived as uneducated based on an individual's language use in a particular context, leading to being treated differently and unfairly. Being aware of the possibility of linguicism may lead to planning on when, where and why to code-switch – around non-African Americans in public to avoid racialization. Studies have also found that language socialization with a focus on racism can prepare children for racially hostile encounters while also enhancing their sense of racial identity (Demo & Hughes, 1990; Fischer & Shaw, 1999); thus, influencing what they think about language. These researchers' findings help support the

implication that the incorporation of language socialization with a focus on racism may facilitate coping with issues that emerge from being in an oppressive environment (Stevenson, 1994; Fatimilehin, 1999). Regarding messages pertaining to racial identity, culture, intergroup interactions, and discrimination, previous findings are linked to this study in the sense that the parents talk about racism and racial identity's effect on their language planning and what they believe an individual should do to avoid being prejudged (e.g., code-switch or not use AAL at all). Although the parents recognize the advantages and disadvantages of AAL use, we must still address the cost of speaking a non-mainstream variety of American English in social contexts where it may be seen as inappropriate, ineffective, and/or disrespectful by focusing on the consequences of doing so. For example, in excerpt 40 Officer Luke Constable expresses his beliefs about changing to a more professional way of speaking while in public to avoid being perceived as less educated. Even some child participants talk about the cost of speaking NMAE in the wrong context; in excerpt 34, Aleyah Banks expresses her ideology on not meeting her teachers' linguistic expectations if she uses slang while giving a presentation at school. While such processes of socialization may not be necessary to promote bilingualism and being non-African American, it is useful to know that teachers acknowledge AAL as a legitimate language/variety and use it as a tool of instruction. How parents socialize their children may be found important to educators since it shapes linguistic behavior at school. Though some educators' ideologies do not include the belief that what happens at home is significant to school performance, it is hard to deny that racialization directs families' language policy.

Implications for Educators

The school environment is important to FLP since the language socialization work done at home at times counteracts with that of teachers, and the opinions of teachers were very much a

concern for the parents in this study. Therefore, the study has a few key implications for educators based on the findings from this study and others. First, considering that racialization is an issue in parenting, causing concern, (Bauer, Colomer, & Wiemelt 2020) teachers can help alleviate this problem by acknowledging code-switching and code-meshing as effective practices that stem from their family's language policy and should be valued in and outside the classroom. With the act of code-switching being grounded in the theoretical framework of translanguaging that has been adopted by researchers, we see that it is central to intra-family interaction (McKinny & Molate 2022). Being aware of the semantic differences between language varieties may help educators while teaching speakers who utilize AAL in the classroom. Kozminska and Hua (2022) find that through translanguaging practices families achieve bonding. Despite the fact that racism and race impact parents' decisions, it should not affect how they or their children see themselves at home and in public at school. Nonetheless, racial identity and language use are influenced by racialization, which is a problem that schools need to be aware of since they play a role in FLP. Mirvahedi, Rajabi, and Aghaei's (2022) study strengthens the notion of racialization influencing language and racial identity as they base their argument on their observations that show how language choices ostensibly made at the household level are inevitably connected to forces in the public sphere. Such language choice may include but are not limited to beliefs about using or not using a NMAE with family and planning to practice SAE in order to be viewed in a more positive light. Therefore, it can be implied that the parents' decisions on language use made at home are connected to racialization and racism that their children may encounter in public at school. Second, prejudice and racism against African American families that might assume that AAL use in academic contexts is disadvantageous should be rejected. It is important that educators realize that AAL is a primarily spoken language of some students since they may

benefit from bidialectalism as a resource for linguistic development, constructing racial identity, and creating a sense of belonging. Language and race socialization and language planning within the family worked together in this study and demonstrated important points for children's linguistic development and racial identity. In some ways when participants refer to AAL as slang or ghetto, their ideology may be seen as uneducated and that they may not respect dialectal variation. This may imply that within our education system, we need to teach students about language variations and not many understand that there are many viable ways of speaking different languages and they we speak different languages at school. Third, educational research has demonstrated the importance of building relationships with students in teaching and learning (Wright, 2020). More specifically, work with African American youth has focused on the role of language and race in schooling processes (Parham, 1981; Marshall, 1995; Bauer, Colomer, & Wiemelt, 2020). Permitting children to cogitate on the intersections of their families' racial identity with their language use can further draw connections between school and home. For instance, in excerpt 41 Ashley Sitter had the opportunity to express herself as she explains her feelings about being an African American youth, talking like her "regular self" being respectful to her parents and teachers. Lastly, teachers who identify as African American/Black can support their students by addressing racialization and racism in their teaching. While language and race socialization are not always effective in all spaces and should be only a teacher's individual and personal choice, a teacher's own experiences can serve to reduce the marginalization of children in the classroom who may feel racialized or feel out of place at school or are having difficulty understanding the teaching materials.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

In the qualitative ethnographic research study at hand, there are limitations, just as in previous studies focusing on language policies of families from a specific demographic. First, because this ethnographic study features a sample of only ten families, over thirty participants in total, in order to produce richer data, it is not appropriate to generalize the findings to other African American families from Memphis, although it provides models for comparison. Second, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was not able to interview families face-to-face in a comfortable setting. In compliance with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, the participants and I socially distance ourselves by interviewing virtually. Furthermore, I had to rely on the participants' willingness and availability to conduct the in-home recordings without providing incentives or prompting them to do so in-person. It can be presumed that I received so few in-home recordings because of this limitation. Nonetheless, the methods used in this study may be applied to other FLP studies elsewhere in the world since parents can be interviewed via Zoom from anywhere connected to the internet. Further study is recommended to investigate more African American families in other parts of the world and how their children's relationships among siblings influence parental language ideology and home language practices.

Considering that language socialization literature is an important area of research, it is essential that its foundation is well grounded in theory and empirical evidence that captures the process of socialization practices about race in African American/Black families as well. Fogle (2013) found that multilingual parents must balance the desire to raise their children multilingually with the need to spontaneously express affection and develop emotional bonds, but in this study, I find that parents have to balance respect and correctness with allowing their children to be themselves. In connection to my findings, it can be implied that bidialectal parents

feel compelled to encourage their children to readjust their language use when in public and at times at home for they may believe that although it is necessary to have a sense of belonging in the community through the use of AAL it is also important to express yourself professionally and respectably. In short, the African American family members in my study are in a constant process of being bidialectal in a predominately monolingual society. The brief ethnographic profiles of the participants suggest that in the future, children will maintain their own linguistic repertoires in a manner in which their parents will have a challenging time comprehending and/or controlling. I suggest the expansion of family language policy to examine the process of socialization about race and how it shapes FLP when regarding race, the devotion of more attention to the role of racialization, racial identity, and racism in FLP and the socialization process, the inclusion of longitudinal research designs to help show the connection between language and race and the results of language socialization that focuses on racism, and the incorporation of in-home recording methodologies to examine parent-child communication about language and race. Examining language and race socialization was important to this investigation of FLP for it revealed how the parents consciously planned their family's language use while considering their racial identity and societal attitudes toward AAL. Devoting attention to the roles of racialization, racial identity, and racism in FLP helps us understand the families' language choices in particular social contexts. Performing group family interviews and collecting audio recordings also stood important in this study as it gave the participants a rare opportunity to talk about their concerns with racism and how this external factor matters to their family. Including a longitudinal design would have made a difference in the results; allowing me to follow the participants in real time and better establish the real sequence of events in order to gain a more in-depth insight into the cause-and-effect relationship of racism on FLP.

Future Directions. Regarding future directions for FLP studies that are covering race and language, researchers can examine data in a few more ways. A future direction for FLP and bidialectal studies can be a distinct focus on the importance of the generational differences and negotiation between parents and children found in this study that have not been found in bilingual FLP studies. For instance, The Sages uniquely exhibited generational distinction in excerpt 45 as she talked about speaking freely with her grandfather without the consequence of correction, which came as a surprise to her daughter, Rhonda, who expected there to be some sort of correction when informal speech was used at the family dinner table. Understanding and appreciating difference generations within a family is critical for effective and productive language policies and language planning since understanding the viewpoints and language values of various generations may lead to implications for solving conflicts of language ideology and practices within families. Currently, there are approximately five different generations within families: traditionalists (1992-1945), baby boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1981), Millennials (1982 – 1996), and the youngest generation, generation Z (1997 – present). When parents and children from different generations feel like their ideas and attitudes are understood and valued, they are more likely to exemplify respect and pride when it comes to language use. For example, in excerpt 44 we realized that Amanda’s daughter, Anna, does not speak to her mother “disrespectfully” during Girl Time Wednesdays – during this time, Amanda allows Anna to talk to her about whatever she wants in whatever manner Anna chooses. Negotiation does not necessarily mean that a parent must concede to their children or vice versa; negotiation between parents and children consist of both generations understand each other’s point of view. Negotiating can solve the issue of conflicts of language ideologies and practices since it allows generations to express their viewpoints, which can lead to improving familial relations and

intergenerational communication. To effectively plan language use, language qualities from parents and children are needed to deal with issues regarding racial identity and racism. Parents and children have their own unique perspectives and attitudes toward language and generations can learn from each other. Older generation's language experiences and knowledge can be taught to the younger generation while the younger generation can also teach the older generation about how to use technology and language together effectively. Generational diversity and negotiation between parents and children within language policies are important since generations have the shared goal of communicating effectively without conflict.

Regarding more analysis for future research, employing a gender analysis when studying parents' beliefs and attitudes can help researchers understand the origins of conflicting language ideologies and practices within a family (Leach, 2003). It can also lead linguists to explore assumptions about this issue of conflict such as its impact on ethnolinguistic culture and traditions (Brouwer, Harris, & Tanaka, 1998). And analyzing mothers and fathers on the basis of gender can provide information on the potential direction of the family's language planning and decision-making efforts and interventions. Focuses on gender in FLP studies that investigate race and language will expand linguists' understandings on the distinctions between mothers' and fathers' ideologies. In this study, the mothers tend to be the driving force of socializing their children to use particular forms of English; for example, Eliza Wheeler in excerpt 50, Dr. Yolanda Helmer-Keys in excerpt 27, and Ellen Freeman in excerpt 29 either overtly or covertly encourage their child to speak the more prestigious form of American English or a more causal form of English. Though FLP literature focusing on race and racism is still developing, the concept is not. African American families have always had to deal with racialization and prepare their children for injustices and sublimities associated with being Black and using language in

the United States. This study can and will be important as one factor responsible for illustrating the role that racialization, racial identity, and racism play in FLP. To move forward, future studies should make stronger connections between language and race and link racialization to the development of language ideologies, planning, practices, and processes of socialization in order to create a theoretical framework and enrich our understanding of family language policy.

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As a Black researcher investigating African American families, it feels important to include families that are rarely studied. Yet it is challenging due to self-bias and racism being such a sensitive topic (as discussed in Chapter 3). The study focused on Black families' discussions about language and race, African American language, the role that racism plays in FLP, and the bidialectal resources used in Black families. Through the findings and analyses in this study, FLP can start centering racism as a factor in understanding the language practices, decisions, and ideologies of families. Racialization, racial identity, and racism are occurrences that many individuals face outside of the home and within their own community at times. Understanding the role that these factors play is essential to understandings of language ideologies, practices, and planning as well as parenting and socialization. African American/Black parents believe that that AAL use is okay at work and in other more "formal" settings depending on the context. African American/Black parents plan language by teaching their children how to be bidialectal in society, by being aware of when they should use what language and with whom, and by being aware that code-switching is important to their family and a part of American life for them. They also plan language by socializing their children in these language practices.

Family language policy and language socialization can shape and are shaped by language practices and the actions/perceptions of people with racist perspectives. Implications for linguists, parents, and educators include ways to include African American families in research, advice on understanding the advantages and disadvantages of being Black and using language, and how to encourage an understanding of racism's impact on FLP. Lastly, the study also investigated the pervasive racist ideologies that influence bidialectal families' decisions in contexts such as the United States and argues for more conversations of such bigotry in relation to the construction of racial identity and language use in the public sphere. Researchers should not exclude the racism factor from studies since we now recognize how important of a role it can play when investigating marginalized families. In sum, I am arguing that factors of racialization and racism should be included and made clear in FLP studies since acts of bigotry (e.g., assuming an individual is uneducated based on their language practices, disregarding the value of NMAE and code-switching) influence how parents socialize with their family members. In short, if family language researchers are excluding said factors in their research analysis, whether implicitly or explicitly, they are not providing a comprehensive account of the rationale behind distinct language ideologies, planning, and practices, they are missing important theoretical and practical constructs, and they are limiting the understanding of what causes parents to make particular language decisions. If we are not including racism as a factor in FLP, then we are limiting our understanding of how minority families make decisions at home and outside the household.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Email Recruitment Letter

UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

Do you identify as an African American parent who lives in the Shelby County area and has a child(ren) age 7 and up? Are you interested in participating in a conversation about race and language along with how it relates to your identity as an African American and the way your family communicates? The University of Memphis is conducting a research study about the Family Language Policy of African Americans and is seeking to explore what parents think about the language they speak in relation to race. Volunteers will have the opportunity to participate in a virtual interview for approximately 30 – 45 minutes about these topics of race and language. You will be required to sign a parent consent and child assent form to participate in the study; your name will be kept anonymous.

If you are interested, you can get started by completing this pre-interview survey [link]. And we will follow up with you through the contact information you provided. If you have any questions, please contact Daryl A. Anderson Jr., dndrson5@memphis (901)573-3239.

Appendix B

Social Media Recruitment Post: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat

Hey yall, I am conducting research for my dissertation on the family language policy of African Americans. I am looking to interview parents who (1) Identify as Black/African American, (2) live or have lived in the Shelby County area, and (3) have a child(ren) at least 7 years old. If you know anyone who is interested in participating, have them fill out this short survey [HERE](#) and I will be in contact soon! They'll be asked to participate in a 45 min – 1.5-hour interview where we will discuss race and language within their family and conversations. Everything will be anonymous so no worries, and I look forward to hearing back from someone.

Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer

IRB: PRO-FY2021-310 | Contact Daryl A. Anderson Jr. ndrson5@memphis.edu

**Are you a Black parent from the Shelby County area with children ages 7+?
Are you interested in having conversations about language and race?**

The University of Memphis is researching "Family Language Policy of African Americans" and is exploring what parents think about the language they speak in relation to race.



- Must be a parent, 18 years or older and live or have lived in the Shelby county area
- Will be asked to participate in 45 min - 1.5 hr interview
- Scan the QR Code or use the link to fill out questionnaire
- https://memphis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Kkte7y5nryLmVT

Appendix D

Parent Consent Form



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS™

Institutional Review Board 215
Administration Bldg.

Memphis, TN 38152-3370

Office: 901.678.2705

Fax: 901.678.2219

Informed Consent/Assent for Research Participation

Title

PRO-FY2021-310: Family Language
Policy of African Americans

Researcher

Daryl Anthony Anderson Jr., University of
Memphis

Researchers Contact Information

(901)573-3239, dndrson5@memphis.edu

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The box below highlights key information for you to consider when deciding if you want to participate. More detailed information is provided below the box. Please ask the researcher any questions about the study before you make your decision. If you volunteer, you will be one of about 30 people to do so.

Key Information for You to Consider

Voluntary Consent: You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to directly deal with topics of race and language by exploring the family language policies of African American parents who speak two dialects, African American Language, and the more standardized version of English. Exploring these subjects could potentially explicate intersections of ethnolinguistic identity, home language, and societal language ideologies and practices by emphasizing issues of racialization and racism connected with home language use. By doing this study, we hope to learn how African American parents make family and language decisions for their children in a bidialectal environment.

Duration: It is expected that your participation in the interview will last 45 minutes to 1.5 hours

Procedures and Activities: You will be asked to complete a Qualtrics pre-interview survey, sign a consent/assent form for you and your child (if they want to participate), participate in a family inclusive interview that will last about 45 minutes to 1.5 hours, then you may be asked to do in-home recordings of your family's dialogue (optional). This interview will be via the Zoom app and will be about topics of race and language variety as well as family configuration, your children's language competence, when and where you use what language variety with your children, what challenges (if any) you faced in choosing a school for your children, what language variety you speak with your children and how frequently, your perspectives on your children's language development, and how being bi-multidialectal influences your family identity. The lead investigator will have a list of questions to ask you and your child, but you will also be encouraged to follow topics that interest you and talk about your experiences in a conversational way.

Risk: Some of the foreseeable risks or discomforts of your participation include finding some questions we ask you to be upsetting or stressful. If so, we can tell you about some people who may be able to help you with these feelings. You should choose a private location for the Zoom interview so that you will feel secure talking about personal issues.

Benefits: You will get any benefit from taking part in this study. Your willingness to take part, however, may, in the future, help society as a whole better understand more about the challenges of racial discrimination, language varieties, parenting, and cultural identity.

Alternatives: Participation is voluntary, and the only alternative is to not participate.

Who is conducting this research?

Daryl Anthony Anderson Jr. of the University of Memphis, Department of English is in charge of the study. He is being guided by Dr. Evelyn Wright Fogle.

Why is this research being done?

The goal of this study is to directly deal with topics of race and language by exploring the family language policies of African American parents who speak two dialects, African American Language, and the more standardized version of English. Exploring these subjects could potentially explicate intersections of ethnolinguistic identity, home language, and societal language ideologies and practices by emphasizing issues of racialization and racism connected with home language use. By doing this study, we hope to learn how African American parents make family and language decisions for their children in a bidialectal environment.

How long will I be in this research?

The research will be conducted via the Zoom app. It should take about 45 minutes to 1.5 hours of your time. The research procedures will be conducted online via email, survey, and video software. Upon agreeing to participate in the research, you will be asked to complete a brief online questionnaire. Then you will take part in a Zoom interview with the lead investigator about your parenting experiences. It will take approximately 45 minutes to 1.5 hours to complete an initial interview. The Zoom video call will be recorded and transcribed. You may be asked to meet with the lead investigator an additional time to answer questions that arose from the first interview. Upon the conclusion of the interview, I may give you the option to do in-home recordings twice for a week during socializing events (i.e., meals, car riding, family conversations in various spaces) four approximately one hour. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is less than 3 hours over the next 6 months.

What happens if I agree to participate in this Research?

If you agree you will be asked to complete a Qualtrics pre-interview survey, sign and consent/assent form for you and your child (if they want to participate). If you do not want your child to participate in the interview, then they do not have to. Participating in a family inclusive interview that will last about 45 minutes to 1.5

hours, then you may be asked to do in-home recordings of your family's dialogue (optional). This interview will be via the Zoom app and will be about topics of race and language variety as well as family configuration, your children's language competence, when and where you use what language variety with your children, what challenges (if any) you faced in choosing a school for your children, what language variety you speak with your children and how frequently, your perspectives on your children's language development, and how being bi-multidialectal influences your family identity. The lead investigator will have a list of questions to ask you and your child, but you will also be encouraged to follow topics that interest you and talk about your experiences in a conversational way.

What happens to the information collected for this research?

We will make every effort to keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will

write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private. We will make every effort to IRB Informed Consent for Research Participation

prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. All computer files associated with the study will be kept on the lead investigator's password protected computer and on password-protected hard drives or jump drives if necessary. All paper files

(printouts of transcripts, etc.) will be stored in the lead investigator's locked office. The videos will be destroyed ten years after the final verification check of the transcript with the participant so that valuable information is not lost before the data analysis is complete. All data will be stored on the investigators' password protected computer and will be permanently deleted after ten years. Only the PI and advisor will have access to the interview data. We will keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court or to tell authorities if you report information about a child being abused or if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Also, we may be required to show information that identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Memphis.

How will my privacy and data confidentiality be protected?

We promise to protect the privacy and the security of your personal information as best we can. Although you need to know about some limits to this promise. Measures we will take include asking you to choose a pseudonym for the researchers to use when transcribing and reporting the interview data. Identifying information will be separated from the interview transcript. Place names and other names mentioned during the interviews will also be changed. You may stop the interview at any time and request to have any part of the interview struck from the transcript. The researchers' Zoom account that is used to conduct the interview will be deleted when all data is collected to reduce the risks to your privacy.

What are the risks if I participate in this research?

The risks or discomforts of participating in this research may include finding some questions we ask you to be upsetting or stressful. If so, we can tell you about some people who may be able to help you with these feelings. You should choose a private location for the Zoom interview so that you will feel secure talking about personal issues.

What are the benefits of participating in this research?

There is no guarantee that you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. Your willingness to take part, however, may, in the future, help society as a whole better understand more about the challenges of racial discrimination, language varieties, parenting, and cultural identity.

What other choices do I have besides participating in this research?

Participation is voluntary, and the only alternative is to not participate.

What if I want to stop participating in this research?

It is up to you to decide whether you want to volunteer for this study. It is also ok to decide to end your participation at any time. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decided to withdraw your participation. Your decision about participating will not affect your relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Memphis.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

IRB Informed Consent for Research Participation

There are no costs associated with participation in this research study if you choose to hold the interviews in a location other than Zoom, you may have to pay for the cost of getting to the study site and a parking fee unless you choose to be interviewed at your home.

What if I am injured due to participating in this research?

If you believe you need immediate medical attention if you get sick during the study, you should seek immediate medical attention. The University of Memphis does not have funds set aside to pay for the cost of any care or treatment that might be necessary because you got hurt or sick while taking part in this study. Also, the University of Memphis will not pay for any wages you may lose if you are harmed by this study. You do not give up your legal right by signing this document.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this research?

No, you will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study.

Who can answer my question about this research?

Before you decide to volunteer for this study, please ask any questions that might come to mind. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Daryl A. Anderson Jr. at (901)573-3239 and/or dndrson5@memphis.edu, and/or his advisor, Dr. Evelyn Fogle-Wright at ewfogle@memphis.edu If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705 or email irb@memphis.edu. We will give you a signed copy of this consent to take with you.

STATEMENT OF PARENT CONSENT

I have had the opportunity to consider the information in this document. I have asked any questions needed for me to decide about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions through the study.

By signing below, I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been given a copy of this consent document. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, my legal representative or I may be asked to consent again prior to my continued participation

As described above, you will be recording while performing the activities described above. Zoom App will be used for the interview. Initial the space below if you consent to the use of Zoom as described.

____ I agree to the use of Zoom App to participate in the interview

Name of Adult Participant

Signature of Adult Participant

Date

IRB Informed Consent for Research Participation

Researcher Signature

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understand the information described in this consent and freely consent to participate.

Name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix E

Child Assent Form

To be read aloud to the child

Some people at the university are interested in how children talk with their family. You are being asked to be a part of a study about how race and language are discussed in African American families. I will interview you and your family for 45 minutes – 1.5 hours and we will have a conversation about these topics. Your parents will have the option of making audio recordings of you at home with them having conversations during mealtime, car rides, and/or leisure times. They can do this two times during week for about one hour which will total 120 minutes of audio recordings. After that, I will have another conversation with you and your family about the audio recordings for 30 to 45 minutes.

I will not give your recordings to anyone except you and your parents. If you understand this paper and want to take part in this research, please write your name below. You do not have to take part in the recordings if you do not want to.

Signature

Date

Investigator

Date

Appendix F

Questions for Qualtrics Screener

- (1). How many members are in your household?
- (2). How many people do you consider to be in your immediate family?
- (3). How many children do you have?
- (4). How old are your children?
- (5). With which gender do your children identify?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Transgender female
 - d. Transgender male
 - e. Nonbinary
 - f. Other, please indicate
- (6). If your children are still in grade school, what grade are they in?
- (7). How do you identify your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Transgender female
 - d. Transgender male
 - e. Nonbinary
 - f. Other, please indicate
- (8). Do you have a partner or co-parent? If so, what race do they identify with the most?
- (9). Do you currently live in the Shelby County area? If so, which part?
- (10). What is your highest level of education?
 - a. Some school
 - b. High school
 - c. Some college
 - d. Associate's Degree
 - e. Bachelor's Degree
 - f. Master's degree
 - g. Doctoral Degree

h. Other

(11). What race do your parents identify with the most?

(12). What race do you identify with the most?

(13). What is your annual salary range?

a. \$0 - \$15,000

b. \$15,000 - \$30,000

c. \$30,000 - \$45,000

d. \$45,000 - \$75,000

c. \$75,000 - \$100,000

d. \$100,000 – and up

(14). Have you talked to your child(ren) about race? If so, how, and what did you talk about?

(15). Would you like to participate in a follow-up video or audio interview with the researchers?
(The interview will last between 30 min - 45 min long and will be conducted via Zoom).

(16). Do you permit your children to take part in the interview as well?

(17). In case you are selected to participate in the interview, what is your phone number and email address?

Appendix G

Interview questions for parents

- (1). Describe the similarities and differences between the way you speak to your child(ren) at home versus how you talk to them in public.
- (2). Do you feel like you speak differently at home than you do in public? Why or why not?
- (3). Do you feel like you should or have to change the way you speak in public, especially when talking to your child(ren) in front of non-family members?
- (4). Do you notice a difference in the way you speak, and the way other African American families speak? Why do you think that is?
- (5). In what ways do you encourage your child(ren) to speak differently in public versus at home?
- (6). Lastly, do you feel like it is important to modify the language you use with your children when you all are not at home? If so, then how do you adjust the way you speak?

Interview questions for children

1. Do you feel that you talk differently from other people in your family?
2. Do you think that you talk differently from other kids at your school?
3. Has anyone ever told you that you should speak in a certain way or not speak in a certain way?
 - a. Who was it?
 - b. What happened?

Appendix H

Thematic Categories

Code	Interviews/In-home recordings	Times spoken
Positive Attitudes towards [AAL]	15	366
Negative Attitudes towards [AAL]	14	309
I/we use/do not use [AAL]	13	80
Talk/speak around White/Black people [in general]	12	72
I feel that	5	60
Professional(ly)	11	49
The way I/we speak/talk	4	48
Race/racism	11	47
respect(ful)	7	33
[AAL] is a part of our culture	10	31
The way Black people talk	6	29
Proper/Improper/(In)correct/broken English/Grammar	10	26
I/we teach/encourage	10	23
I/we speak/talk different(ly) to each other	5	23
ghetto	6	17
Relax(ed)	4	16
Code-Switch(ing)	4	15
I/we use/don't use slang	7	15
Is [AAL] use wrong?	8	14
worry	4	12
disrespect(ful)	7	10

LIST OF EXCERPTS

1. Family 3 interview, *“Certain things that we can say”*
2. Family 3 interview, *“We say certain words”*
3. Family 2 in-home recording, *“African American Vernacular English; oh, slang!”*
4. Family 10 interview, *“A way that we speak”*
5. Family 4 interview, *“They don’t use all the like, long words”*
6. Family 2, interview, *“Different and distinct to African Americans”*
7. Family 5, in-home recording, *“Versus book talk or way of the White man”*
8. Family 9 interview, *“They have different speakings”*
9. Family 1 interview, *“I talk like I have sense”*
10. Family 6 interview, *“Ebonics, ghetto talk, improper English”*
11. Family 8 interview, *“The Memphis Dialect”*
12. Family 10 interview, *“Improper or ghetto”*
13. Family 8 interview, *“They say the N-word a lot”*
14. Family 5 interview, *“Broken English”*
15. Family 10 interview, *“The -er and -g”*
16. Family 7 interview, *“I say ‘ion’; I don’t say I don’t”*
17. Family 5 in-home recording, *“You didn’t even, yeen”*
18. Family 2 in-home recording, *“Junt, finna, bout to”*
19. Family 6 interview, *“Mane”*
20. Family 4 interview, *“Cuh”*
21. Family 5 in-home recording, *“Stutin”*
22. Family 1 interview, *“Two generations using it differently”*
23. Family 3 interview, *“Paw paw”*
24. Family 5 interview, *“I knew what they meant – soon”*
25. Family 7 interview, *“I knew how to retch around”*
26. Family 2 interview, *“They’re not used in the real world”*
27. Family 5 interview, *“Three types of language”*
28. Family 1 interview, *“Even when in the relaxed setting of family”*
29. Family 7 interview, *“Speak in just regular English”*
30. Family 4 interview, *“What do you mean, you talk white?”*
31. Family 5 in-home recording, *“I think it has its place.”*
32. Family 10 interview, *“There’s no difference on how I speak”*
33. Family 6 interview, *“You talk a certain way with your Black friends.”*
34. Family 2 interview, *“It’s just how I’m usually expected to do”*
35. Family 2 in-home recording, *“I wanted to use my big projective voice”*
36. Family 1 interview, *“We can talk differently among ourselves”*
37. Family 6 interview, *“Talk the way he talkin’ to me”*
38. Family 2 interview, *“The context and meaning of words”*
39. Family 3 interview, *“Because of the connection”*
40. Family 8 interview, *“Depending on what you need to get done”*
41. Family 1 interview, *“T talk to them respectful”*
42. Family 5 interview, *“When I go to work... I’m respectful”*

43. Family 8 interview, *"We teach them to be respectful"*
44. Family 3 interview, *"She doesn't get disrespectful"*
45. Family 10 interview, *"It was respectful, it was not gonna be disrespectful at all"*
46. Family 5 interview, *"I'm not apologizing for it"*
47. Family 10 in-home recording, *"They made her feel like she didn't belong"*
48. Family 1 interview, *"Our parents might take it as disrespectful"*
49. Family 2 in-home recording, *"I use it as a tool"*
50. Family 4 interview, *"It's important for him to be able to speak well"*
51. Family 6 interview, *"That's a real hard thing to break"*
52. Family 7 interview, *"I don't get ghetto"*
53. Family 8 interview, *"I have to get down to her level to speak"*