Empathy, the Elusive Teaching Skill to

Support African American English Speaking Students

by

Geraldine A. Pappas

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
(Curriculum and Practice)
at the University of Michigan-Dearborn
2014

Doctoral Committee:

      Associate Professor Martha A. Adler, Chair
      Professor Wendy M. Burke, Eastern Michigan University
      Associate Professor Susan A. Everett

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to empathic teachers, young and old, novice and veteran, Black and White and to the students they teach.

"I pray for all of us, the strength to teach our children what they must learn, and the humility and wisdom to learn from them so that we might better teach" (Delpit, 1995, p.183).

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Abstract

The beliefs, expectations and responses of today's educators in the classroom can promote and/or impede communication. The perception of Standard American English is an important influence on intercultural communicative competence within classroom instruction and determines effective instruction for linguistically diverse speakers, especially African Americans. Examination of language use in the classroom and its impact on learning is increasingly important if we are to meet the needs of lower performing students who speak African American English (AAE). Fourteen elementary and middle school urban teachers from a high poverty district were involved in this study, which investigated their perceptions and linguistic knowledge of AAE. During an eight week period the teachers completed surveys, took part in interviews, and were observed during classroom instruction. The data were analyzed utilizing the conceptual model of intercultural communicative competence. This model combined attitudes, knowledge and skills with linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. This study found that (a) that AAE is still a misunderstood and maligned sector of English, (b) linguistic knowledge did not play a role in instruction and (c) empathy played a key role in the instruction of AAE speaking students. The recommendations for further research include determining the type of training teachers need to solve the problems of linguistic bias towards AAE by involving teachers and pre-service teachers who work with students who speak AAE and the possibility of using intercultural communicative competence as the framework for developing the skill of empathy.

Keywords: African American English, Code-Switching, Empathy, Standard English, Intercultural Communicative Competence

Chapter I: Introduction

Background

Teacher experiences with culture and language influence their practices in the classroom. If teachers have limited experiences with language and cultural diversity they have limited instructional capital. If teachers are unaware of their own beliefs and perceptions regarding language they cannot determine what is beneficial in diverse classrooms (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Lippi-Green, 2012).

African American students continue to suffer and experience failure (Delpit, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2001). Many of these students speak a variation of English such as African American English (AAE[1]). AAE-only speaking students may lack experience with the vocabulary and contextual understandings as well as the language and cultural structure of Standard English (Delpit, 2008, 2009; Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Green, 2011; Labov, 1979). Helping teachers to recognize the impact of language and culture on the day-to-day experiences in the classroom can serve to facilitate how African American students can improve negotiating meaning in those classrooms and beyond (Delpit, 2009; Godley, Sweetland, Wheeler, Minnici, and Carpenter, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2001).

There is a disconnect in urban classrooms today, which is between the teacher and student who have different understandings of language systems and language use (Delpit, 2009; Labov, 1979; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). The language of a teacher communicates both content

---

[1] This term has changed over time. I have chosen the term African American English for this work.

and academic language that students need to know in order to succeed (Fillmore, 1985).

Teachers who are not familiar with language systems and constructs are unable to utilize linguistic diversity theory as a resource theory and thus are unable to establish a mutual comprehension with students (Delpit, 2008, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Smitherman, 1999; Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, & Lovejoy, 2014). Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) may serve as a model to assist teachers in gaining respect for, prior knowledge of language, and the values of African American children whose home language does not consist of Standard English.

Intercultural communicative competence theory can lead to understandings of classroom discourse between African American English (AAE) and Standard American English (SE). Building the capacity of teachers to understand AAE and its structure can foster a mindset that can build on language commonalities instead of regarding students as "aberrant and presuming their job is to rid African American students of any vestiges of their own culture" (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Intercultural communicative competence has the potential for solving the problems of underachieving students who are AAE speakers in urban schools by disabling teacher judgment and enabling understanding.

Statement of the Problem

The 2012 report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation indicated that two-thirds of children living in areas of concentrated poverty are in large cities. In the United States, culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students are disproportionately overrepresented among poor and low-income households (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012). It has been known for a long time that students of color and non-native speakers of English are overrepresented in special education classes (Baugh, 2001; Russo & Talbert-Johnson, 1997). These students have

been misdiagnosed with language disorders (Rickford & Finegan, 2004) because they struggled on assessments of phonemic awareness and reading comprehension (Labov, 1983). The continual misdiagnosis of AAE speaking students may indicate a relationship between culture and social class as being relevant to discussions surrounding the education of CLD students. Hilliard (1980) proposed that teachers perceived cultural dissimilarities as indicators of potential learning disabilities. To meet the needs of AAE speaking students teachers need to be familiar with and have an understanding of the cultural and linguistic background of these students (Hilliard, 1980).

The use of AAE is often equated with a genetic inferior intelligence and cultural deprivation, justified by incorrect notions that state "AAE usage is "improper," "broken" or "sloppy" (Scott, Straker, & Katz, 2009, p. 43). Labov's (1972) work has demonstrated that the urban child does not have an inferior mother language or life experience. However, the language, community interaction, and culture differ dramatically from those found in urban classrooms; these differences are not always recognized or understood by teachers. Labov (1972) states that

> Linguists believe that we must begin to adapt our school system to the language and learning styles of the majority in the inner-city schools. They [the linguists] argue that everyone has the right to learn the standard languages and culture in reading and writing (and speaking, if they are so inclined); but this is the end result, not the beginning of the educational process. (para.2)

The language used in schools is Standard English (SE), the language which historically, according to Trudgill (1999) "was selected as the variety to become the standard variety precisely because it was the variety associated with the social group with the highest degree of

4

power, wealth and prestige" (p. 124). This view implies the superiority of Standard English as a consequence of centuries of social and political processes, which sustain prejudices and misconceptions without support in the analysis of language varieties and their communicative effectiveness. Lippi-Green (2012) documents the ways in which this bias toward the theoretical and venerated spoken language, often called "good English" or "Standard English," discriminates against speakers of other English varieties. AAE is a valid variety of English; the lack of understanding regarding the language and culture from which AAE stems contributes to the misunderstanding of learning ability and the lack of academic success for AAE speaking students (Lippi-Green, 2012).

Standard English is a Sociolect

Standard English is defined as "a set of grammatical and lexical forms typically used in speech and writing by educated native speakers" (Trudgill, 1984, p.32). The use of SE by a specific social group of educated native speakers qualifies SE as a sociolect. A sociolect is defined as "a variety or lect which is thought of as being related to its speakers' social backgrounds rather than geographical background" (Trudgill, 2003, p.68). While there is no linguistic evidence supporting the claim that SE is superior to other dialects of English, Trudgill (1999) states that it is the "prestige variety, widely used in education, in the media and in almost all forms of writing" (p.32). The fact that SE is the language expected for commerce, business, government, education and other institutions is not uncommon. Heteroglossia, common around the world, is where one language or variation of a language is considered the standard and all others as non-standard, such as language used in conversation. In addition to variations, English is a language with a broad range of styles ranging from the most to the least formal. However, not all speakers have equal access to all styles and it is generally the goal of education "to give

pupils exposure to styles at the more formal end of the continuum that they might otherwise not gain any ability in using" (Trudgill, 1999, p. 119).

Educational Conundrum

Standard English is used in school for instruction--textbooks, assessments, etc.; however, not all students speak SE. If teachers are unaware of the connection between language and learning they will not be able to recognize and address the needs of students who do not speak Standard English. According to Delpit (1995), "Teachers must acknowledge and validate students' home language without using it to limit students' potential" (p. 293). In addition, combining the use of the home language in instruction to meet the objective of reaching proficiency in Standard English may yield better results; "With regard to school literacy learning, proficiency in standard American English should be seen as a goal, not as a prerequisite to becoming literate" (Au & Mason, 1981, p. 129).

Being aware of varying views of AAE and the importance of integrating this understanding into current educational practice may provide more effective teaching patterns and interventions to help students succeed academically. Delpit (2009) and Fillmore and Snow (2000) argue that to effectively educate all students, educators need to be cognizant of students' patterns of communication, various dialects, and their effect on classroom learning. Although SE is the language of instruction in all public schools, it is not always the language of the children in the classroom. Many learners from a wide variety of languages have difficulty meeting the academic standards of the classroom, understanding instruction, and engaging in active learning when the instructions are provided from an SE perspective (Darling- Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Delpit, 2009; Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Smitherman, 1999). Students continue to struggle as their families recognize that educational success and

expanded social and career options are linked to competence in Standard English the established language of school (Delpit, 2009; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Smitherman, 2003; Young, 2007).

Using Culturally Relevant Pedagogy to Incorporate AAE

Culturally relevant pedagogy is an instructional practice and theoretical model that focuses on student achievement, acknowledges students' cultural identities, and facilitates the development of critical thinking, which allows students to challenge inequities in schools and society (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Focusing on what children know requires in depth learning about students' cultures, languages, and the experiences that they bring into the classroom. Educators can use this knowledge of the students' backgrounds, interests, and experiences to develop culturally relevant pedagogy. Incorporating knowledge of language structures and the culture that accompanies various languages provides the necessary determinants of intercultural communicative competence.

Purpose of the Study

This study used core tenets of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) to examine individual teacher perspectives through questionnaires, observations and interviews. The results were examined for instructional implications. The large body of research regarding the development of communicative competence is focused on the student and the acquired skills in an English Language learning setting (Canale & Swain, 1980; Labov, 1979; Savignon, 1997; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). ICC is a concept that may be recognized by foreign language teachers and experts in the field of linguistics but it is not generally recognized by mainstream teachers. Given the linguistic diversity in today's urban classrooms this study argues that teachers are not well prepared to address linguistic diversity in the classroom. This study

7

examines teachers' understandings of linguistic diversity through the lens of ICC tenets that can help teachers establish a linguistic environment appropriate for all learners. ICC provides a framework with which urban teachers can rethink SE in "expanded, pluralistic, and internally internationalized ways" (Kirkland, 2010, p. 303).

At the time of this study an extensive search of the literature was conducted which included professional journals in linguistics, sociolinguistics, teacher preparation, urban education and other journals. The search did not reveal research reflecting skill or awareness of intercultural communicative competence of general education classroom teachers, especially teachers in the K-8 setting. At the time of this study the only research available related to ICC and AAE was on pre-service teachers conducted by Ilsovay (2012). Studies regarding teachers' views and beliefs have been conducted by T. M. Jones (2011) who looked at teachers' views on AAE in the classroom and G. Jones (2011) who looked at African American teachers' beliefs about African American vernacular. These studies offer justification for further investigations.

Significance of the Study

Research has shown that language matters but it is not clear how much teachers know about language or how they approach the instruction of language. Teachers who employ the skill of empathy can effectively facilitate instruction for AAE speaking students to acquire SE. Through empathy teachers should be able to discern between language differences and language deficits and dispel the myths which claim that AAE is mostly an "abusive repertoire of street slang used by ignorant urban underclass" (Pullam, 1999, p. 40). The research supports inquiry into the acquisition of the skill of empathy for teacher education programs.

Theoretical Perspectives

This study is based on the constructs of a combination of cultural/intercultural and communicative competence theories (Byram, 1997; Canale & Swain, 1980; Deardorff, 2004; Savignon, 1997; Taylor, 1994), which focus on the relation between the exchanges of meanings. To actualize learning and understanding, the cultures and language of all participants must be recognized and valued (Baugh, 2001; Delpit, 1995; Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Green, 2011; Heath, 1983; Smitherman, 1999). It is the process of communication that facilitates this recognition. To meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students, teachers at every level of instruction must recognize that even students from urban settings possess rich and varied language and cultural experiences (Delpit, 2009; Hale, 2001; Heath, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Smitherman, 1999).

Research Questions

The primary research questions explored in this study were:

1. What do teachers in the urban setting know about AAE and the relevance to their instructional practices?

2. Do urban teachers adjust their instructional practices to accommodate the needs of their AAE speaking students and if so how**?**

3. What are urban teachers' perceptions of AAE?

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

The present study focused on teachers' understandings, attitudes and instructional practices within the context of language diversity in an urban school environment. In particular, research relevant to AAE speakers was included. This chapter consists of a review of literature as it relates to AAE, communicative competence, intercultural communicative competence and code-switching.

African American English within the Context of Standard English

Discussion focusing on features of AAE dates back to the 1960's where debates arose among linguists, psychologists and educators regarding appropriate teaching methods concerning students who did not use "Standard English" in the classroom. Research by Labov (1983) and Smitherman (1999) reignited the debate. Past research has demonstrated that spoken language strongly influences written language especially among traditional African American culture, where oral tradition influences linguistic structures (Baugh, 2001; Labov, 1979; Rickford, 1999, 2000). Although research on the historical and sociolinguistic factors of AAE continues to grow (Gee, 2008; Rickford & Finnegan, 2004; Wolfram, 2004) research on teacher responses to nonstandard varieties of English and linguistic variables have been slow to progress. A study regarding how African American teachers' beliefs regarding AAE influence teaching was conducted by G. Jones in 2011 and concluded teachers have limited knowledge regarding AAE. T. M. Jones's (2011) study looked at teachers' views on the use of AAE in the language arts classroom and recommended that teachers be more receptive to the needs of AAE speakers in the classroom by respecting AAE and not regarding it as a sign of poor intelligence or error laden

speech. Teacher responses to AAE features reveal a pattern in teacher practice that discredits AAE as "bad language" (Delpit, 2009, Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Godley et al., 2006). Teachers use statements such as "speak correctly" or cross out student words to correct nonstandard language (Green, 2002; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). The corrections have not worked, as researchers have discovered "vernacular speakers who were corrected when they used vernacular features actually used more, not fewer features over time" (Wolfram, Adger & Christian, 1999, p. 122-123). Teachers who continue to correct AAE speaking students are likely to consider these students as having learning problems or as less able than SE speaking students (Labov, 1997). These negative expectations create an environment of failure and data has revealed that "the longer African American city kids stay in school the worse they do" (Rickford, 1996, p.1). Two major cases, Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children et al., v. Ann Arbor School District Board Ann Arbor (1997) and the Ebonics Resolution of Oakland, California (1996) brought the issue of recognizing the significance of AAE to the forefront and shed importance on considering language within the context of instruction; however, these attempts seemed to have failed to make a major impact within urban classrooms.

The Ann Arbor case. The Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children et al., v. Ann Arbor School District Board (1997) was a landmark case regarding alleged prejudice against the students who spoke AAE (MacNeil & Cran, 2005). Parents of Black students, who attended a largely white school, sued the district for failing to educate their children. When the students used AAE, "their teachers assumed they couldn't do schoolwork" (MacNeil & Cran, 2005, p. 132). One student who is now in his forties stated, "the teachers really didn't communicate with us too much. It was just sort of like, in a sense that we were on our own" (MacNeil & Cran, 2005, p. 132). The lawyers from Michigan Legal Services took on the case

for the plaintiff and sued the school district claiming discrimination based on language. The

court heard from a number of renowned researchers and experts who presented their studies

involving AAE in order to ascertain two main propositions:

> That African American English is a rule-governed language system, that is, an
>
> Africanized form of English (Smitherman, 1999); and that the teachers' failure to
>
> recognize this linguistic fact led to negative attitudes toward the children who spoke it;
>
> in effect their attitudes constituted a language barrier impeding students' educational
>
> progress. (Ball & Lardner, 1997, p. 3)

Evidence was presented that asserted AAE to be a distinct, definable version of English, different

from the SE of the school and the general world of communications. Additional evidence stated

that AAE had definite language patterns, syntax, grammar, and history, which differed from the

language used by mainstream of society. In spite of AAE being a legitimate language it still was

not considered an acceptable method of communication in the educational world, in the

commercial or among professionals. Determining that the school district was insensitive to the

linguistic background of their African American students (MacNeil & Cran, 2005) the court

mandated the school board to take steps to help its teachers to recognize the home language of

the students and to use that knowledge in their attempts to teach reading skills in Standard

English. The court wrote that "if the reading problem can be explained by the use of Black-

English [AAE] in the home setting, a school should account for the existence of the home

language when teaching those students to read" (Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School

Children v. Michigan Board of Education, 1997, p.1379). The evidence implied that no matter

how well intentioned the teachers were, they were not likely to be successful in overcoming the

language issues caused by their failure to take into account the home language system, unless

they recognized the existence of the language system used by the children in their home

community and to use that knowledge as a way of helping the children to learn to read SE. The

court did not seek to tell educators how to educate, but only to ensure that the school district

carried out an obligation imposed by law to help the teachers use existing knowledge regarding

AAE and take appropriate action to overcome language barriers. This case resulted in the district

being ordered to develop a plan for teaching Black students and the teachers at Martin Luther

King School. To carry out the orders, the school board suggested a two-part plan:

> An in-service program for teachers of instruction in general language and dialect
>
> concepts including the contrasting features of Black English and Standard English, the
>
> identification of Black English speakers, the accommodation of code switching needs in
>
> Black English speakers, and the use of knowledge of dialect differences to help
>
> individual students read Standard English. The plan included both a formal motivational
>
> and an instructional in-service component and a classroom reinforcement and
>
> implementation in-service component. (Martin Luther King Jr., Etc. v. Ann Arbor
>
> School District, 1997, p. 9)

Although the case caused a shift in thinking about AAE, the outcome of the Ann Arbor

case did not take into consideration the question of how teachers were to address the linguistic

and cultural needs of their students (Ball & Lardner, 1997). The court recognized the need for

teachers to develop sensitivity to students' use of AAE and to become informed and responsive

to racial and linguistic variation. What remained unanswered was how to transform this newly

acquired knowledge into everyday practice: Were teachers aware of the role they played in

teaching students about the impact of language? Language is an instrument for communication

but it is also an agent of identity. American author, James Baldwin (1978) offered the following

thoughts to the discussion:

> It is not the Black child's language that is in question; it is not his language that is
>
> despised: It is his experience. A child cannot be taught by anyone who despises him, and
>
> a child cannot afford to be fooled. A child cannot be taught by anyone whose demand,
>
> essentially, is that the child repudiates his experience, and all that gives him sustenance,
>
> and enter a limbo in which he will no longer be Black, and in which he knows that he can
>
> never become white. (p. 70)

Oakland California School Board Resolution. A second and also important case

regarding the issue of AAE speaking students arose from the Ebonics Resolution of Oakland

California (1996). On December 18, 1996, the Oakland School Board resolved to maintain "the

legitimacy and the richness of the language . . . known as Ebonics . . . and to facilitate students'

acquisitions and mastery of English language skills" (Perry & Delpit, 1998, p. 145).

The Oakland School Board developed a Standard English Proficiency Program (SEP),

which incorporated cultural pedagogy to develop literacy skills. Nine cultural features of

African American culture were identified: "spirituality, resilience, emotional vitality, musicality

and rhythm, humanism, communalism, orality and verbal expressiveness, personal style and

uniqueness, and realness" (Wheeler & Swords, 2006, p. 42). The intent of the program was to

help African American students avoid the misunderstandings and miscommunications

encountered when they spoke AAE. Recognition and acceptance of the home language of

students was the first step in bridging the gap between minority and non-minority students in the

education system (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Wheeler, 1999). Identification of a

process to help students move to a more standard form of English was the second step towards

language and literacy development. Texts and pedagogical strategies that were culturally and

linguistically responsive were also shown to increase student efficacy, motivation, and academic

achievement (Lee, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Although the program was based on sound

research and had implications to improve the achievement of AAE speakers the district sought to

fund the program by using Title VII (now Title III) funds to support dual language instruction, in

this case, Ebonics and SE. It was this use of Title funds that sparked the controversy.

Despite the rising studies suggesting a positive impact of this case, negative public

attitudes toward AAE reappeared as America watched anti-AAE sentiments displayed in the

Oakland Unified School District. When the district "passed a resolution declaring Ebonics

(AAE) to be the official language of approximately 28,000 African American students within the

district" (Baugh, 2001, p. xi) mainstream America fought back and a national debate was

created. Classrooms in the United States did not accept AAE. Labov (1997) recognized that

there were two opposing schools of thought concerning the acceptance of AAE for instructional

purposes: (a) it would foster the replacement of SE and (b) valuing and using the language that

children brought with them to the classroom would facilitate learning (Baugh, 2001; Heath,

1983; Wheeler, 1999). Labov (1997) supported the board's efforts and summed the situation up

by stating "The essence of the Oakland school board resolution is that the first method has not

succeeded and that the second deserves a trial" (Labov, 1997, p. 3). The Oakland school

district's attempts to modify language used for instruction failed. The federal courts denied the

declaration of linguistic independence and the attempts to utilize Title VII funds which were

intended to serve students with limited English proficiency (LEP) only.

Even though the Linguistic Society of America and other scholars of education came

forward to defend the Oakland School Board's resolution recognizing AAE as a rule-governed

variety of English worthy of respect, disagreement regarding AAE continued. While mainstream America saw AAE differently and/or negatively, there was even dissent among prominent African Americans. Leaders such as Maya Angelou, Jesse Jackson, and Kweisi Mfume, the head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) at that time, vehemently opposed the resolution and called it "making slang talk a second language," "teaching down" to students, and "an unacceptable surrender, border lining on disgrace" (Rojas, 1996, p. A13). The identification of AAE as slang or bad grammar dates back to post Civil War documents. Hale (1998) recounted a statement from a resident of the Georgia Sea Islands where the Gullah dialect still thrives replete with Africanisms. The resident declared in an interview with an anthropologist collecting folklore in 1919, "Dere is not'in de matter wid us but bad grammar" (Hale, 1998, p. 20). Though competing views of AAE exist, the fact remains, even among educated African Americans; there is an expectation for their children to be held accountable for using Standard English. The negative views held by recognized African American leaders reflect the viewpoint that AAE is unacceptable and prefer that students adhere to SE (Wheeler & Swords, 2006).

The controversy still remains a dilemma with the education of AAE speakers in the United States. Smitherman (1999) stated, "As far as language diversity and language attitudes are concerned the school remains a critical agent of social change" (p. 117). Research on language related controversies has revealed that negative beliefs about the "grammaticality, logic and morality of stigmatized dialects are widespread in U. S. society and difficult to change" (Godley et al., 2006, p. 30).

Non-Standard English and the School Environment

Many teachers are not well equipped to help AAE speaking students adjust to school and experience successful learning. Too few teachers share or know about their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, or understand the challenges inherent in learning to speak and read Standard English (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Teachers in these classrooms have not acquired the diverse communication skills to meet the linguistic needs of AAE speaking students (Fillmore and Snow, 2000). The necessary skills may be acquired through knowledge of how children acquire competence in their first language over years of experience and the basics of communication theory (Au & Mason, 1981; Darling Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Effective instruction cannot take place if teachers do not possess a basic understanding of how language is used and is structured by different ethnic groups in the multicultural society of the United States (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Fillmore & Snow, 2000). T. M. Jones (2011) and G. Jones (2011) both conclude that teachers need to prepare themselves to meet the linguistic needs of AAE speaking students by acquiring knowledge of AAE. The participants in G. Jones's (2011) study lacked cultural and linguistic knowledge of AAE. This unawareness led to misguided attitudes and beliefs toward AAE speaking students.

Communicative Competence

Hymes (1972) a linguist who influenced the field of anthropology, coined the term communicative competence, which includes both explicit knowledge of the rules of grammar and sociolinguistic knowledge of the rules of language used in context. It has been described as the ability to know when to use informal language such as "Hey you wanna move outa the way?" or formal language "Excuse me, would you please move to the side?" The competent

communicator is capable of handling linguistic variations and various uses of language in context.

Canale and Swain (1980) elaborated on the four types of communicative competence proposed by Hymes (1972): namely, using language that is feasible, that is formally possible, has social meaning or value and represents what actually happens (Hymes, 1972) and further categorized them as (a) sociolinguistic competence, (b) discourse competence, (c) strategic competence and (d) grammatical competence.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to understanding cultural values, norms and socio-cultural conventions in context. Discourse competence acknowledges the rules and coherence of various types of discourse. This competence, which is contextual, recognizes discourse structure and activating prior knowledge. Strategic competence deals with the knowledge of verbal and nonverbal strategies to enhance effective communication. Grammatical competence is the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive grammatical structures of a language and to use them. Grammatical competence is also known as linguistic competence or competence with phonological rules, this competence deals with morphological rules, syntactic rules, semantic rules and lexical items. Allen and Brown (1976) concluded: "Communication competence, unlike linguistic competence, involves awareness of the transactions that occur between people. Competence in this perspective is tied to actual performance of the language in social situations" (p. 248).

Language purpose and functions. Language is used for a variety of purposes and functions. Language is as it is because of the functions it has evolved to serve in people's lives, primarily personal and social needs. Halliday (1978) provided one of the best explanations of language functions, as he used the term "function" to mean " the purposive nature of

communication and outlined seven different functions of language: (a) instrumental, (b)

regulatory, (c) representational, (d) interactional, (e) personal, (f) heuristic, and (g) imaginative"

(p. 24). Among these different functions Halliday (1978) outlined two, which are of major

importance from the view of strategic communicative competence: the interactional and

personal. The interactional function serves to ensure social maintenance, which is the

communicative contact between and among human beings that simply allows them to establish

social contact and to keep channels of communication open (Halliday, 1978). The knowledge of

slang, jargon, jokes, cultural aspects, politeness and formality expectations, and other clues to

social exchange are required for successful interactional communication (Robinson, 1988).

One's feelings, emotions and personality are expressed through the personal function. A

person's individuality is usually characterized by his or her use of the personal function of

communication. In the personal function, the nature of language, cognition and culture all

interact.

Language knowledge and skills. Skills are considered the hinge between knowledge

and behavior. Considering the description of communicative competence provided by Hymes

(1972), emphasis is placed on language use in interaction. Therefore proficiency in skills, as

described by Scheffler (1967), is what is required for the manifestation of communicative

competence. Both knowledge and skill exemplify competence the competence required to teach

others. Scheffler (1967) sorts ability into subgroups of "facility" and "critical skill." Facilities

are seen as automatic behavior that is not processed cognitively. Critical skills are acquired

through training and are improved by practice requiring strategic judgment. They require

conscious knowledge while facilities do not. Scheffler (1967) differentiates between "knowing

that" as a propositionally based term and "knowing how" as a procedural term. He defines each

as follows: knowing how to use language represents ownership of a skill, a trained capacity, a competence, or a technique. Skills differ from traits, habits or propensities, as well as from achievements, i.e., appreciation and understanding. Having a skill is also quite different from knowing what the skill is. A person might possess all of the relevant information concerning some skill without having the skill itself and conceivably he/she might be skilled without having any given piece of information concerning the skill in question, though it is unlikely he/she would lack all relevant information (Scheffler, 1967). Skills, according to Scheffler, are acquired through instruction and improved with practice.

Communicative competence as a model. For decades, researchers (Allen & Brown, 1976, Canale & Swain, 1980, Halliday, 1978, and Savignon (1983, 1997) have concentrated on the development of the model for communicative competence, among which are. Communicative competence emerges from the premise that language and communication are at the heart of the human experience, and therefore its main objective is to communicate successfully. In a pluralistic society, teachers and students need to be equipped linguistically and culturally in order to achieve this objective. It can be stated that teachers must focus on the sociolinguistic and cultural aspects of language, both in the dominant discourse and sub-dominant discourse for students to become familiar with and gain a working knowledge of Standard English.

Development of Intercultural Communicative Competence Model

All people participate in multiple cultures, whether consciously or not, and all cultures vary from within, are diversified and heterogeneous. Cultural relationships are tailored and people's multiple cultural associations interact and intersect with each other. The participation in one's own culture is often context-dependent, sinuous and constantly evolving (Barrett, Byram,

Lazar, Mompoint-Gaillard, & Philippou, 2013). Understanding the concept of culture, being

sensitive and adapting to other cultures is a component of ICC. This is demonstrated by learning

how perspectives and ways are shaped and considering the lived experiences, as well as social,

political and economic contexts. Cultural associations not only empower but also constrain

people's thoughts, feelings and actions. It is important to understand that culture is affiliated with

"people's sense of well-being and social functioning can be adversely affected if others ascribe

inappropriate identities to them" (Barrett et al., 2013, p. 7). Interpersonal encounters with those

of the same culture are fluid encounters, which act in harmony and with fluent dialogue. An

interpersonal encounter converts to "an intercultural encounter when cultural differences are

perceived and made salient either by the situation or by the individual's own orientation and

attitudes" (Barrett et al., 2013, p. 8). In an intercultural interaction, response to the other person

is not neutral or based on the other person's individual personal characteristics. The response to

the other is based on one's perception of the other's culture or set of values. Therefore to

communicate across cultures, one must be open, non-judgmental, and see to see the other

person's perspective. Each person sees the world in a way that is accurate and truthful for that

individual and people do not have to agree with each other's perceptions. Thus when someone

engages outside his/her culture, intercultural competence is required to achieve harmonious

interaction and successful dialogue (Barrett et al., 2013). The teacher student relationship may

constitute such an interpersonal encounter.

The characteristics of intercultural communicative competence include flexibility,

tolerance for ambiguity, open-mindedness, sensitivity, adaptability and "the ability to engage in

divergent and systems-level thinking" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 272). Intercultural

communication takes place when the individuals of various cultural communities negotiate

shared meanings in interaction (Ting-Toomey, 1999). The establishment of shared meanings is contingent upon the level of ICC of each speaker.

The three major components of ICC (attitudes, skills, and knowledge) are interrelated. An increase in one component interacts with the other two components to create an overall increase of ICC. The skills required for ICC include the use of knowledge, diverse cultural frames of reference and various perspectives that allow for critical thinking and problem solving (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). The ability to communicate and connect with members of other language communities in a range of settings for multiple purposes is another skill. Communication and interaction in intercultural encounters require individuals to draw upon their knowledge of other languages, that is, their repertoire of languages and language varieties acquired in formal education or otherwise. This would include knowledge of other dialects as well. The skill of interpreting and communicating within intercultural encounters is shaped by the languages and cultures which are brought to those encounters (Barrett et al., 2013). Additional ICC skills include:

- Multiperspectivity – the ability to decenter from one's own perspective and to take other people's perspectives into consideration in addition to one's own;

- Skills in discovering information about other cultural affiliations and perspectives;

- Skills in interpreting other cultural practices, beliefs and values and relating them to one's own; and

- Empathy, the ability to understand and respond to other people's thoughts, beliefs, values and feelings. (Barrett et al., 2013, p. 12)

Language is a symbolic system, which enables us as group members to communicate our cultural perspectives, beliefs and values. Language can act as a bridge or a barrier to communication relative to the competencies one procures in a power wielding language. When people with similar cultural affiliations interact the use of language itself is not normally a salient problem from a communication stance. However, when people with a different language or language varieties interact language becomes highly salient if they are unable to communicate effectively. Thus, knowledge of language and its many varieties and communicative awareness remain crucial components of intercultural competence (Barrett et al., 2013).

Theoretical Underpinnings of Language

Empirical evidence from linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and cognitive psychology has established the complex nature of language learning (Baugh, 2001; Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1972; Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Halliday, 1978; Hymes, 1972; Labov, 1965; Wolfram et al., 1999). Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Bronfenbrenner's (2004) ecological theory emphasize that interactions between people, as well as interactions with their environments, influence learning. One of the most complex tasks facing teachers today is communicating meaning across culturally diverse learners. This is particularly significant in the urban setting. Issues of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, culture and power interact and increase the complexity of this crucial task. Sensitivity to language differences contributes to understanding and establishes the basis for building capacity to become competent communicators who are culturally sensitive (Canale & Swain, 1980; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Lucas, 2011; Savignon, 1997).

Lee (2007) advocates that the success of urban teachers is predicated on teachers having specific knowledge about the language, culture, cognition, motivation, and social/emotional

realities of urban students. According to Lee (2007), teachers can achieve better results if they understand the power of instructional talk based on the norms of AAE and by placing more emphasis "on helping students reason in a literary fashion than constantly 'correcting' how they speak" (p. 85). Lee provides an analytical approach to instruction as opposed to a critical approach. Her decision not to correct students when they are responding provides them with authoritative voices in the classroom and "deciding who can talk is not controlled solely by the teacher" (Lee, 2007, p. 87). The advocacy for critical language pedagogy in affirming AAE can have a positive effect on students' perceptions of AAE and themselves by safeguarding their cultures and heritages (Scott, Straker, & Katz, 2009). Understanding the challenges apparent in a firmly grounded achievement gap will provide the basis for discovering further relevant solutions.

Teacher preparation programs do not include intercultural communication training in the curriculum (Lazar, Huber-Kriegler, Lussier, Matie, & Peck, 2008). Language teachers, not general education candidates, are usually the general receivers of this training. General education teachers might benefit if they too were prepared to provide instruction to linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Models of ICC

The concept of ICC has been studied over the years and various models have been developed to provide a structured framework, each emphasizing different factors. Two that emphasize similar factors were chosen for this study; they are Byram's (1997) Multidimensional Model of Intercultural Competence and Deardorff's (2006) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence.

Byram's model of ICC. Byram (1997) presents a multidimensional model, which, in

conjunction with Canale and Swain's (1980) framework would comprise a comprehensive

assessment of intercultural communicative competence. Byram's (1997) theory on intercultural

competence or intercultural communicative competence identifies the characteristics of a person

with ICC as someone who is able to see the relationships between different cultures, is cognizant

of his/her own culture, and understands how culture influences thinking as opposed to believing

understanding and perception is natural. Communication is not merely the exchange of

information but rather the ability to "understand and relate to people" (Byram, 1997, p. 5) from

cultures other than our own (Figure 2.1). Intercultural communicative competence explores the

concept of competence as it relates to language, culture and experience. The basic idea of

communicative competence remains the ability to use language appropriately, both receptively

and productively, in real situations but how is it interpreted based on preconceived perceptions of

what is "acceptable" language is a different consideration (Byram, 1997).
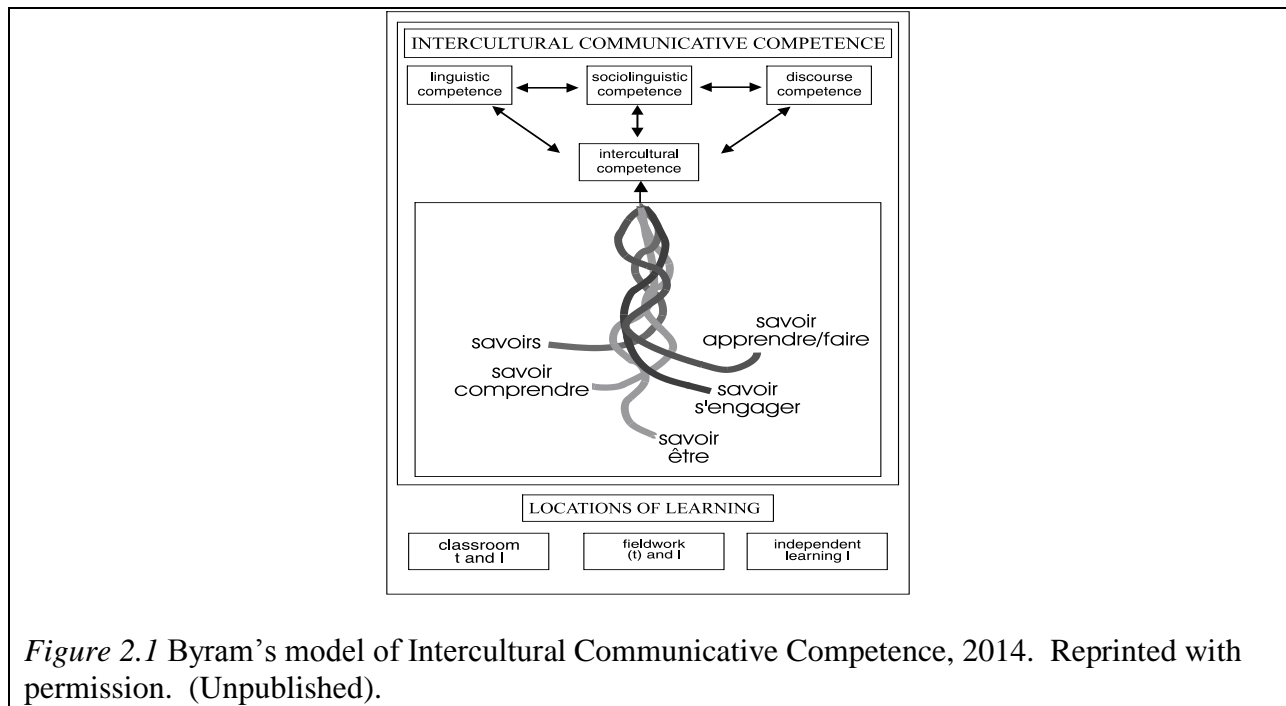
Figure 2.1 Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, 2014. Reprinted with permission. (Unpublished).

Byram uses the French term savoir, which literally means to know, when describing the constructs of his theory. Byram's (1997) savoirs are described as the attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness/political education. Savoirs are related to one's ability to translate and interpret documents from specific cultures and relate them to one's own culture, acquire and use cultural knowledge and practices in real-time communication, critically evaluate the products and practices of world cultures, and suspend disbelief about one's own culture and the cultures being studied (Byram, 1997).

Byram (1997) states that acting inter-culturally can be simple or complex. It requires a readiness to suspend prior beliefs about other cultures as well as beliefs about one's own culture in order to use cultural knowledge and critical thinking skills to communicate and interact in the now. This premise would require teachers to suspend judgment or perceptions of non-Standard English speakers as being inferior. It additionally requires that teachers' personal beliefs regarding appropriate English be relinquished. Perception of a different intercultural communication refers to communication among different races but to others it may encompass different religions, ethnicities or sexual orientation (Martin & Nakayama, 2007).

Deardorff's model. According to Deardorff (2006) the most widely accepted definition of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is the "ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2006, p.32). The model was designed to explain how an individual acquires the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for intercultural competence as well as the aspects of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) (Figure 2.2). The model, although

intended for studies in international education, has implications for American classrooms where student diversity continues to grow.

DESIRED EXTERNAL OUTCOME:
Behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some degree

DESIRED INTERNAL OUTCOME:
Informed frame of reference/filter shift:
Adaptability (to different communication styles & behaviors; adjustment to new cultural environments);
Flexibility (selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviors; cognitive flexibility);
Ethnorelative view;
Empathy

Knowledge & Comprehension:
Cultural self-awareness;
Deep understanding and knowledge of culture (including contexts, role and impact of culture & others' world views);
Culture-specific information;
Sociolinguistic awareness

Skills:
To listen, observe, and interpret
To analyze, evaluate, and relate

Requisite Attitudes:
Respect (valuing other cultures, cultural diversity)
Openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures, withholding judgment)
Curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty)

Figure 2.2 Pyramid model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) Journal of Studies in Intercultural Education, 10, 241-266, 2006. Reprinted with permission.

The process begins with requisite attitudes, such as respect, openness and curiosity. It then proceeds to knowledge and comprehension, which include: cultural self-awareness, deep understanding and knowledge of culture and sociolinguistic awareness. The model does not specifically identify language but notes:

Language alone does not ensure one's competency in the culture. Thus, language is a necessary but not sufficient skill for intercultural competence. Language, however, can

be a notable vehicle through which to understand others' worldviews, which is crucial to

intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2004, p. 36).

The next level is the desired internal outcome, which refers to adaptability (to different

communication styles and behaviors), flexibility and empathy. The final level of the process is

the desired external outcome, "behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based

on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes) to achieve one's goals" (Deardorff, 2004,

p. 36). The recognition or metacognition of one's own intercultural competence could greatly

influence the outcomes in the classroom as it would require self-examination of culture, respect

of other cultures and openness to change according to the degree of empathy felt toward students

and their respective culture.

Eliminating ethnocentrism. The foundation of intercultural communicative competence

is the capacity to avoid ethnocentrisms. Ethnocentrism is the predisposition to view one's own

cultural group as natural and correct and all others as nonconforming (Triandis, 1994). The

assumption is that all groups act in concert within their own groups. We distrust those groups

that are inherently different (Triandis, 1994). Among educators this distrust denies the

"legitimacy and validity of cultural diversity in teaching and learning for ethnically diverse

students" (Gay, 2010, p. 244) even when teachers recognize the importance of "sensitivity,

respect, and awareness for cultural diversity they often lack appropriate pedagogy to address the

needs of the ethnically diverse learner" (Gay, 2010, p. 245). Recognizing AAE as a variant of

SE requires the knowledge that AAE has linguistic codes that make it a unique variation of

English (Labov, 2010; Ogbu, 1992; Young et al., 2014). Though AAE deviates from the

linguistic rules not be judged as speaking incorrectly. Intercultural

communicative competence requires the skill and ability to translate cultural knowledge into communication behaviors that result in successful intercultural interaction (Burstein & Cabello, 1989). Language is believed to vary as the context in which language is employed changes, such as the language employed in the home versus the language employed in school (Delpit, 1995; Gee, 2008; Labov, 2010). Having cultural knowledge and understanding linguistic variation offers students who employ AAE a new opportunity and retracts the common belief that they should "park their informal, undervalued, home language at the door, in exchange for the unequivocally better, formal 'White' standard" (Young et al., 2014, p. 88). Therefore, successful intercultural interaction would imply that instructional behavior exemplifying ICC would reflect the culture of those who are being instructed and provide experiences that relate to the context in which SE is used in textbooks and in the classroom (Gee, 2008; Delpit, 1995). As teachers gain insights into and acceptance of various cultures, they need to develop an all-inclusive acceptance of their diverse students and identify ways to become empathic. All children should feel welcomed, affirmed, respected, and valued in school.

   Encouraging empathy. Developing empathy for students that experience school and life differently from the teacher's informed philosophy and practice can create a foundation for better communication and learning. Empathy is "the ability to imagine yourself in someone else's position and to intuit what that person is feeling" (Pink, 2006, p. 159). The ability to discover a world beyond the known and to experience the world of a student is "the process of reaching out beyond the self to others" (Brown, 2007, p. 165). Empathy, a central variable, involves the understanding of the other person's affective and cognitive states. Thus, to communicate effectively, you need to acquire a sophisticated degree of empathy (Brown, 2007). Knowing the origins of a dialect can create an empathetic environment fostering respect and trust

(McClendon, 2004). If false presuppositions exist or assumptions are made about the other person's status, communication will deteriorate. One element in Byram's (1997) model is attitudes (savoir être) which is characterized by words such as sensitivity, curiosity and openness to describe his belief that one must be open to learning about others, new views and values which subscribe to empathy and establish relationships of parity. This involves a certain willingness among teachers to reflect on their own cultures by questioning their prevailing values and beliefs. In the classroom this element translates to focusing on what cultures have in common and to establish relationships based on similarities and common perspectives instead identifying differences, which reinforce existing stereotypes and prejudices. An important consideration is the cross-cultural interpretation of empathy, i.e., understanding how different cultures express empathy.

Implementing ICC in the School System

Barrera (1992) has observed that a culturally affirming attitude is not always present in schools. She writes that there can be a "cultural gap" in how some teachers respond to children of different cultures (Barrera, 1992). Offering a useful framework for discussing the intersection of culture, knowledge, and literacy, she argues that teachers' cultural knowledge should include cultural, cross-cultural, and multicultural knowledge. Brown (2007) offers a set of criteria for teachers who pursue the development of intercultural communicative competence as a reflective approach for designing lessons and activities that are sensitive to the needs of students with language diversity. Eight criteria for consideration are as follows:

1. Activities should value the customs and belief systems that are presumed to be part of the culture of the students.
2. Activities refrain from demeaning stereotypes of any culture.

3. Activities refrain from any possible devaluing of the student's native language.

4. Activities recognize willingness of students to participate openly due to factors of collectivism /individualism and power distance.

5. Activities require students to go beyond the comfort zone of uncertainty avoidance in their culture, empathetically and tactfully.

6. Activities are sensitive to the perceived roles of males and females in the culture of the students in the class.

7. Activities sufficiently connect specific language features (e.g., grammatical categories, lexicon, and discourse) to cultural ways of thinking feeling and acting.

8. Activities draw on the potentially rich background experiences of the students including their own experiences in other cultures. (Brown, 2007, p. 213)

Intercultural Communicative Competence Cultural knowledge, insists Barrera (1992), is human knowledge. She notes that "ways with language and literacy of different people, although common in some respects, also reflect some significant differences" (Barrera, 1992, p. 235). These differences may include the forms of questions that children are asked as well as children's patterns of response to such questions, the uses for reading and writing, or the styles of oral narration. There also are differences in language use and patterns of interactions among children and adults, roles of behavior such as boy being aggressive and loud as opposed to girls being quiet and submissive, and customs of response as when a student of color is reprimanded they are taught not to look directly at the adult as a form of respect for authority (Willis, 2000). Understanding each child's culture influences the way teachers work with their students and plan their lessons.

Classroom literacy instruction. Equally important is the ability to address the literacy needs of children whose cultures are different from the teacher's culture. Teachers can acquire or develop an understanding and accepting attitude toward other cultures and build upon the linkages and interplay among culture, language, and literacy. Gay (2002) observes that

> Deeply ingrained cultural socialization becomes problematic in education when the schooling process operates on one cultural model to the exclusion of all others, or when culturally different children are expected to set aside all their cultural habits as a condition as a condition of succeeding in school. (p. 10)

Teachers may talk about developing a community of readers and writers, but the concept of community must be more than a school-bound model. It needs to expand beyond the walls of the classroom and extend into the community. Denerville (2007) conducted a study regarding the vernacular writing features of African-American fifth graders. Denerville (2007) found that it is important for teachers to understand AAE as a valid linguistic form and further suggests that "knowledge and understanding of linguistic and cultural varieties can only add to the learning process" (p. 99).

In conclusion, it is the teachers' perceptions of AAE that can create hidden biases in the classroom and negatively influence the instruction that African American children receive. Many teachers view SE as correct while other English dialects are seen as less than acceptable. It is likely that teachers who have biases may be more prone to employ correctivist approaches with AAE speakers (Godley et al., 2006; Lippi-Green, 2012). Teachers are unable to acknowledge the documented features of AAE that represent sociocultural ties to a student's home, family, and community (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). It is possible that teachers lack ICC given that ICC is not a required competency for teachers in regular classrooms. Therefore,

students who receive messages that their way of speaking is wrong must convert to SE without regard to the context in which it is used. Furthermore, speakers of AAE are falsely led to believe that only they speak a dialect, which deviates from SE (Wolfram et al., 1999). These discordant relationships lead to communicative disconnects between teachers and students.

ICC And Its Relevance in the General Education Classroom

Teachers are not well equipped to help children who speak dialects of English adjust to school and experience successful learning (Delpit, 2009; Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Heath, 1983). Too few teachers share or know about their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds or understand the challenges inherent in learning to speak and read Standard English (Delpit, 2009; Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Heath, 1983; Lippi-Green, 2012). Teachers who have not acquired the diverse communication knowledge and skills to address the needs of AAE students are in need of the basics of communication theory (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Lippi Greene, 2012; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). AAE speaking students need teachers who have knowledge of how children acquire competence in their first language over years of growth and experience. Effective instruction cannot take place if teachers do not possess a basic understanding of how language is used and is structured by different ethnic groups in our multicultural society (Zeichner, 1993). Teachers need to be competent communicators in order to facilitate and instruct students to discern and respond sensitively to the body language used in a communicative transaction, utilize rhetorical skills for the expression of specific knowledge and skills, and fully participate in group dynamics and group discussion skills.

Facilitating the learning of SE is key to improving one's future and imagining different worlds. It is the access key to upward mobility. Students have multiple exposures with SE in school through texts, instruction and assessment. The trend has traditionally been for SE to be

treated as a given, a prerequisite, essential to all learning (Schleppegrell, 2001; Adger, Snow & Christian, 2002). Moreover, "organizational structures in schools give or deny students access to an apprenticeship to the discourses of academic success" (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, p. 551). Dyson (1997) noted, ". . . disrespectful attitudes [of educators towards Black students' home language] interfere with children's literacy learning much more than does nonstandard speech in and of itself" (p. 3). The primary reason given to and by teachers for requiring proficiency in SE is that SE opens the doors of success and access for students. However, " the overriding goal for language education throughout the school years should not be the mastery of any one genre or language variety but the capacity to negotiate among contexts, to be socially and politically astute in discourse use" (Dyson, 1997, p. 5). Children need language that provides access to the practices of their various communities and access to SE (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003).

The Intercultural Communicative Gap

A characteristic of what teachers perceive as at-risk learners of English is that they may not be communicatively equipped to engage in the everyday scripts of school-based activities, activities for which most middle class, mainstream students have been prepared since birth (Delpit, 1995; Gee, 2008; Heath, 1983). Rather, children come to school versed in the experiences of their homes, their families and their home culture; cultures comprised of complex ways of knowing and communicating (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). This is what Bloom (2000) called a "theory of mind" (p. 60) firmly established as a foundation on which children's native communicative repertoire is formed at a young age through social interaction with others. This is accomplished through observing parents' and peers' ways of understanding, talking about, and being in the world (Bloom, 2000; Bruner, 1996). How a child's home and community

understand and communicate about the world and how this is manifest in U.S. school culture can be quite dissimilar (Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1983; Soto, 1997)

A mistaken perception of AAE speakers is that they are as cognitively deficient (Bowie & Bond, 1994). A study conducted by Bowie and Bond (1994), found that a majority of elementary school teachers equate AAE with the use of faulty, illogical grammar, and viewed AAE speakers as being lazy and sloppy in their speech. This deficient view of AAE and its speakers is prevalent among a large majority of SE speakers. Many white middle class teachers view SE as correct while other variations of English are seen as subpar. As a result, teachers engage in a corrective approach with AAE speakers. Many teachers employ corrective methods when teaching reading and writing to children that speak AAE. When educators correct students use of AAE without acknowledging the documented features of AAE that represent sociocultural ties to a student's home, family, and community (Wheeler & Swords, 2006), students receive the message that their way of speaking is wrong and should be converted to SE without regard to the context in which it is used. In addition, AAE speakers are led to believe that they are the only population who speak a dialect, which differs from SE (Wolfram et al., 1999). These discordant relationships lead to communicative gaps between teachers and students.

Code-switching

One way to bridge the communicative gap between a child's home language and school language is to respect and understand code-switching. If teachers are not familiar with the concept of code-switching they cannot recognize it as a competency. Even if it is not known or understood by many educators, one should have at least an understanding of the functions of switching between the native language and another language and its underlying reasons (Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Wheeler, 2008). The ability to code switch is a learned competency utilized when

one wishes to identify with the audience or setting he or she is in at a given time or place. The ability to identify code-switching and understand its importance can provide teachers with a heightened awareness of its use in classroom discourse and lead to better instruction (Hughes, Shaunessy & Brice, 2006). A valuable asset of code-switching for instructional purposes is helping students to discern between formal and informal language. Code-switching provides a bridge between the two languages or language variations. Teachers trained to develop ICC can bridge the gap between informal and formal language. When discussing communicative functions Gumperz (1982) refers to the discourse function of code-switching as bridging the relational and referential function of language that amounts to effective communication and interlingual unity.

Teachers who have an understanding of code switching recognize this ability as competency and employ a more learner-centered approach to instruction (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Teaching students to code switch uses a learner-centered approach whereby teachers assist students in understanding how and when certain language usage is or is not appropriate. As demonstrated in the classroom students learn to ascertain which contexts require code-switching. Students realize that their language is viable and valuable as it is affirmed by their teachers.

SE is critical in today's emphasis on standards and assessment. A learner-centered approach that allows for code-switching can align with the standardized testing model because teachers exhibit how to interpret the language of a standardized test, a language that often appears to be foreign to many students (Greene & Walker, 2004). McCoy (2006) describes a teacher who succeeded at teaching 26 "at risk" students how to code-switch effectively; the teacher taught his students through role playing activities where he introduced settings such as a

job interview to help the students manipulate both academic language and AAE. The students then judged which language was appropriate for given settings. Instructional strategies are essential to any classroom, strategies that are effective with all students regardless of race or culture. Teachers should be able to identify strategies that would align with the unique culture of the students and their experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1998) such as the one in McCoy's study (2006).

Current research by Craig, Kolenic, and Hensel (2014) has led to a unique curriculum utilizing code-switching. One feature of the curriculum for elementary students is a collection of nine storybooks which places AAE and SE side by side to help children translate between the two and to get more comfortable using SE in a classroom setting. Craig et al. (2014) created a framework describing SE as formal and AAE as informal instead describing SE as right and AAE as wrong. Craig and her colleagues discovered that helping kids to understand how code-switching works on a grammatical level will allow them to compare and contrast AAE with SE. Findings from the Craig et al. study indicated that students who were able to code-switch and focus from one linguistic framework (AAE) to another (SE) were able to outperform students who were unable to code switch.

Conclusion

To communicate successfully, teachers need to know how to structure their output for maximum clarity and have strategies for understanding what students are saying. Understanding student discourse is key to the analysis of what students know, how they understand, and what teaching strategies would be useful. The impact of linguistic knowledge has been recognized for the past three decades within the English as Second Language community but very little has infiltrated the mainstream classroom with regard to pre-service teacher training and professional

development (Adger et al., 2002; Baugh, 2001; Burstein & Cabello, 1989; Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Delpit, 2009). Attention has been drawn to the idea of modifying instruction to meet the needs of AAE speakers as seen in the Oakland case and developing linguistic and cultural training for teachers to meet the needs of AAE speaking students in the Ann Arbor case. Both of these cases highlighted the importance of providing educators with cultural and linguistic knowledge to better inform instruction for AAE speaking students. Diverse classrooms have become part of our society; teachers are more and more likely to encounter students with whom they do not share a first language or dialect or native culture. As mentioned previously, language and culture are integrally related and should be considered in all aspects of research. An understanding of linguistics allows teachers to see that the discourse patterns they value are aspects of their own cultures and backgrounds; they are neither universal nor inherently more valid than other possible patterns (Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

The intent of this study was to explore what teachers know about AAE, how they know it and how they make use of what they know in the classrooms. Research in the field of linguistics has contributed significant data on linguistic diversity, which can support teachers in their classrooms. Through misconceptions and misinformation teachers often make false assumptions regarding the students whose ways of using language are not what they expect (Godley et al., 2006; Heath, 1983).

Models of intercultural communicative competence may serve as the means to develop the skills required to support AAE speaking students. The two models presented in this literature review identified the characteristics that exemplify ICC. The core dimensions of both models are attitudes (respect, empathy and openness to other cultures), knowledge of AAE and skills (strategies used in the classroom). Teachers who recognize and cultivate their own intercultural

communicative competencies can advance students who speak a dialect other than Standard English. Understanding and accepting a student's first language and possessing the knowledge to appreciate language varieties in the classroom comprise the fulcrum toward acceptance of AAE in the classroom (Delpit, 2009).

Chapter III: Methodology

This study was informed by the conceptual framework of the intercultural communicative competence theory and examined teachers' knowledge, attitudes and instructional practices regarding AAE. These elements are reflected in the following research questions:

1. What do teachers in the urban setting know about AAE and the relevance to their instructional practices?

2. Do urban teachers adjust their instructional practices to accommodate the needs of their AAE speaking students and if so how**?**

3. What are urban teachers' perceptions of AAE?

A qualitative research design was chosen to address the research questions. Qualitative research is an interpretive approach to describing the lived experience of human beings in their natural setting and an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem (Creswell, 1998). The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative research places emphasis on understanding through looking closely at people's words, actions and records

This case study explores the phenomenon of teachers working in predominately low-income schools teaching children who speak AAE. Taking a phenomenological stance is fitting because it "begins with the assumption that multiple realities are rooted in subjects' perspectives" (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006, p. 33). The meaning of an experience is determined by the perception of the people who have actively engaged in the experience; thus,

this type of study is designed to describe and interpret the experience (Ary et al., 2006) of the participants. The possibility remains that each participant holds a different perspective, which provides essential data. Each participant's perspective is his or her reality of a given situation. The focus is on the experience itself and how the experience is transformed into consciousness (Merriam, 2009).

This study explored what teachers know about AAE, how they know it and how they make use of what they know in the classrooms. The frames from ICC were re-interpreted and applied in the following manner: teachers' knowledge of AAE and linguistics was applied to knowledge of AAE, implementation of instruction that reflected teachers' attitudes and knowledge was used for skills. The objective was to explore how teachers communicate with, think about and/or respond to their AAE speaking students.

Research Site

The site chosen for this research was Delta Public Schools,[2] an urban district within a large metropolitan area. Three of the district's four schools were part of this study. The fourth school, a high school, was not included because instructional time with students, approximately 40 minutes a day, would limit observational time to obtain data to inform the study. This district was chosen because of its predominantly low income African American urban students, who are AAE speakers and its teaching staff who are primarily White. The three schools in the study were Geneva Middle School, Bentley Elementary and Rosewood Elementary.

The first school, Geneva Middle School, is open to students in grades six through eight. At the time of this study 369 students were enrolled. According to the State of Michigan

---

[2] All names are pseudonyms to provide anonymity to participants.

Educational Data (MI School Data, 2013), the majority of students (90%) were African American, one per cent was Hispanic and nine percent were Caucasian. Eighty-nine percent of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. Recent state test scores also indicated that an average of 48% were proficient in reading and an average of 15% were proficient in mathematics (MI School Data, 2013).

Bentley Elementary is a K-5 school with a population of 206 students enrolled at the time of the study: 80 % African American, 6 % Hispanic and 14 % Caucasian. Eighty per cent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch. At the time of the study, state assessments indicated that an average of 38% of the students were proficient at reading and an average of 19% of the students were proficient at math (MI School Data, 2013).

Rosewood Elementary, K-5, had a student population of 647 students. Sixty five per cent of the students were African American, 30% were Caucasian, 4% were Asian and the remaining 6% of students were designated as a mixed race. The average percentage of students who were proficient in reading was 49%. The average percentage of students proficient in math was 18 % (MI School Data, 2013).

Data Collection

Procedure. Consent was obtained from all study participants outlining the participants' rights and any risks associated with participation with the initial observations and interviews (Appendix A). Approval for this study was obtained from the researcher's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to all data collection. Participants were informed of the following: sample-selection process, the purpose of the research, and the nature of the questions asked. They were guaranteed confidentiality and informed they could withdraw from the process at any time

without negative consequences. Over the course of eight weeks, April 2013 through May 2013, individual interviews and classroom observations were conducted.

   Participants. The teacher participants were selected by the principal at each building. After providing teachers with a description of the study the principals asked for volunteers. The principals provided a list of names of all who volunteered. The researcher met with each teacher and details of the study were explained. A total of 14 K-8 teachers from Delta Schools were included in the study. The middle school teachers included one teacher who taught science and three who taught English. The other ten teachers were general education K-5 teachers. The teachers ranged in age between 31 to 60 years of age. With the exception of one teacher, all were female. Their years of teaching experience ranged from seven to 15 years or more. All fourteen participated in the survey component of the study, but due to time constraints only 12 of the teachers participated in the interviews. All 14 teachers were observed.

   Of the 14 participants (Table 3.1) nine were European American/Caucasian, non-Latino and five were African American. Six were between 31 to 40 years old; five were between 41 to 50 years old; and, three were between 51 to 60 years old. Twelve of the respondents reported having master's degrees plus several semester hours beyond. One teacher had only a master's degree with no additional coursework and one teacher had an educational specialist degree. Two were members of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), one was a member of the International Reading Association (IRA) and five had no professional membership for English Language Arts. Teachers were only asked to provide professional membership in English language arts organizations. Eight of the teachers taught in grades K-5 and six taught in 6-8.

Table 3.1

Demographics

Category	Number
Gender	
Female	13
Male	1
Racial/Ethnic Identification	
African American	5
European American/Caucasian, non-Latino	9
Age Range	
31-40	6
41-50	5
51-60	3
Highest Level of Education Obtained	
Master's Degree	1
Master's plus semester hours beyond	12
Specialist Degree	1
Member Organization	
NCTE	2
IRA	1
No professional memberships for ELA	5
NA	7
Number of Years Teaching	
7-10 years	1
11-14 years	5
15 years or more	8
Current Teaching Level	
Grades K-5	8
Grades 6-8	6

Data obtained. Data for this study were collected between April 10, 2013, and May 21, 2013 (Table 3.2). They included field notes from participant observations, interviews and surveys. Data were collected in three phases. Phase 1 consisted of distribution and completion

of the survey. Phase 2 consisted of interview questions regarding teacher knowledge and

perception of AAE language, instructional training and practices. Phase 3 consisted of

classroom observations, which were used to align responses from Phase 1 and 2.

Phase 1: Surveys. In phase 1 of the study, all 14 teachers completed Smitherman and

Villenueva's (2000) survey "Language Knowledge and Awareness Survey" (Appendix B). Dr.

Smitherman, a veteran researcher in the field of African American English, was contacted and

permission to use the survey was ultimately granted via email from the Language Policy

committee an arm of the National Council for the Teachers of English (NCTE) (Appendix C).

Table 3.2

Timeline for Research

_____

	Beginning Date	Ending Date
Phase 1 (Surveys)	April 10, 2013	April 17, 2013
Phase 2 (Interviews)	April 18, 2013	May 2, 2013
Phase 3 (Observations)	April 24, 2013	May 21, 2013

_____

The first section of the survey contained close-ended questions about attitudes toward

language variation, grammar and bi/multilingualism. The second section contained questions

regarding training in language diversity, what academic training in language diversity is needed

and what are the attitudes of the teachers toward their own language. This section also contained

reflective questions regarding teachers' awareness of their teaching practices as they pertain to

language diversity. The third section of the survey asked for demographic information: age,

gender, ethnicity, teaching experience, highest level of education, current grade(s) taught, professional organization membership and current teaching level.

Phase 2: **Interviews.** Twelve participants then completed a semi-structured interview (Appendix D). Two teachers were unable to complete the interviews due to time constraints. Guiding statements were used to help identify possible factors related to teachers' experiences with the culture and language of AAE students. The interview focused on clarifying questions and inquiries about the teachers' instructional practices and reflections on teachers' language and culture. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed. Throughout the interviews, member checking was used not only to confirm the statements but also my interpretation of the statements.

The interviews consisted of 12 open ended questions with probes. Each interview lasted approximately one to two hours. Nine of the interviews were conducted in each teacher's classroom the other three were conducted over the phone.

Phase 3: **Observation and field notes.** Classroom observations were carried out after surveys and interviews were completed. As stated previously, only 12 participants were observed. An initial analysis of the survey and interview data was conducted prior to classroom observations. Participants determined the day and time for the observations. The observations ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. Observations focused on teacher language and practices that reflected the tenants proposed by Byram (1994) and Deardorff (2004): attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Synchronous field notes were taken and a matrix was developed for observations. The matrix was created from survey items and interview responses that correlated with ICC models (Appendix E).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

      Data organization. Field notes and detailed annotations for each classroom observation were hand written and organized by teacher names and dates. The matrix was also used during observations. Detailed notes documented all student to teacher and teacher to student interactions for each observation which included both direct instruction, and informal interchanges.

      Audio recordings of teacher interviews were transcribed and stored electronically. Hard copies of the transcriptions were printed and stored in a three ring binder with all corresponding annotations. Data from the survey were entered into a digital spreadsheet. A hard copy of the spread sheet was printed and included in the binder. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously to support a systematized and coherent interpretation of all data. Triangulation of data was attained by examining data from the survey, interviews and field notes from classroom observations.

      Coding. Transcriptions of audio recordings, field notes and surveys were coded and analyzed to look for emerging categories and patterns. Initial coding of all data sets was based on the analysis of the literature for similar key words or concepts. Initial coding was guided by the concepts and terms related to the literature review, specifically the ICC models of Deardorff (2004) and Byram (1997). The terms and concepts used were: attitudes, knowledge, skills. During the first cycle survey data and interview data were coded to identify the three constructs of the study design. The second cycle of coding was comprised of further analysis to check for categories across the data. The categories were used to design a matrix for classroom observations.

Matrix. A matrix was created prior to and used during classroom observations. Descriptors were circled to indicate when characteristics that identified ICC were observed (Appendix E). Field notes added observation details. The categories were inserted based on the analysis of the survey and interview data. The matrix was then used as observations were conducted checking off items as they were observed. The behaviors and responses observed were then coded in colors reflecting elements of ICC such as: empathy, relationship, respect and openness. The use of contrastive analysis was seen as openness, the willingness to talk about how people speak differently or point out that SE is different way of speaking or by recognizing AAE positively in discourse or writing. Empathy was determined by actions or words, which demonstrated that the teachers responded to students by using a student's perspective. Using code-switching, which facilitated understanding, was an indicator of empathy as was using culturally relevant reading material. Helping student make cultural connections and initiating conversations about how people speak differently in diverse situations helped establish relationships. The primary focus of the observations was on how the teachers interacted with the students and the discourse that indicated either acceptance or rejection of the language used by students. Much of the time was spent observing the language teachers used to engage, relate and encourage the students. Any questions concerning the observations were addressed with the teachers for the purpose of member checking. The teachers were contacted by phone or email after the observations were completed.

Categories

Initial coding was later evaluated for recurring categories. Observations were first coded by categories associated with attitudes, skills and knowledge. These finding were then examined using race. Analysis of the data obtained from classroom observations, interviews and the

survey resulted in four emergent categories. In Chapter IV, the data collected for this study will

be presented and the emergent categories are described.

Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to determine teachers' current perceptions and knowledge about AAE and instructional practices with AAE speaking students. The researcher used classroom observations conducted and recorded nine, one-to-one, semi-structured interviews and surveyed fourteen teachers who had daily interactions and communications with AAE speaking urban school children. This study was guided by three main research questions:

Research Question 1: What do teachers in the urban setting know about AAE their students speak and the relevance to their instructional practices?

Research Question 2: Do urban teachers adjust their instructional practices to accommodate the needs of their AAE speaking students and if so how?

Research Question 3: What are urban teachers' perceptions of AAE?

This chapter presents the qualitative analysis of findings, which provided information about teacher knowledge, perceptions and practices from the three urban schools namely, Rosewood Elementary School, Bentley Elementary School, and Geneva Middle School. Four main categories emerged: (a) knowledge of African American English, (b) attitudes toward AAE, (c) strategies to address use of AAE, and (d) skills considered relevant for preparing future urban teachers, and (e) race, which is presented in the narrative throughout the other four categories (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Participants: AAE Knowledge, Attitudes and Strategies Employed

Race/Teacher	Grade Level	Coursework	Experience	Attitude Toward AAE	Strategies
Black Teachers					
Carehart	1st Grade	No	Personal & Classroom	Negative	Yes
Lodge	5th Grade	Yes	Personal & Classroom	Negative/Contextual	Yes
Parks	Middle School ELA	Yes	Personal & Classroom	Negative/Contextual	Yes
Prescott	5th Grade	Yes	Personal & Classroom	Prescott/Contextual	Yes
Sampson	Middle School ELA	Yes	Personal & Classroom	Negative	Yes
White Teachers					
Abram	2nd Grade	No	Classroom	Negative	No
Basil	3rd Grade	Yes	Classroom	Negative	No
Graves	Middle School English	Yes	Classroom	Negative	No
Major	1st Grade	No	Classroom	Negative	No
Mentor	Kindergarten	No	Classroom	Negative	No
Newton	4th Grade	No	Classroom	Negative	No
Ralin	Middle School ELA	Yes	Classroom	Negative/Contextual	No
Tandor	4th Grade	Yes	Classroom	Negative	No
Witson	Middle School Science	Yes	Classroom	Positive/Contextual	Yes

The following section is a discussion presented in two parts: (a) teacher profiles by race and (b) the four categories. These profiles along with pertinent statements within each category provide context for an appropriate understanding of teachers' perceptions of AAE. Classroom practices employed which support AAE speaking students by the teachers are also included.

Black Teacher Profiles

Ms. Carehart. Ms. Carehart has over 20 years of experience at the primary level. At the time of this study she was teaching first grade at Bentley Elementary. Her entire career has been with the current district. Ms. Carehart had coursework beyond her master's degree. None of her coursework included a linguistics class. When asked to rank courses that she would recommend for anyone preparing to be a teacher today she ranked Introduction to the English Language[3] as most important and African American English as least important. Ms. Carehart uses AAE but was taught to use SE. When growing up her mother corrected her when she spoke AAE, which she thought was helpful. Ms. Carehart stated she believes in a classroom that is learner-centered and incorporates the community. An older woman was present in the classroom at the time of the observation and was referred to as granny by the children and Ms. Carehart. Granny would listen to the stories the children wrote and would work with them one to one. It is not known if Granny was unique to Ms. Carehart's classroom. Community volunteers in other classrooms were not present during observations.

Mr. Lodge. Mr. Lodge is a teacher at Bentley Elementary. At the time of this research he was teaching fifth grade. He has a master's degree plus hours beyond and is the first person in his family to obtain a master's degree. His grandmother has a bachelor's degree. Mr. Lodge stated his grandmother had a big influence on his life and stressed the importance of SE to achieve success. Mr. Lodge has been teaching for over 10 years. He had limited coursework in linguistics; his only class was Linguistics for Teachers. He stated he did not like the class, but

---

[3] This and other titles used are not the titles of actual courses teachers took but rather what they checked off on the survey.

remembers terms like "syntax, semantic and all those other terms" (Interview, 4/29/2013). He indicated that courses such as Linguistics for Teachers and African American Dialects are important for anyone preparing to be a teacher today. He stated that his class on interpersonal skills was most beneficial. His grandmother, who was a minister, explained to him that as a Black man it was necessary to "be a little bit better, speak a little bit clearer, work a little bit harder than other people." The implication being that Standard English is the English used by educated people and to attain a life of success Standard English and only Standard English may be used. Mr. Lodge stated that his training in early childhood and his practicum in second grade prepared him to be effective in any classroom. He also stated that being a parent is the best training for a teacher. Mr. Lodge believes that integrating more singing and rapping into the curriculum would help his students. He also stated that having a learner-centered classroom where students learn from each other is better for his students.

Ms. Parks. Ms. Parks is an ELA teacher at Geneva Middle School. Ms. Parks had a master's degree plus several hours beyond. Her college coursework included classes in African American English and Linguistics for Teachers. Ms. Parks has taught for less than 10 years in the urban setting. She stated that she grew up in a large urban area in the Midwest and lives in a neighborhood within the school district. During the interview she stated,

"I'm just like them. I came from urban surrounding. I grew up in large urban area with a single parent. I graduated from a large, urban, public school. When I see these students, mostly the girls that come in, I have so much in common with them, so it makes it easier to relate to them." (Interview, 4/25/2013)

Ms. Prescott. Ms. Prescott is a fifth grade teacher with over 15 years of experience at Rosewood Elementary. She indicated on the survey that her students do not raise issues about

language diversity; however, she also indicated on the survey that she discussed the following with her students: language diversity, status and appropriateness of languages, and differences between dialect and slang. During the interview she stated that her classmates did not like the courses in linguistics and some failed the class but that she enjoyed the classes even though they were difficult. An issue of concern, as indicated on the survey, was that students overall struggle with speaking and writing in SE. In the interview she stated that she had "a very active family and parents, mom who pushed me, grandparents who were extremely involved, an educated family . . . . [But she] was not upper or middle class where many of my classmates were" (Interview, 5/01/2013). She also indicated that she has a problem with statements that identify children of poverty not being able to meet the standards. "It [students' lack of success] has to do with what's taught and instilled in the home and then what we reinforce at school" (Interview, 5/01/2013). During the interview Ms. Prescott stated that she did not feel African American studies were touched upon in a way to allow children to identify their part of being an American. She said,

> African American studies is an integral aspect of American history so I read a lot about that [for her own knowledge and in class] and I'm able to just make a lot of connections to help the students understand too. (Interview, 5/01/2013)

Ms. Sampson. Ms. Sampson is an ELA teacher at Geneva Middle School. She hails from the south and has taught for more than 20 years. Ms. Sampson has a master's degree plus hours beyond. Her coursework in college included Language Diversity and Introduction to the English Language. Ms. Sampson stated she did not know if AAE was slang or dialect. She was aware of the studies on the African American language and understood it as the language rooted out of slavery. She described it as different from regular language [SE] or traditional English.

54

On the survey Ms. Sampson wrote a question next to the title African American English, "What is this? Is this different than standard English?" (Survey, 4/2013). During the interview Ms. Sampson indicated that AAE was slang; she said, "It's slang. All kids have slang. I don't care where the kids come from. They have slang. Slang is a part of the vernacular of our culture." Ms. Sampson indicated that she was concerned about the term African American English. She felt it suggested that African Americans spoke a foreign language compared to the rest of the nation. In both the survey and interview, Ms. Sampson indicated that "other races of people use slang or non-Standard English when they communicate, so why does the survey suggest, somewhat stereotypically, that African Americans are "unique" to the usage of non-Standard English" (Survey, 4/2013). Ms. Sampson was observed to be an AAE speaker but did not identify her English as AAE. In the survey she described the language that she speaks as SE. In the classroom Ms. Sampson used AAE when engaged in discourse with her AAE speaking students. Ms. Sampson ended the survey by indicating her greatest concern: "As a teacher, one concern is that my students gain a great understanding of the language. Especially I want to make sure they have a command of vocabulary (Survey, 4/2013).

White Teacher Profiles

   Ms. Abram. Ms. Abram is a second grade teacher at Rosewood Elementary. Ms. Abram grew up in an area outside of the school district and currently resides in that same area. Ms. Abram's has over 10 years of experience and a Masters of Arts in teaching. She is currently working on a master's in administration. She did not recall having a course in linguistics in any of her coursework. Her current training has been in cognitive coaching which she employs in her classroom with her second grade students. At the time of the observation her classroom was set up for group learning emphasizing a learner-centered approach to instruction. When asked

what she would like to know more about to help facilitate learning for her students she replied, "I think what I would like to know more about is to have more intense training on how to work with urban students."

Ms. Basil. Ms. Basil is a teacher with over 10 years of experience in the elementary school setting and a Masters of Arts in teaching. At the time of this study Ms. Basil was teaching third grade at Rosewood Elementary. She is single and lives in a suburb outside of the school district. At the time of the observation her classroom was set up for group learning with desks arranged in clusters of four. Ms. Basil had two courses in linguistics while in college, introduction to the English Language and Linguistics for Teachers. Ms.Basil believes it is important for her students to learn SE. Her students have raised the topic about differences between dialect and slang. When students use nonstandard dialect features in their speech she discussed the importance of knowing both standard and nonstandard and the contexts when each is appropriate. Ms. Basil stated, "Children need to learn the correct language, they should know when to use it and when it is appropriate to use slang."

Ms. Graves. Ms. Graves is an ELA teacher at Geneva Middle School with over 20 years of experience in the classroom. Ms. Graves had coursework in African American English and American Dialects. She acknowledged awareness of the Ebonics debate from "the 80s and 90s," but defined the language her students speak as "urban English" and as being "heavily influenced with southern accents and idioms, pronunciations, dropping the "g" in the "ing" suffix. It's very casual speech" (Interview, 4/12/13). Ms.Graves also believed that her students' only exposure to Standard English outside of the classroom was through television. Ms. Graves' survey responses indicated that she provided discussions regarding the differences between dialect and language, or dialect and slang and why everyone does not speak the same way.

Ms. Major. Ms. Major is teacher with over 15 years' experience. At the time of this research she was a first grade teacher at Rosewood Elementary. Ms. Major has a master's degree plus hours beyond. None of her coursework included linguistics. The only coursework she would recommend to new teachers is introduction to the English Language. Ms. Major indicated that students need to master SE for upward mobility. She also indicated that students do not need to learn grammar rules to improve their ability to understand and communicate concepts and information. Students in her class did not ask about language diversity and she rarely discusses it.

Ms. Mentor. Ms. Mentor is a teacher at Rosewood Elementary with over 20 years of experience in the kindergarten classroom. She has a master's degree plus additional hours. None of her college coursework included courses on linguistics. Ms. Mentor indicated that introduction to English and American dialects were the most important coursework for anyone preparing to become a teacher. Ms. Mentor used the language experience approach for instruction in her classroom. At the end of each unit she created a book for each student whereby each student dictated his or her story related to the topic of the unit. During classroom discussion she repeated what the student said using SE but never told a student that is not how to speak or corrected what the student stated. She indicated afterward that she did employ contrastive analysis to assist students with SE. When asked about what language issues most concerned her, Ms. Mentor replied, "Young children are not always talked to and lack conversation skills. Many students do not speak in complete sentences" (Survey, 5/4/2013). The teacher created a memory book for each student at the end of the year. The cover of each book has a picture of the student when they first entered kindergarten and a page for an activity from

each month created by the student. The sentences in the memory books were written by the

students.

       Ms. Newton. Ms. Newton is a teacher at Bentley Elementary with over 10 years of

experience at the elementary level. At the time of the study she was teaching third grade. She

lives in a suburb outside of the district and grew up in that same suburb. She has a master's

degree plus additional hours. Even though she had no courses in language diversity while in

college, Ms. Newton indicated that she would recommend the courses Introduction to the

English Language and American Dialects to anyone preparing to become a teacher today. Ms.

Newton also stated that the college classes she took did not really address the challenges in her

classroom. Ms. Newton stated that the students who attend her school face many problems such

as "having a parent in jail, broken home, moving from place to place and some not having a

home at all" (Interview, 4/30/2013).

       Ms. Ralin. Ms. Ralin is an ELA teacher at Geneva Middle school with over 10 years of

experience teaching in grades three through eight. Ms. Ralin has administrative certification.

Her college coursework included Linguistics for Teachers. Ms. Ralin grew up in a suburban

area, attended college in a rural area and currently resides in a suburb. She stated that she comes

from a family of educators. She did her student teaching "in a rural community, with very

different children than I have now" (Interview, 4/10/13). When asked if it was important to learn

about the families and community where she teaches, Ms. Ralin responded:

     Learning about the student [sic] themselves rather than just teaching to a student. But to

     understand what this student is experiencing and just learning about them. Because I

     think in any community a child can be experiencing things we don't know. And if we

don't learn about the child themselves [sic] and their [sic] home life, you can't really,

teach them, they can't learn from you if you don't understand them. (Interview, 4/10/13)

  Ms. Ralin indicated Linguistics for Teachers and American Dialects as being important for

teacher preparation. She also wrote on the survey that "The inability of students to understand

that proper English needs to be used in certain situations" is an issue that is of concern to her.

Ms. Tandor. Ms.Tandor is a teacher at Rosewood Elementary. At the time of the study

she was teaching fourth grade. She has over 15 years of experience and has a master's degree

plus additional hours. Her college coursework included a class in Language Diversity and one in

Linguistics for Teachers. Ms.Tandor lives in a suburb outside of the district. She stated that the

best professional development she has had is the experience of teaching in her current district.

She stated,

I mean, just experience it and seeing what they need and how they come in and they don't

have a lot of structure at home. People can tell you this and you still want to come in

when you're graduating and say, Oh, I'm going to make a difference and I'm going to

do this. You want the kids to like you; well, liking you isn't going to help them if they

don't respect you and know that you have boundaries. People tell you to do things, but in

the heat of the moment you try to do things that you think of. I think that experience in

seeing that these kids especially need procedures and need discipline and need focus.

Because there's many times and I'm not saying always, because that's not always the

case, but in a lot of instances in our district they live chaotic lives, so they're going to

learn better and they're going to blossom more so than if they have a little bit more set

procedures and structure. (Interview, 5/1/2013)

Ms.Tandor stated that the best lessons were the ones where "you put a little more effort into knowing your kids, to know that they would do better whether its hands on or visual or something from the smart board" (Interview, 5/1/2013). Ms. Tandor discussed language with her students such as, differences between dialect and slang and why everyone does not speak the same way. She also discussed knowing standard and non-Standard English and the contexts when each is appropriate.

Ms. Witson. Ms.Witson is a science teacher at the Geneva Middle School. Ms.Witson has over 15 years of experience and has a master's degree plus additional hours. Her college courses included the following classes in linguistics: African American English, Introduction to the English Language and Linguistics for Teachers. Ms.Witson identified Introduction to the English Language and courses such as African American English and American Dialects to be important for those preparing to become teachers. She also stated that she took a class in multicultural education which helped her to understand her students. She indicated that her students spoke AAE. Ms. Witson's entire career has been with her current district. Ms.Witson's classes were held in a computer lab where she described her approach as learner-centered. She stated that language is important for student success and discusses the equality of all languages and language varieties with her students. Her students have raised the question, "Why doesn't everyone speak the same way?" Ms. Witson stated in the interview that when these questions arise in class she addresses them through discussion. Her survey response indicated that it is important to discuss knowing both standard and non-Standard English and the contexts when each is appropriate. Her students are required to write about projects they have worked on and present their findings to the class with power points. She stated that she uses contrastive analysis to support her students' writing. She also stated that children who have not mastered SE struggle

with state assessments not only because of SE but because of the academic language used on the

assessments. Ms. Witson stated loves teaching her students and tries to provide them with

instruction that develops higher order thinking skills and has high expectations. She

acknowledged that poverty is an issue. She stated, "I absolutely love them and their families,

their culture and again, I understand them, but just one big issue is the cycle of poverty most of

them deal with." When asked what she has learned from her students to help her instruction in

the classroom she stated,

> "The most important thing I've learned from them is that they are all important no matter
>
> where they come from. They're so important to me no matter where they're coming
>
> from. I always keep that in mind. We never know what's going on in their home
>
> environment and that has opened my eyes. Who knows what problems, what situations
>
> that they're dealing with and each and every one of them are important. I love teaching
>
> them." (Interview, 4/14/2013)

All of the teachers in this study have distinctive backgrounds and life experiences, which helped

shape their attitudes toward AAE. The data revealed some details of their backgrounds and

attributes as classroom teachers. The categories presented in the next section emerged from the

analysis of the data.

Categories

An analysis of the data obtained from classroom observations, interviews and the survey

resulted in four categories in addition to race. The first category is knowledge of AAE, how is it

defined and how the teachers attained their understandings of AAE. The second category

describes the attitudes of the teachers towards AAE. The third category identifies the strategies

teachers used in their classrooms to address AAE. The fourth and final category presents the relevant skills for urban teachers that were suggested by the participants.

Knowledge of African American English. The first category pertains to the knowledge or awareness of urban teachers who participated in the study regarding non-standard English. The teachers in this study became aware of African American English (AAE) through different experiences, which included coursework during their educational training, personal histories and classroom experience. The findings were differentiated by race. Out of the five Black teachers (Carehart, Lodge, Parks, Prescott and Sampson) only Ms. Carehart indicated not having coursework in linguistics. All but three of the White teachers (Major, Mentor and Newton) had some coursework. All five African American teachers reported knowing about AAE through personal experience as African Americans. Six of the White teachers became familiar with AAE through their teaching experience (Allen, Basil, Major, Mentor, Newton & Ralin) (Table 4.2). The other three White teachers became familiar with AAE through coursework and experience with teaching AAE speakers.

Knowledge from coursework. Based on the survey responses, four Black teachers, Mr. Lodge, Ms. Parks, Ms. Prescott and Ms. Sampson, reported having coursework in linguistics during their teacher preparation programs; Ms. Carehart, reported having no prior coursework in linguistics. Three Black teachers, Mr. Lodge, Ms. Parks and Ms. Prescott, had coursework in African American English and Linguistics for Teachers. In addition to coursework in AAE, Ms. Prescott had coursework in American dialects. Ms. Sampson, had coursework in Introduction to the English Language.

Two White teachers, Ms. Graves and Ms. Witson, had coursework in African American English. Ms. Basil and Ms. Witson had coursework in Introduction to the English Language. In

addition to coursework in AAE, Ms. Graves had coursework in American Dialects. Four white teachers, Ms. Abram, Ms. Basil, Ms. Ralin and Ms. Tandor had coursework in Linguistics for Teachers.

Ms. Witson spoke about the exposure to multi-cultural classroom training from her coursework and how it helped her become more informed about non-standard English. She stated:

I had a couple of classes about the multi-cultural classroom. I had a teacher in undergrad. I can't remember his last name but he was amazing. I learned a lot with him. He prepared us with simulations and a lot of role-playing. We learned a lot about African American culture and its language. It was a very good class. (Interview, 4/14/2013)

Ms. Graves, who had coursework in AAE and American dialects, described AAE as follows:

I think it's more urban English; I would call it, which is used by the African-American community. I wouldn't call it Ebonics, as defined back in the '80s and '90s. It's been heavily influenced with southern accents and idioms, pronunciations, dropping the "g" in the "ing" suffix. It's very casual speech. (Interview, 4/12/2013)

Ms. Tandor who had coursework in Linguistics for Teachers was aware of dialects and language variations including AAE. She stated:

I think having those classes made you aware of different dialects and different ways people spoke and why they spoke that way. You have an idea that a lot of times it was just what they know in my district where they have Black vernacular English. (Interview, 5/01/2013)

Table 4.2

Source of Teacher Knowledge of AAE

Black Teachers			
University Coursework	No University Coursework	Personal Experience	Classroom Experience
AAE: Lodge, Parks, Prescott American Dialects: Prescott Introduction to the English Language: Sampson Linguistics for Teachers: Lodge, Parks, Prescott,	Carehart	Carehart, Lodge, Parks, Prescott & Sampson	Carehart, Lodge, Parks, Prescott, Sampson
White Teachers			
University Coursework	No University Coursework	Personal Experience	Classroom Experience
AAE: Graves & Witson American Dialects: Graves Introduction to the English Language: Basil & Witson Linguistics for Teachers: Abram, Basil, Ralin, Tandor & Witson	Major, Mentor & Newton	N/A	Abram,Basil,Graves, Major, Mentor, Newton, Ralin,Tandor, Witson

Knowledge from personal experience. Ms. Sampson grew up speaking AAE but did not

identify her language as AAE. She stated the following:

I know we've had this study about this African American language and all of that. Got to

know where it comes from and this language has been rooted out of slavery coming into a

world where you were segregated all the way up until the 70's because I'm from

Mississippi and my sisters were segregated. They couldn't mingle too. They're saying

equal kind and join them until the 70's. She was the first class that graduated in an

integrated school in '74 so you have to look at the history of where people are coming

from so you might have some family members who are not as educated as we say the

64

regular language. I don't know if I like that term but so called regular language.

(Interview, 4/17/2013)

Ms. Parks grew up in a large urban city speaking AAE. She described her first days of

college as a culture shock. She was afraid to use AAE for fear she would be perceived as a

"ghetto girl." She stated:

When I started college, it was like a culture shock for me. I'd never really been outside

of [the city]. Even though Atlanta being only an hour away, I go and I'm like, "Oh, my

goodness. I've never been around people that are so different than me." I would be in

class and I'd know the answer to a question and I'm like, "I'm not going to raise my

hand" because I didn't want the other students to judge me and say, "Look at that, what a

ghetto girl" or talk about my language. (04/18/2014)

Mr. Lodge learned to speak AAE while growing up and viewed it as the language spoken

by his friends in his neighborhood. Mr. Lodge reported having coursework on AAE but he

credited his early high school experiences socializing with his friends as the source of his

knowledge of AAE as being different from SE. He stated:

I had a situation where I, when I was in high school, had a whole bunch of friends, core

friends who were Black. Now we went to school and we all graduated. I went to college

and some of them went to work at the Ford plant, we've gone our separate ways. But a

couple of times when we were out, hanging out, [After returning home from college] my

friends would make fun of me. They would say, "Man, you sound White." They'd make

fun of me, what's with you man, you sound White. And every now and then, I got

offended a little bit; I got hurt a little bit. (Interview, 4/29/2013)

When Mr. Lodge related this experience to his grandmother and she assured him that there was nothing wrong with his language stating that it was all a part of "getting ready for the real world, getting ready for the job world."

Knowledge from classroom experience. Five of the White teachers gained knowledge about AAE from their classroom experiences. All five teachers indicated their experience with AAE came from interaction with their AAE speaking students. Ms. Abram expressed a desire to learn more about the urban learner. She stated, "I think what I would like to know more about is to have more intense training on how to work with urban students." All of her classroom experience has been with her current district. Ms. Mentor is another teacher whose teaching experience has been within the same district. Ms. Mentor stated she was concerned about the sentences used by her students and indicated they used incomplete sentences; she gave the example of students saying, "They fighting." Ms. Basil, Ms. Mentor and Ms. Newton acquired their knowledge about AAE from being in the classroom with AAE speaking students.

Based on different sources of data, interviews and surveys, knowledge of AAE for the Black teachers came from personal experiences as Blacks and coursework in linguistics in their college years. However, the White teachers' knowledge of AAE came from coursework and experience in the classroom. Knowledge of AAE for the Black teachers is personal. Knowledge of AAE for the White teachers is what they have learned from books or from the experience of teaching.

Attitudes toward AAE. The second category pertained to the attitudes of teachers regarding AAE. This category is organized into three main subcategories: (a) AAE viewed as negative, (b) AAE viewed as positive, and (c) AAE viewed as contextual. The statements from

the interviews and surveys as well as classroom observations are presented in Table 4.3, Table 4.4 and Table 4.5

AAE viewed negatively. All of the teachers, in this study, regardless of race, held negative views of AAE. Among the Black teachers one teacher saw it as the language of the uneducated, another indicated only SE should be spoken at home and others saw AAE as a barrier to social mobility. One White teacher saw it as a bad habit that needed to be broken while others saw it as an incorrect way of speaking.

Black teachers' views. Mr. Lodge described AAE as the language of those who are "not educated." His view was based on what he was taught by his grandmother who told him that society expected proper English. Mr. Lodge said, "Unfortunately society expects people to use proper English etiquette to be perceived as educated." Mr. Lodge corrected his students' usage of AAE and stated it was not English. On the day of observation, Mr. Lodge was conducting a writing class based on a topic that was given to the students on the previous day. Mr. Lodge reviewed the topic with the students and then directed to students to share their writings with one another. One of the students shared his writing with Mr. Lodge and Mr. Lodge commented on the student's use of the word "ain't" and "fittin to"stating that these were not English and could not be used in the paragraph. During the interview Mr. Lodge stated, "I will say fittin to is not a word. And other stuff like ain't, I'll correct."

Ms. Prescott and Ms. Sampson viewed AAE as slang. Ms. Sampson stated, "It's slang. All kids have slang. I don't care where the kids come from. They have slang. Slang is a part of the vernacular of our culture." Ms. Prescott referred to the language spoken by the parents as slang. On the survey Ms. Carehart indicated that she did not believe there are valid reasons for using non-standard dialects.

Mr. Lodge and Ms. Sampson all indicated that the students need to learn SE for social mobility. Ms. Sampson stated that students "are going to have to learn [SE] in order to articulate through the system to get a better education and you know, to get a job." Mr. Lodge indicated that SE is necessary to "get ahead in the world."

White teachers' views. The White teachers described AAE in the interviews in a variety of negative ways. Ms. Basil and Ms. Newton identified AAE as slang. Ms. Tandor and Ms. Newton indicated it was not proper English. Ms. Tandor stated that she takes great effort in trying to teach the students proper English but the students use the language that they know and that language is not proper English. Ms. Tandor had one class, Linguistics for Teachers, at the college level. The class, according to Ms. Tandor made her aware of different dialects and "different ways people spoke and why they spoke that way." She corrected AAE when her students used this type of language in her classrooms. Ms. Tandor said,

> You have an idea that a lot of times that's all they know. You have an idea that a lot of
>
> times that's just what they know. In my district where they have Black vernacular
>
> English, many of them do not speak proper English. You can do what you can to show
>
> them and teach them, but the bottom line is they go home to hearing it inappropriately
>
> and in the wrong context. (Interview, 5/01/2013)

Other teachers had students repeat answers spoken in AAE until it was stated correctly. Ms. Abram and Ms. Tandor did not believe there were valid reasons for using non-standard dialects and also indicated SE should be used in the home. All of these views were recorded as negative (Table 4.3).

White Teachers' Negative perceptions of the students. Some teachers described the AAE speaker in a negative light by indicating they were deficient because of their language. A

dialectal prejudice emerged indicated that the students had articulation problems or were lazy.

Ms. Ralin indicated that the students were unwilling to put forth the effort:

> The problem I feel with their English and the way they speak, and I tell them this, and I
>
> tell them it's just not them, it's everybody, we're all lazy. We leave out parts of words.
>
> Even LOL, it's lazy. I use it, I do, I'm guilty of it but it's lazy. Their words that they use
>
> it's lazy, it's a shortened version of it. So spelling to them, they don't hear all the sounds
>
> in their words. So they can't spell very well because when they speak they leave out
>
> sounds. (Interview, 4/10/2013)

Table 4.3

Negative Attitudes toward AAE

Category	Black Teachers	White Teachers
Purpose • Disagreed with survey statement: "There are valid reasons for using non-standard dialects" • Agreed with the survey statement: "In the home, students should be exposed to standard English only. • Agreed with the survey statement: "Students should learn [SE] grammar rules to improve their ability to understand and communicate concepts and information" • Agreed with the survey statement: "Students need to master Standard English for upward mobility" • "Need to speak correct language for job interviews…. for economic success and social success	Carehart Carehart Lodge, Parks, Prescott, Sampson Lodge, Prescott, Sampson Sampson	Abram, Tandor Tandor, Ralin Abram, Basil, Graves, Major, Mentor, Newton, Tandor, Witson Abram, Basil, Graves, Major, Mentor, Newton, Tandor, Witson
AAE as English • "Wrong English" • Have students repeat in SE • "Not proper" • "Incorrect language" • "Slang"	 Prescott, Sampson	 Abram Abram, Tandor, Ralin Tandor, Newton Newton Basil, Newton, Ralin
AAE speakers • "Language of the "uneducated" • "Lazy" • "Need to break it"[as in a bad habit] • "Some of them are struggling with coming out of that use of Ebonics, use of African English" • "They don't hear sounds" • "Articulation-wise, they are confused?	Lodge	 Ralin Abram Ralin Ralin Abram

Ms. Ralin also stated, "Some of them are struggling with coming out of that use of Ebonics, use of African English. And they will use it every so often. We talk about proper, or formal and informal English"

Ms. Abram, who had coursework in language diversity during her training and viewed AAE as a type of English language, noted that she had to "break" the habit of using AAE and replace non-standard English with SE. Ms. Abram continued to explain that the students who speak AAE have a problem with articulation. She then continued to explain that it is necessary for her to restructure the sentences of the students so they are able to hear them the correct way. She also stated that the children need to hear the "right" English, but that the language of the student is wrong. Ms. Abram does tell her students that they are speaking incorrectly; however, she has her students restate the sentence until it is stated the right way. She said,

> Articulation-wise, sometimes they are a little confused and then just sometimes it's, [for example, the student says] I gotta use it. [I say] You got to use what? [Student] I have to use the lavatory. I have to use the bathroom, "Excuse me, may I use the bathroom?" Just like correcting "the gottas" and stuff like that. I think they need to hear it the right way. (Interview, 5/01/2013)

Black and White hold Negative values due to utility. Eleven out of the 14 respondents agreed to the statement that "Students need to master Standard English for upward mobility." The responses suggest the need for AAE speakers to conform to Standard English in order to be successful. Ms. Sampson stated,

> My opinion is if they [the students] had to go into a job setting they're going to have to learn how to do; I guess you'll say traditional English but it can be taught they are going to have to learn it in order to articulate through the system to get a better education and

70

you know, to get a job. I can understand what they're saying. It's slang. (Interview,

4/27/2013)

Ms. Newton stated that it was okay to use AAE at home but when students go on a job

interview they "will need to speak correctly."

To summarize, all participants in the study provided views about AAE that were

considered negative. Both Black and White teachers had negative perceptions of AAE. These

negative views were presented as AAE not being proper English or slang. Some teachers viewed

the AAE speaker in a negative light stating that AAE is the language of the uneducated or a lazy

way of speaking.

AAE viewed positively by Black teachers. The results of the analysis of the data

showed that some participants viewed AAE primarily in positive terms. An attitude of respect

for AAE emerged when Black teachers recognized its place in history and accepted it in

classroom discourse. All five Black teachers allowed AAE to be spoken in the classroom and

four did not correct its usage (Table 4.4).

Ms. Sampson did not label AAE but knew it existed. While in class, Ms. Sampson did

not correct students who used AAE. The interaction between Ms. Sampson and the students

seemed comfortable and easy, as reflected with the use of both AAE and SE in class. No

corrections were made and a majority of the students participated in the discussion. Ms.

Sampson referred to SE as regular language but was not sure if she liked the term "regular

language." Ms. Sampson previously was cited as viewing AAE as negative but she also referred

to the historical significance of AAE. She stated, "But you have got to know where it comes

from. This language has been rooted out of slavery, coming into a world where you segregate it

all the way up until the 70's" (Interview, 4/27/2013).

71

Table 4.4

Positive Attitudes toward AAE

Category	Positive	
	Black Teachers	White Teachers
There are valid reasons for using non-standard dialects.	Lodge, Parks, Prescott, Sampson	Basil, Graves, Mentor, Major, Newton, Ralin,Witson
Disagree with the statement –"In the home, students should be exposed to SE only"	Lodge, Parks, Prescott, Sampson	Abram, Basil, Graves, Mentor, Newton, Witson
Allowed AAE to be spoken	Carehart, Lodge, Parks, Prescott, Sampson	Basil, Graves, Mentor, Newton,Witson
Did not correct AAE	Carehart, Parks, Prescott, Sampson	Basil, Graves, Mentor, Newton, Witson
"Don't need to change your language" [comment to students regarding use of AAE]	Parks	
It has history	Sampson, Prescott	
Respect of cultural difference, "Students can express themselves in AAE and SE"	Parks	
"Students need to be comfortable reading, writing and speaking SE as well as AAE"		Graves

Ms. Prescott also viewed AAE in a more positive light, noting the importance of accepting, recognizing, and respecting the differences in people. Her attitude was one of support and empathy. She also did not correct AAE when it was used in her classroom instructions. She stated,

Everyone is different and accepting and recognizing and respecting the differences in

people is what I learned from them. They helped enrich me because of their lives and the

things that they encounter and go through. You can never take certain little things for

granted. You should never assume. You always wait and learn from them and that's

why I said I like to get my own information via them not other people. That's what I

would consider most important to me. (Interview, 5/01/2013)

Ms. Parks, who did not correct AAE in class, discussed how she taught the importance of AAE.

She stated,

I do teach to all my students, it doesn't matter which class it is, that there are certain ways

you have to present yourself. I don't care what stereotype says about Black people being

loud. We cover them all. In today's class we covered stereotypes and that was one. I

told them that just because it's a stereotype, you don't have to live up to it. I talk to them

about appropriate language and how to communicate with people and about having

respect, but not necessarily having to change their language in order to get there. You

can speak what they call Ebonics and not have an ounce of slang in it, and people still get

your point. You can be professional and not speak every single word correctly.

(Interview, 4/18/2013)

Ms. Carehart was observed as being very attentive to developing the skills of Standard

English in her first-grade students, as evidenced by her modeling of SE in her own speech while

teaching and not using the common grammatical and phonological variations found in AAE

during direct instruction. A positive attitude of acceptance was displayed when her young Black

students communicated orally, she accepted their use of AAE without directly correcting their

speech patterns; instead, she would either rephrase the students' statements in Standard English

as an affirmation that she heard what her students were saying or request the student to restate

what they were attempting to say. At the same time Ms. Carehart was sometimes observed

deliberately using AAE in a way that was in direct contrast with her Standard English speech

patterns.

AAE viewed positively by White teachers. Ms. Ralin recognized that her students

spoke AAE. She was observed facilitating classroom dialogue with students speaking AAE

during the discussion. Ms. Ralin did not correct the students' AAE but would sometimes restate

responses in SE. Ms. Ralin stated,

> When a student answers something that's informally, I usually restate it in a standard
>
> way, as an example for the rest of the class. So, what he's saying is, and I will say what
>
> it is, in what a formal sense is. No I don't make them feel bad about answering and I
>
> don't say "Well, can you say it the right way?" Because their way is not wrong, it's just
>
> a different situation. So I try to direct it by restating it in a formal way and then I will say
>
> to them, do you understand what I am saying? (Interview, 4/10/2013)

Ms. Graves stated that having students express themselves in SE and AAE is important.

She stated, "I want the students to feel comfortable, be it reading, listening, or writing Standard

English, as well reading and speaking and writing in their own voices, because that's authentic,

too. I think they need that flexibility (Interview, 4/12/2013).

Some of the results of the survey indicated generally positive attitudes regarding AAE.

Seven out of the nine White respondents agreed to the statement that "There are valid reasons for

using non-standard dialects." AAE is an accepted dialect but this does not include usage in the

classroom. Seven out of the nine White respondents disagreed to the statement "In the home,

students should be exposed to standard English only" and two respondents agreed. These results appear to recognize AAE as a language for home and community but not in school.

AAE viewed as context specific. Some participants recognized the value of AAE and the respect for non-standard English, but also recognized the need to teach Standard English in order to meet the demands of school. This underscored the importance of the context or situation in which AAE was used, with more formal language preferred in the classroom. A subcategory of this category was code-switching. All five Black teachers employed code-switching.

AAE viewed as contextual by White teachers. Ms. Witson was observed conferencing with a student, regarding a written assignment. The student used AAE in his writing. Later, when asked about the conference, Ms. Witson explained that the student had used his point of view or the essence of his thought well and demonstrated how to rewrite his explanation using Standard English. This is also consistent with the contextual use of AAE, wherein Standard English was preferred in classroom work.

While Ms. Ralin appeared to view AAE as negative she also viewed it as contextual. She stated,

> We talk about proper, or formal and informal English. When you are in class and you are talking to an adult or you are at a job interview or you are trying to communicate something to someone at a professional level, you need to use formal English. If I'm having a conversation with two students, or three students about something and we're not in a classroom setting they're using their terminology, as they say, I let it go. I allow them to use it if they're speaking about something at a personal level. If they're coming to me and saying things that happened at home and they want my advice, I don't change that. I allow them to speak the way they would like, as long as it's appropriate,

75

obviously. But in the classroom, I try to veer them toward formal English. When we are

in a setting of discussion with other students and we're in a formal situation, I try to

direct that. Outside of the classroom, informal situations, if it's a personal thing, I don't

usually change anything. (Interview, 4/10/2013)

Table 4.5

AAE Viewed as Contextual

Category	Black Teachers	White Teachers
Inside of the classroom-SE, outside of the classroom AAE	Carehart, Lodge, Parks, Prescott and Sampson	Basil, Ralin, Witson
Job interviews require SE	Lodge, Parks, Sampson	Ralin
SE is used at work	Carehart, Lodge, Parks	
AAE is used with family and friends	Carehart, Lodge, Parks, Prescott, Sampson	
"I allow them to speak the way they would like if they're speaking about something at a personal level. But in the classroom, I try to veer them toward formal English."		Ralin
"If they're coming to me and saying things that happened at home, that's okay"[to use AAE]		Ralin

AAE viewed as contextual by Black teachers. Ms. Parks reflected on her first days in

college and at that time she perceived her language to be "ghetto." She wouldn't answer

questions in class because she didn't want others to judge her as being ignorant because of her

language. When she heard unfamiliar vocabulary she would write the word down and look it up.

Ms. Parks shared the following: "I learned when I heard words I didn't know, I'd go and look

them up and I'd practice using them around other people and see how it came out" (Interview, 4/25/2013). Ms. Parks didn't withdraw because she knew she had the skills to get her degree. What she did do is set out to discover a way to overcome her own negative perception of her language and learn how to interact with the cultural practices of the university setting, a new context for her.

Ms. Sampson spoke about the importance of Standard English in acquiring jobs in the future, but she also recognized how non-standard English is part of culture and everyday conversations. This perception was reflective of a teacher who believed that the use of AAE is appropriate in a non-formal context and can be used in everyday situations outside the classroom. Ms. Sampson believed that it may be difficult for AAE speakers to learn SE but they need to learn it. She said,

> My opinion is if they had to go into a job setting where they're going to have to learn
> how to do – I guess you'll say traditional English but it can be taught and they can learn
> it, they are going to have to learn in order to have to articulate through the system to get
> better education and you know, to get a job but I myself, I can understand what they're
> saying. It's slang. All kids have slang. I don't care where the kids come from. They
> have slang. Slang is a part of the vernacular of our culture. (Interview, 4/27/2013)

Code switching. All five of the Black teachers were observed code-switching in their classrooms. Ms. Carehart code switched to capture the attention of her students or to explain. Ms. Sampson code switched during instruction, using AAE for classroom discourse and SE for direct instruction. Ms. Prescott used AAE to emphasize the importance of a new concept. Ms. Parks used AAE to address her students as they entered and exited the classroom. Mr. Lodge code switched during personal conferences with his students. Mr. Lodge's grandmother raised

him with the intent that he would be successful with the understanding that the only way to be successful is to utilize SE. However, the use of SE isolated him from his friends who thought that Mr. Lodge spoke "white" English. Mr. Lodge then discovered he would need to speak SE when at work and AAE with his friends. In school Mr. Lodge code-switched when conversing with his students and sometimes when instructing his students.

Ms. Parks learned to code switch to SE when she was in college. She learned that there was a language appropriate for the college classroom and another language that was appropriate to use with family and friends. At work she code switched with her AAE-speaking colleagues and her students. This positive attitude toward AAE has allowed Ms. Parks to employ code-switching in her classroom and instruct her students in its use. Ms. Parks believed SE was necessary for social and economic mobility but AAE was also important for sustaining social relationships. Ms. Parks stated she spoke AAE at home and with her friends. She stated it was easy for her to switch from AAE to SE and intended to help her students develop this skill. Ms. Parks was observed using AAE to greet her students as they entered the class but using SE during instruction.

The Black teachers were the only teachers who utilized code-switching in the classroom. Each teacher used AAE for a purpose, such as facilitating discourse or gaining the attention of the students. The teachers then switched to SE for instructional purposes.

Overall, it appears that teachers had distinct perceptions about AAE. Some viewed it positively, some negatively, whereas others viewed it as contextual. The Black teachers recognized the need to respect AAE and its cultural and historical significance. Black teachers and White teachers viewed AAE negatively. Both groups generally believed it was not English and not appropriate in academic and formal settings. The Black teachers viewed the use of AAE

as contextual and utilized code-switching in the classroom. The White teachers generally

believed that AAE can be used outside the classroom, but should not be used in formal settings

such as the classroom.

Strategies Used to Address AAE in the Classroom

The third category pertains to the strategies used by the teachers with their AAE students.

Various strategies that teachers used to address AAE emerged from the observations and

comments made during the interviews. Journals and contrastive analysis were used by both

White and Black teachers. The Black teachers utilized: code-switching, use of culturally

relevant reading material, modeling and role playing. The White teachers used: peer proof

reading and teaching spelling concepts. The one critical difference was the use of AAE, i.e.,

code switching in the classroom by the Black teachers.

Strategies used by Black teachers. Four specific strategies were used by the Black

teachers: code-switching, modeling, role playing and the use of culturally relevant literature

(Table 4.6). Code-switching was used by all of the Black teachers.

Table 4.6

Strategies Used by Black Teachers

Strategy	Teacher
Used culturally relevant reading material	Lodge, Parks, Prescott, Sampson
Used and allowed code-switching	Carehart, Lodge, Parks, Prescott, Sampson
Provided opportunities for Role Playing	Lodge, Sampson
Provided Modeling	Carehart

Ms. Parks identified models of AAE and SE during career week presentations. This was

not her deliberate strategy but in her telling of the story she indicated that using AAE can

facilitate student participation. She recounted two separate classroom episodes that involved

presentations by visitors on creating a savings account and other banking information. Realizing

the students did not get the information she was hoping from the first presentation, which was

delivered by a White speaker who spoke "formal language." Ms. Parks invited another speaker.

By chance the next speakers were two Black women who delivered the same topic on banking

skills using language that immediately resonated with the students. Ms. Parks shared,

> Say, for example, if . . . . here's a perfect example. We had a lady come in from bank to
>
> do a presentation on saving money for my girls. She was proper. She spoke what we
>
> would call traditional English, and my girls were apprehensive to ask questions and to
>
> keep the conversation going. I'm like, oh, my goodness, why aren't . . . so I'm creating
>
> all the questions, trying to get the girls going to ask questions. The only people who
>
> really participated are the ones who are always outgoing no matter what. I found that
>
> was a wasted opportunity, because they could have really gotten so much information.
>
> Whereas, when two other ladies came that were of Black descent, it didn't matter. They
>
> had all types of questions. It was entirely different because they spoke in   the way that
>
> they [the students] were used to [they spoke AAE]. (Interview, 4/18/2013)

The students discussed what they learned from each presentation and related that they learned

more from interacting with the Black presenters who were AAE speakers. Ms. Parks pointed out

that professionals use code-switching when needed to aid in understanding and communicating.

Mr. Lodge's attention to AAE was deliberate. He stated he used role playing, classroom

discussions and opportunities for communicating. Mr. Lodge used role playing to help students

determine when to use AAE and when to use SE. The students presented their reports in the

form of news broadcasts. An anchorperson had to interview someone who was a witness to an

accident. The anchorperson wrote his lines and had his part checked by Mr. Lodge who

informed the student that it was important to check his words. The witness could just explain

what he or she saw and was allowed to use AAE. Many of the students offered ideas to the

students who were role playing the witness.

Ms. Sampson also stated that having students work together in groups for role playing

helps them to engage and learn from each other. Ms. Sampson talked about a recent role playing

activity where students needed to use academic vocabulary and AAE vocabulary:

> I mean the same engagement, they really enjoyed it. You know you got to go through a
>
> lot of preliminary setting it up and everything but once they have a little time to work in
>
> their groups and then they got to change things and change scenarios themselves to fit
>
> their groups so and then they get a little bit of, you know, some kids are more vocal than
>
> others and somewhat act a little bit more than others but I think they did a good job.
>
> (Interview, 4/27/2013)

Ms. Sampson identified role playing as a way to develop SE vocabulary and language that is

appropriate for different situations.

Mr. Lodge, Ms. Prescott, Ms. Sampson, Ms. Parks and Ms. Carehart employed code-

switching during instruction as a strategy. While most of the instruction was in SE the teachers

use AAE to provide additional information for clarity or understanding. Students often

responded using AAE then switching to SE. Ms. Prescott used code-switching in her class to

provide clarification. Ms. Sampson gave directions in SE but during discourse she would

intermittently use AAE as in the following:

Student 1:	I enjoy watching sunsets
Student 2:	Who has time? Those mosquitoes.
Ms. Sampson:	Some people are negative no matter what you say.

> Don't you feel peaceful seein a sunset?
>
> Student 2:   No! I never really seen a sunset, too many trees.
>
> Ms. Sampson   Try seein you a sunset. (Field notes-4/17/2014)

Mr. Lodge believed that by providing many different types of reading material to students they learned the language of the written text. He stated,

> And stories, no matter how crazy we read, lots of rhyming stories, lots of poetry and different types of stories, cause when you bombard the student with different types of language, different types of different genres of language, you know from stories fiction, not fiction, riddles, it just rubs off on them. (Interview, 4/29/2013)

Ms. Parks explained that her students became excited about reading when she began using a reading program that used urban situations and incorporated AAE into the stories. She stated,

> When I started teaching the new program, I was excited to see those kids come in, they come right in, they hurry up and do their do now, and want to hurry up and read. The books are real to them and they [the books] often use African American English. (Interview, 4/18/2013)

Strategies Used by Both Black and White Teachers

Both Black and White teachers employed similar strategies (Table 4.7). Twelve of the teachers use private conferences for issues of correctness. Ms. Major and Ms. Mentor, both White teachers and Ms. Parks, a Black teacher, correct writing not speech. Five teachers, Ms. Basil and Ms. Tandor, both White, and Mr. Lodge, Ms. Parks and Ms. Prescott, who are Black, discussed both standard and nonstandard English with their students and the context when each is appropriate. Contrastive analysis was employed by Ms. Carehart, a Black teacher and also by

Ms. Mentor and Ms. Witson who are both White. Ms. Mentor and Ms. Witson used contrastive

analysis in their classrooms during private conferences to translate AAE to SE. One White

teacher, Ms. Basil, used a graphic organizer during a writing conference. Three teachers, Mr.

Lodge, a Black teacher and two White teachers, Ms. Ralin and Ms. Witson used journals to

support AAE speakers.

Table 4.7

Strategies Used by Both Black and White Teachers

Strategy	Black Teachers	White Teachers
Uses private conferences for issues of correctness	Lodge Parks, Prescott, Sampson,	Abram, Basil, Graves Major, Mentor, Newton, Tandor, Witson
Corrects writing not speech	Parks	Basil, Major, Mentor
Discusses both standard and nonstandard English and the context when each is appropriate	Lodge, Parks, Prescott,	Basil, Tandor
Uses contrastive analysis/Modeling	Carehart,	Mentor,Witson
Uses Journals	Lodge	Ralin, Witson
Uses an organizer for peer editing		Basil

Ms. Witson described how she helps students. She said, "I will either bring them up or

let them know just re-state your question . . . or I'll jot it down on the side" (Interview,

4/14/2013). Ms. Mentor used the language experience approach for instruction, writing down

the students' stories in their words and in SE. Stories by the students were carefully bound and

placed in the classroom library for all to share and every student had at least one story in the

library. Ms. Carehart often modeled SE by restating students' AAE in SE with students

repeating her SE restatement. She never explicitly corrected the students' speech but rather led

them to SE as in the following exchange:

Student:	Grandma got two new dog. [reading from his writing]
Ms. Carehart:	Grandma has two new dogs?
Student:	[nods, agreeing]
Ms. Carehart:	How many dogs?
Student:	two
Ms. Carehart:	Two what?
Student:	dog
Ms.Carehart:	One dog or two dogs?
Student:	Two Dogs
Ms. Carehart:	Who has two new dogs?
Student:	Grandma
Ms. Carehart:	Now tell me what Grandma has [slight emphasis on has]?
Student:	Grandma has two new dog
	[looks at Ms. Carehart and self corrects]
Student	dogs [student smiles]
Ms. Carehart	Grandma is so lucky, she has two new dogs.

(Field Notes, 4/30/2013)

Ms. Carehart was observed using this strategy with other students during writing instruction. In

addition she corrected students' writing using contrastive analysis translating the student's

writing to "school" writing.

Ms. Witson, who used journals in her science class, was observed correcting grammar on student reports; however, she did not respond to the question regarding the type of approaches used with students who use non-standard dialect features in their writing. She did share that she had high expectations for her students and finds that they are very creative in creating solutions to science problems. She also believed it was important for the students to use SE in their writing or else the teachers they meet in the future will not read what they have written.

Mr. Lodge reminded the students to use their vocabulary journals and dictionaries when writing their second drafts. Mr. Lodge also used poetry to develop SE writing skills. His students enjoyed creating poems with rhyming words. He stated,

> When you see them doing it, or practicing it in the classroom then you say, Oh that was a
>
> great poem; those words rhyme that was amazing! And once you do it to one person,
>
> then you got five other kids coming up saying, "I can do it too." (Interview, 4/29/2013)

The teachers provided various strategies for supporting AAE speakers in their classrooms. Some of these strategies were not extant for both Black teachers and White teachers. White teachers did not identify code-switching, role playing and providing culturally relevant reading material as strategies. With the exception of code-switching, it cannot be implied that because the White teachers did not identify these strategies they did not use them.

Ms. Basil used an organizer for peer editing. The fifth grade students completed the sentences on the organizer. One example from the organizer was: The writer can make this piece better by . . . . [The sentence was completed by the student who was a peer editor]. One Black student wrote the following comment: "If this poem stay on topic sted of jumping to other stuff. It'll be beder. He got two line missing." Ms. Basil did not correct the writing but in a private conference proceeded to ask the student what ideas she could suggest to help the writer "stop

jumping off topic." Ms. Basil then assisted her with her suggestions by starting the sentence out

with, "You can make your poem better by. . . ." Ms. Basil then proceeded to ask:

> Do you mean staying on topic? You wrote he got two line missing. Can we use another
>
> word for got? He _____. [She paused, allowing for wait time. The student answered,-
>
> has? Ms. Basil replied yes and then continued.] Two is more than one-right?   Should
>
> line be plural? What letter do you add to line to make it plural?" (Field notes,
>
> 5/16/2013).

The strategy employed by Ms. Ralin emphasized a corrective approach and did not

scaffold AAE to SE. Ms. Ralin focused on addressing the poor spelling of her students. She

stated,

> Spelling to them, they don't hear all the sounds in their words. So they can't spell very
>
> well because when they speak they leave out sounds. So when you hear a word and you
>
> don't have all the sounds, it's very difficult to spell the whole word. So spelling is a very
>
> tough thing for them. And as the year goes on, this year and last year both, as the year
>
> goes on the spelling gets better. And it's not that I teach spelling concepts, because I
>
> think in seventh grade, they've already learned all of the spelling concepts. I think it's
>
> because they learn how to say the words better. I really feel like that. And their spellings
>
> in their journals are entirely different than their spelling in their stories. (Interview,
>
> 4/10/2013)

Relevant Skills for Urban Teachers

The fourth category pertained to the suggestions that were cited by participants as

relevant skills for urban teachers. These are interaction skills, instructional skills and

interpersonal skills. Only two White teachers identified a relevant skill for urban teachers, Ms.

Abram and Ms. Basil. Both of these teachers felt that facilitating group learning was important.

Group learning provides the opportunity to build relationships. The Black teachers identified

more skills for urban teachers than the White teachers. All five Black teachers identified code-

switching as a skill. Ms. Prescott and Ms. Sampson identified strategies that reflected cultural

competency as a skill. Ms. Parks, Ms. Prescott and Ms. Sampson stated that establishing

relationships was important. Ms. Sampson indicated patience and group learning were important

skills (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

Skills for the Urban Teacher

Skill	Black Teachers	White Teachers
Code-switching	Carehart, Lodge, Parks, Prescott, Sampson	
Employ strategies that demonstrate cultural competency	Prescott, Sampson	
Establishing relationships	Parks, Prescott, Sampson	
Patience	Sampson	
Facilitate Group Learning	Sampson	Abram, Basil

Ms. Parks spoke about being able to teach her students about code-switching. This is the

knowledge of one's own culture, culture of others and sociolinguistic awareness. She stated:

> It's the way you have to . . . it's the way you have to survive. You would never talk to
>
> your boss the same way you talk to your husband. You would never talk to your
>
> students the same way you would talk to your best friend. At some point, everybody has
>
> to code-switch, but you still have to be yourself when you're code-switching. (Interview,
>
> 4/18/2013)

Ms. Prescott spoke about knowing history and having cultural competency as important in urban classrooms. She believed having a good background on different cultures might prepare future urban teachers to address diversity in class. She said:

As a teacher, I feel like history kind of repeats itself and working with a predominantly African American group of students, I feel that teaching American history slavery and African American studies are not really touched upon in a way to allow children to identify their part of being an American and that is an integral aspect of American history so I read a lot about that, in my own personal views and I'm able to just make a lot of connections to help the students understand too. Some of my travels, I like to travel to the South just learn about it. This is the first year that I've been able to bring so many resources of the things I collected over the years to my classroom. (Interview, 5/01/2013)

Ms. Prescott and Ms. Parks spoke about the importance of building relationships. These are skills used in the capacity to listen, observe, acquire new knowledge of a culture and apply that knowledge. Ms. Prescott stated:

Before you can teach anybody anything, there has to be a relationship that's built because as far as a child is concerned because they don't have a professor-student relationship with you. They look to you but if you don't have a connection with them, why should they trust you? (Interview, 5/01/2013)

Ms. Parks stated, "When you're building a relationship with students you have to be firm, fair and consistent" (Interview, 4/18/2013).

Ms. Abram, Ms. Basil and Ms. Sampson stated that having students work together in groups building relationships that allow students to engage and learn from each other. Ms. Abram stated that her students learn more from group interaction. She enjoyed setting up

activities where the students can work together and she can observe what they are saying. She said, "I personally favor group learning. I like specifically in a science lesson where kids are working in groups and they're exploring and finding out new information, using new words, sharing ideas with each other" (Interview, 5/01/2013).

Ms. Sampson indicated that she would like to know more about motivating her students to read so that they would be able to compete in the world. Another concern she had was helping them cultivate patience and increasing her own patience. She stated, "These kids weren't raised like I was, they don't have patience and I don't know how to teach that" (Interview, 4/27/2013).

The survey data provided recommendations for college classes related to language diversity (Table 4.9). One teacher, Ms. Prescott indicated a course in African American English is most important, eight considered it very important or important; two Black teachers, Ms. Sampson and Ms. Carehart, and two White teachers, Ms. Basil and Ms. Ralin indicated African American English is not important and one teacher did not indicate its importance. Four teachers considered a course on American dialects to be most important, eight considered it very important or important, while one teacher, Ms. Tandor, considered it not important. One teacher did not indicate its importance. Nine teachers indicated a course on the Introduction to the English language to be most important, three considered it very important or important, while two teachers, Ms. Abrams and Ms. Parks, considered it not important. Four teachers indicated a course on Linguistics for Teachers to be most important, seven considered it very important or important, while three; Ms. Mentor, and Ms. Newton and Ms. Witson considered it not important. One teacher, Ms. Major, identified only the most important course, introduction to English. Ms. Graves and Ms. Ralin did not indicate the importance of Linguistics for Teachers.

Mr. Lodge indicated that courses in both Linguistics for Teachers and Introduction to the English language are most important. Ms. Prescott indicated that all of the courses were most important.

Table 4.9

Survey Data on Recommended Courses for Anyone Preparing to Be a Teacher Today

Black Teachers	African American English	American Dialects	Introduction to the English Language	Linguistics for Teachers
Black Teachers				
Ms. Carehart	Not Important	Very Important	Not Important	Very Important
Mr. Lodge	Very Important	Important	Most Important	Most Important
Ms. Parks	Important	Most Important	Not Important	Very Important
Ms. Prescott	Most Important	Most Important	Most Important	Most Important
Ms. Sampson	Not important	Important	Most important	Very important
White Teachers				
Ms. Abram	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Most Important
Ms. Basil	Not Important	Most Important	Very Important	Important
Ms. Graves	Very Important	Most Important	Important	N/A
Ms. Major	N/A	N/A	Most Important	N/A
Ms. Mentor	Important	Very Important	Most Important	Not important
Ms. Newton	Important	Very Important	Most Important	Not Important
Ms. Ralin	Not Important	Very Important	Important	Most Important
Ms. Tandor	Important	Not important	Most important	Very important
Ms. Witson	Very Important	Very Important	Most Important	Not Important

Summary

Chapter IV presented a discussion of the results of the phenomenological analysis of the data gathered from the 12 interviews, 14 survey questionnaires, and 14 classroom observations as supplementary data, from the three schools namely, Rosewood Elementary School, Bentley Elementary School, and Geneva Middle School. Based on the analysis four main categories emerged as salient: The first category was knowledge of AAE, how is it defined and how the teachers attained their understandings of AAE. The second category described the attitudes of the teachers towards AAE. The third category identifies the sociolinguistic skills and strategies

teachers used in their classrooms to address AAE. The fourth and final c presents the relevant skills for urban teachers that exemplify sociolinguistic awareness.

All of the teachers in this study were well educated and possessed some knowledge of AAE. Some teachers acquired knowledge through college coursework; others gained knowledge from teaching AAE speakers in the classroom while others grew up with AAE and spoke it. Attitudes toward AAE varied from positive, negative and contextual. Some teachers held negative attitudes toward the speaker based on their negative attitude towards AAE. All of the teachers employed strategies to support the AAE speaker however, the Black teachers employed strategies that differed from the White teachers. The relevant skills identified by the Black teachers differed from those identified by the White teachers.

The Black teachers in this study had personal knowledge of AAE as a language (albeit not academic or technical) as they grew up with AAE speakers and spoke it themselves. All but one of the teachers had courses in linguistics. Ms. Sampson had coursework regarding introduction to the English language but identified AAE as slang. This same teacher spoke of AAE as the language "rooted out of slavery" and stated it may not be the same as traditional English. Mr. Lodge was not aware that he code switched yet he recalled hearing the term. The Black teachers had acquired knowledge of AAE through personal experience and coursework in college. The Black teachers recognized the need to respect AAE and its cultural and historical significance. However, the Black teachers also had a negative perception of AAE and identified it as slang or incorrect English that is not appropriate for the classroom or for future advancement in the real world. SE was viewed as more important than AAE. They viewed AAE as contextual as its use was considered appropriate in various settings. The Black teachers were the only teachers familiar with code-switching and employed it in the classroom along with

other strategies such as contrastive analysis, role playing, journals and culturally relevant literature. The Black teachers recommended code-switching, cultural competency, establishing relationships, patience and group learning as skills for supporting AAE speakers. Coursework in Linguistics for Teachers and Dialects were also recommended by all five teachers.

The White teachers had acquired knowledge of AAE through coursework in college and through their teaching experiences with AAE speaking students in the classroom. The White teachers viewed AAE negatively and identified it as slang or language that was not appropriate in the classroom. None of the White teachers employed code-switching. The skills used by the White teachers included journals, private conferences to correct grammar and contrastive analysis. The strategies that were identified included private conferences, code-switching, journals, use of culturally relevant literature, role playing and contrast analysis. Group learning was identified as a skill for supporting AAE speakers. The suggestions for future teachers included coursework recommendations in Introduction to the English Language and American Dialects.

Chapter V presents a discussion and interpretation of the findings as well as the conclusion of the study. Two themes emerged from the categories presented in chapter four: empathy and deficit theory. Lastly, Chapter V offers the implications and future recommendations that emerged from the study as a result of the analysis.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Implications

The linguistic perspective of AAE varies from teacher to teacher. AAE is a language that distinguishes race and it is relevant to those who see it as part of their identities. All teachers in this study recognized the prominence of SE, acknowledging the tendency of society to label Standard English as the "proper" or "correct" English variation therefore relegating AAE to an inferior status indicating it is not socially acceptable. The teachers also stated the importance for students to master SE in order to be perceived as educated and having the skills to become successful. Their perceptions were not uncommon (Lippi-Green, 2012; Scott et al., 2009). It is advantageous to know not only what beliefs and perceptions are held regarding AAE but also how those beliefs affect classroom instruction. In this study the empathy of five Black teachers and two white teachers prevailed over the negative attitude of the White teachers who held fast to the deficit theory of AAE.

Black and White Empathy for AAE Speaking Students

Black empathy for AAE speaking students. The Black teachers in this study used skills that differed from the White teachers to support AAE speakers. Only those teachers who also spoke AAE were able to empathize with their students and acknowledged the fact that AAE was not a "disability" for learning and therefore addressed it head on. These teachers used code-switching in the classrooms and being AAE speakers themselves allowed their students to see value and utility to using AAE when teaching AAE speaking students. By code-switching the AAE speaking teachers demonstrated communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) that was shared with their AAE-speaking students. They empathized with their students as some of them

93

had shared experiences with the use of AAE, in sharing both positive and negative. The Black teachers spoke of personal experiences about growing up speaking AAE and challenges they had such as the experiences in college which revealed a level of understanding that engendered empathy for their students. The personal knowledge these teacher shared revealed their cultural awareness of AAE and how others saw AAE. This knowledge reflects what Deardorff (2004) refers to as understanding worldviews. The Black teachers allowed code-switching in the classroom and by doing so indirectly sent messages to the students that AAE was acceptable while at the same time guiding them to use SE as well. This response to AAE promoted respect for the home community and language by enhancing the ability to code switch (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). None of the white teachers had the same social/personal experiences with AAE speakers other than their students, who by the nature of being students were not seen in the same way as friends and family were. The shared experience was definitely an advantage the Black teachers had over their White peers. Being an AAE speaker provided a distinct relationship with AAE speaking children that allowed the teachers to facilitate the acquisition of SE by using the skill of empathy.

The concept of code-switching is relevant for many contexts but has significant relevance in classrooms with AAE speakers because it demands the skill to move from one linguistic code to another (Gumperz, 1982; Hughes, Shaunessy & Brice, 2006). Code-switching has the potential to elevate the status of AAE and honors the home culture thus creating a bond of trust and understanding between teacher and student (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). The Black teachers understood and used code-switching because as members of the same cultural group they had personal knowledge of AAE. Using AAE in the classroom to clarify or instruct demonstrated the value of AAE (Gumperz, 1982). AAE speaking teachers also realized that as AAE speakers

themselves they are subject to being stereotyped. Ms. Parks encouraged her students to reject the stereotypes affiliated with AAE and urged the students to adopt a positive perception of AAE as it related to the appreciation of diversity. She challenged the students not to accept the stereotypes and promoted discussions about AAE. Make references to your literature in this discussion.

Rather than emphasizing the rightness of SE by labeling AAE as wrong or incorrect the Black teachers helped the students recognize the grammatical differences between home English and school English bridging the two languages. They implemented activities such as role playing similar to those described by McCoy (2006) to scaffold instruction from AAE to SE. This manner of instruction allowed the students to choose the language style that was appropriate to the place, audience and communicative purpose (Hymes, 1972). Code-switching was also allowed for student writing. By providing assurance to students that their writing is acceptable for communication and enabling them to have access to the structure of SE when writing for classroom purposes enables students to use language contextually.

Code-switching appeared to be a naturally inherent ability among Black teachers. Even though not all Black teachers were cognizant of the linguistic term, code-switching, they employed it in their classrooms. These teachers made use of the "savoirs" (Byram, 1997). They had code-switching skills, the ability to use those skills to facilitate SE acquisition and attitudes that indicated they valued the students they taught and the language they spoke. By intuitively employing code-switching the Black teachers were able to make use of AAE for instructional talk and, thus, provided learning experiences for their students and, as such, whether implicitly or explicitly, acknowledged the power of discourse (Delpit, 1995, 2009; Lee, 2007). This relationship and empathy, which enabled the successful interactions between the Black teachers

and their students, is dependent upon attitudinal factors that are not unlike Byram's argument for personal relationships to be a requisite for attitudes that cultivate skills of discovery and interaction (1997).

        White empathy for AAE speaking students. While none of the White teachers spoke AAE or had any personal experiences with any AAE speaking community, two teachers stood out with regard to empathy, Ms. Mentor and Ms.Witson. Ms. Mentor used contrastive analysis and the language experience approach as well as a book project that honored the stories of her students. Her empathy demonstrated that she valued her students' stories and valued her students. Her project is not unlike Denerville's (2007) study an example of another teacher who found a way to traverse the way from AAE to SE or Craig's (Craig, Kolenic, & Hensel, 2014) study which allowed the transition from one linguistic frame to another as a teaching strategy.

        Ms. Witson employed contrastive analysis in her middle school science classes specifically to allow the students to learn about both AAE and SE. Using contrastive analysis as Ms. Witson did in this study has the potential for students to gain specific knowledge about their own language system (AAE) and can compare its features to another language system (SE) (Baugh, 2001; Delpit, 2009; Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Smitherman, 1999; Young et al., 2014; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). While it is not known where or how she learned contrastive analysis what is known is that she loved her students and their culture and she wanted them to learn. Ms. Witson was able to find a way to support AAE speakers in her classroom. Her cultural empathy, the capacity to identify with the feelings of those from other cultural backgrounds, was determined to find a way to help the students meet with success (Barrera, 1992; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Dyson, 1997). She knew they struggled with academics because of SE and that they were AAE speakers but she did not devalue AAE nor did she prevent the students from

speaking AAE. She appeared to have developed the interpersonal skill of empathy, the ability to imagine the world through the eyes of her students (Barrett et al., 2013; Pink, 2006). Her empathy had provoked a personal attitude of curiosity. This curiosity led her to discover a way to help her students acquire SE and this method was contrastive analysis. The "savoir apprendre/faire" (Byram, 1997), the skill of discovery and the ability to acquire new knowledge through interaction, was evident in Ms. Witson's ability to make use of an acknowledged strategy to support her AAE speaking students. She demonstrated that teachers who value language diversity by suspending judgment and seeking ways to understand can find a way to support students who are AAE speakers. By utilizing a strategy such as contrastive analysis Ms. Witson employed skills such as listening, analyzing, interpreting and relating, skills that exemplify the concept of ICC (Deardorff, 2006). Just as McCoy's (2006) study found role playing a successful strategy for giving students the opportunity to code switch, Ms.Witson and Ms. Mentor utilized contrastive analysis in the same light.

The Deficit Theory Rears Its Ugly Head

While the research on AAE has long established that the speech of African Americans is neither unsystematic nor deprived (Labov, 1972, 1979; Wolfram, 2004) the teachers in this study revealed that perceptions of AAE as a language that is flawed or deficient persist today and that they project these views onto the students themselves. Some White teachers in this study saw AAE as being unacceptable describing it in terms that connote deficiencies not unlike what others have reported (Bowie & Bond, 1994; Baugh, 2001; Craig et al., 2014; Delpit, 2009; Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Gay, 2010, Rickford, 1999). The White teachers who attributed negative traits to AAE speakers, such as laziness, inarticulation, and inabilities to spell correctly, perceived the AAE speaking students as lacking.

These teachers believed that African American children who speak AAE are slow, lazy or less able than students who speak SE. This attitude has been referred to as "dialect prejudice" (Wheeler & Swords, p. 14, 2006). Teacher who hold these attitudes consider their AAE-speaking students as lazy and incapable of learning because they do not use SE. They have made judgment calls instead of cultivating their own curiosity to determine the types of language practices that can be implemented to support SE acquisition. The teachers could have suspended judgment and sought an alternative strategy instead of declaring the learner as deficient. While insufficient and/or impersonal knowledge of AAE may be factors that lead teachers to negative perceptions not all of the White teachers in this study subscribed to the deficit theory. Even though other teachers may have held negative attitudes toward AAE they did not to think less of their AAE speaking students. Teachers need to be mindful that they are teaching students not language and evaluate their personal beliefs and attitudes. It may be that the White teachers who regard the AAE speaking students as less able hold internal biases that stem from their own communities, biases which imply that AAE speaking students are unable to learn. If the teachers respect their students it is important for them to demonstrate that they are valued (Deardorff, 2006). Corrections and categorizations such as being lazy violate the ethnic and cultural identities of AAE speakers. The children's negative reactions to inadequate approaches to SE foster lack of enthusiasm, which in turn as the potential to produce poor performance not only in standard English but also in the classroom in general, especially when they become self-conscious linguistically (Delpit, 1995).

While it is true that a system in which command of SE has become essential in the professional world it does not mean that developing proficiency in SE should cause one to abandon AAE. AAE has its own social identity and function and needs to be respected as such.

Attitudes of respect display value for other cultures (Deardorff, 2006). An attitude that continues to purport that AAE speakers must reject their language and drop allegiance to the people and places that define them (Delpit, 1995) was evidenced by the teacher responses which indicated by that students should speak SE at home. These attitudes were also evidenced by the teachers who corrected AAE in the classroom, identified their students as having speech problems, referred to students as just being lazy and using improper speech.

Attitudes that support the superiority of Standard English are attitudes which sustain prejudices and misconceptions. These attitudes discriminate against speakers of other language varieties. AAE is a true language the lack of understanding regarding the language and culture from which AAE stems contributes to the misunderstanding of learning ability and the lack of academic success for AAE speaking students. While it is true this is the case for all children, it is especially true for those who speak AAE in order to do well academically children must acquire competence in SE in order to compete. It is also true they will never acquire it by expunging their first language (Lippi-Green, 2012).

Is There Value in Linguistic Coursework?

The value of coursework remains questionable. The findings indicated that a majority of the teachers had some coursework in linguistics; however, it is not known of what that coursework consisted. Based on this study, it appears that the coursework did not have an impact on how the teachers valued AAE. Knowledge from coursework in AAE did not necessarily guarantee understanding or promote a positive attitude toward AAE. Statements from teachers who had linguistic coursework identified AAE as "that Ebonics" or "not proper English" indicate that teachers do not understand what AAE is and what it is not. Many of the teachers did not prioritize a course in AAE for future urban teachers. The coursework is

irrelevant if teachers cannot use the knowledge gained from that coursework to promote an understanding of AAE. Research has indicated that the intent of coursework may be exposure to linguistic diversity however linguistic and racial discrimination may be present (Wolfram, 2004).

Reflections and Recommendations

As educators who influence future generations it is important that we examine our assumptions of SE or we will continue to teach with the understanding that there is a single American "Standard English" to be respected by all as is believed by the participants in this study. Linguistic evidence should support what and how we teach not the inherent bias of racial, social and cultural origins of diverse speakers.

Not everyone has the opportunity to learn to speak AAE. This study begs some new questions, which may be considered for further exploration. How can we infuse opportunities for pre- and in-service teachers to explore AAE as well as other variations of English in meaningful ways? Perhaps, this is what could be explored. What have others done to include AAE and other English variations into coursework or fieldwork and do we know the results? What do teachers really need to know about SE and AAE? What is the linguistic knowledge teachers need to facilitate SE acquisition?

The personal experience of the Black AAE-speaking teachers played a major role in this study as to explaining why they were able to support their AAE speakers. For the two White teachers, empathy was revealed as well. But where did this empathy come from and why wasn't it apparent for the other white teachers? Was it an innate curiosity that motivated them to find a way to support the AAE speakers? What were the internal dispositions of these teachers whose empathy allowed them to find supportive strategies? Whatever the answers may be the most

important point is that the teachers who expressed empathy supported the students in learning SE.

It was evident that empathy trumped knowledge in terms of knowing strategies for AAE speakers. It appears that empathy is of significance in terms of pedagogy in the urban classroom. Can we teach empathy? How do we establish the control? Teachers may be well served to learn code-switching and contrastive analysis as tools of language and culture. Can ICC be used as the platform for building teacher knowledge, skills and attitudes that support effective and appropriate intercultural interactions, especially with regards to AAE speakers?

The findings from this study may suggest an experimental design study that would investigate the idea of providing experiences related to negotiating interactions with diverse populations so teachers would be able to develop intercultural communicative competence. These experiences may extend into the community. The tenets of ICC can be incorporated into the curriculum and maintained as a framework providing essential information about cross cultural language use and alternate pedagogy for diverse populations (Ilosvay, 2012).

Limitations

This study was a phenomenology and as such cannot be generalized beyond the teachers who participated. The findings that distinguished the Black AAE speaking teachers may not be the case for all AAE speaking teachers. The teachers in this study were volunteers who were chosen by the principals. Other teachers may have volunteered but were not chosen to participate. The methodology could have included additional questions that would have provided information specific to AAE or ICC could have been added.

Closing Thoughts

Current educational reforms seek to improve the achievement of students in the urban setting; however, none of the reforms look at how language and culture of both the teacher and student affects achievement. Language policies have a serious impact on teaching. Creating policies that provide cultural and linguistic support for teachers and students can increase education opportunities for AAE speaking students. Considering the influence of intercultural communicative competence and its implications for classroom instruction has not been studied but may yield better results than the constant barrage of assessments.

Teaching today is more complex, requiring teachers to have the knowledge that will help them navigate linguistic, cultural, developmental and socioeconomic differences among their students. It requires the ongoing access to knowledge and the skill to apply that knowledge in diverse classrooms. As teachers we need to acknowledge that students are being left behind because we are not addressing their need for effective language and communication instruction not because they are incapable of achieving. We need to look at our attitudes, our knowledge and skills to determine if we have the empathy to serve our students effectively. But I feel that empathy is of greater significance. I wonder what strategies would emerge if we replaced judgment with empathy. In order to attain ongoing achievement for all students we must first respect them for who they are, accept and celebrate their differences especially the languages they employ to communicate and finally, facilitate learning with empathy.

References

Adger, C. A., Snow, C. E., & Christian, D. (Eds.). (2002). *What teachers need to know about language*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Allen, R. R., & Brown, K. L. (Eds.). (1976). *Developing communication competence in children*. Skokle, IL: National Textbook Co.

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2012). *Kids Count*. Retrieved from http://www.AEcf.org/work/kids-count/

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Razavieh, A., & Sorenson, C. (2006). *Introduction to research in education* (7th ed.). Wadsworth, Australia: Thomson.

Au, K. H., & Mason, J. M. (1981). Social organizational factors in learning to read: The balance of rights hypothesis. *Reading Research Quarterly, 17*, 115-152. Retrieved from

Baldwin, J. (1978). If Black English isn't a language, then tell me, what is? In T. Perry, & L. Delpit (Eds.), *The real ebonics debate: Power, language and the education of African American children* (pp. 67-70). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Ball, A., & Lardner, T. (1997). *Dispositions toward literacy: Constructs of teacher knowledge and the Ann Arbor Black English case*. Retrieved from http://www.stanfordtechnologies.com/~arnetha/pdf/DispositionsArt97.pdf

Barrera, R. B. (1992). The cultural gap in literature-based literacy instruction []. *Education and Urban Society*, *24*, 227-243. Retrieved from http://www.lab.brown.edu/tdl/elemlit/readingk3.shtml

Barrett, M., Byram, M., Lazar, I., Mompoint-Gaillard, P., & Philippou, S. (2013). *Developing intercultural competence through education*. Retrieved from : http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=15&ved=0CDsQ

FjAEOAo&url=http%3A%2F%2Fhub.coe.int%2Fc%2Fdocument_library%2Fget_file%

3Fuuid%3D9396761c-aea8-43f3-86a6-

c105b45ef756%26groupId%3D10227&ei=5GDFU8mLK4KnyATP3oDwCg&usg=AFQj

CNFISw08fdB2moK7zA9dhZAYQ870TQ&sig2=aJcoPIxja5s7nzhv9p5BFQ

Baugh, J. (2001). Applying linguistic knowledge of African American English to help students

learn and teachers teach. In S. L. Lanehart, *Social and historical contexts of African*

American English (pp. 319-330). Philadelphia, PA: John Bejamins Publishing.

Bloom, P. (2000). *How children learn the meanings of words*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Bowie, R., & Bond, C. (1994). Influencing teacher attitudes toward Black English: Are we

making a difference? *Journal of Teacher Education*, *45*, 112-118.

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). White Plains, NY:

Pearson.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Burstein, N. D., & Cabello, B. (1989). Preparing teachers to work with culturally diverse

students: A teacher education model. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *40*(5), 9-16.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon,

England: Multilingual Matters.

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). *Approaches to communicative competence*. Singapore:

SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Cazden, C. (1988). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning*. Portsmouth,

NH: Heinemann Books.

Cazden, C. B., John, V., & Hymes, D. (Eds.). (1972). *Functions of language in the classroom*.

New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Craig, H. K., Kolenic, G. E., & Hensel, S. L. (2014). African American English speaking

students: A longitudinal examination of style shifting from kindergarten through second

grade. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*, *57*(1), 143-157. Retrieved

from http://0-

search.proquest.com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/docview/1524721864?accountid=14578

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five*

traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing*

world: What teachers should learn and be able to do San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Deardorff, D. K. (2004). *Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student*

outcome of international education at institutions of higher education in the United States

(Unpublished doctoral dissertation). North Carolina State

Deardorff, D. K. (2006, Fall). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence.

Journal of Studies in International Education. Retrieved from www.eaie.org/.../711.p

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children*. New York, NY: New Press.

Delpit, L. (2008). *The skin we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom*. New

York, NY: New Press.

Delpit, L. (2009). Language diversity and learning. In A. Darder, M. P. Baltodano, & R. D.

Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 324-337). New York, NY: Routledge.

Denerville, D. V. (2007). *Vernacular features and writing performance among African-*

American fifth graders (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations

and Thesis database.

Dyson, A. H. (1997). What the children convey: On matters of time, talk and Ebonics. *The Quarterly of the National Writing Project*, 19(1), 1-7. Retrieved from http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/821/What_the_Children_Convey.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d

Fillmore, L. W. (1985). Teacher talk that works. In S. Gass, & C. Madden, *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 17-50). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Fillmore, L. W., & Snow, C. E. (2000, August 23). (What teachers need to know about language). Retrieved from ERIC: www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=ED482994

Fogel, H., & Ehri, L. (2000). Teaching elementary students who speak Black English vernacular to write in Standard English: Effects of dialect transformation practice. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *57*(5), 464-480.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching [Entire issue]. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *53*(2). doi: doi:10.1177/0022487102053002003

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gebhard, J. G., & Oprandy, R. (1999). *Language teaching awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Gee, J. (2008). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourse* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Godley, A. J., Sweetland, J., Wheeler, R. S., Minnici, A., & Carpenter, B. D. (2006). Preparing teachers for dialectically diverse classrooms. *Educational Researcher*, *35*(8), 30-37.

Green, L. J. (2002). *African American English : A linguistic introduction*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Green, L. J. (2011). *Language and the African American child*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Conversational code switching in discourse strategies*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Hale, G. E. (1998). *Making Whiteness: The culture of segregation in teh south,1890-1940*. New York, NY: Vintage.

Hale, J. E. (2001). *Learning while Black*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Halliday, M. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press.

Heath, S.B. (1983). *Ways with words*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Hilliard, A. (1980). Cultural diversity and special education. *Exceptional Children*, *46*, 584-590.

Hughes, C. E., Shaunessy, E. S., & Brice, A. R. (2006). Code switching among bilingual and limited English proficient students: Possible indicators of giftedness. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *30*(1), 7-28.

Hymes, D. H. (Ed.). (1972). *On Communicative Competence* Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Education, Penguin Books Ltd.

Ilosvay, K. K. (2012). *A qualitative study of language beliefs and linguistic knowledge in preservice teachers using the intercultural communicative competence framework* (Doctoral dissertation, Portland State University). Retrieved from pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds/233/

Jones, G. (2011). *How African American teachers' beliefs about African American vernacular English influence their teaching* (Doctoral dissertation, George Mason University). Retrieved from digilib.gmu.edu:8080/jspui/bitstream/.../Jones_dissertation_2011.pdf.txt

Jones, T. M. (2011). *A study of teachers views on students' use of African American English in the language arts classroom* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama). Retrieved from acumen.lib.ua.edu/content/u0015/.../u0015_0000001_0000606.pdf

Kirkland, D. E. (2010, April). English(es)in urban contexts: Politics, pluralism and possibilities. *English Education*, *42*, 293-306.

Labov, W. (1965). On the mechanism of linguistic change. In A. R. Keiler (Ed.), *A reader in historical and comparative linguistics* (pp. 267-288). London, England: Holt, Rhinehart & Winston.

Labov, W. (1972). Academic ignorance and Black intelligence. *Atlantic Monthly*. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/95sep/ets/labo.htm

Labov, W. (1979). *Language in the inner city: Studies in Black English vernacular*. : Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press.

Labov, W. (1983). Recognizing Black English in the classroom. In J. W. Chambers(Ed.), *Black English educational equity and the law* (pp. 29-55). Ann Arbor, Michigan: Karoma Publishers, Inc.

Labov, W. (1997, January). *Testimony submitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education*. Retrieved from http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wLabov/Papers/Ebonic%20testimony.pdf

Labov, W. (2010). *Cognitive and cultural factors*. Vol. 3 of *Principles of linguistic change*. Oxford: Wiley/Blackwell

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998, Summer). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice*, *34*(3), 159-165.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2001). *Crossing over to Canaan; The journey of new teachers in diverse classrooms*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2003). *New literacies: Changing knowledge and classroom learning*. London, England: Allen & Unwin.

Lee, C. D. (2007). *Culture, literacy, and learning: Taking bloom in the midst of the whirlwind* . New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lippi-Green, R. (2012). *English with an accent* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Lucas, T. (Ed.). (2011). *Teacher preparation for linguistically diverse classrooms*. New York, NY: Routledge.

MI School Data [Measurement instrument]. (2013). Lansing, MI:

MacNeil, R., & Cran, W. (2005). *Do you speak American?* New York, NY: Harcourt.

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2007). *Intercultural communication in contexts* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Martin Luther King Jr., Etc. v. Ann Arbor School District, 20 LEAGLE United States District Court 9 (D. Michigan 1997).

McClendon, G. (2004). *Ax or ask? The African American guide to better English*. Chicago, IL: Positive People Hampton Academic Press, McClendon Report, LLC.

McCoy, W. (2006). Helping students find a voice by giving them the words. *California English*, (3), 24-25.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San

      Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ogbu, J. U. (1992, November). Understanding cultural diversity and learning. *Educational*

      Researcher, *21*(8), 5-14. Retrieved from

      http://www.brianscollier.com/classreadings/Understanding_Cultural_Diversity_and_Lear

      ning.pdf

Perry, T., & Delpit, L. (Eds.). (1998). *The real Ebonics debate: Power, language, and the*

      education of African American Children. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Pink, D. (2006). *A whole new mind: Why right-brainers will rule the world* (2nd ed.). New

      York, NY: Penguin Group.

Pullam, G. (1999). African American vernacular English is not standard English with mistakes.

      In R. Wheeler (Ed.), *The workings of language*. Retrieved from

      http://web.stanford.edu/~zwicky/aave-is-not-se-with-mistakes.pdf

Rickford, J. R. (1996). The Oakland Ebonics decision: Commendable attack on the problem.

      Original text of the article printed in the *San Jose Mercury News* 26 Dec. 1996.

      Retrieved from http://www.stanford.edu/~rickford/ebonics/SJMN-OpEd.html.

Rickford, J.R. (1999). Using the vernacular to teach the standard. In D. Ramirez, T. Wiley, G.

      de Klerk and E. Lee (Ed.) *Ebonics in the urban education debate (pp.23*-41). Long

      Beach: Center for Language Minority Education

Rickford, J. R., & Finegan, E. (Eds.). (2004). Language *in the USA*. Cambridge, MA:

      Cambridge University Press.

Robinson, P. (1988). A Hallidayan framework for vocabulary teaching. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching (IRAL)*, *26*, 229-238.

Rojas, A. (1996, December 23). Strong opinions on Ebonics policy: no middle ground in views of Oakland schools' plan. *San Francisco Chronicle*, p. A13.

Russo, C. J., & Talbert-Johnson, C. (1997). The overrepresentation of African American children in special education: The resegregation of educational programming? *Education and Urban Society*, *29*, 136-148.

Savignon, S. 1983. *Communicative competence: theory and classroom practice; texts and contexts in second language learning*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Savignon, S. (1997). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Scheffler, I. (1967). *Conditions of Knowledge*. Chicago, IL: Scott Foresman.

Schieffelin, B., & Ochs, E. (1986). Language socialization. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 163-191.

Schleppegrell, M. (2001). Challenges in language teacher training. In G. Brauer, *Pedagogy of higher learning in language education* (pp. 237-252). [Adobe Digital Edition]. Retrieved from http://www.questia.com/library/book/pedagogy_of_language_learning_in_higher_education_an_introduction_by_gerd_brauer.jsp

Scott, J. C., Straker, D. Y., & Katz, L. (2009). *Affirming students' right to their own language*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sinicrope, C., Norris, J., & Watanabe, Y. (2007). Understanding and assessing intercultural competence: A summary of theory, research, and practice(Technical report for the

foreign language program evaluation project). *Second Language Studies*, *26*(1), 1-58.

Retrieved from www.hawaii.edu/sls/uhwpesl/26(1)/Norris.pdf

Smitherman, G. (1999). Language policy and classroom practices. In C. D. Adger, D. Christian,

& O. Taylor (Eds.), *Making the connection: Language and academic achievement among

African American students* (pp. 115-124). Washington, DC: Center for Applied

Linguistics.

Smitherman, G. (2003). *talkin that talk*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Smitherman, G. & Villanueva, V. (2000). Language knowledge and awareness survey

conducted by CCCC Language Policy Committee for the National Council of Teachers of

English Research Foundation and the Conference on College Composition and

Communication.

Soto, L. (1997). *Language, culture, and power: Bilingual families and the struggle for quality

education*. : Albany: State University of New York Press.

Taylor, E. (1994). Intercultural competency: A transformative learning process. *Adult Education

Quarterly*, *44*, 154-174.

Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating across cultures*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Triandis, H. C. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Trudgill, P. (1984). *Language in the British isles*. New York, NY: Press Syndicate of the

University of Cambridge.

Trudgill, P. (1999). Standard English: What it isn't. In T. Bex, & R. J. Watts (Eds.), *Standard

English: The widening debate* (pp. 117-128). London, England: Routledge.

Trudgill, P. (2003). *A glossary of sociolinguistics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (17th ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wheeler, R. (2008, April). Becoming adept at code switching. *ASCD Educational Leadership*, *65*(7), 54-58. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/apr08/vol65/num07/Becoming_ Adept_at_Code switching.aspx

Wheeler, R. (Ed.). (1999). African American vernacular English is not standard English with mistakes. *The workings of language* (pp. 39-58). Retrieved from http://web.stanford.edu/~zwicky/aave-is-not-se-with-mistakes.pdf

Wheeler, R., & Swords, R. (2006). *Code switching; Teaching standard English in urban classrooms* 319-. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Wolfram, W. (2004). The grammar of urban African American vernacular English. In B. Kortmann, & E. Schneider (Eds.), *Handbook of varieties of English* (pp. 111-132). Berlin. Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

Wolfram, W., Adger, C. T., & Christian, D. (1999). *Dialects in schools and communities*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Young, V.A. (2007). *Your average nigga: Performing race, literacy, and masculinity*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press

Young, V. A., Barrett, R., Young-Rivera, Y., & Lovejoy, K. B. (2014). *Other people's English*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Zeichner, K. M. (1993). *Educating teachers for cultural diversity* [NCRTL Special Report]. Retrieved from National Center for Research on Teacher Learning: http://ncrtl.msu.edu/

Appendix A

03 April 2013

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. My name is Geri Pappas; I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan –Dearborn. I am conducting a research study as partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree. As a former teacher in Detroit Public Schools I realize how precious your time is and value your support. My area of research is intercultural communicative competence in the classroom. I would like to observe your classroom and talk to you about your experiences in the classroom with students from the urban setting.

The research involves the completion of a survey, an interview and classroom observation. The interview session will be recorded to avoid the possibility of missing your important comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be viewed by me and I will ensure that any information I include in the report does not identify you as the respondent.

Your participation is purely voluntary and you have the option to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. You may not receive any direct benefit from this study, but the study may help increase knowledge which will be of benefit to others in the future.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study itself please contact Geri Pappas at the following email gsinacor@umd.umich.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss concerns with someone other than the researcher(s), You may contact the Dearborn IRB Administrator in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 1055 Administration Building, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Evergreen Rd., Dearborn, MI 48128-2406, (313) 593-5468; the Dearborn IRB Application Specialist at (734) 763-5084, or email Dearborn-IRB@umich.edu.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign your name in the space provided below; you will be given a copy of this consent form for you to keep. If you would like to learn the findings of this study, please email me at (your email) and I will be happy to forward that information to you. Thank you for your participation in this study.

I agree to participate in the study.

_____

Printed Name

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Appendix B

CCCC/NCTE LANGUAGE SURVEY

PART ONE

Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. Circle the number that represents your response.

1   Strongly Agree

2   Agree

3   Disagree

4   Strongly Disagree

1. A student whose primary language is not English should be taught solely in English.

    1   2   3   4

2. Students need to master standard English for upward mobility.

    1   2   3   4

3. In the home, students should be exposed to standard English only.

    1   2   3   4

4. Students who use nonstandard dialects should be taught in standard English.

    1   2   3   4

5. There are valid reasons for using nonstandard dialects.

    1   2   3   4

6. There are valid reasons for using languages other than English.

    1   2   3   4

7. Students should learn grammar rules to improve their ability to understand and communicate

    concepts and information.

    1   2   3   4

PART TWO

8. To what extent do you discuss language diversity with your students? Please circle the letter that represents your response.

    a) a lot   b) moderately   c) a little   d) not at all

9. Which approaches do you use in discussing language diversity with your students? Circle all that apply.

    a) readings on language matters

    b) analysis of language in literature and other creative art forms

    c) affirmation of equality of all languages and language varieties

    d) I do not discuss language diversity in my classroom

10. List the most important issues or topics about language diversity that your students raise with you.

    Circle all that apply.

    a) differences between dialect and language, or between dialect and slang

    b) why everyone doesn't speak the same way

    c) status and appropriateness of languages and language varieties older than standard English

    d) My students do not raise issues about language diversity

11. What approaches do you use with students who use nonstandard dialect features in their speech?

    Circle all that apply.

    a) I correct their writing, not their speech.

    b) I discuss knowing both standard and nonstandard and the contexts when each is appropriate.

    c) I use private conferences to discuss issues of correctness

    d) I might say nothing.

    e) I tell them that for an English class only standard English is appropriate.

12. What approaches do you use with students who use nonstandard dialect features in their writing?

Circle all that apply.

a) I discuss knowing both standard and nonstandard and the contexts when each is appropriate.

b) I use private conferences to discuss issues of correctness.

c) I might say nothing.

d) I tell them for an English class only standard English is appropriate.

13. How would you characterize the teaching style of the best English teacher you ever had?

Circle all that apply.

a) was a strict grammarian

b) had high expectations and was demanding

c) was open-minded, a good listener

d) gave constructive feedback on writing

e) encouraged risk-taking in writing

f) stressed creativity and critical thinking

g) I never had an outstanding English teacher

14. Which courses in language diversity were part of your college education? Circle all that apply.

a) African American English

b) American Dialects

c) Introduction to the English Language

d) Linguistics for Teachers

e) I didn't have any courses in language diversity in college.

15. Which courses would you recommend for anyone preparing to be a teacher today? Please rank in order of importance, from 1, "most important," to 4, "least important," or check "e."

    a)_____African American English

    b)_____American Dialects

    c)_____Introduction to the English Language

    d)_____Linguistics for Teachers

    e)_____I don't think courses in language are necessary for anyone preparing to be a teacher today.

16. Give the title and author of the text you use to teach about language issues.

    Title:_____

    Author:_____

17. My grammar was most often corrected by (circle the letter that represents your response):

    a) a friend

    b) a family member

    c) my teacher

    d) a supervisor

18. How helpful was this correction? Circle the letter that represents your response.

    a) very helpful

    b) helpful

    c) somewhat helpful

    d) not helpful at all

19. How would you describe your language now? Circle all that apply.

    a) multilingual

    b) multidialectal

    c) standard American English most of the time

    d) nonstandard American English

20. How would you describe your language in the past? Circle all that apply.

    a) multilingual

    b) multidialectal

    c) standard American English most of the time

    d) nonstandard American English

21. What factors do you believe have influenced your language? Rank in order of importance, from 1 "most important," to 6, "least important."

    a) _____ race/ethnicity

    b) _____ cultural background

    c) _____ neighborhood/community language

    d) _____ geographic background

    e) _____ socioeconomic class

    f) _____ education

22. Are you familiar with the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" resolution? Circle the letter that represents your response. (If your answer is "no", go to question 24.)

    a) Yes

    b) No

23. To what extent do you support the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" resolution? Circle the letter that represents your response.

    a) strongly support

    b) support

    c) oppose

    d) strongly oppose

24. Are you familiar with "English Plus," the view that students should be encouraged to use and learn not only standard English but other languages and dialects for multilingual/multidialectal ability? Circle the letter that represents your response. (If your answer is "no," go to Part Three.)

    a) Yes

    b) No

25. To what extent do you support "English Plus"? Circle the letter that represents your response.

    a) strongly support

    b) support

    c) oppose

    d) strongly oppose

PART THREE

Please circle the letter of the appropriate demographic information.

26. Gender:

    a) Female

    b) Male

27. Racial/Ethnic Identification:

    a) African American

    b) Asian American

    c) European American/Caucasian, non-Latino

    d) Latino

    e) Native American/Alaskan Native

    f) Pacific Islander

    g) Other (Specify): _____

28. Age Range:

    a) 21-30

    b) 31-40

    c) 41-50

    d) 51-60

    e) Over 60

29. Highest level of education obtained:

  a) Bachelor's degree

  b) Master's Degree

  c) Master's plus several semester hours beyond

  d) Educational Specialist degree

  e) Doctorate (Specify area): _____

  f) Other (Specify): _____

30. Member of:

  a) NCTE

  b) CCCC

  c) Both NCTE and CCCC

  d) No professional memberships for English Language Arts

  e) Other(please specify)_____

31. Number of years teaching:

  a) less than 1 year   d) 7-10 years

  b) 1-3 years   e) 11-14 years

  c) 4-6 years   f) 15 years or more

32. Current teaching level:

  a) Grades K-5

  b) Grades 6-8

  c) Grades 9-12

  d) Other (Specify): _____

33. As a teacher of English, what language issues most concern you? What language issues least concern you?

34. Please comment on this survey. We are interested in your suggestions and reactions.

Thank you for your help.

Appendix C

Permission to Use CCCC Survey

Dear Geraldine,

The Language Policy Committee grants you permission to adapt the Language Knowledge and Awareness Survey for the purposes of your very important research, of course with proper citation.

We look forward to learning more about your work as it progresses. Keep in touch.

On behalf of the Language Policy Committee,

Elaine Richardson, co-chair
        Kim B. Lovejoy, co-chair

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about yourself- What is your educational background? Where did you grow up?

2. What learning experiences have you had to prepare you for teaching in the urban classroom?

3. Do you live in the same community as your students? (Now, or in the past).

4. What professional training has helped you the most to be effective in the classroom?

5. Did you take any courses in linguistics while you were in college? If yes, what were they?

   Do you feel this course has helped your instruction in the classroom?

6. Tell me about your classroom, your students and the community they live in.

7. Tell me about the things you do to help your AAE speaking students succeed.

8. Do you speak a language other than American English? Are there students in your classroom

   who speak a different language or dialect? What do you know about AAE?

9. What are some of your greatest concerns regarding your class?

10. What resources are available to support you?

11. What would you like to know more about to help facilitate learning for your students?

12. What is the most important thing you have learned from your students?

Appendix E

Observation Matrix			
Teacher Name/Grade	Attitudes	Skills	Knowledge
	Positive-translates AAE Initiates conversations about how people speak differently in diverse settings. Withholds judgment Negative-corrects students AAE speech Zero tolerance for AAE Corrects students AAE Writing w/o explanation Corrects Student's Speech w/o explanation Reinforces SE only	Helps students use Contrastive Analysis Conducts Student Conferences that inform students Uses journals Uses Poetry Uses Role Playing Makes connections between AAE-SE Helps students make cultural connections Patient Listens without interrupting	Uses Code Switching Uses Contrastive Analysis Non-AAE Speaker AAE Speaker Explains how and when certain language usage is or is not appropriate Uses culturally relevant reading material with or without AAE language
Oral/Written	Green-Openness Blue –Empathy Red-Relationship Orange-Respect		

Figure E.1. Observation Matrix

Appendix F

Permission to use Byram's model for figure 2. 1.

Dear Geraldine Pappas,

Thank you for your interest in my work.

The diagram you have sent me looks like the one in the Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence and this is not a good one since savoir etre looks detached. I attach the original which you may use.

I suggest you contact Sarah Boye who has written an article about this although I think it is not yet published: frauboye@googlemail.com

Best wishes
Mike Byram

MichAEl Byram
Professor Emeritus University of Durham,
Guest Professor University of Luxembourg
Email: m.s.byram@dur.ac.uk

Appendix G

Permission to use Deardorff's model for figure 2.2

Dear Geri,
Thank you for your email. Yes, you have my permission to use the model - please do be sure to cite the 2006 JSIE article.

I'd be quite interested in hearing more about your dissertation research. I would also like to invite you to join an online research network of ICC researchers that I started at www.iccglobal.org - and to post there about your research. We'd love to have you as part of the network!

All the best,

Dr. Darla Deardorff
Executive Director, AIEA
Research Scholar, Duke University
Tel: 919-668-1928
Email: d.deardorff@duke.edu