2017

Teacher Perceptions of African American English and Its Impact on Teacher Expectations

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Teacher Perceptions of African-American English and Its Impact on Teacher
Expectations

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A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2017

Approval Page

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Abstract

Teacher Perceptions of African-American English and Its Impact on Teacher Expectations. Rhoden, Sabrina K., 2017: Applied Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Teacher Perceptions/Teacher Attitudes/African-American English/Teacher Expectations/Self-fulfilling Prophecy

This applied dissertation was designed to examine teacher attitudes toward African-American English (AAE) and how those attitudes influence teacher expectations for students who speak AAE. Previous exposure to AAE as well as differences between teacher interaction with AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students was investigated.

Teacher expectations are more strongly related to the later achievement of children from stigmatized groups, i.e., children from minority and/or low socioeconomic backgrounds; and teacher expectations have lasting effects on these students' performances (Jussim & Harber, 2005). Since it is estimated that up to 80% of African-Americans living in the continental United States speak AAE (Amberg & Vause, 2009), it is imperative to look at teacher attitudes toward the dialect and to explore possible biases. Equally important is the examination of current teaching approaches used to instruct speakers of AAE. Negative attitudes or perceptions toward a child's language may result in lower teacher expectations for AAE speakers in the classroom. Lower expectations could result in impediments to student learning.

The writer used the African-American English Teacher Attitude Scale (AAETAS) to quantify teacher attitudes and perceptions toward AAE. Previous exposure to AAE was obtained through participant response. Observations of teacher-student interactions were conducted to obtain the frequency of interactions as a conveyance of expectations. Open-ended interview questions were posed to participants to gain additional insight into teacher attitudes and to understand how teachers approached teaching students who spoke AAE. This study suggests that previous exposure to AAE through coursework or professional development could possibly lead to teachers having more positive attitudes toward AAE speakers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Being perceived as a high achiever in the classroom could not only allow a student to be treated differently but it may actually have some effect on their achievement; this too can be said about low achievers (Brophy & Good, 1970; Hinnant, O'Brien, & Ghazarian, 2009; Sorhagen, 2013). The interactions between teacher and the low-achieving student could be quite different from the dyadic relationship between the teacher and the high-achieving student (Good, 1981). The low-achieving student's progress in school may also be significantly impacted especially if that student belongs to a stigmatized group such as low socioeconomic class or a racial minority (Jussim & Eccles, 1995; Jussim, Eccles, & Madon, 1996; Jussim & Harber, 2005; Madon, Jussim, & Eccles, 1997).

Teacher expectations have been widely researched in the fields of social psychology and educational psychology for over 50 years. Perhaps the most influential and controversial study on this topic that has spurred numerous debates and countless other research is the Pygmalion in the classroom study by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). In this study, a nonverbal intelligence test was administered to all students at Oak Elementary. The teachers in the school were not aware that the test was a test of intelligence but instead were informed that the test was a pilot administration of a new assessment developed by Harvard University to identify children who were likely to have an intellectual growth spurt over the subsequent school year. Teachers were then notified which of their students were identified to be "bloomers," when in reality the students were randomly selected. A year later, the same test was administered to the school and the results found that the "bloomers" outperformed the students who were not identified as "bloomers" in the control group. Rosenthal and Jacobson explained their results in terms of the self-fulfilling prophecy effects of teacher expectations. In other words, teachers believed that the identified "bloomers" could make exceptional progress, so they treated those students in ways

that encouraged achievement.

Self-fulfilling prophecy is a widely researched social phenomenon first coined by sociologist Robert K. Merton (1948). Merton explained the occurrence as a false definition of a situation evoking a new behavior which makes the original false conception be fulfilled. Evidence of the phenomenon occurring in the classroom has been found in a number of experimental and non-empirical studies (Jussim & Harber, 2005; Rosenthal & Rubin, 1978), but the phenomenon's impact has been questioned by many. Jussim and Harber (2005) reviewed 35 years of empirical research and asserted that all of the controversies surrounding self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom can be resolved by maintaining the following: They do exist but the effects are generally small, fragile, and fleeting; some at-risk groups have been found to have larger statistically significant effect sizes; and although self-fulfilling prophecies do disappear over time, they may continue in a diluted form for many years.

The researchers in the Pygmalion study relied on the phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecy to explain their results; but since they did not observe teacher behaviors in the classroom directly, they could not determine how teachers treated students differently. In order to understand how teacher perceptions might govern behaviors toward students, it is important to examine the findings from studies that actually observed teacher-student interactions. These studies have discovered that, in general, teachers interact differently with high-achieving and low-achieving students (Good, 1981). While observing teacher-student interactions of high-achieving students and low-achieving students in four first grade classrooms, Brophy and Good (1970) found that high-achieving students were provided with more teacher praise and support, while low-achieving students received more negative criticism. These findings supported earlier studies which found that the quality of interactions between teachers and high-achieving students were better than the quality of interactions between teachers and low-achieving students

(deGroat & Thompson, 1949; Good, 1970; Hoehn, 1954). Good (1981) pinpointed some of the divergent behaviors of teachers in the classroom discovered in studies using the instrument Brophy-Good Teacher-Child Dyadic Interaction Observation System: seating lower performing students farther away from the teacher, paying less attention to lower achieving students such as smiling less and giving less eye contact, calling on higher achieving students more frequently, waiting less time for lower performing students to answer questions, failing to provide clues or follow-up questions in problem situations with lower performing students, criticizing lower performing students more frequently for incorrect answers, praising lower achieving students less often for correct or marginal responses, providing more detailed and specific feedback to high-achieving students while low-achieving students receive less feedback and less detailed feedback, interrupting the work of lower performing students more frequently, and demanding less effort and less work from lower performing students.

The body of research pertaining to teacher expectations and more specifically how those expectations are communicated to students through student-teacher interactions could provide insight into how teacher perceptions factor into the Black-White achievement gap (Ferguson, 2003; Oates, 2003). Disparity in student achievement between African-American students and White students specifically in the area of reading has been widely researched (e.g., Edwards, 2004; Entwisle & Alexander, 1988; Flowers, 2003; Hale, 2001; Thompson, 2004). It is evident by the amount of literature available and legislative actions such as the eighth reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that scholars and the public alike agree that the achievement of African-American students is worth investigating; however, there are deficiencies in the literature which have been overlooked for students of color. Flowers (2007) expressed the need for additional research to closely examine the factors that influence African-American student achievement. Among those factors, it was

suggested teacher perceptions of African-American students' reading achievement be studied. Additionally, research on self-fulfilling prophecy in the classroom has repeatedly shown stronger statistically significant effect sizes for students in stigmatized groups and called upon further research on the roles social class and race-ethnicities play in regulating teacher expectations (e.g., Hinnant et al., 2009; Jussim & Harber, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Lack of knowledge about African-American English (AAE) combined with negative attitudes about the dialect may produce lower teacher expectations for AAE speakers in the classroom which, as a result, impedes student learning (Birch, 2001; Cazden, 1988; Goodman, 1969; Goodman & Buck, 1973; Smitherman, 2000).

The research problem. It is estimated that 80% of the African-Americans who live in the continental United States are AAE speakers (Amberg & Vause, 2009). Unknown by many educators, AAE is a distinct dialect of American English that has its own set of linguistic rules. AAE is very similar to Standard American English (SAE) but there are significant variances between AAE and SAE. These differences have been shown to have a harmful influence on the educational achievement of African-American children (Smitherman, 1981). Also unknown to many educators is the Ann Arbor court case filed in 1979 on behalf of 11 African-American children, which claimed that the Ann Arbor School District violated federal law because the school district failed to take into account the language barriers encountered by these children while attempting to educate them (Whiteman, 1980). Judge Charles Joiner who presided over the case ruled that the school system must consider the features of the students' language and their culture when planning instruction for these students. Judge Joiner also charged that the school district was responsible for educating teachers with the means to provide instruction for students who speak AAE and to not do so would perpetuate the educational impediments to

African-American children's academic progress.

Unfortunately, despite the amount of information available concerning AAE, the reading difficulties faced by AAE speakers, and the bias towards AAE, many teachers are not aware of its existence. Many people including educators think the language spoken by AAE speakers is simply broken English. This allows negative perceptions about AAE as an inferior or lazy form of English to exist (Goodman, 1969; Goodman & Buck, 1973; Smitherman, 2000). This perception of AAE leads to lower expectations for those who speak the dialect. There have been a number of studies that reveal teacher bias against dialect speakers (DeVilliers, 2006; Lippi-Green, 1997; Tauber, 1997). Often, speakers of AAE are thought to be uneducated, less credible, and less intelligent.

Due to the positive correlation between teacher expectations and student achievement (Alexander, Entwisle, & Thompson, 1987; Ferguson, 1998; Jussim et al., 1996; Oakes, 1982; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999), lower expectations for students who speak AAE is argued to interfere with their learning and educational progress. Oates (2003) asserted that teacher perceptions may perpetuate the Black-White achievement gap even if the perceptions derive from a race-neutral process. Oates used findings that show teacher subjective assessments of students tended to have stronger effects on subsequent grades and standardized math test scores for African-American students (Jussim et al., 1996). He went on to say that negative teacher perceptions, regardless of whether student past performance or other factors justify them, may strongly undermine the performance of African-American students in schools (Oates, 2003).

Background and justification. The disparity in academic achievement between African-American and non-Hispanic White students is known as the achievement gap. Since the first administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the 1960s, the disparity in Black and White academic achievement has continued to exist (Campbell,

Hombo, & Mazzeo, 2000). The underperformance of African-American students compared to their non-Hispanic White peers on standardized assessments has been the center for much concern and research. The 2005 NAEP revealed that the average reading scale score for African-American eighth graders was 28 points below the average for White eighth graders (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005). Despite a small shrinking of the gap from the 1970s to the1980s (Tate, 1997), the gap widened again during the 1990s (Lee, 2006); and the widening trend continues. African-American students consistently perform below their non-Hispanic White peers in both reading and mathematics.

Hanushek and Rivkin (2009) investigated the impact of schools on the Black-White achievement gap. Using figures from the Texas Schools Project which accumulates school administrative data of elementary and middle school students with each cohort of students containing over 200,000 in over 3,000 public schools, the authors reported that the actions taken to reform schools "have been unsuccessful in closing the black-white achievement gap, which grows across grades and grows most for the initially highest achieving Blacks in Texas" (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2009, p. 386). This is similar to the findings of Levitt and Fryer (2004) who discovered once a few social background factors (socioeconomic status, birth weight, and participation in the government nutrition program Women, Infants, and Children) were controlled, the Black-White achievement gap was nonexistent for students entering kindergarten. Factors such as neighborhood characteristics, family size, the working status of the mother, and participation in preschool did not significantly impact the child's achievement at the onset of formal schooling (Levitt & Fryer, 2004). However, Levitt and Fryer did find once these otherwise identically achieving students entered school, the achievement gap was present.

In addition to the daunting statistics of the achievement gap, a disproportionate number of students who speak a nonstandard dialect are assigned to special education classes (Baugh, 2000;

Russo & Talbert-Johnson, 1997; Seymour & Bland, 1991) and misdiagnosed with language disorders (Rickford, Sweetland, & Rickford, 2004). Russo and Talbert-Johnson (1997) reported that speech language pathologists too often diagnose students exclusively on test results and neglect to take into account pertinent factors such as student cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The authors attribute this to a lack of knowledge about AAE.

Deficiencies in the evidence. Dialect differences alone cannot account for the academic difficulties faced by African-American students and the Black-White achievement gap. Socioeconomics, demographics, and parenting beliefs and behaviors are just a few factors identified as contributors to student academic achievement or failure. Berlak (2008) mentioned the culture and history of African-Americans; Jencks and Phillips (1998) identified the economic disparity that exists between races; while Ferguson (1998) isolated teacher quality as the reasons for the existence of the achievement gap. Irrespective of the limitations of schools to address all of these factors, a disparity in education does exist and the law requires schools to be accountable for the achievement of all students. Among these factors, addressing teacher quality is within the capabilities of school systems. Coincidentally, teachers and teacher quality are a central feature of NCLB (Boyd et al., 2008). Researchers for the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research analyzed individual student and teacher-level data for Grades 3-8 for each year from 2000 through 2005 using data from New York City Schools and found that teacher effectiveness accounted for a large percentage of variance in student test scores (Boyd et al., 2008). Combining what is known about the significance of teacher quality and teacher expectations, examining classroom teacher perceptions and attitudes about AAE may provide a missing piece in the puzzle of the achievement gap.

Setting. The setting for the study was an elementary school located 20 miles south of a major metropolitan area in the Southeastern United States. The school district is the largest of

four school districts in the county in which it resides and is the eleventh largest in the state. The

elementary school has a high population of African-American students and economically

disadvantaged students. It is reported that at least 80% of continental African-Americans and a

number of southern Whites and urban Hispanics speak AAE (Amberg & Vause, 2009); thus, the

elementary school amply provided a sample of students who spoke AAE. The school district

serves approximately 17,400 students, of which 52% receive subsidized lunch. The site of the

study is a community prekindergarten through fifth grade elementary school identified as a Title

I school. The enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year was approximately 560 students. Table

1 shows the ethnicity ratios for students enrolled in the 2013-2014 school year.

Table 1

Elementary School Ethnicity Ratios – 2013-2014

Ethnicity	N	%
American Indian	4	.7
Asian	12	2.2
Black	326	58.2
Hispanic	150	26.7
Multiracial	11	1.9
White	57	10.2
Total	560	99.9

Table 2 displays the percentage of students who qualified for subsidized lunch in the

2013-2014 school year.

Table 2

Percentage of Students Qualifying for Subsidized Lunch – 2013-2014

Lunch Status	N	%
Free	412	69.9
Reduced	38	.5
Total	450	76.4

Significance of the study. Not all African-Americans speak AAE, and not all AAE speakers are African-American (Baron, 1997). It is estimated that 80% of the African-Americans who live in the continental United States and a number of southern Whites and urban Hispanics speak AAE (Amberg & Vause, 2009). Speakers of AAE, teachers of AAE speakers, school systems attempting to address the achievement gap, and teacher preparation programs will benefit from the findings of this study.

Definition of Terms

Teacher perceptions/attitudes. Views, opinions, and feelings held by an individual resulting from experience and external factors acting on the individual (Susuwele-Banda, 2005). In this study, teacher perceptions/attitudes were measured with the African-American English Teacher Attitude Scale (AAETAS).

Teacher expectations. Inferences that teachers make about the future academic achievement of students (Cooper & Good, 1983).

Professional development. A facilitated learning opportunity with the goal of increasing student achievement.

AAE. A dialect of American English derived from the language contact situation of African descendants in the United States (Meyer, 2009, p.75). In this study, AAE includes the following: AAE Vernacular, Black English, Black dialect, Negro dialect, nonstandard Negro dialect, Ebonics, Afro-American English, and African-American language. AAE does not

include slang or Hip Hop Nation language.

Previous exposure to AAE. Participation in a professional development training or completion of a college course that focuses on AAE, nonstandard dialects, and/or multicultural education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate teacher attitudes toward AAE of three first-grade teachers in a Title I school. The study examined if a relationship existed between teacher attitude scores from the AAETAS and each individual teacher's previous exposure to AAE. Differences in teacher-student interactions between students who speak AAE and students who speak SAE were explored. Additionally, the study investigated teacher perceptions of AAE and their attitudes toward the dialect in their own words. Last, feelings of preparedness to teach students who speak AAE and if there is a relationship between preparation level and previous exposure were studied. Teacher professional development is pivotal to educational reform (Desimone, 2009). With professional development, awareness of AAE as a legitimate language system may be achieved. With this knowledge, it is hoped that once the perceptions of AAE speakers change, the expectations for these students will follow suit which would lead to improved educational outcomes.

Organization for the Rest of the Study

The remainder of this study will be organized as follows: In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework within which the study is grounded is presented along with an overview of the related research in the areas of teacher expectations and student achievement, AAE, characteristics of AAE, negative perceptions of AAE, teacher attitudes toward AAE, and lastly teacher training and teacher quality. Precisely, Chapter 2 presents a review of literature and other significant

research associated with the research problem. Chapter 2 concludes with the research questions.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological procedures with a description of the research design,

participants, and instruments used in the study. Data collection and data analysis are also

detailed in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 concludes with limitations. Chapter 4 is comprised of an

analysis of the data collected from the study and presentation of the results. Chapter 5 provides a

summary and discussion of the findings, implications for practice, and suggestions for additional

research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Lack of knowledge about AAE combined with negative attitudes about the dialect may produce lower teacher expectations for AAE speakers in the classroom which, as a result, impedes student learning (Birch, 2001; Cazden, 1988; Goodman, 1969; Goodman & Buck, 1973; Smitherman, 2000). The study examines how teachers' previous exposure to AAE impacts their perception toward speakers of AAE and how teacher perceptions toward speakers of AAE impact their expectations for these students.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework within which this study was grounded is based upon the tenets of sociocultural theory. Initially systemized and applied by Russian psychologist Les Vygotsky and colleagues in the 1920s and 1930s, sociocultural theory posits learning and cognitive development occur from the social interactions between the individual and others, cultural-historical factors, and characteristics of the individual (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003).

During the time of Vygotsky's (1978) work, there were three schools of thought about the relationship between learning and child development. Vygotsky opened Chapter 6 with a description of the three perspectives. The first assumed that child development occurs independently of learning and that child development is a prerequisite of learning. Vygotsky cited the works of Piaget and Binet to demonstrate these suppositions. The second school of thought Vygotsky mentioned is that learning is development and that they are one in the same. This is in stark contrast to the first theory which contended that development precedes learning (Vygotsky, 1978). The third perspective "attempts to overcome the extremes of the other two by simply combining them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 81). Vygotsky rejected all three of the viewpoints

but noted that understanding the alternative theories will provide a sufficient understanding of the relationship between learning and development. Before this time, learning was widely viewed as an external process and development as an internal process.

The importance of understanding the complex relationship of learning and development is critical for educators as they plan curriculum for students. At the time of Vygotsky's (1978) writing, the teaching of reading and writing in European and American countries typically began at age six. Although Vygotsky acknowledged that it is empirically established that learning should coincide with a child's developmental level, he wrote that "we cannot limit ourselves merely to determining developmental levels if we wish to discover the actual relations of the developmental process to learning capabilities" (p. 85). Vygotsky thought that the teaching of reading and writing should be transferred to the preschool years based upon the works of Hetzer, Burt, and Montessori and the concept of the zone of proximal development.

Zone of proximal development. Advancements in development are attained through what Vygotsky (1978) explained as the zone of proximal development, which is the "distance between the actual development level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined by problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration of more capable peers" (p. 86). This is in opposition to the belief that stages of development are a prerequisite of learning as mentioned earlier. Vygotsky stated the following about his view on learning and development:

> Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. From this viewpoint, learning is not development; however, properly organized learning results in mental development and

sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning. Thus, learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions. (pp. 89-90)

Oftentimes, sociocultural theory and the work of Vygotsky are minimized to the sole concept of the zone of proximal development which places the emphasis of development and learning on the teacher and has come to be synonymous with the practice of scaffolding (Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003). Although very important, it is equally important to point out that the zone of proximal development is not the crux of Vygotsky's theories. It is the interrelatedness of interpersonal relationships, cultural-historical contexts, and the individual that brings about development.

Wertsch (1991) highlighted three major themes in the writings of Vygotsky that explain the interdependence of social and individual processes: (a) individual development, including higher mental functioning, has its origins in social sources; (b) human action, on both the social and individual planes, is mediated by tools and signs; and (c) the first two themes are best examined through genetic, or developmental, analysis. From this perspective, learning and development are seen as being embedded within social situations and occurring as a learner interacts with other people, objects, and events in the collaborative environment (Vygotsky, 1978). This is meaningful considering the proposed study is based upon the notion that teacher-student interactions are significant to student achievement and that language, a semiotic mechanism that fosters social relations, mediates the student-teacher interaction.

Teachers play a pivotal role in the development and learning of children. Planning for properly organized learning so the child's potential for development is attained is the responsibility of the classroom teacher. When a child is in his or her zone of proximal development, teachers can provide the child with appropriate support and tools so the child can

acquire a new task or skill. The provision of supports and tools by the teacher is referred to as scaffolding, and eventually the student will be able to accomplish the new skill or task being taught independently. Essential to this planning is knowledge of what the individual child brings to the learning environment. Tudge and Scrimsher (2003) noted Vygotsky as just as attentive to what the child brought to the social interaction and the broader cultural and historical setting of the interaction as he was to the knowledge of the teacher or more capable peer. Knowledge of the child includes understanding the child's culture and language (Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986).

To delve deeper into the complexity of language and its role in learning, Vygotsky and Kozulin (1986) characterized inner speech as "thinking in the pure" (p. 249) and language as the external understanding of the internal thought. When a teacher does not understand or appreciate the language of the student, the teacher is not validating or supporting the knowledge that student already possesses.

When looking at the broad picture, the tenets of sociocultural theory are important in the education of all students but especially those who come from cultures different from that of mainstream society. Torres-Velasquez (2000) concluded that if students are to be responsible or play an active role in determining their future, educational researchers and teachers alike cannot ignore or take into consideration a student's culture. Children bring to school their own knowledge of language and arithmetic, and their learning and development began prior to their first day of school (Vygotsky, 1978). Students learn from social interaction; first from caregiver and family, then from teacher. Those first social interactions within the early school years shape the learning of students for years to follow. A positive relationship with the student along with a teacher's understanding and acceptance of the student's background is necessary for the learning and development of the child.

The theoretical framework used for this study, grounded in the principles of sociocultural

theory, accedes that all language is valuable as an expression of a child's thinking and teachers through professional development can develop an awareness and understanding for students who speak AAE.

Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement

Since the Pygmalion study by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), the topic of teacher expectation literature has been full of controversy. The study prompted numerous investigations with the goal of replicating or repudiating the findings that supported the existence of a self-fulfilling prophecy in the classroom. Most of the criticism concerning Pygmalion centered around the assertion that teacher expectations have an influence on student intelligence. Whether or not teacher expectations can impact a person's IQ is still unknown, but the topic of teacher expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies is still a hotbed of discussion due to the association of teacher expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies to greater societal issues.

Several reviews were conducted on the topic of teacher expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies (Brophy, 1983; Jussim, Smith, Madon, & Palumbo, 1998; Rosenthal, 1974; Rosenthal & Rubin, 1978; Snow, 1995; Spitz, 1999) including the latest by Jussim and Harber (2005). Jussim and Harber sought to end much of the debate and put to rest any misconceptions or sensationalism surrounding the results of the study. Despite the number of studies and reviews already in existence, the authors found that there was a need to synthesize the facts from fiction in an updated article particularly because self-fulfilling prophecy and teacher expectation literature is often cited. The two researchers centered their examination on six questions. The questions were selected to address the focal themes in the literature and the areas of the literature where there is no consensus in the conclusions: (a) What did the early teacher expectations research show; (b) do teacher expectations influence student intelligence; (c) how powerful is the typical self-fulfilling prophecy in the classroom; (d) how accurate is the typical teacher

expectation; (e) do negative teacher expectations harm students more than positive teacher expectations help students; and (f) do teacher expectations effects accumulate across different teachers and over time? Jussim and Harber pointed out that because of all of the debates concerning this topic, it was important to "stick close to the empirical evidence" (p. 132), which meant that they assessed the actual results of the studies and not what is widely accepted in the scholarly literature.

The results of Jussim and Harber's (2005) extensive review found that there is empirical evidence to validate the occurrence of self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom, but the effects are characteristically small and generally do not accumulate. However, Jussim and Harber's review did support the findings of many other researchers who have discovered that self-fulfilling prophecies are powerful for students from at-risk backgrounds (Jussim & Eccles, 1995; Jussim et al., 1996; Jussim & Harber, 2005; Madon et al., 1997). One of the studies that conclusively supported the existence of the self-fulfilling prophecy was Rosenthal and Rubin's (1978) meta-analysis titled Interpersonal expectancy effects: The first 345 studies. In this study, Rosenthal and Rubin looked at 345 interpersonal expectancy effect experiments and divided the experiments into eight categories: reaction time, inkblot tests, animal learning, laboratory interviews, psychophysical judgments, learning and ability, person perception, and everyday situations. Everyday situation experiments included studies of teacher expectations and were found to have a mean effect size of 0.88 and a mean standard normal deviate of 1.03.

The existence of the phenomena is accepted and empirically validated, but some researchers were interested in how these mechanisms were working in the classroom and the factors that cause teachers to develop higher expectations for some students and lower expectations for others. These led to naturalistic studies where researchers entered the classroom and observed teacher behaviors. Brophy and Good (1970) pioneered the research of observing

teacher-student interactions. Unlike previous naturalistic studies that observed teacher expectations on whole-class interactions, this study was focused on the dyadic relationship between teacher and individual students. The purpose of the study was to investigate the ways in which teachers communicate different expectations to different children resulting in differences in achievement. The study took place within an elementary school in a small school district in rural Texas. The ethnic makeup of the school was about 75% Caucasian, 15% Hispanic, and 10% African-American. About 45% of the students in the district were from the local military base. Four first-grade teachers were used in this study. The teachers were asked to rank the students in their class in order of achievement. It is important to note that the school employed the use of homogeneous grouping, therefore naturally minimizing the objective differences of the children based on test scores. Teacher rankings of their students served as the teacher expectation measure. At the end of the school year, achievement was measured using the Stanford Achievement Test. From these rankings, researchers took the top three boys and girls and bottom three of boys and girls from each class. A few children low on the list were excluded due to limited English language proficiency or evidence of a disability. Once participants were established, researchers observed in the classroom using an observation system that addressed teacher-student contacts previously noted in pilot studies. The researchers observed each classroom four times on four different days. Each classroom was observed for two full mornings and two full afternoons in order to make sure a range of classroom activities were included within the study observations. The study identified 17 different behaviors that teachers applied to high- and low-expectation students. It was reported that teachers criticized low-expectation students more often and accepted low-level performances from these students. In comparison, high-expectation students received more praise for correct responses and more feedback, support, and rephrasing of questions when they answered questions incorrectly. Brophy (1985)

argued that the differential behaviors exhibited by teachers in these studies may have impacted the achievement of the students involved and thus served as self-fulfilling prophecies.

More recently, the Longitudinal Relations of Teacher Expectations to Achievement in the Early School Years (Hinnant et al., 2009) was a study that sought to "explore the possibility that child sex, ethnicity, family income, and social skills moderate the relation between teacher expectations and children's subsequent academic achievement in the early school years" (p. 663). In 1991, the researchers enlisted parents of children who were born to healthy, English speaking mothers over the age of 18, were not of multiple birth or released for adoption, lived within 1-hour of the research sight, and resided in safe neighborhoods. During the sampling period of the study, 5,416 parents fit the criteria and agreed to be contacted for the purpose of the study. Participants came from 10 different locations of the United States: Little Rock, Arkansas; Irvine, California; Lawrence/Topeka, Kansas; Wellesley, Massachusetts; Morganton/Hickory, North Carolina; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Charlottesville, Virginia; Seattle, Washington; and Madison, Wisconsin. Conditional random sampling was used to ensure diversity in social economic status and ethnicity which resulted in a sample of 3,015 families. Of the 3,015 families, 1,364 families completed the home interview process and were enrolled in the study. The researchers took precautions to ensure the 1,364 participants were representative of the larger hospital sample. The children of these families were followed from birth to fifth grade. The authors gained teacher expectancy scores at first, third, and fifth grade using the method reported in Madon et al. (1997) where a discrepancy score was calculated from teacher ratings of student performance in reading and math ability and their performance on standardized assessment. An adapted questionnaire from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (SECCYD), an expansive study that tracked children longitudinally from birth, was utilized for the teacher

ratings scores and the Letter-Word Identification and Applied Problems subtests from the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery–Revised was used as the standardized assessment measure. Teacher-perceived social competence was also measured using the Social Skills Questionnaire from the Social Skills Rating System: Grades K-6. The study reported results based on data collected in first grade, third grade, and fifth grade. In the areas of reading and math, first-grade and third-grade results as well as reading in the fifth grade showed that teacher expectations are highly related to the child's social competence. Teachers tended to have high teacher expectations for those students who had good social skills. Most meaningful for the current study, it was found that teacher expectations for math in the fifth grade were highly related to the child's ethnicity. Students from minority groups were rated lower by teachers and received lower teacher expectancy scores. In addition, it was found that teacher expectations were more strongly related to the later achievement of children from stigmatized groups, i.e., children from minority and/or low socioeconomic backgrounds, and teacher expectations have lasting effects on these students' performance supporting previous research findings (Jussim & Harber, 2005). Boys from minority backgrounds performed lower when their abilities were underestimated and performed higher or had the greatest gains when their abilities were overestimated. For all students at fifth grade, first- and third-grade teacher expectations predicted the math performance of the children. The researchers reported the associations as linear therefore suggesting teacher overestimations of children's math abilities, more than what their test scores indicate as accurate, tend to make children perform better in math in the future. Similarly, when teachers have an underestimation or negative view of a student's math performance, again, more than what their test scores indicate, the student tends to perform not as well in the future.

Another study (Sorhagen, 2013) which used data from the SECCYD examined the

association between first-grade teacher expectations of their students' math, basic reading, and language skills with the students' high school academic performance measured by achievement and cognitive tests. Sorhagen (2013) found that when teacher expectations were underestimated in the first grade, their scores on the achievement measures at age 15 were lower; and when the expectations were overestimated, the student's performance was higher. These results were discovered after prior academic ability, demographics, and noncognitive covariates were controlled.

AAE

AAE has a long history dating back to the language contact situation of the slave trade (Meyer, 2009). It is reflective of the African languages (Niger-Congo) of the slaves and the Euro American English of the slave owners (Smitherman, 2000, p. 19). Although AAE is one of the most extensively researched language variety of all United States dialects (Rickford & Rickford, 2000), linguists often disagree as to whether AAE is a language or a dialect of SAE. The Linguistic Society of America, the principal professional organization of linguists, provided the following statement in January 1997 in the midst of the Ebonics controversy of the late 1990s:

> The distinction between "languages" and "dialects" is usually made more on social and political grounds than on purely linguistic ones. For example, different varieties of Chinese are popularly regarded as "dialects," though their speakers cannot understand each other, but speakers of Swedish and Norwegian, which are regarded as separate "languages," generally understand each other. (Rickford, 1997, "LSA resolution on the Oakland 'Ebonics' issue," para. 3)

What is well known and supported with decades of research is AAE is a language system with a distinct set of phonological (system of sounds), morphological (system of structure of

words and relationship among words), syntactic (system of sentence structure), semantic (system of meaning) and lexical (structural organization of vocabulary items and other information) patterns (Green, 2002). So, when a child speaks AAE, the child knows a system of sounds, word and sentence structure, meaning and structure of vocabulary, and other information about language (Green, 2002). This contradicts the language deficiency theories of AAE speaking children. Known over the years by several names including but not limited to Ebonics, African-American Language, AAE Vernacular, Afro-American English, Black English, Black English Vernacular, Black Vernacular English, Black Language, Black dialect, Negro dialect, nonstandard Negro dialect, and Negro English (Mordaunt, 2011); AAE is not broken English or slang. Smitherman (2000) mentioned persons who are dismissive of the legitimacy of AAE think that the use of "incorrect grammar" is the same as speaking AAE, but she reminds readers that the dialect is governed by a grammatical system of rules similar to SAE.

Characteristics of AAE.

If an educator is to intelligently plan pedagogical strategies for teaching urban ghetto black children to read, write, spell, and learn to maximize their verbal potential, he needs to have information on the language system Black English speaking children bring to school with them. (DeStefano, 1973, p. 113)

Empirical linguistic research has established AAE as a legitimate linguistic system with rule-governed syntax that is not slang or haphazard (Baugh, 2000; Green, 2002; Monteith, 1980; Smitherman, 2000). AAE shares many features with SAE and other dialects of English but what makes it distinct from other dialects is a number of pronunciation and grammatical features (Fasold & Wolfram, 1970; Green, 2002). Basic pronunciation differences include the absence of word-final consonant clusters (e.g., tes' for test); the substitution of the th- sound (e.g., de for they, tought for thought, and free for three); the absence of r- and l- sounds after vowels, between

vowels, and after initial consonants (e.g., ma'y for marry, sistuh for sister, p'otect for protect);

the devoicing of final b, d, and g (e.g., pick for pig, butt for bud, cap for cab); deletion of d (e.g.,

goo' for good); nasalization of the –ing suffix (e.g., singin' for singing), nasalization of vowels,

and the influence of nasals on i and e making words like pin and pen and tin and ten sound the

same; absence of vowel glides (e.g., buah for boy); the non-use of the article an or the absence of

indefinite articles; the location of the stress or accent on the first syllable (e.g., po'lice for

poli'ce); and other pronunciation features (e.g., ax for ask, bok for box, skring for string). AAE

has its own set of grammar rules that are at times different from the grammatical rules of SAE.

These distinctions are found in the verb system, the use of negation, -s suffixes, questions, and

pronouns.

DeStefano (1973) opened Chapter 3 of her book with a scenario where a child is

corrected by a teacher who is not aware of the characteristics of Black English. Had the teacher

been knowledgeable about the characteristics of AAE speech, the teacher would have known that

the child read the passage correctly and did not need correcting. Information about the

characteristics and features of AAE are often technical analyses that are difficult for nonlinguists

to comprehend (Fasold & Wolfram, 1970). This makes it difficult for persons who are not

linguistic specialists to study the systematic rules of the language. Many researchers have called

for teacher education programs to include coursework in linguistics so teachers will be equipped

with the knowledge needed to teach children from diverse language backgrounds (Baugh, 1999;

DeStefano, 1973; Gere & Smith, 1979).

Negative Perceptions of AAE

Ann Arbor decision. In 1979, Judge Charles Joiner ruled that the Ann Arbor School

district failed to take into account the home language of 11 African-American students and in

doing so failed to teach those students how to read. This landmark U.S. District Court case

"established the importance of teachers' attitudes toward language" (Freeman, 1982, p. 41).

Judge Joiner wrote that it was not the student's language that was a barrier to learning how to

read but teacher attitudes toward student language that made the students feel lesser and

tampered with the student-teacher relationship (Kossack, 1980). This ruling was important to

not only AAE speakers but to all students of linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Court of public opinion. There have been a number of studies examining the attitudes

or perceptions of AAE (Blake & Cutler, 2003; DeStefano, 1973; Green, 2002; Gupta, 2010;

Lippi-Green, 1997; Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 1981), but one does not have to

look to research articles to know that AAE carries a stigma and there is strong public disdain for

AAE usage from both members of the African-American community and nonmembers. A

number of studies have found that speakers of AAE are regarded as having negative traits such

as being less trustworthy, less intelligent, and less educated (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007;

Cross, DeVaney, & Jones, 2001). In an interview on CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 show, Juror

B37 from the Zimmerman trial did not think the testimony of Rachel Jeantel was a credible one

because of her usage of AAE. Cooper (2013) reported the following:

> Juror B37 said Jeantel was not a good witness because the phrases used during her
>
> testimony were terms she had never heard before. The juror thought the witness felt
>
> inadequate toward everyone because of her education and her communication skills. I
>
> just felt sadness for her. (Cooper, 2013, "Juror B37: Rachel Jeantel wasn't a good
>
> witness," para. 4)

Disapproving feelings toward AAE by non-African-Americans are easy to find (Lippi-

Green, 1997). Lippi-Green (1997) gave accounts of pejorative comments found in news

programming, talk shows, movies, commentaries, books, and so forth. One such account was of

Edward I. Koch, former Mayor of New York City. Koch wrote about an essay he heard written

and read by a student at Martin Luther King, Jr. High School in a letter printed in the March 1989 issue of Harper's Magazine. In his letter to the Chancellor of Education, Koch dismissed the essay due to the student's pronunciation of the word ask. He wrote that the essay was otherwise excellent, but because of her pronunciation of the word ask as ax, the substance of the essay was lost (Lippi-Green, 1997).

Strong viewpoints of despise for AAE can also be found in the African-American community. This was very evident after the Ebonics controversy in the late 1990s. Many African-Americans spoke out against the Oakland California School Board decision including Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. It is evident that AAE is considered substandard or broken English by most of the public regardless of race or ethnicity. The sociolinguistic community believes that if the public were educated about dialects and language, the negative perceptions of language differences would change (Rickford et al., 2004).

Teacher Attitudes Toward AAE

There have been numerous studies over the past 40 years about teacher attitudes toward AAE (Newkirk-Turner, Williams, Harris, & McDaniels, 2013). Recently, Gupta (2010) examined the perceptions of elementary school teachers pertaining to AAE and their level of preparedness to teach students who speak AAE. The study took place in a high-needs school district in the mid-Atlantic United States. All 600 elementary school teachers within the district were mailed a 25-item survey that inquired about their perceptions of AAE and how well prepared they felt to teach students who spoke AAE. Along with the survey was a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and a return envelope. Of the 600 surveys, 156 were returned and analyzed. The study found that of 156 respondents, only 14.4% of the respondents felt that AAE was an adequate language system. Similarly, most teachers indicated that AAE contributed to problems with reading, writing, and performance on standardized tests. Findings

also indicated that most teachers did not feel prepared by their teacher education program to instruct students who speak AAE adequately.

Dating back to the 1960s, a number of studies measured attitudes and perceptions of listeners toward different racial and cultural groups to judge characteristics such as the speaker's intelligence, trustworthiness, and credibility. Studies of this type provided researchers unobtrusive insight into the listener's perception of these groups of people. African-American and White listeners consistently and repeatedly rated African-American speakers less favorably than White speakers on all positive traits (Hensley, 1972; Johnson & Buttny, 1982; Koch, Gross, & Kolts, 2001). This was found to be accurate for teachers as well. Teachers perceived African-American students to be less intelligent than White students in a number of studies (Cecil, 1988; Cross et al., 2001; Politzer & Hoover, 1976).

To extend upon existing research in this area, Shepherd (2011) conducted a study with 57 teachers of African-American, Hispanic, and White races. The participants listened to predetermined scripted responses of African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and White second- and third-grade students. Over 600 recordings were made to ensure that the responses met a strict criteria including if the responses were read accurately, naturally, and with good voice quality. After a series of stimulus selection, 200 recorded responses were used. It is important to note that the responses were predetermined and read by the students so they were of equal quality. Shepard (2011) found the following:

> The results showed that, relative to the same responses perceived as coming from White girls, those perceived as coming from minority boys were evaluated an average of 0.14 standard deviations less favorably, those from White boys an average of 0.16 standard deviations less favorably, and those from minority girls an average of 0.18 standard deviations less favorably. A linear regression confirmed that, with an alpha level of .05,

the difference between evaluations of responses perceived as coming from White girls and those perceived as coming from minority boys, minority girls, and White boys was significant, $\beta = .091$, $t(680) = 2.31$, $p < .025$. The regression also revealed a significant interaction with teacher ethnicity, such that Black and Hispanic teachers evaluated responses perceived as coming from minority boys, minority girls, and White boys significantly less favorably, relative to those perceived as coming from White girls, than did White and Asian teachers, $\beta = .091$, $t(680) = 1.98$, $p < .05$. (p. 1021)

These findings supported earlier studies demonstrating differences in teacher evaluations based upon perceptions and attitudes of the teachers (Crowl & MacGinitie, 1974; Granger, Mathews, Quay, & Verner, 1977; Woodworth & Salzer, 1971).

Cecil (1988) also examined teacher attitudes and expectations of African-American students who spoke SAE compared to their perceptions of African-American students who spoke AAE. The study found that teachers thought the students who used SAE could achieve greater academic achievement than the students who spoke AAE.

Judge Joiner contended that it was the negative attitudes of the teachers toward AAE that hindered the academic progress of the plaintiffs, and he faulted the school district for not supporting their teachers by providing training about AAE despite the girth of information that was available to them. Despite the amount of information available, linguistic diversity courses are rarely a part of the curriculum for preservice teachers (Baugh, 1983; Delpit, 1998; Gay, 2002). When teachers do not take into account a student's home language, a number of problems can arise. A sense of rejection can be conveyed to the student, as mentioned previously, damaging the teacher-student relationship and inappropriate interventions can be developed for the child.

There are serious implications for the negative attitudes held by teachers concerning

AAE. Baugh (2000) remarked,

>As long as some teachers continue to believe that nonstandard English or Limited English
>
>Proficiency (LEP) is a sign of diminished cognitive potential, the future welfare of this
>
>nation is threatened not by the more visible forms of racial intolerance that occupy the
>
>attention of presidential commissions, but by less visible forms of linguistic intolerance
>
>for others who speak in ways that some find unappealing, or worse. (p. 80)

Wheeler, Cartwright, and Swords (2012) gave two possible accounts of an AAE speaking student's reading on the Developmental Reading Assessment®, Second Edition (DRA2). The DRA2 is "a proven, criterion-referenced assessment and includes recommendations for scaffolded support to increase student reading proficiency" (Beaver & Carter, 2014, "Proven Reading Assessment," para. 2), according to the publisher of the assessment. The student was given an on grade-level DRA2level 40 prompt to read. The teacher recorded 21 miscues with 16 corresponding to actual reading errors and five resulting from dialect differences. If the teacher understands and correctly identifies the five miscues resulting from dialect differences, the student's accuracy rate on the grade-level text would be 92.2%. The teacher then plans "subsequent instruction focused on expanding his conceptual knowledge and vocabulary and on expanding his command of Standard English equivalents using the linguistically informed approaches of contrastive analysis and code-switching" (Wheeler et al., 2012, p. 419). The second account portrays a teacher who does not take into account the dialect differences of the AAE speaking student and counts all 21 errors. The result yielded an accuracy rate of 89.7%. This prompts the teacher to move to a lower level text, DRA2 level 38, which is prescribed in the manual. If the teacher continues to identify dialect miscues as errors, the student could be placed in a reading level lower than his or her actual reading ability. This would lead to an inappropriate intervention. The student could be pigeonholed into a below grade level remedial

reading group and not make reading progress. This could also result in a referral for special education services. Russo and Talbert (1997) noted that despite 30 years of data showing that African-American children are disproportionately (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Chinn & Hughes, 1987; Dunn, 1968; Maheady, Towne, Algozzine, Mercer, & Ysseldyke, 1983; Smith, 1983) represented in special education programs, the trend continues. In 2000, African-American males comprised 9% of the total student enrollment but represented 20% of the students identified with an intellectual disability and 21% of the students identified with an emotional disturbance (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Teacher Training and Teacher Quality

"Arguably the most important educational resource is teachers. Teachers and teaching quality are a central feature of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) which requires a 'highly qualified teacher' in every core academic classroom" (Boyd et al., 2008, p. 1). In a study examining the differences in New York City teacher qualifications and the implications for student achievement in high-poverty schools, Boyd et al. (2008) discovered that teacher quality was the furthermost substantial factor in the variance of student test scores. This finding supports other studies that have found that the lowest achieving students tend to receive weaker teachers who spend less time on instruction and provide basic instruction which exacerbates the achievement gap, while higher achieving students are assigned to teachers who emphasize higher order thinking skills and spend more time on instruction (Boyd et al., 2008; Desimone & Long, 2010; Knapp, Shields, & Turnball, 1995). Teacher quality research provides insight into how the achievement of lower achieving students can be improved. Students need quality teachers and effective teaching.

Desimone and Long (2010) investigated the extent different aspects of teacher and

teaching quality (teacher education, experience, certification, professional development, time spent on instruction, and quality level of instruction) influenced math achievement of kindergarten and first-grade students. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2000) Early Childhood Longitudinal Study were used in multilevel growth models to estimate relationships (Desimone & Long, 2010). Results indicated that teacher and teaching quality is very important to the achievement of students.

Comparable effects are found in the literature about 90/90/90 schools. The criteria for 90/90/90 schools established by Reeves (2004) have the following characteristics: 90% or more of the student population is non-White; 90% or more of the student population qualify for subsidized lunch; and 90% of the student population meet or exceed achievement test standards. Kearney, Herrington, and Aguilar (2012) conducted a case study on Lackland City Elementary School to identify the factors that contribute to Lackland City Elementary School's success. The case study included observations and recorded interviews with stakeholders by three researchers who coded transcripts of the observations and interviews independently. Teacher, parent, student, and administration perspectives were compared. The common themes identified by the researchers were support structures, relationships, and consistency. Within those themes, the importance of teachers on student achievement were highlighted throughout. Teacher support, teacher relationships, and low teacher turnover were mentioned within the themes of support structures, relationships, and consistency.

Walker (2008) conducted a longitudinal, qualitative, quasi-research study involving over 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students over the span of 15 years with the purpose of identifying the characteristics of effective teachers. The students who participated in the study were both traditional and nontraditional college students from higher education institutions throughout the United States, Canada, Bermuda and the Caribbean. The author of the study had

students who were enrolled in one of his education courses write an essay during the first week in the course about their most memorable effective teachers who had an impact on their lives. The student participants had to explain why they chose those particular teachers and provide examples of their effectiveness. The essays were then analyzed for emerging themes in the personality traits of these teachers. Walker found that there were 12 identifiable characteristics of effective teachers: (a) prepared, (b) positive, (c) hold high expectations, (d) creative, (e) fair, (f) display a personal touch, (g) cultivate a sense of belonging, (h) compassionate, (i) have a sense of humor, (j) respect students, (k) forgiving, and (l) admit mistakes. When each characteristic was described, the significance of the teacher-student relationship, focal in the tenets of sociocultural theory, was prevalent. Some of the most telling statements were, "The most effective teachers have optimistic attitudes about teaching and about students" (Walker, 2008, p. 65); "set no limits on students and believe everyone can be successful" (Walker, 2008, p. 65); "recognize that fair doesn't necessarily mean treating everyone the same but means giving every student an opportunity to succeed" (Walker, 2008, p. 65); "are approachable" (Walker, 2008 p. 65); "connect with students personally" (Walker, 2008, p. 65); "take personal interests in students and find out as much as possible about them" (Walker, 2008, p. 65); "visits the students' world" (Walker, 2008, p.65); "have a way of making students feel welcome and comfortable in their classrooms" (Walker, 2008, p. 66); "concerned about students' personal problems" (Walker, 2008, p. 66); "do not take everything seriously and make learning fun" (Walker, 2008, p. 66); "show sensitivity to feelings and consistently avoid situations that unnecessarily embarrass students" (Walker, 2008, p. 66); "habitually start each day with a clean slate" (Walker, 2008, p. 66); "are quick to admit being wrong" (Walker, 2008, p. 66).

Summary

There are a myriad of factors that contribute to the Black-White achievement gap in the

United States. Teacher expectations and teacher attitudes are certainly not the cause of the achievement gap, but teachers and their high expectations for all students can be part of the solution. From the viewpoint of sociocultural theory, teachers can provide learning environments that foster, nurture, and procure learning, but in many cases and most of the time inadvertently, teachers do the opposite in an effort to teach SAE. The "correctionist" approach to teaching does not deem worthy the child's current knowledge of language. If the tenets of sociocultural theory are putative, educators must value and validate what each individual child brings to school. When teacher negative perceptions of a child's language are perceived by the student, it can negatively impact the student's learning (Birch, 2001). It can be a source of confusion, confrontation, and frustration for the child. This is detrimental to the student-teacher relationship and to the child's academic future.

As Politzer and Hoover (1976) mentioned, teachers who hold negative perceptions or attitudes toward a student's language should not be condemned as racist individuals. As stated earlier, the negative opinions of the general public, including teachers, are most likely a result of a lack of understanding. Negative attitudes and low expectations for students who speak AAE are very common due to a lack of knowledge on the topic. After all, if AAE is seen as broken English, the job of the teacher is to teach "correct" English. Until persons understand that AAE is a true linguistic system with grammar rules of its own, this misconception will continue to survive and teacher-student relationships will continue to be damaged. Smitherman (1999) contended that the school is the major agent of social change when it comes to language diversity. In the 1970s, the Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching conducted trainings and informational sessions on topics concerning AAE and the children who speak AAE. The mission of the Stanford Center was to improve teaching in American schools. As a result of the informational sessions, teachers who participated in the trainings developed

more positive perceptions of AAE (Lewis & Hoover, 1979; Politzer & Hoover, 1976). Whether these positive perceptions of AAE impacted student achievement is unknown, but Rickford et al. (2004) called for the need to investigate if improved teacher attitudes toward AAE would lead to better student achievement. One of the aims of the current study was to explore if there is a relationship between teacher previous exposure to AAE and their attitudes toward the speech variety. The second goal of the study was to examine if teacher attitudes toward AAE impact teacher expectations for AAE speakers as it applies to teacher-student interactions. To not embrace a child's language, which is a part of the child's cultural identity, goes against the principles of a nurturing learning environment. It is not astonishing that so many minority students are failing in schools.

Research Questions

1. What attitudes do selected first-grade teachers possess toward AAE as measured by the AAETAS?

2. Is there any relationship between teacher attitudes as measured by the AAETAS and their previous exposure to AAE?

3. Is there a trend of differences between teacher interactions with AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students?

4. What are teacher perceptions of AAE in their own words and do their descriptions correspond with their attitude scores?

5. Is there a relationship between previous exposure to AAE and how prepared a teacher feels to teach students who speak AAE?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Negative perceptions about AAE as an inferior or lazy form of English exists (Goodman, 1969; Goodman & Buck, 1973; Smitherman, 2000) and may lead to lower expectations for those who speak the dialect. Research on self-fulfilling prophecy in the classroom has repeatedly shown stronger statistically significant effect sizes for students in stigmatized groups and called upon further research on the roles social class and race-ethnicities play in regulating teacher expectations (e.g., Hinnant et al., 2009; Jussim & Harber, 2005). Investigating how teacher expectations are communicated to students through student-teacher interactions could provide insight into how teacher perceptions factor into the Black-White achievement gap (Ferguson, 2003; Oates, 2003).

In this chapter, the methodological procedures of the study are outlined. The first section details the research design followed by a description of the participants and instruments utilized in the study. Next is a description of the data collection process and data analysis. The chapter concludes with limitations.

Procedures

Research design. A mixed-methods design was utilized in this study. A mixed-methods methodology was selected for the purpose of obtaining a better understanding of the research problem. Neither a qualitative nor quantitative approach alone would be sufficient in explaining the complex subject of teacher expectations and attitudes toward speakers of AAE.

Both qualitative and quantitative measures were collected. For the quantitative portion of the study, data from the AAETAS was analyzed to determine teacher attitudes toward AAE as measured by the instrument and if there was a relationship between teacher attitudes and previous exposure. Information about teacher previous exposure to AAE was collected from

responses provided by the teacher participants on the Researcher Created Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix A).

For the following phase of research, teacher participants used their class rosters and the Common Characteristics of AAE chart (see Appendix B) to distinguish students as AAE speakers or non-AAE speakers. Teacher interactions with three randomly selected AAE speakers and three non-AAE speakers from each classroom were observed using the researcher-created Observational Recording Sheet of Variables Related to the Communication of Teacher Expectations (see Appendix C). A count of teacher-student interactions for both speakers of AAE and non-speakers of AAE were collected during observations in the classroom. Those occurrences were tallied to find any existing trends of differential treatment of students based on student dialect.

Qualitative data were collected through observer field notes recorded during observations and open-ended interviews. The field notes provided details of the teacher-student interactions recorded from the close-ended observations. The open-ended interviews provided teacher participants the opportunity to describe their attitudes toward AAE in their own words. During the interview, participants disclosed whether they felt adequately prepared to teach students who spoke AAE or other nonstandard dialects. Overall, the interviews provided insight into the thoughts of teachers who teach students who speak AAE.

Participants

The sampling method implemented in this sturdy was convenience sampling. After receiving denials from three school districts within the state and neighboring state, the researcher gained acceptance into one elementary school for one grade level.

Teacher participants consisted of three first-grade classroom, general education

teachers all within the age range of 21-30. The three teacher participants made up the first-

grade team in its entirety at the school. All teacher participants reported serving students who

speak AAE. Two of the three teacher participants reported more than half of their class roster

consisted of students who speak AAE. The remaining teacher reported eight of 18 students

speak the dialect. Given that it is reported that as many as 80% of African-Americans speak

AAE, a school serving a significant number of African-American students presented ample

opportunities for these teacher participants to have interactions with speakers of the dialect.

Table 3 presents the demographic information retrieved from the Researcher Created

Participant Information Sheet.

Table 3

Demographic Information Reported by Teacher Participants

Participant Number	Ethnicity	Sex	Age Range
Participant 26	Caucasian or White	Female	21-30
Participant 12	Caucasian or White	Female	21-30
Participant 88	African-American or Black	Female	21-30

The teacher participants completed consent forms and indicated their willingness to

participate in the study after permission was granted by the school district and the school site's

principal. Despite the limitations mentioned further in the study, it is hoped that the findings

will provide general insight into the topic and spur additional investigations into teacher

expectations for students who speak AAE and other nonstandard dialects.

Student participants were identified as AAE speakers or non-AAE speakers by their

teachers. Teachers used their class roster and a chart of Common Characteristics of AAE to

identify the students (see Appendix B).

Instruments

The instrument used in the study to quantify teacher attitude toward AAE is the AAETAS

(see Appendix D). Permission to use the instrument was obtained from the two living authors via email correspondence (see Appendix E). The AAETAS is a 4-point, 46-item Likert scale with scores ranging from 46-184 designed by Hoover, McNair, Lewis, and Politzer (1997). Scores above 160 reflect excellence or high attitudes, and scores below 120 reflect deficit or low attitudes toward AAE. Scores between 120 and 159 reflect what the authors called a difference attitude. The descriptors used in the scale are as follows: SD = Strongly Disagree, MD = Mildly Disagree, MA = Mildly Agree, SA = Strongly Agree and NA = Not Applicable or No Answer. Earlier versions of the AAETAS were developed at Stanford University, but McNair-Knox added components to the instrument to increase its reliability. The AAETAS has 23 positive and 23 negative statements. The AAETAS has been used in teacher workshops across the country to explore teacher attitudes toward AAE, and it has been the instrument of choice for several researchers including Abdul-Hakim (2002) and McClendon (2010). The reliability of the scale measured from 0.89 to 0.93. The results of a reliability analysis of each item using SPSS determined that each item has an r coefficient of .30 or higher using Cronbach's alpha. According to the developers of the instrument, "a high score (above 160 points) can be interpreted as a favorable attitude toward divergent speech patterns and the achievement potential of African-American students, whereas exceptionally low scores (below 120) tend to show significant negative attitudes" (Hoover et al., 1997, p. 386).

A researcher-made information sheet accompanied the AAETAS to obtain the variable of previous exposure to AAE as well as general demographic information (see Appendix A). Item 4 of the Researcher Created Participant Information Sheet states the following: Please select one statement that describes your previous exposure to AAE. Participant responses will range from a score of 0, no previous exposure to AAE, to a score of 3, previous exposure to AAE that prepared him or her to teach speakers of nonstandard English dialects.

A researcher-designed observational recording sheet of variables related to the communication of teacher expectations was used to observe the frequency of teacher interactions with both speakers of AAE and non-AAE speakers (see Appendix C). The variables listed on the recording sheet were adapted from behaviors found in Brophy and Good (1969). In addition to tallying the frequency of interactions between teacher and students, the observer wrote field notes to later reflect upon the interactions. The number of interactions for both AAE speakers and non-AAE speakers are presented in Table 7 in Chapter 4.

Lastly, open-ended interview questions were posed to participants at the conclusion of the study using a researcher-constructed interview protocol (see Appendix F). The interview was audiotaped for later content analysis by both the researcher and an outside reviewer.

Data Analysis

To answer Research Question 1, "What attitudes do selected first grade teachers possess toward AAE as measured by the AAETAS," data from the completed AAETAS were entered into SPSS statistical program. Descriptive statistics including the mean, median, standard deviation, range, and maximum and minimum values were tabulated along with sum scores. Each participant's survey sum score was used to determine the participant's attitude score category: excellence, difference or deficit. According to Hoover et al. (1997), the authors of the scale, scores below 120 showed deficit or significantly negative attitudes toward AAE, scores between 120 and 159 showed difference attitudes, and scores of 160 or above showed excellence or favorable attitudes toward AAE.

To answer Research Question 2, "Is there any relationship between teacher attitudes as measured by the AAETAS and their previous exposure to AAE," teacher attitude scores were presented in a table along with their response to question 4 of the Researcher Created Participant

Information Sheet.

To answer Research Question 3, "Is there a trend of differences between teacher interactions with AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students," teacher interactions with both AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students were presented in a table.

To answer Research Question 4, "What are teacher perceptions of AAE in their own words and do their descriptions correspond with their attitude scores," and Research Question 5, "Is there a relationship between previous exposure to AAE and how prepared a teacher feels to teach students who speak AAE," participants were asked to answer open-ended interview questions. The interview was audiotaped and later transcribed. The responses were then reviewed and coded for overlapping themes and categories using a grounded theory methodology of constant comparative data analysis. This technique of analysis was selected because of its systematic, step-by-step procedure (Creswell, 2008). Creswell (2008) defined grounded theory design as, "a systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or an interaction about a substantive topic" (p. 432). The qualitative analysis allowed the teacher participants to reveal their perceptions and attitudes toward AAE in their own words. Teacher participants also disclosed whether they felt adequately prepared to teach students who speak AAE or other nonstandard dialects how to read and write SAE effectively. As a follow-up to the aforementioned question, participants shared their awareness or lack of awareness of specific teaching strategies used to address the needs of AAE speakers.

Constant comparative data analysis (Glasser & Strauss, 1967) requires the collection of the data from the interviews, sorting of the data into categories, reviewing information once more to collect additional information, and comparing the new information with emerging themes. An outside reviewer was commissioned to analyze the interview data in addition to the researcher in

an effort to establish interrater reliability and remove any bias that may have existed in the analysis of the qualitative data.

Summary

The intent of the study was to examine teacher attitudes toward AAE of three selected first-grade teachers and investigate if these attitudes had an impact on expectations for AAE speaking students communicated through teacher-student interactions. The study examined if a relationship existed between the teacher attitude scores from the AAETAS and each individual teacher's previous exposure to AAE. Differences in teacher-student interactions between students who speak AAE and students who speak SAE were explored. Additionally, the study investigated how teacher attitude scores on the AAETAS compared to their attitudes toward the dialect expressed in their own words. Last, feelings of preparedness to teach students who speak AAE and if there is a relationship between preparation level and previous exposure were studied.

The methodology described in this chapter required administration of the AAETAS along with the Researcher Created Participant Information Sheet, observations of the teacher participants and their interactions with students using the Observational Recording Sheet of Variables Related to the Communication of Teacher Expectations, interviews of teacher participants, and analyzing of data using a mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and qualitative data were analyzed using constant comparative data analysis. Results are reported in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter 4 reports the results of the survey and data related to the five research questions guiding the study. This study examined the attitudes of three first-grade teachers toward AAE. The study attempted to ascertain whether there was a relationship between the three teacher participants' attitudes toward AAE and their individual previous exposure to the dialect. Trends in teacher interactions with AAE speakers and non-AAE speakers or SAE speakers were investigated. Furthermore, teacher attitudes about AAE in their own words were included to explore alignment with attitude scores from the AAETAS. Teacher readiness to teach AAE speakers was also studied. The following research questions were investigated.

1. What attitudes do selected first-grade teachers possess toward AAE as measured by the AAETAS?

2. Is there any relationship between teacher attitudes as measured by the AAETAS and their previous exposure to AAE?

3. Is there a trend of differences between teacher interactions with AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students?

4. What are teacher perceptions of AAE in their own words and do their descriptions correspond with their attitude scores?

5. Is there a relationship between previous exposure to AAE and how prepared a teacher feels to teach students who speak AAE?

AAETAS Results

A total of three (N=3) teachers from one grade level within the study school completed the AAETAS in April 2015. These three teacher participants included the entirety of the first-grade teachers. All three teacher participants completed the whole survey, and no questions were

missing or unanswered. After the surveys were completed by the participants, the researcher

scored the surveys by hand using the scoring guidelines created by the authors of the instrument.

The scoring system assigned numerical values to the responses as follows:

(a) 4 points for a strong agreement with a positive statement;

(b) 3 points for a mild agreement with a positive statement;

(c) 2 points for a mild disagreement with a positive statement;

(d) 1 point for a strong disagreement with a positive statement

(e) 4 points for a strong disagreement with a negative statement;

(f) 3 points for a mild disagreement with a negative statement;

(g) 2 points for a mild agreement with a negative statement; and

(h) 1 point for a strong agreement with a negative statement.

Once the surveys were manually scored, the researcher inputted the raw data into SPSS

for analysis. Table 4 displays the mean, median, standard deviation, range, and minimum and

maximum scores. The mean of all scores was M = 137, and the median was slightly higher than

the mean Mdn = 140. The mode was not reported due to the sample size. The mean, median,

minimum, and maximum score were all within the difference category. According to Hoover et

al. (1997), the authors of the scale, scores below 120 showed deficit or significantly negative

attitudes toward AAE, scores between 120 and 159 showed difference attitudes, and scores of

160 or above showed excellence or favorable attitudes toward AAE.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Attitude Scores on the AAETAS (n=3)

N	M	Mdn	SD	Range	Min	Max
3	137	140	13.75	27	122	149

Teacher Participant Attitude Scores

   Research Question 1. To answer Research Question 1, "What attitudes do selected first-grade teachers possess toward AAE as measured by the AAETAS," the surveys were scored manually according to the scoring instructions developed by the authors of the instrument. Table 5 reports participant attitude scores and corresponding score category.

Table 5

Teacher Participants Attitude Scores and Score Category

Participant Number	Attitude Score	Score Category
26	140	Difference
12	149	Difference
88	122	Difference

Participant Attitudes and Previous Exposure to AAE

   Research Question 2. To answer Research Question 2, "Is there any relationship between teacher attitudes as measured by the AAETAS and their previous exposure to AAE," participant scores from the AAETAS were entered into a table along with participant responses to question 4 of the Researcher Created Participant Information Sheet. Question 4 provided participant previous exposure to AAE. Table 6 displays teacher participant previous exposure to AAE and their attitudes toward the dialect according to the AAETAS. A participant's previous exposure to AAE was derived from each participant's response to item 4 of the Researcher Created Participant Information Sheet. The responses to item 4 were assigned numerical values in order to denote degrees of greater exposure and lesser exposure. A response of (a) yielded a numeric score of 3, the greatest level of exposure; a response of (b) yielded a numeric score of 2; a response of (c) yielded a numeric score of 1; and a response of (d) yielded a numeric score of 0, having no previous exposure to AAE as defined in the current study. The participants all possessed different levels of exposure according to their responses. Participant 12 reported the

greatest level of previous exposure to AAE having had a graduate-level course which focused on teaching strategies for students who spoke nonstandard dialects. Participant 12 also possessed the highest AAETAS score, although all participant scores fell within the difference category. Participant 26 reported no previous coursework or professional development about nonstandard dialects but reported having other education courses that discussed strategies and other instructional techniques used to teach AAE speakers. Participant 88 reported having no previous coursework or professional development about nonstandard dialects and no previous education courses or workshops discussed AAE or other nonstandard dialects. Thus, for the purpose of this study, Participant 88 had no previous exposure to AAE. Participant 88 also held the lowest attitude score toward AAE although the score fell within the difference category. Despite having different levels of exposure to AAE, the participants of the study all held difference attitudes towards AAE. Difference attitudes are described as acknowledging AAE is different from SAE. Scores 120 and below are described to have deficit attitudes toward AAE, and scores 160 and above are described to have excellence attitudes toward the dialect.

Table 6

Teacher Participant Previous Exposure to AAE and AAETAS Score/Descriptor

Participant Number	Previous Exposure to AAE	AAETAS Score/Descriptor
26	(1) c. I did not complete a course or participate in a professional development workshop about nonstandard dialects and/or other multicultural education but I had other education courses or workshops that discussed strategies and other instructional techniques to teach AAE speakers.	140/Difference
12	(2) b. I completed a course or participated in a professional development workshop about nonstandard dialects and/or multicultural education and felt that I still needed to learn more about AAE to effectively teach speakers of the dialect.	149/Difference
88	(0) d. I did not complete a course or participate in a professional development workshop about nonstandard dialects and/or multicultural education and none of my education courses or other professional development workshops discussed AAE or other nonstandard dialects.	122/Difference

Research Question 3. To answer Research Question 3, "Is there a trend of differences between teacher interactions with AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students," teacher interactions with three randomly selected AAE speaking students and three randomly selected non-AAE speaking students were tallied on the Observational Recording Sheet of Variables Related to the Communication of Teacher Expectations. Each time the teacher participant demonstrated one of the interactions from the observation sheet with one of the three randomly selected AAE speaking students or non-AAE speaking students, that interaction was tallied. Table 7 shows the number of interactions for each participant with each group of students.

Table 7

Teacher-Student Interactions with Students Who Speak AAE and Students Who Do Not Speak

	Interactions with AAE Speakers		Interactions with non-AAE Speakers	
Participant	High Expectations	Low Expectations	High Expectations	Low Expectations
26	2	1	3	1
12	14	0	7	0
88	7	2	10	2
Total	25	3	17	3

Research Questions 4 and 5. To answer Research Questions 4, "What are teacher perceptions of AAE in their own words and do their descriptions correspond with their attitude scores," and 5, "Is there a relationship between previous exposure to AAE and how prepared a teacher feels to teach students who speak AAE," qualitative data were collected from teacher participant interviews.

Analysis of Teacher Interviews

Interview questions were presented to the three participants in the study. The teacher participants were asked three questions and additional follow-up questions when needed from the researcher-created interview protocol. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. According to Creswell (2008), to expand upon the general action of people, a grounded theory design is appropriate. The purpose of Research Question 5 was to expand upon the understanding of how teacher perceptions of AAE influence teacher instruction of AAE speaking students.

During the open-coding process of the transcribed interviews, common themes appeared. Open coding involves naming and categorizing information (Creswell, 2008). Table 8 presents the initial codes by question.

Table 8

Initial Coding of Teacher Participant Interview Responses by Questions

Question	Response
1. What is your perception of African-American English? So would you say your perception is positive, negative or neutral?	difference between spoken and written English interferes with testing positive everyday life speaking how they learned to speak neutral cultural adverse effects
2. Do you feel adequately prepared to teach students who speak African-American English or another nonstandard dialects how to read and write standard American English effectively? Why or why not?	need to learn more not as prepared don't know if the dialect should be allowed correction aware of different cultures felt adequately prepared
3. Are you aware of alternative teaching strategies that specifically addresses the needs of African-American English speakers?	code-switching charts showing differences modeling not aware of any teaching strategies

Three primary themes emerged during the initial coding of information that was relevant

to the research questions: perception, preparation to teach AAE speaking students, and

instructional strategies. Within the theme perception were three categories: positive, negative

and difference. Within the theme preparation to teach AAE speaking students were the

categories need to learn more and feeling adequately prepared. Lastly, within the theme

instructional strategies were the categories code-switching and no knowledge of instructional

strategies. After the major themes were identified, a second level of coding called axial coding

was conducted to compare similarities and differences within the different categories.

An outside reviewer was commissioned to analyze the interview data in addition to the

researcher in an effort to establish interrater reliability and remove any bias that may exist in the

analysis of the qualitative evidence. The outside reviewer, who is a professor for the university familiar with the study, possessed extensive knowledge in both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The outside reviewer was provided a copy of the transcribed interviews and an overview of how the researcher identified themes and categories in the current study. Over a period of a week through deliberation and reflection, the researcher and outside reviewer came to agreement on the development of themes and categories.

The two major themes agreed upon included perception and knowledge of instructional strategies. All participants mentioned differences between AAE and SAE, but some participants expressed more positive perceptions or attitudes and some mentioned negative attitudes. All participants in one way or another mentioned that they desired additional training and development in effective instructional strategies focused on teaching students who speak nonstandard dialects such as AAE. One participant responded that she felt adequately prepared to teach students who spoke nonstandard dialects because she was aware of different cultures due to her upbringing; however, when responding to the question concerning her awareness of instructional strategies to teach speakers of AAE how to read and write, she responded no but desired to learn.

Table 9

Final Agreed Upon Themes and Categories

Theme	Categories
Perception	Difference
	AAE is how students speak
	MAE is what is read and taught
	vernacular that kids speak
	cultural
	students learned AAE
	Positive
	nothing wrong with it
	students do a really good job
	Negative
	has adverse effects on testing
	students don't know the proper way
	lacks exposure to vocabulary
Instructional strategies	code-switching
	correction
	not aware of any teaching strategies

Theme: Teacher perception. Question 1 in the interview protocol focused on teacher perception of AAE. Teacher perceptions/attitudes are views, opinions, and feelings held by an individual resulting from experience and external factors acting on the individual (Susuwele-Banda, 2005). Categories that emerged during the coding process were difference, positive, and negative perceptions. Altogether, the teacher participants possessed difference attitudes toward AAE according to the AAETAS instrument; however, during the interview process, two participants declared neutral attitudes toward the dialect, whereas one teacher participant articulated a positive attitude toward AAE. Although none of the teacher participants explicitly affirmed a negative perception of AAE, two teacher participants provided negative responses within this theme.

Category: Difference. Two teacher participant responses indicated a neutral or difference attitude toward AAE. These participants stressed that AAE is what the students who

speak it have learned at home. One participant said that it was cultural, and the other participant mentioned that the dialect does not bother her, although she knows some people have a problem with it.

Category: Positive. One teacher participant asserted a positive attitude toward the dialect. This teacher participant felt that her students who speak the dialect do a really good job during testing and that AAE is the way people speak. She went on to mention that she was "lucky enough" to have an awesome professor in graduate school who taught her how to teach students who speak nonstandard dialects. In addition, this participant mentioned that there are so many dialects.

Category: Negative. While no teacher participants stated that they have a negative perception of AAE, some of the comments of the two teachers who claimed to have difference attitudes reflected negative attitudes toward the dialect. One of the participants questioned if she should allow students to use the dialect. The other teacher participant thought AAE had an adverse effect on student learning, made them less aware of vocabulary, and did not allow them to know the "proper way" of saying things.

Theme: Instructional strategies. Question 2 of the interview asked if teachers felt adequately prepared to teach students who speak AAE, and Question 3 of the interview asked if the teachers were aware of alternative teaching strategies that specifically addressed the needs of AAE speakers. These questions were designed to inquire about the nature of teacher-student interactions. Using correction as a teaching strategy minimizes the language skills the student possesses and brings to the learning environment. Furthermore, correction style instruction hampers the teacher-student relationship. The three participants varied in their responses to these questions; thus, three categories materialized: code-switching, correction, no knowledge of instructional strategies.

Category: Code-switching. The teacher participant who responded with positive and favorable attitudes toward the dialect mentioned using the instructional strategy code-switching. Code-switching is the instructional practice of teaching students to recognize alternative language styles. This participant used code-switching which encompassed modeling during guided reading and the developing of charts visually displaying differences in language styles.

Category: Correction. One participant responded that correction was used to teach reading and writing. It is well documented in research that correction is not effective when teaching SAE to speakers of nonstandard dialects (Rickford, 1999).

Category: Not aware of any teaching strategies. One respondent answered that she was not aware of any alternative teaching strategies. In response to question 2, this teacher participant does not feel prepared to teach students who speak nonstandard dialects and does not know if AAE should be allowed to be used or not.

Table 10

Teacher Interview Responses by Theme/Categories

Themes	Categories	Participant 12	Participant 26	Participant 88
Perception	Difference	X		X
	Positive		X	
	Negative	X		X
Instructional	Code-switching	X		
Strategies	Correction			X
	None		X	

Summary of Qualitative Results

The three teacher participants were interviewed by the researcher using the researcher-created interview protocol. Teacher interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. Teachers discussed their perceptions of AAE. After a consensus was obtained between the researcher and an outside reviewer, two different themes relating to the purpose of this study

surfaced: perceptions and instructional strategies. Categories in the theme of perception include

difference, positive, and negative. Within the theme instructional strategies, three categories

were included: code-switching, correction, and no use of instructional strategies.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Many in the field of education question what occurs when prior to entering kindergarten otherwise identically performing students end up with disparagingly dissimilar achievement levels as they progress through school. This study hoped to shed some light on the topic by examining teacher perceptions of AAE. Shepherd (2011) found that student responses perceived as coming from White girls were evaluated more favorably by teachers despite student responses being of equal quality. Shepherd's findings supported earlier research demonstrating differences in teacher evaluations based upon teacher perceptions and attitudes of speech characteristics (Crowl & MacGinitie, 1974; Granger et al., 1977; Woodworth & Salzer, 1971). Students who do not feel welcomed or accepted by the school institution may believe their abilities are inferior to others in the classroom (Birch, 2001; Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Once these students believe they are not capable of meeting expectations, according to the phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecy, they will behave in ways to make this false sense of reality true. Moreover, educators may also have lower expectations for these students because of preconceived notions and biases. Teachers may behave in ways to project those lower expectations and unknowingly plan inappropriate instruction for students who speak AAE centered upon preconceived notions of the children's abilities.

Teachers have the ability to create or perpetuate feelings of inferiority or feelings of validation especially in students who belong to stigmatized groups such as racial and ethnic minorities. As Jussim and Harber (2005) indicated in their meta-analysis, teacher expectations may continue in a diluted form for many years for some students. These students, who may be more inclined to speak nonstandard dialects of English, need to feel embraced by their teachers and their school environment the same as students who do not belong to a stigmatized group.

The earliest social interactions within students' early school years shape their learning for years to follow. Having low expectations for any student is certainly not best practice in the classroom. Examining the perceptions of teacher attitudes toward AAE is necessary to ensure that educators are not perpetuating stereotypes of nonstandard dialect speakers as lazy, dumb, or simply not smart. Meier (1999) believed that linguistic education is important for teachers, but education alone does not fully remedy linguistic bias in education. When teachers have deficit views of children's home languages, teachers neglect to discover the language abilities of these children. This could lead to student disengagement as well as inappropriate instructional programming akin to special education services and remediation. As the United States is becoming increasingly more diverse, the population of students served in public schools is as well. Teachers are serving students who may be ethnically, culturally, and linguistically different from what they are accustomed to experiencing. A study about teacher perceptions and attitudes toward AAE and how those perceptions may be related to teacher expectations may bring about awareness. The first step in solving a problem is recognizing that there is one.

In Chapter 5, a summary of the key findings of this study is followed with a discussion of the results and conclusions. Limitations and suggestions for future research and practice end the chapter.

Summary of Results

The focus of this study was teacher perceptions of AAE and how those perceptions impact teacher expectations, specifically looking at teacher interactions with AAE speakers as an indicator of teacher expectations. The following research questions guided this study.

1. What attitudes do selected first-grade teachers possess toward AAE as measured by the AAETAS?

2. Is there any relationship between teacher attitudes as measured by the AAETAS and their previous exposure to AAE?

3. Is there a trend of differences between teacher interactions with AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students?

4. What are teacher perceptions of AAE in their own words and do their descriptions correspond with their attitude scores?

5. Is there a relationship between previous exposure to AAE and how prepared a teacher feels to teach students who speak AAE?

Research Question 1 and Research Question 4. What attitudes do selected first-grade teachers possess toward AAE as measured by the AAETAS? What are teacher perceptions of AAE in their own words and do their descriptions correspond with their attitude scores? The attitudes of the teachers in the current study were measured using the AAETAS. AAETAS scores for the teacher participants were as follows: 140, 149, and 122. According to the developers of the instrument, "a high score (above 160 points) can be interpreted as a favorable attitude toward divergent speech patterns and the achievement potential of African American students, whereas exceptionally low scores (below 120) tend to show significant negative attitudes" (Hoover et al., 1997, p. 386). Scores between 120 and 160 can be interpreted as a difference attitude. Difference attitudes are described as acknowledging AAE is different from SAE. Difference does not have a positive or negative perception.

All three teacher participants possessed scores within the difference category according to this instrument; however, the data derived from the participant interviews indicate that the AAETAS was not 100% accurate in determining their authentic attitudes toward the dialect. Statements made by the participants during the interviews indicated positive attitudes as well as negative or deficit attitudes toward the dialect. Specific statements in response to Interview

Question 1 included the following:

> Participant 26: I don't have a problem with it but I know many who do. . . . I don't know if I should let them use it in school.
>
> Participant 12: I think it's great. It's the way my students speak at home and they do very well on tests.
>
> Participant 88: I don't think they know the proper way of speaking.

Negative or deficit attitudes toward AAE are hazardous in the classroom. In a number of studies involving teachers of different racial backgrounds, teachers of all races perceived students who spoke AAE to be less intelligent than White students (Cecil, 1988; Cross et al., 2001; Politzer & Hoover, 1976). When teachers suspect students are less intelligent, it is difficult to have high expectations for that student. This can have lasting effects on a child well after the child leaves that particular teacher's classroom. Hinnant et al. (2009) discovered in their study that teachers' negative views of a student's math ability in first grade and third grade have an impact on their performance in fifth grade. This was especially true for minority boys in their study. Boys from minority backgrounds performed lower when their abilities were underestimated and had the greatest gains when their abilities were overestimated by teachers.

Research Question 2. Is there any relationship between teacher attitudes as measured by the AAETAS and their previous exposure to AAE? The three teacher participants in the current study all indicated different levels of previous exposure when responding to item 4 of the Researcher Created Participant Information Sheet. The responses to item 4 were assigned numerical values in order to denote degrees of greater exposure and lesser exposure.

Participant responses ranged from 0, having no previous exposure to AAE as defined in the current study, to 2, completion of a course or professional development about nonstandard

dialects and/or multicultural education. It is important to notice that teacher attitude scores from the AAETAS appeared to have a positive relationship with their levels of previous exposure to AAE. Participant 88 had the lowest attitude score of the three teacher participants and the least previous exposure to AAE. Participant 12 had the highest attitude score of the participants and the greatest previous exposure to AAE. Due to the number of participants within the current study, inferential statistics could not be used to determine a statistically significant relationship between previous exposure to AAE and teacher attitudes toward AAE; but at the very least, it is worth noting the connection between previous exposure and attitude that was observed among the teacher participants. This observation supports previous findings from Politzer and Hoover (1976) and Lewis and Hoover (1979) who found that teachers who participated in trainings and informational sessions on topics concerning AAE and children who speak AAE developed more positive perceptions of AAE. These teachers were not followed after the study, so it is unknown if those positive perceptions of AAE impacted student achievement.

Research Question 3. Is there a trend of differences between teacher interactions with AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students? A trend of differences between teacher interactions with AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students was not detected. It was found that the teacher participants actually conveyed low expectations at an equal frequency to both AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students in the study. For all teacher participants, there was a greater amount of high teacher expectation interactions than low teacher expectation interactions for both AAE speakers and non-AAE speakers. Participant 12 had a noteworthy amount of high teacher expectation interactions when compared to the other two participants: 14 with AAE speakers and seven with non-AAE speakers for a total of 21 total high teacher expectation interactions. This total is only one less than the high teacher expectation interactions combined for the remaining two participants.

Teacher Participant 12 had the most previous exposure to AAE due to having taken a graduate-level course about nonstandard dialects and the highest attitude score according to the AAETAS. Participant 12 also made positive statements toward AAE during the interview portion of the study. It is not surprising that Participant 12 had the most high expectation interactions with AAE speaking students, but it is not known if her relatively more positive teacher attitude toward AAE is what led to the number of high teacher expectation interactions due to the limited sample size of the study. Despite having the lowest attitude score, Participant 88 had seven high expectation interactions with AAE speakers. This number is five more than Participant 26's two interactions. Teacher participant interactions with AAE speaking students did not appear to differ considerably from their interactions with non-AAE speaking students.

Research Question 5. Is there a relationship between previous exposure to AAE and how prepared a teacher feels to teach students who speak AAE? Participant 12 reported having the most previous exposure to AAE but responded that she felt she needed to learn more about teaching students who speak AAE SAE to read and write effectively. Participant 88 reported having the least previous exposure to AAE and responded that she felt adequately prepared to teach students who speak AAE to read and write SAE effectively. Participant 26 reported some exposure to AAE and responded that she is not as prepared as she should be. Despite responding that she felt adequately prepared to teach SAE to students who speak AAE and other nonstandard dialects, Participant 88 was not aware of alternative teaching strategies that specifically addressed the needs of AAE speakers. This information shows that there is no relationship between previous exposure to AAE and the level of preparedness the participant teachers felt they possessed. It was assumed that the more previous exposure a teacher possessed, the more prepared a teacher would feel with regard to teaching AAE speakers; and conversely, the less previous exposure the teacher possessed, the less prepared a teacher would

feel.

Discussion

    Previous exposure to AAE and teacher attitudes. A number of studies have been conducted examining the attitudes of teachers and preservice teachers toward AAE (Blake & Cutler, 2003; Gupta, 2010; Taylor, 1973). Gupta (2010) investigated elementary school teacher perceptions of the dialect through mail-in surveys. There was a total of 152 teacher responses. According to the study, teachers generally thought of AAE as an inadequate language system that hinders student progress. Teachers also reported feeling inadequately prepared to effectively teach speakers of the dialect. Lack of knowledge about AAE combined with negative attitudes toward the dialect may produce lower teacher expectations for AAE speakers in the classroom which, as a result, impedes student learning (Birch, 2001; Cazden, 1988; Goodman, 1969; Goodman & Buck, 1973; Smitherman, 2000). In numerous studies, listeners consistently rate nonstandard dialect speakers inferior to SAE speakers. In a study of 46 preservice teachers, Richardson and Lemmon (2009) found that people have more positive perceptions of familiar dialects. If the findings of Richardson and Lemmon are wide reaching, then teachers who generally speak SAE may not be familiar with AAE or other nonstandard dialects and therefore will not have positive perceptions of the dialect. In the current study, the three participants reported varying levels of previous exposure to AAE.

    Teacher interactions and teacher expectations.

    No matter what material resources are available, no matter what strategies districts use to allocate children to schools, and no matter how children are grouped for instruction, children spend their days in social interaction with teachers and other students. As students and teachers immerse themselves in the routines of schooling, both perceptions and expectations reflect and determine the goals that both students and teachers set for

achievement, the strategies they use to pursue the goals, the skills, energy, and other

resources they use to implement the strategies, and the rewards they expect from making

the effort. These should affect standardized scores as well as other measures of

achievement. (Ferguson, 2003, p. 461)

For the purpose of simplicity, the frequency of teacher interactions was used in this study

to represent the communication of teacher expectations. It is well documented in teacher-student

relationship studies that teachers interact more frequently with students who are perceived as

high achieving and interact less frequently with low-achieving students (Ferguson, 2003; Good,

1970, 1981). This is one way in which teachers communicate their expectations for students.

Teachers provide significantly more opportunities for high-achieving students to speak in the

classroom (Good, 1981). The current study looked at the number of interactions each teacher

participant had with AAE speaking students and non-AAE speaking students as identified by the

teacher participants.

Teacher interactions and instructional strategies. The crux of Vygotsky's theories is

the interrelatedness of interpersonal relationships, cultural-historical contexts, and the individual

student that brings about learning and development. Children bring to school their own

knowledge of language, and their leaning and development began prior to their first day of

school (Vygotsky, 1978). In order to provide inclusive learning environments where what the

student brings to the learning situation is valued, schools need to understand that AAE and other

nonstandard dialects of English are not substandard, random, or merely broken English.

Teachers who use a correctionist approach to teaching SAE risk damaging the teacher-student

relationship as well as risk creating a rejection of school, fear of participating, and a lack of

ownership in learning (Mordaunt, 2011). If students are to play an active role in determining

their future educational outcomes, teachers cannot ignore a student's culture (Torres-Velasquez,

2000). Teacher student interactions are significant to student development and achievement. The use of instructional techniques like code-switching allows teachers to interact with students in a harmless approach not damaging to the teacher-student relationship. In the current study, each teacher participant reported different approaches to addressing the instructional needs of AAE speakers. Participant 26 reported not knowing or using any instructional techniques. She questioned if AAE should be allowed to be used at school, but because of her uncertainty about the topic and lack of direction she allows its use. Participant 12, who had the most previous exposure to AAE, the highest attitude score on the instrument and reported the most favorable perceptions toward the dialect, and who had the most interactions with AAE students, utilized the instruction of code-switching in the classroom. Lastly, Participant 88 reported using a correctionist approach to teaching SAE. This approach is harmful to the teacher-student relationship.

Conclusions

Baugh (2000) stated, "As long as some teachers continue to believe that nonstandard English or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a sign of diminished cognitive potential, the future welfare of this nation is threatened" (p. 80).

The classrooms in the United States are becoming increasingly more ethnically diverse. With this ethnic diversity also comes cultural and linguistic diversity. To address the needs of these diverse populations, educational practices that confront the obstacles associated with the Black-White achievement gap must be developed. As the ruling in the Ann Arbor court case and other pieces of research by educational professionals pointed out, it is not the dialectal differences that produce hindrances to learning; rather, it is "the result of negative attitudes (based on deficit theory) toward learners who speak vernacular dialects" (Goodman, Buck, &

Barnitz, 1997, p. 454). that instigates the impediments to learning experienced by dialect speakers. These impediments include but are not limited to lowered teacher expectations for AAE speakers, feelings of inferiority among AAE speakers, misdiagnosis of student ability leading to inappropriate educational programming, and feelings of not belonging which result in disengagement to school and learning. Again, as the Ann Arbor decision revealed, it is the responsibility of the school systems to provide teachers with an understanding of AAE and ways to teach AAE speakers. A study examining how attitudes toward AAE are influenced by previous exposure to AAE may expose how attitudes toward AAE can be modified through teacher education. Studying how attitudes toward AAE change the frequency of teacher-student interactions may uncover insight into how teacher attitudes toward AAE impact teacher-student interactions, thus further supporting the belief that teacher attitudes toward the dialect need to be changed.

Teaching SAE to speakers of nonstandard dialects should be viewed as teaching students how to be proficient in two dialects, not remediation (Mordaunt, 2011). As the tenets of social cultural theory remind educators, students bring valuable knowledge to the learning environment. Educators should not condemn students' home language or culture but instead use the knowledge that students bring from home and build upon it in order to help students acquire more knowledge. Teaching code-switching and awareness of dialects does not damage student self-confidence or their relationship with teachers and schooling because it does not portray AAE as a dumb, lazy, inferior dialect of SAE. As teachers learn about AAE and understand that it is a legitimate, rule-governed language system, their perspective toward speakers of the dialect should naturally change.

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were formulated.

1. Female teachers with less than 5 years of experience will tend to possess difference

attitudes toward AAE on the AAETAS instrument.

2. Within the difference category of the AAETAS, teachers vary significantly in their attitudes toward the dialect.

3. The higher the attitude score on the AAETAS a teacher possesses results in an increased likelihood the teacher will report greater previous exposure to AAE.

4. Teacher attitudes toward AAE according to the AAETAS instrument do not always match the attitudes they possess toward AAE.

5. Teachers with more previous exposure to AAE through coursework are more likely to be aware of and use focused instructional strategies like code-switching in the classroom.

Implications for Policy and Practice

"We need language policies that will ensure that students who are not native speakers of Standard English will not fail due to language neglect" (Baugh, 1999, p. 284). Across the country, school systems that serve speakers of nonstandard dialects like AAE do not have sufficient reform policies in place for these students. From the findings of this study, implications for both policy and practice regarding professional development and instructional planning are evident.

According to Jencks and Phillips (1998), teacher perceptions of student ability, social/emotional obstacles within a non-inclusive classroom and ineffective instructional strategies have contributed to the achievement gap in the United States. Schools systems have to take into account a student's home language and culture when attempting to educate them. This was specified in Judge Joiner's ruling in the Ann Arbor Black English case of 1979, and this coincides with the basic tenets of sociocultural theory. In order to do so, school districts have a

duty to provide teachers with professional development opportunities to learn about AAE. Providing teachers with an overview of AAE may help change teacher perceptions toward the dialect. Rickford et al. (2004) believed that if the public were educated about dialects and language, the negative perceptions of language differences would change. Educational outcomes for speakers of AAE and other nonstandard dialects may improve if the perceptions of AAE change and teachers are equipped with the following: a better understanding of how to use and interpret assessment data with regard to speakers of AAE, awareness of the damage caused by "correctionist" methods of teaching, and effective instructional strategies like code-switching and contrastive comparative analysis. Thus, this study provides the basis for examining current policy or lack of policy concerning the learning of nonstandard dialect speakers.

Implications to improve instructional practice include teachers valuing the home language and culture of the student, creating inclusive multi-cultural classrooms, and using nondamaging instructional approaches like code-switching. Knowledge of the individual child and what he or she contributes to the learning environment is pivotal in the development of appropriate instructional programming.

Limitations

The small number of participants as well as the sampling method of convenience sampling were limitations that were beyond the researcher's control but are noted as potential threats to the study. In addition to the small sample size, the diversity of the participants which included only female teachers with less than 5 years of experience was yet another limitation. With the limited access to the participants and their classrooms, frequency of interactions were tallied instead of a more advanced observation procedure which would have required advanced training on the observation protocol and validity and reliability testing. Due to time constraints,

the researcher was able to observe each participant only twice. An observation protocol that denoted the quality of interactions would yield more beneficial information.

Suggestions for Future Research

The quality of interactions between teachers and students can set the tone for learning. If the interactions between students and teachers are negative, this can lead to negative feelings of self-worth and negative feelings toward school in general. Speakers of AAE and other nonstandard dialects are often thought of as having less intelligence and ability to succeed (Adger et al., 2007). Students who speak AAE are rated lower in reading comprehension than comparable students who speak SAE when teachers hold a negative attitude toward AAE (Taylor, Payne, & Cole, 1983).   Lack of knowledge about AAE combined with negative attitudes toward the dialect may produce lower teacher expectations for AAE speakers in the classroom which, as a result, impedes student learning (Birch, 2001; Cazden, 1988; Goodman, 1969; Goodman & Buck, 1973; Smitherman, 2000). Poor teacher perceptions of student ability, social/emotional obstacles within a non-inclusive classroom environment, and ineffective instructional strategies that are a result of non-inclusive classroom settings have contributed to the achievement gap (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). There is a need to investigate if improved teacher attitudes toward AAE would lead to better student outcomes (Rickford et al., 2004).

In the current study, the quality of interactions was not examined. It is suggested that the quality of interactions between teachers and AAE speakers and non-AAE speakers be examined to determine if there is a significant relationship between teacher attitudes toward AAE and the quality of interactions between teachers and AAE speakers and non-AAE speakers. This is important for many reasons. It is established that teachers interact with students differently based upon their expectations for students. In addition, it is also recognized that teacher

expectations impact students belonging to marginalized groups. Baugh (2000) stated,

> As long as some teachers continue to believe that nonstandard English or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a sign of diminished cognitive potential, the future welfare of this nation is threatened not by the more visible forms of racial intolerance that occupy the attention of presidential commissions, but by less visible forms of linguistic intolerance for others who speak in ways that some find unappealing, or worse. (p. 80)

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Appendix A

Researcher Created Participant Information Sheet

Researcher Created Participant Information Sheet

Directions: Please circle one letter for each statement or question about yourself.

1. I consider myself to be
    a. African American or Black
    b. American Indian or Alaskan Native
    c. Asian
    d. Caucasian or White
    e. Hispanic or Latino/Latina
    f. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

2. I am
    a. Female
    b. Male

3. My age range is
    a. between 21-30
    b. between 31-40
    c. between 41-50
    d. over 50

4. Please select one statement that describes your previous exposure to AAE.
    a. I completed a course or participated in a professional development workshop about nonstandard dialects and/or multicultural education and felt that the coursework prepared me to teach students who speak AAE.
    b. I completed a course or participated in a professional development workshop about nonstandard dialects and/or multicultural education and felt that I still needed to learn more about AAE to effectively teach speakers of the dialect.
    c. I did not complete a course or participate in a professional development workshop about nonstandard dialects and/or multicultural education but I had other education courses or workshops that discussed strategies and other instructional techniques to teach AAE speakers.
    d. I did not complete a course or participate in a professional development workshop about nonstandard dialects and/or multicultural education and none of my education courses or other professional development workshops discussed AAE or other nonstandard dialects.

Appendix B

Common Characteristics of African-American English

Common Characteristics of African-American English

Below is a very brief summary of some of the more prominent characteristics of African American English (AAE). Using the information below, please identify students in your classroom who speak AAE. It is important to understand that students who speak AAE may or may not utilize or exhibit all of the characteristics featured below. In addition, the characteristics listed below are not exhaustive.

Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Lexical Features

AAE	SAE	
bad	good	origin from Mandingo language in West Africa
kitchen	hair at nape of neck	origin unknown
tes'	test	absence of word-final consonant cluster
de	they	substitution of th- sound
sistuh	sister	absence of r- and l- sounds
pick	pig	devoicing of final b, d, and g
goo'	good	deletion of d
singin'	singing	nasalization of the –ing suffix
pin	pen	nasalization of vowels
buah	boy	absence of vowel glides
po'lice	poli'ce	location of the stress or accent on first syllable
ax/aks	ask	metathesis of final consonant clusters beginning with s

Grammatical Features (Tense verb system, the use of negation, dropping of the copula be)

AAE	SAE
I been done my work.	I did my work a long time ago.
I been doing my work.	I've been doing my work for a long time.
I didn't go nowhere.	I didn't go anywhere.
You crazy.	You are crazy.
Who you?	Who are you?
She my friend.	She is my friend.

Appendix C

Observational Recording Sheet of Variables Related to the Communication of Teacher Expectations

Observational Recording Sheet of Variable Related to the Communication of Teacher Expectatons

Variables	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Comments
Direct question from teacher				
Raised hand to answer a question				
Called upon to answer a question				
Correct answers followed by teacher praise				
Correct answers not followed with any feedback				
Correct answers followed by criticism				
Incorrect answers followed by teacher criticism				
Incorrect answers followed by teacher support (rephrasing of questions, giving a clue, repetition)				
Incorrect answers not followed with any feedback				

Appendix D

African-American English Teacher Attitude Scale (AAETAS)

African-American English Teacher Attitude Scale (AAETAS)

Hoover, R.M., McNair, F., Lewis, S.A.R., & Politzer, R.L. (1997). African American English Teacher Attitude Measures for Teachers. In Reginald L. Jones (ed.), Handbook of Test and Measurements for Black Populations (pp. 383-393). Hampton, VA: Cobb.

1. Most African American people's major potential is in music, art, and dance.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

2. African Americans should try to look like everybody else in this country rather than wearing Bubas and Afros.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

3. African Americans need to know both standard and Black English in the school in order to survive in America.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

4. African American English is a unique speech form influenced in its structure by West African languages.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

5. The reason African Americans aren't moving as fast as they could is that the system discriminates against them.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

6. African American English is a systematic, rule-governed language variety.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

7. African American English should be eliminated.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

8. African American English should be preserved to maintain oral understanding and communication among Black people of all ages and from all regions.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

9. The African American community concept of discipline involves not letting children "do their own thing" and "hang loose."
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

10. African American kids have trouble learning because their parents won't help them at home.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

11. It is racist to demand that African American children take reading tests because their culture is so varied that reading is an insignificant skill.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

12. African American English should be promoted in the school as part of African American children's culture.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

13. Standard English is needed to replace African American English to help with worldwide communication.
Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

14. It is not necessary for Black children to learn anything other than their own dialect of African American English in school.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

15. The reason African American people aren't moving as fast as they could is that they're not as industrious as they should be.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

16. There is no such thing as African American English.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

17. The use of African American English is a reflection of unclear thinking on the part of the speaker.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

18. African American children's language is so broken as to be virtually no language at all.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

19. African Americans should talk the way everybody else does in this country.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

20. African American English is principally a Southern speech form.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

21. When a child's native African American English is replaced by Standard English, she or he is introduced to concepts which will increase his learning capacity.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

22. The home life of African American children offers such limited cultural experiences that the school must fill in gaps.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

23. African and African American hair and dress styles are very attractive.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

24. African American kids would advance further in school without African American English.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

25. African American English has a logic of its own, equal to that of any other language.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

26. African American children can't learn to read unless African American Vernacular English is used as the medium of instruction in the schools.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

27. African American people have their own distinctive pattern of speech which other people in this country should accept.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

28. African American English was produced by its history in Africa and this country and not by any physical characteristics.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

29. African American English can be expended to fit any concept or idea imaginable.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

30. The home life of African American people provides a rich cultural experience directly connected to African origins.

Agree Strongly Agree Mildly Disagree Mildly Disagree Strongly

31. The reason African American children have trouble learning in school is that they are not taught properly.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

32. African American English is basically talking lazy.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

33. African American children can be trained to pass any test written.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

34. African American children can to read in spite of the fact that most readers are written in Standard English.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

35. African American children have the same potential for achievement in math and science as any other people.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

36. African American children are advantaged through African American English; it makes them bi-dialectal just as Chicanos are bilingual.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

37. African American English is misuse of standard language.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

38. African American children should be allowed to choose their own course of study and behavior in school from an early age and should not be directed by the teacher.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

39. Standard English is superior to nonstandard English in terms of grammatical structure.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

40. African American English should be preserved because it creates a bond of solidarity among the people who speak it.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

41. Acceptance of nonstandard dialects of English by teachers would lead to a lowering of standards in school.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

42. African American English should be preserved because it helps African American feel at ease in informal situations.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

43. African American English enhances the curriculum by enriching the language background of the children.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

44. African American English expresses some things better than Standard English.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

45. Since only Standard English is useful in getting a job, it should always be preferred over African American English.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

46. African American English should be abandoned because it does not provide any benefits to anybody.

Agree Strongly   Agree Mildly   Disagree Mildly   Disagree Strongly

Appendix E

Letter to Request Permission for Use of Instrument

Letter to Request Permission for Use of Instrument

Sabrina K. Rhoden

[Date]

Dr. Faye McNair-Knox
Executive Director
One East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative
1798 B Bay Road
East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Dear Dr. Faye McNair-Knox:

My name is Sabrina K. Rhoden and I am a doctoral candidate at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina. I am in the process of conducting research on Teacher Attitudes toward African American English.

I am writing to seek your permission to use your African American English Teacher Attitude Scale (AAETAS) as published in: Hoover, R.M., McNair, F., Lewis, S.A.R., & Politzer, R.L. (1997). African American English Attitude Measures for Teachers. In Reginald L. Jones (ed.), Handbook of Test and Measurements for Black Populations (pp. 383-393). Hampton, VA: Cobb.

I fully intend to keep the fidelity of the instrument by not modifying any of the contents and I fully understand that I must give full credit to you and the other authors.

Your permission to use the AAETAS would be greatly appreciated. If you approve, please notify me in writing or via email correspondence. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sabrina K. Rhoden
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Project: Teacher Perceptions of African American English and Its Impact on Teacher Expectations

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Description of the Project: The purpose of this study is twofold. The study investigates the relationship between teacher attitudes about African American English (AAE) and teachers' previous exposure to information about AAE. The study also examines how teacher perceptions toward speakers of AAE impacts their expectations for these students. Participants include elementary, classroom teachers in schools serving predominantly African American students and the students in their classes. Names of participants will not be shared with others to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The interview is estimated to take between 10-20 minutes to complete.

Questions:

1. What is your perception of African American English (AAE) and African American English speakers?

2. Why do you say that?

3. Do you feel adequately prepared to teach students who speak AAE or other non-standard dialects how to read and write SAE effectively?

4. Why or why not?

5. Are you aware of alternative teaching strategies that specifically address the needs of AAE speakers?