Morphosyntactic Differences between Standard and African-American English

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá morfosyntaktickými rozdíly mezi standardní a Afro-americkou angličtinou. Hlavním cílem této bakalářské práce je dokázat, že Afro-americká angličtina není chybná angličtina, ale je systematická a dodržuje pravidla. K tomu abych dokázala své tvrzení, jsem se věnovala morfosyntaxu afro-americké angličtiny a tyto rozdíly znázornila na příkladech.

Klíčová slova: afro-americká angličtina, standardní angličtina, AAE, SE, dialekt

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with morphosyntactic differences between Standard and African-American English. The main aim of this bachelor thesis is to prove that African-American English it is not English "with mistakes", but it is rule governed and systematic. To prove this, I examine morphology and syntax of AAE and highlight the differences on the examples.

Keywords: Afro-American English, Standard English, AAE, SE, dialect

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This bachelor thesis is called Morphosyntactic differences between Standard English and African American English. As Pullum (1999, 40) stated, many speakers of Standard English (hereupon SE) assume that African American English (hereafter AAE) is only a "badly" spoken SE or Standard English "with mistakes". However, even though AAE shares some features with SE, there are some differences, which will be examined in my bachelor thesis.

The first chapter describes the basic terms such as English varieties, dialect and Standard English, which will be used further in this thesis. The second chapter provides brief description of major regional and ethnic dialects spoken in the USA. Also the term African American English is introduced. Third chapter is focused on general features of AAE. This chapter describes in particular differences in phonology and lexis of AAE and these features are compared to SE. The last but one chapter is focused on morphological differences between SE and AAE. This chapter mainly deals with inflectional morphology, plural marking of nouns and also pronouns. The last chapter of my bachelor thesis is focused on syntactic differences between AAE and SE. This chapter examines divergences in questions, negation, relative and existential clauses. Moreover, the bachelor thesis will be provided by examples, which will support the theory and also contrast differences between SE and AAE. The main goal of this bachelor thesis is to prove that AAE is systematic and rule governed English.

1 VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

English language is spoken by more than 400 million native speakers and it is probably the world's most widely used language. As a consequence of its wide distribution in the world, many varieties of English exist. (Pullum and Huddleston 2005, 1) A language variety can be defined as "a variant of a language that differs from another variant of the same language systematically and coherently." (McEnery, Xiao and Tono 2006, 90) Therefore varieties of English may differ from one another for example in phonology, lexicology and grammar. (Quirk et al. 1985, 15) This bachelor thesis will be dealing with region varieties (dialects) and social varieties (sociolects).

1.1 Dialect and accent

The term dialect refers to certain variety of language spoken by a specific group of people using specific combination of English words, grammar and pronunciation. (Trudgill 2004, 2-5; Finegan 2014, 373) Dialect indicates speaker's social and regional background and can be further divided into regional dialect and social dialect. Firstly, regional dialects are spoken in a particular area of a country, for instance the Northern dialect in the USA. (Siegel 2010, 5; Kövecses 2000, 64) Besides regional dialect, people speak national dialects as well like British English, Canadian English and American English. (Finegan 2011, 11)

Secondly, social dialects or also called sociolects are not associated with geographic regions. Social dialects are related to religion, education, social class, age and mainly ethnicity. There are many ethnic groups in the USA, thus many ethic dialects exist, such as African American English, which will be describe further in this bachelor thesis. (Wardhaugh and Fuller 2015, 42-43)

Additionally, dialects consist of large amount of idiolects, which can be described as speaker's personal dialect. Thus no dialect is entirely homogenous. (Crystal 2003a, 225; Brook 1979, 27)

Another term, which is closely connected to the term dialect and often wrongly considered as a synonym for dialect is accent. (Fasold and Connor-Linton 2006, 313) Accent could be described as a variety, which differs phonologically and (or) phonetically from other variety. (Chambers and Trudgill 1998, 5) Basically, accent is focused on specific pronunciation, for example RP pronunciation in the UK. (Trudgill 2004, 7)

1.2   Standard English

Standard English (SE) is a dialect that non-native speakers of English learn commonly as well as it is taught in schools. Standard English is called standard due to the process of standardization. SE uses certain rules and forms that have been determined by authorities (e.g. the BBC, the British Council and the editors of Oxford dictionaries and Longman dictionaries in the United Kingdom). SE is used in textbooks, grammar books, dictionaries, in print, etc. Furthermore, Standard English is connected to lexicon, grammar and orthography. SE is spoken by educated people and by news broadcasters in a wide range of accents. Nevertheless, only 3 to 5 per cent population of the United Kingdom speak Standard English with regionless accent called Received Pronunciation or also sometimes called the BBC accent. Even though linguists claim that no language or variety of language is superior, it is generally believed that SE has a favoured status as it causes positive social advantage as well is spoken in media, government. (Trudgill 1995, 5-6; Ibid. 2004, 8; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006, 10; Wardhaugh 2010, 356-357; Crystal 2003, 110; Linn and McLelland 2002, 231)

2 AMERICAN ENGLISH

American English started to develop when the British established the first colonial settlement in Jamestown in 1607. The colonist found out that in the New World there are animals, plants and people they had never seen before and thus new words must have been created such as *skunk, pecan* and *squash*. Besides the British colonies, also German, Scottish, Irish, Dutch and French colonies were established during the seventeenth century. Therefore, the population of the USA is mostly made up of immigrants, with the exception of Native Americans, who were transferred to reservations throughout the country. The immigrants, who came to the USA brought with them their language, culture and tradition. (Anderson and Stewart 2007, 1; Ciment and Radzilowski 2015, 186, 942) And thus during the seventeenth century the American dialects originated as the first English speakers came to the contact with other varieties of languages. (Amberg and Vause 2009, 24; Kövecses 2000, 19-20) Because of this, the major varieties of American English are formed by regional and social dialect. (Algeo 2001, 262)

2.1 Regional Dialects in American English

Nowadays, the USA can be geographically divided into four main regional dialects: the Northern dialect, the Western dialect, the Midland dialect and the Southern dialect. (Algeo 2001, 262) The division of the dialects can be seen in the map below.

Figure 1 Major regional dialects in the USA

Source: (Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006, 148)

2.1.1 Northern Dialect

Northern dialect is spoken around the area from New England (including Western New England (WNE) and Eastern Northern England (ENE)) and New York to Washington as well as in major cities in the north like Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago. The northern region is commonly characterized by using the sound *r* in words such as *car* and *bird*, but this feature is generally lacking in New York and New England. (Kövecses 2000, 64) Another characteristic of northern dialect is the identical pronunciation of words such as *madder* and *matter* as they can be pronounced with "flap" *d* sound. (Siemund, Davydova and Maier 2012, 104)

2.1.2 Western Dialect

As seen in the map above, it is obvious that the western dialect is geographically the largest region in the USA. It spreads from New Texas, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana to the Pacific Ocean. What is more, the western dialect was also influenced by the northern dialect, southern dialect and midland dialect as the settlers came from these areas to the West. (Kövecses 2000, 70) Western dialect is characterised by low back merger, which is

the merger of pronunciation between [ɒ] as in [kɒt] and [ɔ:] in [kɔ:t], thus the pair *cot/caught* sounds the same. (Crystal 2003, 312)

2.1.3 Midland Dialect

Midland dialect is spoken in an area spreading across the United States, from New Jersey, Virginia to Kansas. Even though Western Pennsylvania (W.Pa) is not included in the map in The Midland area, W.Pa is indeed part of Midland Dialect. The main features of midland dialect are the pronunciation of *–r* (for example in the word *car*) and identical pronunciation of pair cot/caught, which can be also found in Western dialect. (Cortés 2013, 788)

2.1.4 Southern Dialect

Last regional dialect, which can be found in American English, is the Southern dialect. It is spoken in an area spreading from North Carolina to Texas and from Florida to Ohio River, thus the area of the Southern States. (Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006, 240) The southern dialect uses features, which are unique to the South. For example pronouncing words as monophthongs, which are called vowels of consonants that unchanged quality, thus for example the word *mine* [maɪn] sounds like *mahn*. (Giegerich 1992, 15; Van Herk 2012, 31) Southern dialect is often described as a dialect spoken with "southern drawl", which means that it is spoken more slowly than other dialects. Another grammatical characteristic is using prefix *–a* before the verb in progressive form, for instance *a-rainin'*. (Cortés 2013, 788)

2.2 Ethnic Dialects in American English

This chapter will briefly introduce ethnic dialects, which can be found throughout the USA such as American Indian English, Cajun English, Jewish American English, Hispanic American English and lastly African American English. What is more, African Americans differ from other ethnic groups, because most of African Americans were brought as slaves to the USA, thus they did not come to the USA as immigrants as other ethnic groups. (Kövecses 2000, 19; Spears and Hinton 2010, 10) Also, ethnic dialects can be influenced by regional dialects spoken in a specific area. (Cortés 2013, 789)

2.2.1 American Indian English

American Indian English (AIE) is a dialect, which is spoken by the indigenous people in Canada and all over the United States. As Native Americans are not a monolithic group,

several varieties of AIE exist, for instance: Eastern Cherokee English, Mohave English and Lumbee English. (Williams et al. 2015, 99,113)

2.2.1.1 Lumbee English

Lumbee English (LE) is spoken in North Carolina by the Lumbee Indians, who represent the seventh largest group of Native Americans in the United States. The Lumbee adopted English during the 1700s as the result of the European settlements in the area. (Wolfram and Ward 2006, 245) The main feature of LE is using *bes* (bare form of *be* with inflection – s) in the sentence like *"The dogs bes doing that"*. Another feature of LE is the usage of *weren't* as the past form, for example *It weren't me.* (Ibid., 247)

2.2.2 Cajun English

Cajun English (CE) is a dialect spoken mainly in southern Louisiana. The term Cajun describes descendants of French Canadians, who moved to Nova Scotia (formerly recognized as Acadia) in the early 1600s. CE has been strongly influenced by French and also other ethnic dialects, which are spoken in the region. Most noticeable feature of speakers of CE is their extremely fast speech. Another characteristic of CE is the change of dual-vowel sounds (diphthongs) to single vowels (monophthongs) therefore for example the word *tie* [taɪ] sounds like tah. (Ibid., 238-240)

2.2.3 Jewish American English

Jewish English (also called for example Yinglish, Heblish, Engdish) is a dialect spoken by Jews in the United States. Moreover, two main varieties developed in America: Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Sephardim Jews came to American at the beginning of 1600s from Spain and Portugal. Ashkenazic Jews immigrated to America from Western Europe throughout the beginning of 1800s. Nevertheless, as the use of Yiddish started to decrease, Jewish English became the primary language of descendants. Major features of of Jewish English are pronunciation of the words with –ing with a hard *g* sound, thus *Long Island* sounds like *Long Guy Land* and fast rate of speech and raising of pitch. (Ibid., 251-254)

2.2.4 Hispanic American English

Another ethnic dialect is Hispanic American English. According to Kövecses (2000, 91) Hispanic Americans are the second largest ethnic minority group in the US. The largest

group of Hispanic Americans are Chicanos and another large group forms Puerto Ricans, who live in New York, New Jersey and California.

2.2.4.1 *Chicano English*

Chicano English (ChE) is spoken mostly by Mexican Americans (Chicanos), one of the largest ethnic minority groups in the southwest of United States and California. ChE developed from a language contact between Spanish and English in the past. Moreover, it is often misinterpreted as "badly" pronounced English by Spanish speakers, who are learning English as their second language due to the influence of Spanish. Moreover, Chicanos tend to have higher vowel *i* (as in Spanish *sí*) in ending of words, therefore the words *talking* and *going* sound like *talkeen* and *goween.* (Schneider 2008, 572; Wolfram and Ward 2006, 233-234)

2.2.5 African American English

Lastly, African American English is spoken by African Americans especially in the northern territory in the United States and cities like Washington, DC, Detroit, Chicago, etc. However, not all African Americans speak AAE. Some African Americans speak other varieties of English such as Gullah, Cajun French or some Native American languages. (Wardhaugh 2010, 363; Spears and Hinton 2010, 8; Di Paulo and Spears 2014, 104) As Spears and Hinton stated (2010, 5), the term African American is generally used in order to describe all Americans with African descent.

African American English (AAE) is socio-ethnic dialect of English, which is a variety spoken by a specific ethnic group. (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006, 230; Ibid. 2015, 184) In addition, African American English is one of the many labels attached to this variety of English. Over the past forty years this variety has been also called:

- Negro Dialect,
- Nonstandard Negro English,
- Ebonics, [1]

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[1] The term Ebonics was firstly used by Robert Williams. This compound word is made of two words: ebony (meaning black) and phonology (meaning sound). (Williams 1975, 100) This term is closely associated with the Oakland school controversy, when The Oakland School Board on 18th December 1996 recognized Ebonics as a primary language of African American students and a language distinct from English. They wanted to use Ebonics as a better medium for teaching SE. Unfortunately, this resolution was wrongly

- African American Vernacular English,

- Black English,

- Black street speech,

- Vernacular Black English,

- African American Language.

2.2.5.1 Varieties of African American English

African American English can be divided into two main sub-varieties: African American Standard English (AASE) and African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or also known as Black Vernacular English (BVE).

According to Spears and Hinton (2010, 6) AASE has features distinctive to African American varieties, but does not have any non-standard grammatical features such as the use of verb form like habitual *be*. However, these distinctive AAE features are camouflaged and it is almost impossible for anyone, who is not a specialist of AAE grammar, to detect them. (Ibid., 7)

AAVE, on the other hand, is spoken in rural areas as well as in the cities by all age groups of both sexes. The term African American Vernacular English is rather debatable, because it can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, the term vernacular can refer to a nonstandard variety of African American English. Secondly, it can describe the person's most relaxed way of speaking without self-monitoring. (Algeo 2001, Di Paulo and Spears 2014, 102) Nevertheless, even nowadays the label 'vernacular' in African American Vernacular English is still considered as a reference to something of lowly status in broader public. (Mufwene et al. 1998, 204)

AAE consists of a number of associated standard and non-standard varieties. (Ibid., 230) Therefore, in this bachelor thesis I will use the term AAE as a cover term for both AASE and AAVE.

2.2.5.2 Code switching

Code switching refers to the process of changing from the use of one language to another, in this case of African American English to Standard English. (Jackson and Hogg 2010, 94)

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interpreted by media, which claimed that Oakland school wanted to teach Ebonics and after few weeks Oakland school modified the original proposal. (Blommaert 1999, 201-203)

As stated above, SE has still higher prestige than other varieties of English like African American English. African Americans tend to switch to SE when they are talking to non-African Americans or in the presence of speakers of SE. (Eastman 1992, 166) African Americans switch code in environments like in school or at work. (Simpkins and Simpkins 2009, 38) What is more, African American students learn code-switch to SE as early as they enrol to school. However, not all African Americans students code switch to SE. (Craig 2016, 60)

3 GENERAL FEATURES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN EGNLISH AND COMPARISON WITH STANDARD ENGLISH

As mentioned, dialects can differ in grammar, lexis and pronunciation (phonology). This chapter is focused on differences between African American English and Standard English on phonology level as well as lexicology level.

3.1 Phonology of African American English and comparison with Standard English

Dialects vary phonologically from one another. Thus, even though many words are written the same in AAE and SE, they could be pronounced differently.

3.1.1 Th sounds

In SE the *th* sound is produced either as *θ* (voiceless, e.g. think) or as *ð* (voiced, e.g. that). However, in AAE instead of *θ* and *ð* in words appear *t/d* or *f/v* sounds, where *t*, *f* are voiceless and *d*, *v* are voiced. If the word ends in voiced *th*, it would sound in AAE as voiced *d* or *v*. As shown in the example below, the final sound in *bath* is pronounced as *t* [bæf] instead of *θ* [bɑːθ] as in SE. Moreover, the beginning of words like *these* and *that* speakers of AAE produce as *d* [diz] instead of *ð* [ðiːz] as in SE. (Green 2002, 117- 119) However, Green (2002, 119) claims that speakers of AAE produce voiceless *th* sound (*θ*) at the beginning of words such as *thin*, *thing* and *think* as it is in SE.

(1)	SE	Phonetic transcription	AAE
	thing	*[θɪŋ]*	*[θɪŋ]*
	think	*[θɪŋk]*	*[θɪŋk]*
	these	*[ðiːz]*	*[diz]*
	that	*[ðət]*	*[dæt]*
	bath	*[baːθ]*	*[bæf]*

3.1.2 Final consonant sounds

In AAE words like *desk, test* and *hand* may be pronounced as [des], [tes] and [hæn] as a result of a consonant cluster reduction. In this case the consonant cluster is formed by a group of two consonants (*-sk*, *-st* and *-nd*) and as the result of consonant cluster reduction the final consonants are omitted. (Green 2002, 107-109)

(2)	**SE**	**Phonetic transcription**	**AAE**
	hand	*[hænd]*	*[hæn]*
	desk	*[desk]*	*[des]*
	test	*[test]*	*[tes]*

3.1.3 Suffix *-ing*

In AAE words with more than one syllable and with suffix - *ing*, the suffix is pronounced as -*n*. However, this feature never appears in one syllable words (e.g *sing* pronounced in SE and AAE as [sɪŋ]). In SE this suffix is pronounced as -*ɪŋ* as seen in examples below (Green 2002, 122-123):

(3)	**SE**	**Phonetic transcription**	**AAE**
	talking	*[tɔːkɪŋ]*	*[tɔːkɪn]*
	walking	*[wɔːkɪŋ]*	*[wɔːkɪn]*
	nothing	*[nʌθɪŋ]*	*[nʌθɪn]*
	something	*[sʌmθɪŋ]*	*[sʌmθɪn]*

3.1.4 Deletion of *l* and *r*

In AAE consonants *l* and *r* are pronounced at the beginning of the word, like in the words *lips* and *red*. Nevertheless, if these consonants *l* and *r* are in final positions, they may be pronounced as *uh* sound in words like *sister* and *bear*. Moreover, if the final consonant *r* (for example in the word *four*) is followed by a word, which begins with a consonant, the consonant *r* is usually absent. (Fasold and Shuy 1970, 50-52)

(4)	**SE**	**AAE**
	sister	*sistuh*
	bear	*beauh*
	four apples	*fouh apples*

Moreover, in AAE *r* and *l* may be absent in the words, in which *r* and *l* are positioned between two vowels. (Ibid., 52) For example:

(5)	**SE**	**Phonetic transcription**	**AAE**
	marry	*[mæri]*	*[mæi]*
	Carol	*[kærəl]*	*[kæəl]*

story	*[stɔːri]*	*[stɔːɪ]*

The omission of *l* plays crucial role in pronunciation of the contracted form of the auxiliary *will* in AAE. The contracted form is usually not pronounced if the following word starts with *w, b* or *m*. (Ibid., 52-3) For instance:

(6) Tomorrow I'll bring the thing.   SE
(7) Tomorrow I bring the thing.   AAE

3.1.5 Prosodic features

Prosodic features such as loudness, speed as well as stress and intonation are noticeable during speech. Moreover, these features are important when studying AAE as they indicate ethnicity of speaker and thus African American speech. (Green 2002, 124; Roach 2000, 187)

3.1.5.1 Syllable stress

In SE the second syllable of some words such as *umbrella* and *cement* is stressed. However, speakers of AAE might stress the first syllable of the word instead. (Green 2002, 131) In the examples below, which are taken from Hudley and Mallinson (2011, 98), the stress is indicated by capital letters:

(8) **SE**   **AAE**
  umBRElla   *UMbrella*
  ceMEnt   *CEment*

To sum up, AAE differs from SE in phonology in certain features. The most noticeable differences are in omission of final consonant such as –sk, -nd, -st in AAE and in different pronunciation of *th* sounds. As seen above, speakers of AAE follow specific rules in pronunciation, which shows that phonology of AAE is systematic and thus AAE is not only a "language with mistakes".

3.2 Lexis of African American English and comparison with Standard English

Lexis of African Americans is often considered as a street slang. Nevertheless, African American English is not only slang. Lexis of African Americans is consisted of lexis shared

with mainstream English, its own unique lexis and slang, which will be discussed later in this chapter. (Finegan and Rickford 2004, 79)

Moreover, African American will recognize some of the words in African American lexis, yet they will not recognize all of them as the words might not be used in the specific region. (Green 2002, 19, 31) As Smitherman (2006, 20) stated, many of the words of African American lexis are nowadays used also in mainstream English. There are some examples of words used by African Americans given below and even though these words may not be used in every day speech, they are generally recognized by African Americans in all range of ages and genders.

- *Hotcomb* – metal comb, which is heated and is used to straighten hair of African Americans.
- *Charlie* – in a negative way refers to a white man,
- *Funky* – refers to someone, who is acting disagreeably,
- *Phat* – stands for brilliant,
- *Hawk* – means freezing cold,
- *Hip* – means to make someone aware of the truth or describes something that is wanted for its attractiveness,
- *Jive* – means dishonest or inexperienced. (Smitherman 2006, 20-48; Stockman 2010, 24)

Although some words in AAE are identical in spelling with words in SE, they might have different meaning such as *ashy, womanish, kitchen* and *get over*. (Green 2002, 12)

Ashy in SE refers to something covered in ash, whereas in AAE it means "dry appearance of the skin". (Finegan and Rickford 2004, 79)

(9) *The chair is covered in an ashy residue.*   SE

(10) *This body lotion is perfect for ashy skin.*   AAE

Womanish means "suitable or characteristic of woman." (Stevenson and Waite, 2011, 1659) However, in AAE it stands for a girl, who does not behave suitably for her age. (Finegan and Rickford 2004, 80)

(11) *With a womanish gesture the man flipped his hair.* SE

(12) *She goes to bed much later than a girl her age should. It is so womanish.* AAE

Kitchen refers in SE to a room, which is used for cooking. In AAE, however, it means "nappy hair at the nape of the neck, especially on a woman or a girl". (Major 1994, 271)

Get over in SE means to recover from e.g. illness or to overcome a problem whereas in AAE it means to take advantage of or to "succeed by using wit but little effort". (Finegan and Rickford 2004, 80)

> *(13) Mary will get over the shock eventually.* SE
>
> *(14) John and Peter tried to get over on the professor.* AAE

3.2.1 Slang

Another part of lexicon of African Americans is slang, which is informal language used in common speech. Slang is usually spoken by particular group of people, in particular by teenagers and young adults. What is more, slang items can be later added to the lexicon of AAE. (Stevenson and Waite 2011, 1355; Finegan and Rickford 2004, 79) For instance:

- *balla, cat, homes, fool* – stands for a man,
- *honey, ma or wifey* – refers to a woman,
- *benjis, cabbage and paper money* – refers to money. (Green 2002, 28-32)
- *ALready* [Adverb] (first syllable is stressed) – is used in order to show agreement. (Finegan and Rickford 2004, 80)

To summarize, AAE and SE share vast majority of their lexis. Besides this, AAE is consisted of its own vocabulary and slang items. However, some words (e.g. kitchen, ashy) that have exactly the same spelling, have different meaning. Moreover, some words used by AAE would be probably unknown to users of SE.

African American English varies from Standard English not only in lexis and pronunciation, but also in grammar, which will be examined in the following chapters of this bachelor thesis.

4 MORPHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STANDARD AND AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH

This chapter focuses on morphological differences between SE and AAE. This chapter examines mainly inflectional morphology of auxiliaries *have*, *do* and *be*. Lastly, this chapter studies pronouns and plural marking of nouns.

4.1 Auxiliaries

4.1.1 Have

Have can behave as a lexical verb or an auxiliary. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 111) In addition, *have* in 3rd person singular has the –s form. In AAE, on the other hand, there is no –s form in 3rd person singular (1) and also in the negative form (2).

(1) **SE**   **AAE**

I	*have*	*I*	*have*
You	*have*	*You*	*have*
He, she, it	***has***	*He, she, it*	***have***
We	*have*	*We*	*have*
You	*have*	*You*	*have*
They	*have*	*They*	*have*

(2) **SE**   **AAE**

I	*haven't*	*I*	*haven't*
You	*haven't*	*You*	*haven't*
He, she, it	***hasn't***	*He, she, it*	***haven't***
We	*haven't*	*We*	*haven't*
You	*haven't*	*You*	*haven't*
They	*haven't*	*They*	*haven't*

4.1.2 Do

Do can function as an auxiliary (3) as well as as a lexical verb (4). *Do* like the auxiliary/lexical *have* also has -s form in 3rd person singular *does*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 132-33)

> *(3) They don't speak English*

(4) I do my homework every day.

In AAE, *do* has the same form in all persons singular and plural and thus there is no –s form in 3rd person singular as seen in (5). (Green 1994, 72) Similarly, in AAE–s form does not occur in the negative form of auxiliary/lexical verb *do* as exemplified in (6). (Green 2002, 36)

(5)   **SE**   **AAE**

I   do   I   do

You   do   You   do

*He, she, it **does**   He, she, it   **do***

We   do   We   do

You   do   You   do

They   do   They   do

(6)   **SE**   **AAE**

I   don't   I   don't

You   don't   You   don't

*He, she, it **doesn't**   He, she, it   **don't***

We   don't   We   don't

You   don't   You   don't

They   don't   They   don't

4.1.3   Be

Like *have* and *do, be* can act as a lexical verb and also as an auxiliary. *Be* unlike other verbs has distinct forms for the 1st person singular *am* and for 3rd person singular present *is*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 129; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1599)

In AAE, the auxiliary *be* can be omitted in certain environments. Firstly, the auxiliary *be* is absent in all persons except 1st person singular and 3rd person singular neuter as seen in the paradigm below. (Green 2002, 38)

(7)   **SE**   **AAE**

I   am   I   am

You   are   You   Ø

He, she   is   He, she   Ø

It	*is*	*It*	*is*
We	*are*	*We*	*Ø*
You	*are*	*You*	*Ø*
They	are	They	*Ø*

Also, as Green (2002, 38) claims, in AAE the past forms of auxiliary *be* have the same form *was* in both singular and plural as exemplified below. Whereas in SE the form *was* is used only for 1st and 3rd person singular.

(8)   **SE**   **AAE**

I	*was*	*I*	*was*
You	*were*	*You*	***was***
He, she, it was		*He, she, it*	*was*
We	*were*	*We*	***was***
You	*were*	*You*	***was***
They	*were*	*They*	***was***

Similarly to the past forms of *be*, in AAE *be* has the same form in singular as well as plural persons as seen in the paradigm below. Also, in AAE the negative form *wasn't* is pronounced as *wadn't*. (Neville, Tynes and Utsey 2009, 202)

(9)   **SE**   **AAE**

I	*wasn't*	*I*	*wasn't*
You	*weren't*	*You*	***wasn't***
He, she, it wasn't		*He, she, it*	*wasn't*
We	*weren't*	*We*	***wasn't***
You	*weren't*	*You*	***wasn't***
They	*weren't*	*They*	***wasn't***

Secondly, in AAE the auxiliary *be* can be omitted in environments, in which *be* acts as a copula (10). The copula is a linking verb, which connects a subject of verb and a following phrase. The phrase, which is following the copula verb, is called the subject complement as in (12) and (13). (Hurford 1994, 51-52) Nevertheless, if the copula *be* is stressed, it is not omitted in AAE as seen in the example (14). (Pullum 1999, 45)

(10) She nice. AAE

(11) She is nice. SE

(12) Mary is $_{AP}$[very happy].

(13) John is $_{NP}$[a lawyer].

(14) They IS nice. AAE

Thirdly, in AAE the auxiliary *be* can be absent in progressive aspect as seen in the example (15). (Green 1994, 72) However, if the auxiliary *be* is stressed, it can appear on the surface as seen in the example (17). (Baptista and Guerón 2007, 406) In addition, as seen exemplified in (18), AAE uses the –s form for plural person as well as singular person except 1st person singular as in (19). (Green 1994, 71)

(15) He running. AAE

(16) *He is running.* SE

(17) He IS running. AAE

(18) They IS running. AAE

(19) I AM running. AAE

Lastly, the auxiliary *be* can be omitted in a tag question. Tag questions are consisted of a tag question, which is connected to a statement. As seen in the example (20), *Jane is at school* is the statement and *isn't she* is the tag question. A tag question is formed firstly by the operator (in this case by auxiliary *be*) and secondly by the subject. Additionally, the tag is generally positive if the statement is negative and negative, if the statement is positive. Moreover, the subject of the tag *(she)* must agree with the subject of the statement *(Jane)* in number, gender and person and also it must be a pronoun. (Quirk et al. 1985, 810)

(20) Jane is at school, isn't she?

According to Green (2002, 43) in AAE the auxiliary *be* can be omitted in the statement. As seen in the examples (21) and (23), the operator in the tag acts as if the operator in the statement was in fact present, because the operator in the tag agrees in number with the omitted operator in the statement and also has the opposite (positive or negative) form.

(21)"Bruce Ø not eating, is he?" (Ibid.) AAE

(22)Bruce is not eating, is he? SE

(23)"Bruce Ø eating, ain't he?" (Ibid.)   AAE

(24)Bruce is eating, isn't he?   SE

4.1.4 Negative form ain't

Another difference between SE and AAE can be found in the negative forms. Speakers of AAE use *ain't* as the negative form of auxiliaries *have, do* and b*e.* (Iyeiri 2005, 174) Furthermore, as Green (202, 39) stated, *ain't* "does not have distinct past and non-past forms." Firstly, *ain't* acts as the negative form in environment have + not in AAE as seen in the example (25). Even though the negative form *haven't* is also used in AAE, the *ain't* is highly preferred choice. Nevertheless, *ain't* usually does not occur in the environment had + not. (Iyeiri 2005, 177)

(25) "She ain't been there lately." (Wolfram 2004, 332)   AAE

(26) She hasn't been there lately.   SE

Secondly, in AAE *ain't* can be used as the negative form for the present (27) and the past forms of *be* (29). (Iyeiri 2005, 174-5)

(27) She ain't at home.   AAE

(28) She isn't at home.   SE

(29) "She ain't born in Washington." (Iyeiri 2005, 177)   AAE

(30) She wasn't born in Washington.   SE

Lastly, in AAE *ain't* can function as the negative form instead of *didn't.* As stated above, *ain't* does not have past form, thus the past form is marked on following verb as seen in the example (31). (Green 2002, 37)

(31)"She ain't do it." (Wolfram 2004, 332)   AAE

(32) She didn't do it.   SE

4.2 Will, be +going

Futurity is SE can be indicated by *will* or by idiomatic *be + going* in Standard English. (Quirk et al. 1985, 213; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 211) In AAE futurity can be marked by w*ill,* which can be contracted to *'a* and clipped to the preceding pronoun (for instance

she'a). The contracted form *'a* is pronounced as 'ə', which signals that contracted form *'ll* is not pronounced. (Green 1994, 81)

What is more, in AAE futurity can be also marked by *gon* and *gonna*, which are different forms of standard spelling of *be going*. Nevertheless, the form *gon* does not appear in 1st person singular, which has the form *I'ma*. (Green 2002, 40) As Green (2002, 36) adds, other variations like *I'm gonna* and *I'm monna* are also used.

(33)	**SE**	**AAE**
I	*am going to*	*I'ma*
You	*are going to*	*You gon*
She, he, it is going to		*She, he, it gon*
You	*are going to*	*You gon*
They	*are going to*	*They gon*

4.3　The past and the past participle forms

In SE, all regular verbs have identical the past forms and past participle forms (e.g. *travel – travelled- travelled).* (Huddleston and Pullum 2007, 1600) Irregular verbs, however, have different past forms or the –ed past participle inflection or both forms irregular (e.g. *do, did, done*). (Quirk et al. 1985, 103)

According to Wolfram (2004, 330), in AAE the base form of verb can act as the past form (34) and past form of irregular verbs as regular past form as in (36).

*(34) "They **run** there yesterday."* (Ibid.)　　AAE

(35) They ran there yesterday.　　SE

*(36) "Everybody **knowed** him."* (Ibid.)　　AAE

(37) Everybody knew him.　　SE

What is more, in AAE the past participle of irregular verbs tends to have the same form as the past form. (Fasold and Shuy 1970, 62) This feature is visible in the past form of perfective aspect. In Standard English the perfective aspect in past tense is consisted of had+ past participle of the verb (*had eaten*), where the auxiliary *had* marks the past. (Hurford 1994, 164)

In AAE, the perfect aspect in the past tense is formed similarly. However, they differ in the form of past participle of irregular verbs.

(38)	**SE**			**AAE**	
I	*had eaten, walked*		*I*		*had ate, walked*
You	*had eaten, walked*		*You*		*had ate, walked*
He, she, it	*had eaten, walked*		*He, she, it*		*had ate, walked*
We	*had eaten, walked*		*We*		*had ate, walked*
You	*had eaten, walked*		*You*		*had ate, walked*
They	*had eaten, walked*		*They*		*had ate, walked*

In addition to this, in AAE had + past participle of verb can be used to indicate simple past tense. (Green 2002, 92) Therefore this use of preterite *had* differs from SE, in which had + past participle is used to form past perfect. For instance:

(39)"They had went outside." (Lanehart et al. 2015, 135)   AAE

(40) They went outside.   SE

(41) "I had worked at Taco Bell today." (Ibid., 193)   AAE

(42) I worked at Taco Bell today.   SE

(43) "I think she had left yesterday.   AAE

(44) I think she left yesterday." (Green 2002, 91)   SE

4.4 Perfective aspect

The term aspect is used to describe "a grammatical category which reflects the way in which the verb action is regarded or experienced with respect to time." (Quirk et al. 1985, 188) There are two types of aspect: perfective and progressive. The perfective aspect is used to describe the completion of the action and the progressive aspect refers to repetition, continuation as the action is viewed as incomplete. (Veselovská and Emonds 2011, 69; Quirk et al. 1985, 189)

In SE the perfective aspect is formed by the auxiliary *have + V-en* (past participle). Moreover, the auxiliary *have* has the -s form in 3rd person singular like for example *she has eaten.* (Quirk et al. 1985, 130)

In AAE the perfective aspect is formed similarly. As was mentioned earlier, AAE does not tend to distinguish between the past form and the past participle of irregular verbs. Therefore, as exemplified below, the perfective aspect in AAE differs from SE in past participle forms of irregular verbs. For example:

(45) I have eaten, walked   SE

(46) I have ate, walked   AAE

Nevertheless, if *have* appears in contracted form (*'ve*), it can be omitted as seen exemplified below in (47). (Fasold and Shuy 1970, 61) Interestingly enough, the auxiliary *have* occurs in the negative forms (48) and in stressed environments (e.g. *she HAVE ate*). (Green 2002, 39)

(47)   **SE**   **AAE**

I*'ve*   *eaten, walked*   *I*   *ate, walked*

You've   eaten, walked   *You*   *ate, walked*

He, she, it's eaten, walked   *He, she, it*   *ate, walked*

We've   eaten, walked   *We*   *ate, walked*

You've   eaten, walked   *You*   *ate, walked*

They've   eaten, walked   *They*   *ate, walked*

(48)   **SE**   **AAE**

I   *haven't eaten, walked*   *I   haven't ate, walked*

You   haven't eaten, walked   *You   haven't ate, walked*

He, she, it hasn't eaten, walked   **He, she, it haven't ate**, *walked*

We   haven't eaten, walked   *We   haven't ate, walked*

You   haven't eaten, walked   *You   haven't ate, walked*

They   haven't eaten, walked   *They   haven't ate, walked*

4.5   Subject-verb agreement

In SE lexical verbs (e.g. eat, run) occur in the present tense in the base form (the form without inflections) apart from 3rd person singular present. If the subject is in 3rd person singular, then the verb occurs in the –s form (e.g. *he eats, he runs*). (Quirk et al. 1985, 97)

In AAE, however, lexical verbs have the base form in plural as well as singular (e.g., *he eat*), thus subject-verb agreement in 3rd person is not obligatory. (Green 2002, 38)

(49)   **SE**   **AAE**

I   eat   *I   eat*

You   eat   *You   eat*

He, she, it eats   *He, she, it*   **eat**

We	*eat*		*We*	*eat*
You	*eat*		*You*	*eat*
They	*eat*		*They*	*eat*

In addition to this, in AAE –s form can appear in other persons besides 3rd person singular. (Lanehart 2015, 394) For instance:

*(50) "And I **works** just like it was way back in the days. I still go on, carry on. "*(Ibid.)

*(51) "They **goes** home."* (Fasold 1972, 196)

4.6   Pronouns

Firstly, in 2nd person plural there are two possible forms: *you* and *yall*, whereas in SE is grammatical only former *you*. Secondly, pronouns like *him, her* and it can be pronounced without the initial syllable *h* as seen in the table. Additionally, some speakers of AAE pronounce *him, her* and *it* with the initial letter *h,* thus *it* is pronounced as [*hɪt*], especially if the pronoun is stressed. (Wolfram and Thomas 2002, 126) Moreover Rickford (1999, 7) adds that AAE speakers use *they* and *yall* as possessive pronouns as well. For instance:

(52)"It's yall ball.

(53) It's they house."(Ibid.)

Table Pronouns in African American English

Person	Personal pronouns		Possessive pronouns
	subjective case	objective case	
1st sg	I	me	my
2nd sg	you	you	your [yo:]
3rd sg	he, she, **(h)it**	(h)im, (h)er, **(h)it**	his, (h)er, its
1st pl	we	us	our [aʷ]
2nd pl	you/**yall**	you/ **yall**	your/ **yall's**
3rd pl	they [dɛʸ]	them [dɛm]	their [dɛ:]

Source: (Mufwene et al. 1998, 74)

4.7   Inflectional –s

4.7.1   Case

In SE we differentiate between two types of cases of nouns: nominative (common) and genitive. Genitive case expresses possession, thus as seen in the example (55) the inflectional marker –s expresses that Mary is the possessor of the book. (Quirk et al. 1985, 318)

(54)	**Common case**	**Genitive Case**
Singular	*Girl*	*Girl's*
Plural	*Girls*	*Girls'*

(55) <u>*Mary's*</u> _{GEN} *book is on the table.*

The possessive case in AAE is expressed by word order, thus a morphological possessive marker –s is not obligatory. As seen in the example (56) the possessive marker is omitted as it is indicated by word order, where the possessor (*church*) is followed by the possessed (*responsibility*).

(56) *"That's the church_ responsibility.*	AAE
(57) *That's the church's responsibility."* (Green 2002, 102)	SE
(58) *That's Mary_ house.*	AAE
(59) *That's Mary's house.*	SE

4.7.2   Plural marker

Countable nouns in SE make difference between singular and plural. The regular plural nouns are marked by inflection suffix –s as in *boys* and singular remains without suffix *(bo*y). (Greenbaum and Nelson 2000, 90) AAE, however, tends to not distinguish between singular and plurals as exemplified below (Algeo 2001, 298):

SE	**AAE**
(60) *two boys*	*two boy*
(61) *two puppies*	*two puppy*

What is more, some irregular plurals in AAE are treated as regular plurals as in the examples (62) and (63) or are unnecessarily marked as in (64). Plurals, which have zero

plural marking in SE, have in AAE inflection suffix –s as regular plural nouns as seen in (65) and (66). (Wolfram 2004, 333)

SE	AAE
(62) four geese	*four gooses*
(63) two oxen	*two oxes*
(64) five sheep	*five sheeps*
(65) six firemen	*six firemens*
(66) two children	*two childrens*

Lastly, in AAE the inflectional suffix -*s* is absent in plural nouns like cents and miles. (Ibid.) For example:

(67) I got 40 cent_. AAE
(68) It's five mile_ from here. AAE

4.8   Indefinite article

As exemplified in the example (69), the indefinite article *a* signals that *a car* is new information, which the speaker mentions for the first time. Moreover, SE has two forms of indefinite article *a* and *an.* The indefinite article *an* is used when vowel sound is following. (Greenbaum and Nelson 2002, 107)

(69) John bought a car yesterday.

AAE, however, does not use *an* as indefinite article as seen in the example below (DeBose 2005, 183):

(70) "I ate a apple and a orange." (Ibid.) AAE
(71) I ate an apple and an orange. SE

To sum up this chapter, AAE generally shares same features with SE in morphology. However, there are some differences, which distinguish AAE from SE. SE varies from AAE is in the absence of auxiliary *be* in certain environments in AAE. Also, they vary in inflectional morphology of –s, which was mention in connection with plural marking and subject-verb agreement. Moreover, there are some differences in the forms of personal

pronouns and possessive pronouns. SE differs from AAE not only in morphology, but also in syntax, which will discussed in the following chapter of this thesis.

5 SYNTACTICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STANDARD AND AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH

Last chapter of this bachelor thesis is aimed at syntactical varieties of African American English and its comparison to Standard English. This chapter focuses mainly on subject-operator inversion, which appears in yes-no questions, *wh*-questions and indirect question. Also, this chapter also studies relative and existential clauses as well as double modals and double negation.

5.1 Verbs

Quirk et al. (1985, 53) classify verb into three major verb classes: firstly, intransitive verbs, which require only a subject. Secondly, into transitive verbs, which need to be combined with a subject and an object (2). Last class is formed by ditransitive verbs, which require three elements – a subject, an object and other element as well as seen in (3).

(1) I$_{SUBJ}$ slept

(2) I$_{SUBJ}$ saw a butterfly$_{OBJ}$

(3) I$_{SUBJ}$ put a book$_{OBJ}$ on the shelf.

In AAE the lexical verb *beat* (as for *won*) can act as intransitive verb as exemplified in (4), even though in SE it is in fact ditransitive verb (5). (Wolfram 2004, 331)

(4) We beat.   AAE

(5) We beat the other group.   SE

5.2 Auxiliaries

The main function of auxiliaries is that they can act as operator. The operator or the first or only auxiliary in the sentence has several syntactic functions, which will be described in following subchapters.

5.2.1 Subject-operator inversion

First syntactical property is that auxiliaries as operators can invert with the subject of a noun phrase and thus the operator precedes the subject. This inversion is subject-operator inversion and it is primarily used in two major types of interrogative clauses: yes-no questions and *wh*-question. (Quirk et al. 1985, 124)

5.2.1.1 Yes-no questions

As stated above, to form yes-no questions, the subject-operator inversion is needed. If the operator is inverted, the statement can be changed into the yes-no question, as seen in the example (6). (Quirk et al. 1985, 79, 124)

(6) Jane will help. → Will Jane help?

Green (2002, 42) claims that in AAE auxiliaries are not obligatory in questions. If the auxiliary is omitted, the question is indicated by intonation of the sentence and past tense is marked on the lexical verb as seen in the example (8). For instance:

(7) "Did Bob leave?
(8) Bob left?
(9) Is Bob here?
(10) Bob here?" (Ibid.)

In addition to this, auxiliary *be* in the past form and modals cannot be omitted in questions as in (11), but they do not need to appear in the position preceding the subject, thus both examples (12) and (13) are possible in AAE. In SE, however, the example (13) may be uttered for an *echo* question. The echo question repeats either part or a whole sentence, which was just said by another person. (Mufwene et al. 1998, 30)

(11)"*Bruce running?
(12) Was Bruce running?
(13) Bruce was running?" (Green 2002, 42)

5.2.1.2 Wh-questions

Wh-questions begin with the *wh*-word such as *who, what, why, when, where, which* or a phrase like *for who*. Even though *how* is not a *wh*-word, it belongs to the same category. (Green 2002, 85) *Wh*-questions can be formed in two ways depending on the *wh*-element. If the *wh*-element is the subject, then the word order in the statement remains unchanged. In addition to this, in both examples (14) and (15) the wh-word is fronted. For instance:

(14) Who stole my wallet?

On the other hand, if the *wh*-element is not a subject, but other element (for example an object), then the *wh*-element precedes the subject and the operator is between the subject and the *wh*-element as shown in (15). (Quirk et al. 1985, 81) Basically, in this case the *wh*-word is fronted and subject-operator inverted.

(15) Why have you stolen my wallet?

In AAE, the subject-operator inversion in *wh*-question is highly variable, thus wh-questions can be formed with or without subject-operator inversion as seen in the examples (16) and (17). (Lanehart 2015, 26)

(16) "Where can he go?
(17) Where he can go?" (Ibid.)

5.3 Indirect Questions

Last category of question is indirect questions. Indirect questions are clauses themselves and they are embedded within the sentence. Indirect questions are usually introduced by question verbs such as *ask*, *want to see*, *know* and *wonder*. Moreover, in SE the subject of the sentence precedes the verb as in the example (18). Also, indirect questions can be introduced by words w*hether* and *if*. (Hurford 1994, 115; Green 2002, 87)

(18) I wonder if Jane will come to the party.

In AAE in indirect questions the operator (*was*) is inverted as seen in the example (19). This feature differs from SE, in which subject-auxiliary inversion is not used in indirect question.

(19) "I wanted to see was it the one we bought.   AAE
(20) I wanted to see if it was the one we bought." (Green 2002, 87)   SE

Moreover, in AAE both words *if* or *whether* do not need to be used in the indirect questions. For instance:

(21) "I wanted to know could they do it for me.   AAE
(22) I wanted to know if they could do it for me.   SE
(23) I wonder am I helping anybody yet.   AAE
(24) I wonder if I am helping anybody yet." (Ibid., 88)   SE

5.4 Relative clauses

Relative clauses are embedded in the noun phrase and they are introduced by relative pronouns, which are: *who(m), whose, which, that* and *zero*. The term '*zero*' refers to the absent relative pronoun as in (25) and is indicated by the symbol '( )'. Moreover, relative pronouns refer to the antecedent, which is mostly in the previous noun phrase. This relation, in which relative pronoun has reference to the antecedent, is called anaphora and it is crucial in relative clauses. (Huddleston and Pullum 2005, 183; Quirk et al. 1985, 366)

> *(25) I would like to see the movie ( ) you saw last week.*
> *(26) The book <u>which</u> I want is sold out.*

In the example (26) *the book* is the antecedent of the pronoun *which* and the relative clause *which I want* is embedded in the noun phrase *the book*. In this case the relative clause acts as postmodifier (27).

> *(27) [the book [which I want]]*

Moreover, relative pronouns can be restrictive or non-restrictive. Restrictive relative clauses "identify more closely what the noun refers to". (Greenbaum and Nelson 2002, 194) Non-restrictive relative clauses, on the other hand, only provide additional information. Moreover, restrictive clauses (28) should not be enclosed in punctuation marks (usually commas) unlike non-restrictive clauses (29). (Ibid.) For example:

> *(28) The book which Jane very likes became a national bestseller.*
> *(29) The book, which Jane very likes, is very boring.*

In AAE, non-restrictive clauses are possible, but they are not very commonly used. What is more, in AAE relative pronouns can be omitted in restrictive relative clauses. (Green 2002, 90) Also, according to Mufwene et al. (1998, 76) relative pronouns such as *which, who* and *whose* are not usually used in AAE as seen in the example (30) below:

> *(30) "The man [Ø prepared the meal] is a chef.*   AAE
> *(31) The man [who/that prepared the meal] is a chef."* (Ibid., 77)   SE

Additionally, the absence of relative pronoun is likely to occur with copula structures and also with existential structures. (Mufwene et al. 1998, 32) For instance:

(32) "There are many mothers Ø don't know where their children are. AAE

(33) There are many mothers who don't know where their children are" (Green 2002, 90) SE

5.5 Existential clauses

Another difference between SE and AAE is in existential clauses. Existential clause are introduced by *there +be*, which acts as a 'dummy' subject. The dummy subject, however, only fills the subject position in the clause. (Huddleston and Pullum 2005, 249) Therefore, the subject is shifted to a following position. (Greenbaum and Nelson 2002, 130) As exemplified in the example (34), the subject *a book* is moved to a later position after adding *there is*.

(34) There is a book.

In AAE, in some existential clauses speakers can use *it* or *they* instead of *there.* (Mufwene et al. 1998, 25) As seen in the example (35) below, both *they is* and *it is* can be used, even though *a woman* is singular and *they* is plural.

(35) "It's/ They's a woman in a dark suit applying for that new job.

(36) It/ They ain't three people in the country ever heard of her" (Ibid.)

5.6 Double modals

In SE modals such as *can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should* can precede either lexical verb in a bare form or auxiliaries *have* and *be.* (Hurford 1994, 126) For instance:

(37) She can swim.

(38) She could have done it.

In AAE, however, more than one modal may appear in a clause. The most commonly used double modal is *might could,* which stands for 'might be able to' in SE. (Rickford 1999, 6) Nevertheless, not all combinations of modals are possible, for example *may would* and *should could* do not appear in AAE. (Mufwene et al. 1998, 32-33)

(39) "She may can do the work

(40) He might could do the work" (Ibid.)

Another difference is that in SE the negative *not* is positioned after the modal as in the example (41). In AAE, on the other hand, the negative *not* can be positioned either in between modals (42) or it can follow double modals as exemplified in the example (43). (Mufwene et al. 1998, 34)

*(41) She could **not** have done it.*

*(42) "I might **not** could go to the show*

*(43) I might could **not** go to the show"* (Ibid.)

5.7   Double negation

In SE negative clauses are formed by a participles *not/ n't* attached to the operator as in the example (44). (Veselovská and Emonds 2011, 54) Moreover, clausal negation can be marked also by absolute negators such as *no, nobody, nothing, none, nowhere* and *neither, nor, never* as in (45). (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 812)

(44) I don't like this book.

(45) Marry is never late.

What is more, in SE "two negators cancel each other (semantically) to make positive" as exemplified in the example (46). (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 786) Therefore, in multiple negation in SE the first negation contains *no* and the following negations show *any*. (Veselovská and Emonds 2011, 54)

*(46) She **didn't** see **nobody**. = She saw somebody.*

In addition to this, there is a large number of items, which are "sensitive to the polarity of the environment in which they occur." (Ibid., 822) These specific words that prefer negative contexts over positive ones are called negative polarity items (hereafter NPIs). These are for example *any, anybody, anyone*, and *anything*. Moreover, NPIs themselves do not make sentence negative. (Ibid., 823)

*(47) She **didn't** see **any**body. = She saw nobody.*

One of the main characteristic of AAE is double negation, also known as negative concord or multiple negation. (Finegan 2011, 392) Negation in AAE can be marked on indefinite nouns as well as on auxiliaries. (Green 2002, 77) As seen in the examples (48) and (50)

below, AAE uses the absolute negators such as *nothing*, *no* and *nobody* instead of NPIs like *any*, *anyone* and *anything* as in SE. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 846)

*(48) "He **didn't** say **nothin**'.* AAE

*(49) He **didn't** say **anything**."* (Ibid.) SE

*(50) "**Nobody** here **didn't** point **no** gun at **nobody**.* AAE

*(51) **Nobody** here pointed **any** gun at **anybody**."* (Ibid.) SE

Interestingly, according to Green (2002, 77) there is no maximum number of negators, which can be used in a sentence as exemplified in the example (52). What is more, the number of negators does not change the negative meaning of the sentence. (Ibid.)

*(52) "Bruce **don't** want **no** teacher telling him **nothing** about **no** books."* AAE

*(53) Bruce **doesn't** want **any** teacher telling him **anything** about (**any**) books."* SE (Ibid.)

5.7.1 Negative inversion

Closely connected to double negation in AAE is negative inversion. Negative inversion means that negative indefinite noun phrase and negative form of auxiliary are inverted. (Green 2002, 78) In SE only negative pronoun can be inverted. For example:

*(54) "**Can't nobody** tell you it wasn't meant for you."* (Ibid.) AAE

(55) "Nobody can tell you it, wasn't meant for you." (Ibid.) SE

*(56) "**Ain't nothing** you can do."* (Ibid.) AAE

(57) "There isn't anything you can do." (Ibid.) SE

To summarize, AAE distinguishes syntactically from SE in some features. The main difference is in using double negation and double modals in AAE. Moreover, SE varies from AAE in questions, especially in forming wh-questions and yes-no questions as the subject-operator inversion is not obligatory in AAE. What is more, SE differs from AAE in indirect questions differ as AAE tends to retain the subject-auxiliary inversion. Another syntactic difference between SE and AAE can be found in relative and existential clauses.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis dealt with morphosyntactic differences between Standard and African American English. The main purpose of this bachelor thesis was to prove that AAE is systematic and rule governed.

In the first chapter basic terminology such as dialect and Standard English were explained. Second chapter examined regional and also social dialects, which can be found in the United States. The third chapter examined phonology and lexis of AAE and differences in pronunciation were highlighted.

The fourth chapter examined morphological differences between SE and AAE. The most obvious difference between Standard English and African American English is in the absence of auxiliary *be* in specific environments. Also, SE varies from AAE in the subject-verb agreement in lexical verbs as well as auxiliaries such as *be*, *do* and *have*. Furthermore, AAE distinguishes from SE in the genitive case and in plural marking of nouns.

Last chapter examined how SE and AAE differ syntactically. The main syntactical difference between SE and AAE is in the use of subject-operator inversion. SE requires subject-operator inversion wh-questions and yes-no questions, whereas in AAE the subject-operator inversion is not obligatory. Therefore questions like *Where he can go* and *Where can he go* are both possible in AAE. Furthermore, SE does not require the subject-operator inversion in indirect questions, whereas AAE requires it. In addition to this, AAE does not use words *if* or *whether* in indirect question (e.g. *I wanted to know could they do it for me.*). Another difference SE differs from AAE in negation. Even though, double negation is possible in SE, the use of double negation changes the meaning of the sentence. In AAE, however, there is not limited number of negators, which can be used and also the number of negators does not influence the meaning of the sentence. Lastly, AAE also distinguishes from SE in that AAE allows negative inversion, for example *Can't nobody tell you it wasn't meant for you.*

In conclusion, even though AAE shares some features with SE, there are some differences, which distinguishes AAE from SE. Moreover, AAE follow certain rules in grammar as well as in pronunciation, therefore AAE is not SE "with mistakes", but systematic and rule governed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

*	wrong example
AAE	African American English
AIE	American Indian English
AASE	African American Standard English
AAVE	African American Vernacular English
CE	Cajun English
ChE	Chicano English
ENE	Eastern Northern England
LE	Lumbee English
NPIS	negative polarity items
SE	Standard English
WNE	Western New England
W.Pa	Western Pennsylvania

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