

STANDARD ENGLISH DIALECT INSTRUCTION THAT
RESPECTS LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

by

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ABSTRACT

Because the Standard English dialect is the language of power in this country, and students need to be able to negotiate codes of power in order to be successful, active citizens, it is the responsibility of public schools to teach the standard dialect. The following paper explores the question of how to teach speakers of nonstandard dialects the language forms of the Standard English dialect, while still respecting the variety of the English language in the United States. The findings suggest that cultural sensitivity and respect for language plurality can best be taught through explicit instruction on language variation. When paired with methodologies such as contrastive analysis for teaching the Standard English dialect, teachers can facilitate acquisition of the standard dialect while still maintaining students' native nonstandard dialects.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Teaching the grammar of the Standard English dialect has been a contentious part of public education for many years. The enforcement of linguistic homogeneity is often enacted in order build a sense of common goals among a nation, but political leaders fail to recognize that stamping out all but the majority variety of a language is neither necessary nor practical. On the other hand, some argue that collective identity is difficult, if not impossible, without at least one common language (Eriksen, 1992). A standard language enables communication and commerce (Beach, 2001); Nguyen (1993) even argues that employers have the right to require a certain level of communication skills in the standard language for this very reason.

This review of the literature explores both qualitative and quantitative studies conducted among students who speak non-standard language varieties. These studies examine how students are taught their standard language, the students' attitudes towards standard language instruction, and how teachers can teach the standard language in a way that is respectful of multiple languages and cultures. Most of the studies reviewed took place in the United States, with the teaching of Standard English dialect the focus of the studies. Teachers and future teachers who read this review will gain an understanding of how to approach Standard English dialect instruction in the classroom in a way that is respectful of the plurality of "Englishes" present in the United States.

Rationale

The learning of writing and oral communication skills is an essential component of English Language Arts education, but all students enter the classroom with different language abilities and their own cultural understanding of what is “correct” or “incorrect” English. They might have negative attitudes towards the standard variety of English (e.g., MacRuairc, 2011b), which could prevent them from making the necessary cognitive and emotional connections for learning, or they might simply have difficulty understanding the language used by the teacher, especially if they are English language learners who speak a highly specialized variety of English, such as Singaporean or Chinese English. All students, however, regardless of language spoken, deserve the opportunity to be successful in the American public school system. It is therefore imperative that educators understand how to serve these students in a way that is respectful to their various cultures.

Respect of language varieties must be balanced with practicality, however. Students who cannot produce Standard English dialect by the time that they exit the public schooling system will be at a disadvantage. Research on language and employability indicates that speakers of standard English dialect are more successful in job interviews, and that employers use standard English dialect mastery as a criterion for placing people in positions that involve contact with the public (Robbins, 1988). Many minority speakers consider accents an impediment and a stigma in schools, workplaces, and other social settings. These speakers are subject to ridicule, causing anger, insecurity, and shame

(Nguyen, 1993). Discrimination can be blatant. In 1998, the San Jose Mercury News recommended against voting for A.L. Hahn, a young Korean-American running for council, because they believed that his accent would make him ineffective. In another case, a doctor from Bangladesh practicing in the United States was denied medical malpractice insurance because the insurer believed that the doctor's accent would cause more lawsuits due to miscommunication. In 1991, the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles found that 31.7 percent of accented job applicants were treated less favorably than those without accents, and that 20.1 percent were not even considered for a job when calling. Though Title VII forbids discrimination even when a company can prove that it would lose customers due to the hiring of an employee with particular cultural or ethnic characteristics, as of Nguyen's (1993) writing, U.S. courts have thus far upheld accent discrimination as legitimate.

Historical Background

Language purity and its resulting oppression is an idea that did not begin in the United States, but has existed for many centuries. In the United Kingdom, the standardization of English was partially caused by a need to teach a standard version of the language in the British colonies; it was believed that national unity would be impossible without a standard to teach. This "exportation" of English has led to even more dialects and variations of the language, however, which is ironically the opposite effect that the imperialists were trying to achieve (Beach, 2001). In 1789, after the French Revolution, the government of France began legislating language in order to remove local idioms and words, presumably also

to help cement the nation-state. To this day, France is still trying to eradicate any variations in the French language, largely with little success (Eriksen, 1992).

Despite the best efforts of those in power, it is impossible to purify a language.

In the United States, linguistic homogeneity has always been prized, and almost all early immigrant groups lost their native language within two generations of arrival (Eriksen, 1992). Collins (1989) contended that it was class conflicts and tensions between those who spoke the majority language and those who spoke minority languages or dialects that led to the rise of the public education system in the United States. Mass literacy can be achieved in a formal education setting, allowing those in power to spread the use of the majority language and achieve linguistic unification. The rise of required schooling in the nineteenth century, and the standardized testing that has emerged in the twentieth century, have brought about a definition of normal, or acceptable literacy, as opposed to “other, unacceptable, non-normal forms of literacy” (Collins, 1989, p. 11).

Today, minority languages are grudgingly permitted, but there is still strong pressure to assimilate. Many immigrants may choose to try and eliminate their accents, even if their English is comprehensible to speakers of Standard English dialect. This is possibly a result of listener bias; when listeners have a bias against a person because of his or her accent and what they perceive it to mean (i.e., lower social status), the comprehensibility of the listener actually diminishes (Nguyen, 1992). This makes it difficult for speakers of minority languages to feel comfortable interacting with those who speak the standard

variety of the majority language. There is linguistic evidence that motivated listeners can easily make adjustments to better understand an accented speaker (Nguyen, 1992), but for a listener to be motivated, biases against the speaker must be removed.

Public schools may be contributing significantly to the social divisions between speakers of majority and minority dialects. Students are often required to read aloud in classes, giving teachers the opportunity to correct pronunciation. This devalues student contributions and their nonstandard dialects in a public way, perpetuating the idea among the entire class that the standard dialect is “correct.” Additionally, there are differences in vocabulary that can be seen when comparing children of different social classes and racial groups; often there are sets of words that only appear in certain groups. The standard ways of determining the reading level of a text are skewed to include more vocabulary that is used by middle-class speakers. Research has shown that a teacher’s attitude toward nonstandard dialects also affects the effectiveness of the teacher with students of those dialects, making it more difficult for those students to reach the same level of interest and achieve the same quality of education as the speakers of the majority language and dialect (Collins, 1989).

Linguistic oppression can have a number of harmful effects on those who speak non-standard language varieties. The use of the standard language and constant denigration of non-standard varieties leads to feelings of inadequacy by minority speakers, which Eriksen (1992) believed is the most common form of language oppression; in enforcing linguistic homogeneity, the majority “denies

culturally deviant citizens the right to be different” (p. 327). Deviations from the standard can be seen as problems with the people, their upbringing, or their community, leading to psychological distress (Collins, 1989). Formal instruction in the dominant language can imply criticism of the person as well as their language (Robbins, 1988).

Definitions

The term “non-standard language varieties” refers to different patterns of a language that are used among certain populations of speakers. It can mean specific, non-standard patterns of verb conjugation, alternative methods for pluralizing nouns, or even the production of oral language with an accent that does not conform to the standard variety (Wheeler, Cartwright, & Swords, 2012).

Language oppression, as used in this paper, refers to the systematic exercise of power to force speakers of minority language varieties to speak the standard language of the majority. In the United States, this often means oppression of African American English, southern varieties of English, and the varieties of English spoken by non-native speakers. African American English dialect, abbreviated AAE, is a stigmatized variety of English spoken by many African Americans, with different sound, word, and syntactic patterns than the Standard English dialect (Wheeler, Cartwright, & Swords, 2012). AAE dialect has also been called Black English, Ebonics, and African American Vernacular English, though according to Fogel and Ehri (2006), the term African American English is the most common in the literature today.

For the sake of this paper, Standard English dialect is an arbitrary prescribed grammatical form of English spoken by the political majority in the United States, what is called “California English,” the English spoken in the national news and entertainment media. Tapia (1999) explained that many grammatical forms now considered “standard” were, in fact, arbitrarily derived. For example, according to Pyles and Angeo (1993, cited in Tapia, 1999), the usage “you was” instead of “you were” was thought to be proper by prominent rhetoricians and grammarians throughout the eighteenth century.

English Language Arts education includes three main components: reading, writing, and oral communication. Because language production only takes place during writing and oral communication work, studies of teaching methodologies in these areas are the focus of this paper, though as will be seen in Chapter 2, the reading of texts that contain non-standard dialects can improve students’ understanding of and attitudes towards non-standard varieties of English.

Limitations

This literature review is limited in several ways. A number of the studies reviewed were not conducted in the United States, but in other English-speaking countries. Great Britain and Ireland face many of the same issues around teaching standard language that are faced by American teachers; there are a wide array of non-standard varieties of British English used in students’ homes, though the varieties are different than those found in the United States and have more to do with regionalism than ethnic varieties of English. Because Britain and

Ireland have more homogeneous cultures than the United States, findings from these studies might not be appropriate for American students.

Other studies that are part of this literature review discuss the difficulties of teaching the standard variety of a language other than English, for example Portuguese in Brazil, or Standard Greek (as opposed to Cypriot Greek) in Greece. There are lessons to learn from these studies, though again, it is unclear whether or not the results are directly applicable to a classroom in the United States, given the differences in culture and beliefs about education that exist in those foreign classrooms.

This study also reviews research whose participants are at varying ages and developmental levels; as with any teaching methodology, not all practices herein will be appropriate for all students. Further, studies on how to teach in culturally appropriate ways are numerous, and while they are almost universally relevant to the teaching of Standard English dialect to non-standard dialect speakers, this broader category of research is not represented within the current paper.

Statement of Purpose

While language oppression and discrimination is clearly wrong, it is a reality for many citizens of the United States. This paper seeks to understand how English Language Arts teachers can go about providing Standard English dialect instruction, thereby providing students with the necessary tools to be successful as adults, while respecting the plurality of cultures and of the English language in the United States.

Various approaches to teaching (or not teaching) the standard dialect have been proposed in the United States. Galindo (1993) cites Trudgill (1994) to explain the three options that teachers have when students enter the classroom speaking a nonstandard dialect. The teacher can attempt eradication, which is the complete replacement of the nonstandard dialect with the standard; bidialectism, which allows the maintenance of the nonstandard dialect but also teaches the standard dialect; or what is called “appreciation of dialect differences,” in which students are simply allowed to continue using their nonstandard dialect, with the idea that all language is acceptable and should be valued in the same way.

Garvin (1964, cited in Gumperz and Hernández-Chavez, 1985), explained the concept of foregrounding, which refers to the concept that words are context specific, and contain cultural and attitudinal meanings as well as value judgments. Language usage, then, and specifically the choice to speak in a nonstandard dialect, carries with it a positioning of oneself in relation to the audience, as an expression of identity. Speakers might choose to use features of a nonstandard dialect to emphasize an idea or concept that cannot be accurately expressed in the standard dialect. As such, bidialectism is the preferred philosophy for teaching language; while an appreciation of dialect differences would be ideal, it would require vast shifts in language attitudes that are unlikely to ever occur.

The controversy over how to teach Standard English dialect while maintaining a nonstandard dialect has been particularly heated with regard to

speakers of African American English dialect. For example, parents of AAE dialect speakers have expressed overwhelming opposition to the use of materials in AAE dialect in the classroom, believing that the school is responsible for teaching students the SE dialect (Taylor 1973, cited in Stoller 1975). The research reviewed in this study will address this and other issues around language awareness among students and teachers, language variety, and the potential methodologies used to teach the standard dialect.

Summary

Students who speak non-standard varieties of English are apt to face discrimination in many scenarios, and while educators have a responsibility to fight such intolerance and teach acceptance and understanding of others whenever possible, they cannot change the harsh reality that many students will face. If it is the responsibility of the public schooling system to prepare students to be active members of society, teachers must teach students how the standard language is written and spoken.

The studies reviewed in Chapter 2 provide insight into how knowledge of language variation and dialect awareness among students and teachers, along with specific instruction in standard language forms, can help improve the acquisition of Standard English dialect in a way that does not stigmatize nonstandard dialects. Chapter 3 summarizes these findings and offers specific suggestions for classroom implementation, as well as outlines areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The previous chapter offered a brief history of language oppression and discrimination, both within the United States and abroad. It also asserted that it is the responsibility of schools to teach students the Standard English dialect, such that they might operate successfully within the prestige-language environment, but that this education must also be conducted in a culturally responsive manner.

This chapter contains a review of related research, divided into three sections. The first section discusses language awareness among bidialectical and bilingual speakers, and how explicit instruction in language variation can empower students and instill a sense of legitimization and appreciation for standard and nonstandard dialects alike. The second section reviews research on specific approaches to teaching the Standard English dialect to speakers of nonstandard dialects. The final section of this chapter covers research that explores the cultivation of positive teacher attitudes towards nonstandard dialects.

Language Awareness and Appreciation of Variation

Research shows that students have language awareness, particularly around code switching for different contexts, whether or not they are formally taught anything about language variation. This section contains nine studies that explore language awareness, instruction in language variation, and ways of encouraging appreciation for nonstandard dialects. The students in MacRuaric's (2011a; 2011b) study of language attitudes expressed a distinct understanding of

the narrowly codified and formal linguistic register that is to be used in school; the middle-class students in the study understood and still had some positive associations with the school register, while the working-class students struggled to use a register that felt forced and disingenuous to them. Similarly, the nine Indigenous Australian students interviewed by Harrison (2004) were very conscious of how their language differed from that of their teachers, while still believing that they were best able to express themselves in Aboriginal English dialect; this led Harrison (2004) to suggest that students be permitted to use the Aboriginal English dialect when relaying stories or ideas of a personal or cultural nature, in order to maintain a healthy language environment in the classroom. This was the approach taken by the school in which Brown (2011) conducted his study of twelve low-income African-American students. Collection and analysis of their writing samples revealed an awareness that the language they use in school is different from the language they use in their peer groups, and there were more African American English dialect features in writing where students were asked to make a personal connection to a text that they had read, or to make an ethical claim about a topic.

Crinson and Williamson (2004) explored standard and nonstandard usage among teenagers in formal situations in Tyneside, England, in order to make suggestions for changing the national language arts curriculum, and discovered that while girls used fewer nonstandard forms than boys, and that lower socioeconomic status students used more than higher socioeconomic status students, almost all participants in the study were consciously or unconsciously

aware of standard dialect usage, as evidenced through their language choices during the study. In exploring the textual writing patterns of high-achieving bidialectical students who spoke both African American English and Standard English dialects, Ball (1995) found that these students employed text patterns and features of both dialects where contextually appropriate.

Two studies explored the effects of explicit instruction in language variation on high school students, showing that such instruction can help students understand how language is used contextually, how it can convey identity and group membership, and how it is used to maintain power at a societal level. Godley and Minnici (2008) worked implemented a one-week unit on language variation and dialects with tenth-grade students, and found that by the end of the unit, students had begun to understand that language variation is natural and desirable based on context, and should not be stigmatized. Chisholm and Godley (2011) studied how a small-group, inquiry-based discussion can be used as part of language variation instruction, and found that the format allowed students to expressed their understanding of the complex relationship between language and identity.

Teachers can also potentially benefit from understanding the ways that appreciation of language variation is taught in some foreign settings, as in the following two additional studies. In a study of 14 exchange students from Universidad Simon Bolivar in Caracas, coming to the University of the West Indies in the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago for a three-week intensive EFL course, Youssef and Carter (1999) found that when students prepared and

performed in a play written in the Trinidad English dialect, students confirmed that they were unanimous in their enjoyment of the program, their conviction that they had increased their fluency, and their greater understanding and appreciation of the culture and lifestyle of their Trinidadian “neighbors.” Shoba’s (2010) case study of a central Scottish classroom of ten- and eleven-year old speakers of Scots and English found that students expressed a negative attitude toward their dialect prior to lessons and classroom discussion on Scots words in English usage, but afterwards many of the students showed excitement at being taught Scots and being encouraged to use the Scots they spoke at home in the classroom.

MacRuairc (2011a; 2011b) undertook a year-long ethnographic study to understand the views of children, from both working-class and middle-class families, on the overall language climate of their schools. Fifty-three children, all twelve years of age, from two working class schools (n=25, 12 girls and 13 boys) and one middle-class school (n=28, 13 girls and 15 boys), were observed in friend-based focus groups. Each friend group, when it met with the researcher, was given an overall theme, such as after-school activities, homework practices, or school rules, around which to conduct their conversation of language usage and practices both in and out of school. The researcher transcribed these conversations verbatim, and then coded them for themes. Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes (MacRuairc, 2011a).

The groups universally described a narrowly codified and formal linguistic register that is to be used in school, and students across gender and socio-

economic lines had varying degrees of comfort with the style shift required by the schooling environment. The middle-class students showed a better understanding of how and when to moderate their language for the school environment, and while they did not often like having to change their language for school, they still had some positive associations with the school register. The working-class students, on the other hand, struggled to use a register that felt forced and disingenuous to them, and many felt as though the teacher was trying to change them, to make them sound “posh,” which was a very negative association for these students. They also felt that the teachers never explained things in words that they, the students, would use. According to MacRuairc (2011b), the findings of this study are aligned with other studies that indicated a sense of exclusion exists among speakers of non-standard dialects when their language is devalued by speakers of the standard language dialect; thus, the findings are likely transferrable to other populations.

Harrison (2004) interviewed nine Indigenous students studying at an Australian university in the Northern Territory, in order to understand the role that their Aboriginal English dialect played in their educational experiences. The students ranged in age from 22 to 47, and the researcher interviewed each student three times, with the average interview lasting two hours and twenty minutes. Harrison (2004) found that the students interviewed were highly motivated by their relationship with the teacher, not because of his or her authority but based on their level of respect for the teacher as a person. They felt, however, that they were constantly under scrutiny from their teachers, with

respect to their language usage, which negatively affected that relationship; the students voiced that this feeling was also related to the history of the Indigenous people in Australia, who had lived in fear of the Commonwealth government for generations. The students interviewed felt that there were situations where speaking Aboriginal English dialect was appropriate, and that it allowed them to express their identities better than they could when speaking Standard Australian English dialect. As noted by the researcher, the findings of the study align with those of other similar studies, improving the reliability of the research. Though the interviews were exploratory in nature and do not point to specific solutions, they provide an international context that supports open discussions of language in the classroom as well as language variation education for teachers who work with speakers of nonstandard dialects.

In a case study of a senior literature class, Brown (2011) explored how dialect and register are used in the academic writings of African-American high school students who speak AAE dialect in their homes and communities, and how aware these students are of their own language usage. There were twelve students in the class, which was at a charter high school in Washington D.C.; the mission of the school was to take students who have been through the juvenile justice system and prepare them for college. All students were African-American, and the school also had a goal of teaching the students the Standard English dialect, while respecting their AAE dialect heritage. The students were from low-income families. The classroom teacher was white, and race was considered an open topic in the classroom.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to determine the participants' linguistic awareness. Eight students participated in these interviews, four at the beginning and four at the end of the year. Each group of four contained one high-achieving, two middle-achieving, and one low-achieving student, as identified by the teacher. Two writing samples were also collected from each student at the beginning of the year, and one at the end of the year. Language usage was analyzed with a register analysis by breaking utterances into theme and rheme.

Students were universally aware that the language they use in school is different from the language they use in their peer groups. In the collected writing, a hybrid of AAE dialect and SE dialect features can be seen. The researcher found more AAE dialect features in writings where students were asked to make a personal connection to a text that they had read, or in which they had to make an ethical claim about a topic. While the transferability of these findings is unclear due to the special context of the classroom in which the case study was situated, the findings are credible, and could be used to inform future research.

Ball (1995) interviewed four bidialectal students and conducted textual analyses of their writing samples in order to understand how they incorporated patterns of AAE dialect and discourse into their writing. The students, two male and two female, were from an eleventh-grade college preparatory English class in culturally and linguistically diverse West Coast city. The students were high achieving, having grade point averages of 3.0 or above and scoring at or above grade level on the language arts portions of standardized tests. The students

were all familiar with AAE dialect and used it at least some of the time; three students, the two girls and one boy, identified primarily as Standard English dialect speakers who also spoke AAE dialect, and the second boy identified primarily as an AAE dialect speaker. All students came from urban, lower-, or working-class households, as determined by their parents' occupations. At least forty percent of the families at the school received welfare benefits.

The researcher met with the students over the course of a year spanning from the midpoint of their eleventh-grade year to the midpoint of their twelfth-grade year. First, students completed background questionnaires and engaged in audio-recorded discussions with the researcher and with their peers. A wide variety of classroom writing assignments was then collected from all four students. During this time, the students also met with the researcher in her home to talk and to write on topics of interest in an informal setting. Over the summer, the students met with the researcher at the school site, where they were asked to complete a variety of writing assignments on topics of interest directed at audiences of their choosing. These pieces of writing needed to fall into one of four categories—informal letter, essay, report, or speech—and each needed to be completed within 45 to 60 minutes. The students were asked to engage in a talk-aloud protocol while writing, in order to give the researcher insight into each student's writing process. The students were audio recorded, and the researcher also kept observation notes.

All four students demonstrated skill in using features of AAE dialect and SE dialect during discussions with the researcher; as in other studies, more AAE

dialect features were observed when students were relaxed and engaged in more casual conversation. In both formal and informal writing, the students strategically used features of AAE, such as rhythm, repetition, story structure, and colloquial AAE dialect phrases. The talk-aloud protocol provided evidence that the students were making many of these choices deliberately, to achieve a particular stylistic effect.

With many student examples included in the article, and thorough explanations of their analyses, the study has a high level of confirmability. The researcher did not mention whether she explicitly discussed linguistic awareness and code switching with the students in the study, however, nor did she comment on how the students might have learned which language usages were contextually appropriate based on the formality of a given assignment and its audience. This makes it difficult to determine the transferability of the findings, specifically whether this sophisticated language usage is common among high achieving African American students, but it suggests a connection between school success and language awareness.

As part of a larger study on language instruction in urban schools, Godley and Minnici (2008) explored how classroom discussions about language plurality affect students' awareness of their own code-switching practices, as well as their understanding of natural dialect variation and dominant language ideologies. The participants in their study consisted of three tenth grade classes in a medium-sized Midwestern city. The classes contained 55 students, 31 of which agreed to participate in the study. More than half the students at the school were

considered low income, and 91% were African American. Of the 31 participants, thirty were African American and one was white.

The researchers designed and implemented a one-week unit on language variation and dialects. The goals of the unit were to encourage students to be critical of dominant language ideology, understand the diversity of dialects spoken in the U.S., and to gain awareness of their own contextually-based language variation. Students reviewed language variation in Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, which they had just read as a class novel, and used the book as a starting point for discussion of dialect and code-switching. They then viewed the documentary film *American Tongues*, which explores dialect variation in the U.S., and discussed their own language usage in everyday life. The unit was taught by the first researcher, and the classes were observed, recorded, and transcribed by the second researcher. At the end of the school year, four months after the unit was taught, the first researcher interviewed eleven of the students about their usage of multiple dialects. All participants were also given an open-ended questionnaire on their views of language variation, at the beginning and the end of the school year.

Through the classroom discussions over the course of the unit, students began to understand that their personal experiences with language, namely that everyone speaks differently in different contexts, did not align with a belief in one proper form of language. At the beginning of the school year, 46% of students agreed that everyone should speak Standard English dialect all of the time, but when the same question was asked at the end of the year, that number had

dropped to 17%. Students also came to recognize that even among speakers of African American English dialect, the ways that certain Standard English dialect phrases could be rewritten in AAE dialect varied among the students, mostly based on students' neighborhoods and communities. These findings all indicate that students had learned that dialect variation is a natural phenomenon, and should not carry stigma, even though classroom discussions about language and oppression revealed that students are also well aware of the privileging and stigmatization of different English language dialects.

The study had a high level of credibility, given the triangulation of data between the two researchers and the member checking that was conducted during the end-of-year interviews by the first researcher. The findings could reasonably transfer to students of similar ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds in other urban areas. Limited transcription interspersed throughout the discussion provided a basis for confirmability, and a thorough appendix with unit syllabi and the language attitudes questionnaire made the process transparent.

Chisholm and Godley (2011) observed a small group discussion and conducted individual semi-structured interviews to understand how an inquiry-based discussion about language variation, identity, and power might support students' understanding of their own language usage. The discussion and interview participants were three eleventh-grade speakers of African American English dialect, two female and one male, from a small public high school on the edge of a midsized Midwestern city. Ninety-nine percent of students at the school were African American, and 99% qualified for free or reduced lunch. Based on

audio recordings of classroom talk, the researchers determined that most, if not all students at the school were bidialectical, speakers of AAE dialect and Standard English dialect.

An inquiry-based, small-group discussion among the three students occurred on the final day of a three-day unit on language variation, identity, and power; the researchers defined inquiry as “the process of justifying beliefs through reasoning, conjecturing, evaluating evidence, and considering counterarguments” (Wells, 1999, p. 89, cited in Chisholm & Godley, 2011). The group was given five questions to discuss, on how to change negative opinions of nonstandard dialects in themselves and others, their own situationally-based language variation, the ways that language can reflect identity, and whether or not it is right for people to have to change their language usage. The discussion took place in October, and was recorded and transcribed. It was then divided into the argument moves made by the students, and these were coded in relation to the sociolinguistic content of the lesson. The second researcher also conducted interviews with two of the three students in May, at the end of the school year, which helped inform the analysis of data.

The content of the students’ discussion aligned with the goals of the lesson, and expressed an understanding of the complex relationship between language and identity. The discussion was lively, and multiple viewpoints were expressed; the format allowed students to make claims based on their own experiences, and to debate those claims with their fellow participants. This suggests that the inquiry-based discussion was a good methodology for teaching

about this topic. The students did not, however, engage deeply in questions of power and stereotypes related to nonstandard dialect usage, and seemed to conflate the ideas of register, slang, and dialect. Through member checking in the follow-up interviews, the second researcher also discovered that one of the female students was uncomfortable reading a transcript of her own AAE dialect usage during the discussion, suggesting that she had not internalized the legitimacy of her language or the concept of language variation as natural and acceptable.

The small focus-group study format provides limited transferability of this study's findings to other contexts. The researchers' methodology was clear, however, and detailed appendices with lesson plans, along with transcript excerpts throughout the article, led to strong confirmability of the study's findings.

In a qualitative case study, Youssef and Carter (1999) explored the experience of exchange students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as they prepared for and performed a play written in the local, non-standard English dialect. There were fourteen students from Universidad Simon Bolivar in Caracas, the majority from the Faculty of Engineering, who came to the University of the West Indies in the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago for a three-week intensive EFL course. Subjects were between 19 and 35 years old, and were assessed at the Lower Intermediate level of English proficiency on a standardized placement test. The students spent three hours per day over a ten-day period preparing for the performance of the play *Something Old, Something New* by Neville Labastide, which was about the superstitions concerning

marriage and the clash of old and new cultures, and was written in the local Trinidadian English dialect. Lessons consisted of 90 minutes spent on intercultural and language awareness, and the remaining 90 minutes on preparations for the performance.

The students did not exhibit any bias against learning the dialect used in the play, according to the authors. Pronunciation, stress, and intonation patterns were easier to teach because students were engaged in the idea of putting on a performance; there was real-world applicability. The authors conclude that drama may profitably be used in the classroom as a way of heightening linguistic and cultural awareness. A brief open-ended questionnaire given to the students confirmed that they were unanimous in their total enjoyment of the program, their conviction that they had increased their fluency, and their greater understanding and appreciation of the culture and lifestyle of their Trinidadian “neighbors.”

The dependability of the study was enhanced by background information that aligned with the study’s findings, but overall, the credibility and confirmability of the study are weak. Without any results from the questionnaire, it is difficult to believe that the students had no bias against learning the local English dialect. Neither the questionnaire nor a full explication of observational methods was described, so the results cannot be confirmed.

In a qualitative case study of a primary school classroom, Shoba (2010) explored how Scots language instruction was taught and perceived by students. The teacher of the class wanted to destigmatize usage of Scots, and teach students more about Scots as a language. Some Scots pronunciations of words

that are similar to English words simply sound like a non-standard accent to the untrained listener, and are not considered acceptable usage in the UK. The subjects of the study were ages ten and eleven, in a primary school in Fife, on the east coast of the central Scottish lowlands. The school is in a large suburb that has been in economic decline. The students all spoke Scots and English, and no other languages. No further information, such as the exact number of students or the gender breakdown of students, was given.

The classroom was visited twice, and on each occasion, a Scots lesson of approximately 90 minutes in length was audio recorded and videotaped. During each lesson, four students wore clip-on microphones to record their speech. The teacher and groups of students were also later interviewed, to triangulate the data. Finally, a whole-group session with one of the researchers (who spoke Scots) was used to continue to further elicit the thoughts of the class, with parts of the recordings played back for the class to discuss.

When encountering Scots words that were already part of their vocabulary, students' speech patterns reflected neutral feelings about the language. When they were introduced to Scots words that they did not know, however, at first their speech patterns indicated a negative perception of the language. After the lesson had concluded and the small group discussion took place, the students expressed an overall more positive attitude towards the language. Many (though not all) students also expressed pleasure at being taught Scots and being encouraged to use the Scots they spoke at home in the classroom. It is unclear how transferrable the results of this study are to other

contexts, unfortunately. The researcher did not spend a great deal of time in the classroom, and nor was data collected from all students, which negatively affects the reliability of the findings.

Summary of Section One

The studies reviewed in this section all focused on an understanding of language variation. MacRuairc (2011a; 2011b) and Harrison (2004) both examined language attitudes of students who speak nonstandard dialects of English, and how their awareness of speaking a different language variety than that of their teachers affects their classroom experiences. Brown (2011) and Crinson and Williamson (2004) both demonstrated that students are aware of contextual uses of standard and nonstandard dialects, and Ball (1995) showed that high-achieving bidialectical students strategically use features of both the standard dialect and a nonstandard dialect to achieve specific rhetorical effects. Godley and Minnici (2008) and Chisholm and Godley (2011) provided examples of how language variation can be explicitly taught in order to improve students' understanding of the situationality of language and the subjectivity of dialect prestige. Finally, Youssef and Carter (1999) and Shoba (2010) offered two examples of classrooms that fostered understanding and appreciation of nonstandard language usages.

Methods for Teaching the Standard Dialect

This section contains four subsections. The first section covers traditional language instruction that focuses on error correction. The second section explores methodologies that focus on developing students' skills in the standard

dialect by making use of their existing nonstandard-dialect skills. Finally, the third section offers criticism of two national language curricula, one in England and another in Peru, as a warning of how prescribed language curricula can fail to teach standard language forms.

Error Correction as a Construct for Teaching Standard English Dialect

According to Lindfors (1987, as cited in Dyson & Smitherman, 2009), there is no evidence that simply correcting a student's language will improve their ability to speak the standard dialect. Correction-based approaches to teaching standard language forms predictably met with mixed success in the three studies reviewed in this section. In a qualitative ethnographic study of 31 tenth-grade speakers of African American English dialect, Godley, Carpenter, and Werner (2007) found that students frequently lacked the ability to describe why they had made certain corrections during Daily Oral Language activities, and did not question that the "correct" language presented in the activities might not be the only version of English. Dyson and Smitherman (2009) studied a series of teacher-led editing conferences with one first-grade African-American girl who spoke AAE dialect, and found that the teacher's attempts to correct the student's writing were fraught with miscommunication because the teacher did not understand the AAE dialect features that the student employed. In a different language learning setting, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) explored how carefully scaffolded tutoring sessions focused on writing error correction helped college-level English language learners improve their understanding of English grammar.

Godley, et al. (2007) conducted qualitative ethnographic observations in order to understand the language ideologies that were represented by and reflected in a Daily Oral Language activity. Students of three tenth-grade English classes were observed, all with the same teacher, in an urban high school in a Midwestern U.S. city of approximately 300,000 people. The high school was approximately 91% African-American, with 59% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch. In the year prior to the study, 40% of students passed the state writing assessment, and 22% passed the reading assessment. The total number of students in the three classrooms was 55, and 31 of these agreed to participate in the research: thirty African-American students and one white student. All participants were observed to use speech characteristics of African American English.

The researchers observed the English classes approximately three times per week for the entire school year. 133 different occurrences of the Daily Oral Language (DOL) activity were audio- and/or video-recorded on 79 different days. Eleven students were interviewed throughout the year as well. The data also included all student writing longer than one sentence, as well as students' grades and attendance records. At the beginning and end of the year, students were given a timed writing task and a multiple-choice written Standard English dialect assessment. Data were coded first based on the structure of the activity, the students' participation, and the assumptions about language that were implied in the discourse surrounding the activity. Data were coded again based on the

content and the sources of language ideologies that were expressed in the writing.

Students had great difficulty in reflecting on the types of corrections that they made to sentences and why they made them, especially when they were presented with multiple-choice answers. The DOL activity presented a highly prescriptive view of the English language, and focused on language form, as disconnected from the meaning or the intended function of the sentence. Students seemed confused at times, but at no point did they question that the language presented to them might not be correct, or might not be the only version of English. Godley et al. (2007) found that some students expressed language ideologies that emphasized the importance of context and audience, however, and thus placed equal value on non-standard dialects of English, even though these were not believed to be “correct.” The findings suggest that the DOL activity does not provide opportunities for teaching language in a way that relates to students’ existing language skills.

Godley et al. (2007) provided extensive context for the study methodology and the theories in which it was grounded, and carefully explained their collaboration and the way the data was triangulated, yielding a high sense of credibility to the study’s findings.

As part of a larger ethnographic project on child writing, Dyson and Smitherman (2009) conducted case-study observations of teacher editing conferences with one female, African-American first grade student, who attended a culturally and ethnically diverse school in a mid-sized urban school district. Most

of the school's students were from low income homes. The school conducted regular standardized testing of students and was focused on teaching "the basics," which the researchers explained means the teaching of Standard English dialect grammatical features, in the context of literacy. The case study's focus student was so chosen because she was a speaker of AAE dialect, and was noted to be particularly talkative and the most prolific writer in her class. The observed editing conferences focused on the writing conventions tested on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The researchers observed and recorded these conferences, and supplemented their observations with informal interviews and examination of the student's written products.

When the focus student was probed to reconsider the grammar she had used in her writing, the usually talkative girl was almost always silent. The researchers surmised that this occurred because the questions the teacher asked did not make sense in the context of her everyday language usage; for example, the student routinely wrote the contraction "it's" with the AAE dialect phonetic spelling, "is," and the teacher told the student that she was missing a word ("it"). The teacher also attempted to correct the student's copula usage, which followed the AAE dialect usage and thus conveyed a subtlety that is not present in Standard English dialect, making the corrections, in effect, incorrect. The teacher's lack of understanding about typical AAE dialect features created repeated communicative disconnects between her and her student, and even after the teacher repeatedly attempted to "fix" the same issues in the student's writing, her writing did not become any closer to the standard dialect.

The researchers included several samples of the student's writing and transcripts of the conversations around the writing, yielding a high level of confirmability to the study's findings. Though this is only an account of one child's experiences, it is a strong example of what can go awry when teachers attempt to change a student's nonstandard usage into standard dialect form without an understanding of the original dialect.

Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) also conducted a case study of writing conferences, but with three students enrolled in an eight-week, second-level (out of six levels) ESL reading and writing course offered by the English Language Institute of the University of Delaware. These three students were given one extra tutoring session each week, which was conducted by one of the researchers and was the period of observation for this study. All students were female, and their native languages were Japanese, Spanish, and Portuguese. The Japanese-speaking and Portuguese-speaking students had been in the U.S. for two months, and the Spanish-speaking student had been in the U.S. for six months, at the time of the study. All of the students had been placed in the second-level ESL class based on their performance on a placement exam.

Students wrote one in-class essay each week, on a topic of their choice. They received corrective feedback from the tutor in a one-on-one meeting in his office each week. The tutoring sessions lasted between thirty and forty-five minutes, and were audio recorded. The corrections focused on four grammatical structures: articles, tense marking, use of prepositions, and modal verbs.

The researchers developed a twelve-level questioning process for the tutor to use with each error that the student made, based on the Vygotskian concept of the zone of proximal development, with each step providing more scaffolding for the student. The first step was always to have the student look over his or her writing, marking and correcting any errors. Then the tutor would begin a series of questions, each designed to focus the student's attention on a particular error and to generate a solution. The first question was the most broad, asking the student if saw an error in a particular section of the text, and the questions become more specific until the tutor had pointed out the error, and finally, given the student the answer and an explanation; the idea behind the progression of questions was to only give the student as much information as he or she needed to identify and correct each error.

The researchers found that when students were unable to recognize an error, they were often quiet and provided little response to the tutor's probing, prompting the tutor to jump ahead in the questioning process in order to avoid frustrating the student. Within a particular tutoring session, and across sessions, however, as students engaged with the tutor to understand particular types of errors, the students demonstrated an ability to fix those errors with increased independence. The researchers conclude that the collaborative error correction process was beneficial because it provided individualized scaffolding for each student and the different types of errors that the different students were making.

Because it is only a small case study, the transferability of Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) is difficult to determine; the gains made by the students in the

study could be highly dependent on either personal characteristics, such as those that might be common to students voluntarily attending college, or to the particular skills of the tutor. The methodology of the study is very clear, however, and abundant transcripts with analyses provide for high confirmability. Some of the findings in this study align with Dyson and Smitherman (2009), namely the lack of response from students who did not have the understanding of Standard English dialect grammar necessary to see errors in their writing. This study differs from that one, however, in that the students did not already speak a rules-based, complete dialect of English, so the studies are not directly comparable. There is still, perhaps, something for teachers of nonstandard dialect speakers to learn from this methodology, however.

Utilizing the Nonstandard Dialect to Teach the Standard Dialect

Most research on teaching the standard dialect to speakers of nonstandard dialects has focused on ways to utilize students' existing language abilities as a bridge to teaching standard forms. The ten studies in this subsection approach the issue in several different ways. The first three studies focus on first teaching reading and writing in the student's native dialect, before teaching the standard dialect. In his quasi-experimental study of third-grade children in Chicago, Leaverton (1975) explored whether the use of AAE dialect readers, alongside readers in Standard English dialect, would help facilitate the acquisition of SE dialect, but the results were inconclusive. Rickford and Rickford (1995) re-examined attitudes toward dialect readers and reading comprehension when using dialect readers with third- through seventh-graders in East Palo Alto,

California, but also had inconclusive findings. Bull (1990), working in an international context, reported on a quasi-experimental study conducted with ten classrooms of seven-year-old students in Norway who were learning to read, and found that the students who were taught to read in their vernacular dialects were better able to read in the two standard dialects of Norway, *nynorsk* and *bokmål*.

The next study in this section did not utilize dialect readers, but rather included multicultural and African-American children's literature, along with more traditional methods of grammar instruction, as a means for teaching the Standard English dialect. In a quantitative study of seventeen African-American second graders' language usage and corollaries with educational achievement, Ball (1994) found that explicit instruction of some features of the Standard English dialect, through both picture-based and literature-based techniques, was found to increase student post-test scores.

Six studies used versions of what is known as the contrastive approach to teaching the standard dialect, a methodology by which teachers show students specific differences in dialects and how to translate between them. As Feigenbaum (1975) pointed out, in foreign language instruction, the features of a student's native language are often compared and contrasted with the language being learned, in order to highlight areas of similarity and divergence. Particular problem areas, especially in syntax and pronunciation, can be predicted, and teachers can "teach the problems [and] avoid the non-problems" (p. 146). This approach can be applied to bidialectical students as well. In a quasi-experimental study, Yiakoumetti (2006; 2007) created a language intervention for eleven- and

twelve-year-old speakers of the Cypriot dialect in Greece that explicitly taught the differences between their dialect and the Standard Modern Greek dialect, and found that the students who were taught in the contrastive program significantly improved their abilities to speak and write the standard dialect. Shierloh (1991) implemented contrastive analysis with adult basic education learners, and found students' ability to correct written texts for Standard English dialect usage improved, though no comparison with other methodologies was provided. In a quasi-experimental study of community college students who spoke non-standard varieties of English and were enrolled in a remedial English course that taught through contrastive analysis, Baxter and Holland (2007) found that the experimental group showed great improvements in awareness of Standard English dialect subject-verb agreement features and a large improvement in positive attitude towards writing, though *p* values were not given. Two African American students who spoke an island dialect of English received an academic intervention in vocabulary and written interactional in a study by Blake and Sickle (2001), who found that after the interventions, the students were able to express their ideas in ways that speakers of standard English dialect would understand, and they were successful in passing the high school exit exam. In Fogel and Ehri's (2000) quantitative analysis of three different curricular treatments regarding differences between Standard English dialect and African American English (AAE) dialect, the group who received an explanation of the rules of Standard English dialect and guided practice transforming sentences from AAE to Standard English dialect, making the greatest gains. Finally, Wheeler (2006)

reported on a case study of one third grade teacher in Tidewater, Virginia, who transformed her language teaching practice by introducing contrastive analysis, and whose African-American students thus scored equally to their white peers on the statewide assessment of reading and writing that year.

In what claimed to be the first scientifically-based research on the usage of dialect readers, texts written using the word patterns and grammatical structures of students' nonstandard dialect, Leaverton (1975) investigated the use of dialect readers and their effect on reading ability. For the purposes of this paper, the specific relevant question addressed by Leaverton (1975) is whether Standard English dialect acquisition can be facilitated when students first read stories in AAE dialect, and then read the same stories in SE dialect. The subjects in the study were thirty-seven third-graders in Chicago; no further demographic data was reported.

Leaverton (1975) defined speech as either "everyday talk" or "school talk," with the implication that neither one was superior over the other, but that each type of speech simply had its own appropriate context. The researcher developed two versions of four different texts, one version in everyday talk and one in school talk. The language focus of the study was verb usage, and the everyday talk texts were developed with the verb forms that students had been observed to use. The school talk versions of the texts were simply translations of the "everyday talk" texts into Standard English dialect.

Students were divided into two groups based on their scores on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children. The students were ranked based on

score, and were divided as evenly as possible between the two groups: students with odd numbered ranks were assigned to Group 1, the experimental group, and students with even numbered ranks were assigned to Group 2, the control group. The experimental group was given each story in everyday talk first, and when the teacher had determined that half of the students had mastered the story in that form, they were given the story in school talk, and then tested on their knowledge and retention. The control group was given the story only in school talk.

While questions about the story were answered correctly more frequently by students in the experimental group ($\chi^2 = 4.90$, $df = 1$, $p = .05$), and students in the experimental group took less time to read and complete the tests ($\chi^2 = 4.9$, $df = 1$, $p = .05$), the experimental group's ability to identify errors related to verb form, in comparison to the scores of the control group, was not statistically significant. This article reported on the author's unpublished dissertation research, and thus clearly stated that it would not contain the level of detail that would be available in the dissertation. The details provided were unfortunately not enough to comment on the study's validity or objectivity. Because of the small sample size and lack of data about gender and ethnicity of the students involved in the study, the reliability of the findings is questionable.

Rickford and Rickford (1994) conducted two mini-studies revisiting dialect readers among students in East Palo Alto, California, a low-income, multiethnic community. The school district where the research took place had some of the lowest student achievement scores on the California Assessment Program in the late 1980s; scores were slightly better in the early 1990s, when this study was

conducted, but were still lower than other districts in the area and in the state as a whole.

The first mini-study, which took place in spring of 1993, involved seven third- to fifth-grade African-American students, three female and four male. The researcher asked students to read and respond to stories from a dialect reader series called Bridge, which had been developed in the 1970s. The boys and girls received different stories, based on the gender of the protagonist, and each student received copies of his or her story written in both AAE and SE dialects. When the students were asked which version of the story they preferred, the girls all preferred the SE dialect version, while two of the four boys preferred the AAE dialect version. The girls expressed that the SE version was clearer, and that it would be the one their teachers would approve, because it was written “normally.” The boys were more likely to acknowledge that the AAE dialect version was written with language that they themselves used. Seven teachers and one teacher’s aide were also given the stories; half were African-American and half were white. The teachers were universally more positive about the SE dialect versions of the stories than the AAE dialect versions.

The second mini-study involved two trials. The participants in the first trial were twenty seventh-graders: fourteen African-American, three Pacific Islander, two Mexican-American, and one white student. Each student read two different stories from the Bridge series, one in AAE dialect and another in SE dialect, and then answered an eight-to-ten item multiple-choice comprehension quiz for each story. In this trial, the students scored higher on quizzes for the AAE versions of

the stories. In the second trial, however, which involved sixteen sixth-grade students (eleven African American, two Mexican Americans, of children of immigrants from Fiji, and one Pacific Islander), comprehension on the SE stories was higher.

The researchers surmised that the second trial might have confounding factors: the Bridge stories were originally designed for students in seventh grade, and not everyone in the trial was yet reading at a sixth-grade level; the students read the SE dialect stories first, so might have been fatigued by the time they came to the AAE dialect stories; and by chance some of the best readers in the class received the SE version of one particular story, which could have skewed the results. Given the potential confounding factors of the second mini-study, the credibility of the research and the transferability of the findings are suspect. Both mini-studies do suggest that this is an area for further research, however.

Bull (1990) explored whether teaching students in different regions of Norway to read in their vernacular, nonstandard dialect would facilitate learning of the standard Norwegian dialects. The study included seven classes totaling approximately 130 seven-year-old students in their first year of school, in three different regions of Norway, including both urban and rural schools. All were speakers of regional vernacular dialects.

Students spent their first year of school learning to read and write their vernacular, nonstandard dialect of Norwegian. Students and teachers spoke the nonstandard dialect in the classroom. As the year went on, teachers began introducing some forms from the standard dialects, *nynorsk* and *bokmål*, and

explained why they were doing so. Students were encouraged to reflect on how their everyday language usage differed from these forms of the language, but the students were never required to use the standard dialects nor was their work ever corrected to reflect standard dialect forms. At the end of the year, the students took a standardized reading test in either *nynorsk* or *bokmål*. Four control classes, whose classroom language and instruction had all been in one of the standard dialects, were also tested at the same time and used for comparison.

Students in the nonstandard dialect classes were able to read 44 words correctly on the read aloud tests of *nynorsk* and *bokmål*, while students in the control group classes read only 31.7 words correctly on average ($p = .0002$; no other statistics given). On the silent reading test, the students in the dialect classes averaged 51.1 points, while the students in the control classes averaged 48 points. As the researcher noted, these scores are too close for significance. The researcher also examined the students' scores based on a high-, middle-, or low-achieving ranking from the teacher, and found that on the read aloud test, the low-achieving dialect and control group students averaged 25.5 versus 10 words read correctly, and on the silent reading test, the average scores for the two groups were 37.8 and 28.7, respectively. This suggests that learning to read in one's nonstandard dialect is most beneficial for low-achieving students, though that particular label is admittedly not well defined by the researcher.

The large sample size of this study provides a good level of credibility, though a more in-depth statistical analysis of the students' performance would

make the study stronger. The transferability outside of the Norwegian cultural context is difficult to determine, but if the factors that made high student performance possible in the dialect classrooms could be more explicitly examined, it might be possible to replicate these results with nonstandard dialect speakers in an American classroom.

Ball (1994) explored whether a literature-based instructional program would improve the acquisition of /-s/ morpheme usages among second grade African-American students. The subjects of the study included thirty-one second graders who spoke AAE dialect, and lived in low- to middle-income, predominantly African-American community near Detroit, Michigan. Fourteen students, nine girls and five boys, were in one second-grade classroom, while the remaining seventeen students, eight girls and nine boys, were in another second-grade classroom. One classroom was treated as a control group, and the other as an experimental group.

All students met with the researcher for thirty-minutes per week over eight weeks. During week one, students met the researcher in friend pairs, and the researcher conducted an informal half hour interview to collect spontaneous speech samples. During week two, the researchers conducted two tests: a context cue subtest, in which students were prompted to complete oral sentences that would elicit their usage of the /-s/ morpheme, and a picture meaning subtest, in which students were shown two paired images whose meanings had /-s/ morphemes used differently (for example, “the rabbits smile”

and “the rabbit smiles”). Students were asked to identify the image that matched a given sentence.

In weeks three through seven, the students were given instruction on /-s/ morpheme usage in their regular classroom setting, and then in week eight, students again met with the researcher in pairs and repeated the context cue and picture meaning subtests. In the control group, the instructional segment was an explicit, worksheet-based program. In the experimental group, students were taught the /-s/ morpheme usage through multicultural and African American children’s literature.

Students in the literature-based instruction group made significant gains in acquiring the /-s/ morpheme as used the construct plurals (paired $t = -4.37$, $p < .001$) and in copula usage (paired $t = -2.35$, $p < .05$), based on the results of the picture meaning subtest. Students in the explicit instruction group also made gains in learning the /-s/ morpheme as it is used in conjugating singular verbs (paired $t = -4.12$, $p < .001$) and in copula usage (paired $t = -5.37$, $p < .001$), based on the results of the picture meaning subtest; the more significant improvement in understanding of the /-s/ morpheme and copula usage was visible in the explicit instruction group. There were no significant gains for the other /-s/ morpheme usages explored in the study.

Based on earlier work reported in Torrey (1972) (as cited in Ball, 1994), the explicit instruction methodology has a reasonable level of reliability, as well as external validity among the target population. The internal validity of the study

is high for the findings that were significant, and the statistical analyses were thoroughly reported, lending a high level of objectivity to the study.

Yiakoumetti (2006; 2007) conducted a quantitative, quasi-experimental intervention study to explore how bidialectal education can benefit students who are non-standard dialect speakers. Ninety-two 11 and 12 year old students from two schools in Larnaca district of Cyprus participated in the experimental group. Fifty-three students, 23 boys and 30 girls, came from an urban school, while thirty-nine students, 18 boys and 21 girls, came from a rural school. There were ninety students from matched classes in the control group. All were native speakers of the Cypriot dialect, and all were in their final year of primary school.

A language learning method was constructed specifically for the research project. The researcher developed a short textbook that illuminated differences between the Standard Modern Greek dialect and the Cypriot dialect, and trained students to separate the two linguistic codes. The experimental group received instruction using the program daily for three months, for 45-minutes each session; this was half of their traditional language instruction time. The four teachers who implemented the program, were trained by the researcher. A statistical analysis found that the teacher had no significant effect on student performance.

The students were evaluated on a three-minute interview for oral language skill and language and geography essays for written skill; the oral test was administered by the researcher, who spoke Standard Modern Greek dialect, while the essays were given in class on days when essays were part of the

normal class activity, so that students were unaware they were being evaluated on their writing, with the exception of the first week, in which the researcher was present. All assessments required responses in Standard Modern Greek dialect.

Findings in Yiakoumetti (2006) were based on four assessment points, one at the beginning of the program, one at the midway point, one at the conclusion of the program, and a final essay written three months after the program's completion. On the oral performance assessment, the experimental group showed a significant reduction in the use of Cypriot dialect forms between the first and second assessment points, as well as between the second and third assessment points (both $p < .001$; no other statistics given). There was no detectable improvement or deterioration between the third and fourth assessments ($p = .483$; no other statistics given). The control group saw no significant changes over the four assessment periods.

On the language essay tests, the experimental group again showed a reduction in the use of Cypriot dialect forms between the first and second assessment points ($p < .001$; no other statistics given), as well as between the second and third assessment points ($p = .013$; no other statistics given), but not between the third and fourth assessment points ($p = .443$). The control group also saw a significant reduction in the use of Cypriot dialect forms between the first and second assessments ($p < .001$; no other statistics given), which was maintained throughout the remaining assessment points.

On the geography essay tests, the experimental group showed a reduction in the use of Cypriot dialect forms between the first and second

assessment points ($p < .001$; no other statistics given), but did not significantly improve after the second test (test 3: $p = .261$; no other statistics given). The control group saw the same reduction in the use of Cypriot dialect forms between the first and second assessments ($p < .001$; no other statistics given), which was again maintained throughout the remaining assessment points.

In all assessments, significant improvement was found for the experimental group in the four examined categories of phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon (all $p < .001$; no other statistics given).

Findings in Yiakoumetti (2007) were based on just the results of the first three written essays, and specifically focused on analyzing results within the experimental group, specifically between urban and rural students. The researcher found that while rural students had significantly lower pre-test scores than urban students, by the third test, rural students performed just as well as urban students ($p = 0.672$; no other statistics given). While the scores of all students in the experimental group improved, the bidialectical approach presented in this research appears to be especially valuable for rural students.

The study has strong internal validity based on the observed p-values, though more thorough reporting of the statistical analyses would improve the study's objectivity. The results are similar to the findings in Bull (1990), yielding a small level of external validity.

In her work with adult basic education learners, Schierloh (1991) examined how teachers can increase their students' ability to independently proofread and correct their writing for Standard English dialect rules, in a way

that respects their spoken English. Along with a volunteer, the researcher worked with fifteen groups of students, 114 students in total, at the Downtown Adult Reading Center in Cleveland, Ohio. Eighty percent of the students were African-American, eighteen percent were white, and two percent were Latino. Fifty-nine percent of the students read at third- and fourth-grade reading levels.

Over the course of two years, the researcher and volunteer created two types of contrastive analysis coursework: one set of lesson plans on verb usage and spelling, and another on other written usage issues. The coursework was presented as nonjudgmental, and merely a way of examining language in order to translate between dialects. There was also time for extensive oral language practice in small groups.

Each course lasted ten weeks. Students were given pre- and post-tests in which they had to correct written texts for Standard English usage. On the pre-test, the average score was 37 percent, while on the post-test, the average score was 67 percent. The researcher also pointed out that 71 percent of students who took one or both of the usage courses re-enrolled in classes the following year, which she indicated was a high percentage for adult basic education students. The students also seemed more receptive to this method of learning Standard English dialect than to the researcher's previous experiences teaching adult learners.

The study would have benefited from greater detail about the coursework and the student assessments. There was also no comparison to the achievement of the researcher's earlier students who did not benefit from the contrastive

analysis approach. Without that information, credibility is difficult to establish, and there can be no confirmability of the findings.

Baxter and Holland (2007) conducted a quantitative, quasi-experimental study to determine if a contrastive analysis methodology would improve the Standard English dialect subject-verb agreement in writing by community college students who speak non-standard dialects of English. Fifty-four students of diverse ethnicities at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) who all spoke non-standard varieties of English and were enrolled in a remedial English course were the subjects of the study.

Students were divided into a control group and an experimental group. The groups were similar, but the teachers for each group were different, and there were more students in the control group than the experimental group. The teacher for the experimental group was Black, while the two teachers for the control group were White. Each group was given three pretest instruments: a demographic survey, the Workplace Language Skills Assessment Test (WLSAT), and a Writing Likert Scale (WLS) to measure attitudes about writing in various settings. The experimental group received three sessions of contrastive analysis instruction in subject-verb agreement, while the control group received traditional instruction on the topic, which did not include discussion of dialects. At the end of the semester, all students were given the WLSAT and WLS tests again. The experimental group was also given a Likert Feedback Scale (LFS) to measure attitudes about the contrastive analysis approach.

The WLSAT posttest for the experimental group showed great improvements in awareness of Standard English dialect subject-verb agreement features, with 90% of students falling in the high awareness category and 10% falling in the some awareness category. The experimental group also had a large improvement in positive attitude towards writing on the WLS, and no student expressed a negative attitude towards the contrastive analysis approach on the LFS. The primary target population of the study, Black American students, improved in both the control and experimental groups, but the greatest gains were seen in the experimental group.

The results of the posttests are comprehensively reported, so objectivity is strong, but the researchers did not run statistical analyses on their results, bringing internal validity into question. It is unclear whether they did not do the analyses, or if because of the small sample size, they could not determine statistical significance and thus did not report statistics. External validity is suspect because of the lack of internal validity. The reliability is also questionable because of the different teachers; it is unclear how much influence the teacher had on students' learning and attitudes.

In a qualitative case study, Blake and Sickle (2007) explored how a writing intervention might help students speaking a non-standard dialect of English communicate their ideas in the Standard English dialect. Two African American students on Johns Island, one of the Sea Islands in South Carolina, who spoke an island dialect of English, were the participants in the study. Both students failed to pass the high school exit exam, were retained in special education, had

little to no exposure to math or science curriculum, and had little exposure to English literature coursework.

The students had previously been placed in a resource room writing workshop. Their initial writing and oral storytelling was observed, and targeted interventions were designed. The students were specifically taught academic vocabulary and the way that stories and essays were expected to be constructed in “mainstream” academic English usage, what the authors termed “sequencing skills.” The two students understood many of the concepts of the math and science sections of the exit exam, but struggled to express them. They understood the concept of code-switching, and had done it naturally to some extent. After the interventions, the students were able to express their ideas in ways that speakers of the Standard English dialect would understand, and they were successful in passing the high school exit exam.

The authors discussed how the findings of this study were aligned with those of other, similar studies. The study lacked specific methodology information that would improve credibility, however, and given the case study format, it also has suspect transferability. Not enough information was provided about the improvement of the students’ performance for an acceptable level of confirmability.

Fogel and Ehri (2000) conducted a quantitative analysis of three curricular treatments to explore how teachers can best teach speakers of exhibited African American English (AAE) dialect to write using the grammatical rules of the Standard English dialect. The study participants were third- and fourth-grade

African-American students, ages 8 to 10, who AAE dialect features in their written work (n=89; girls=48, boys=41). Students were from two cities in the Northeast of the U.S. with high percentages of African-American residents (42% and 32%) and high percentages of residents below the poverty line (71% and 28%). Writing scores for students in these cities were low based on the percentage of students passing the state writing exams (13-15% and 24%). These students were selected from a larger number who participated in the study (n=265); the students whose responses were analyzed were those who identified as African-American and whose written pre-test exhibited characteristics of AAE dialect in at least 25% of answers.

Twelve intact third- and fourth-grade classrooms were randomly assigned one of three experimental conditions: 1) exposure to Standard English dialect features in stories; 2) story exposure plus an explanation of Standard English dialect rules; and 3) story exposure, explanation of rules, and guided practice transforming sentences from AAE dialect to Standard English dialect. Students were first given a pre-test in which they were asked to rewrite sentences with AAE dialect characteristics in Standard English dialect. This identified students for the study and provided an assessment against which to compare the post-test.

Teachers were then trained to teach one of the three experimental curricula. In one fifteen-minute session, the pre-test was administered, as well as a self-efficacy measuring tool to determine student confidence with Standard English dialect. In the second session, the students received the experimental

curriculum, and then a second self-efficacy tool was administered, followed by three post-test tasks, and then an additional self-efficacy tool.

There was no variance among the pre-test scores ($F(2, 81) = .42; p > .05$) nor the first self-efficacy measure ($F(2, 81) = .79; p > .05$). A one-way ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences among the test groups ($p < .001$). Tukey pairwise comparisons revealed that students in the third experimental condition made significantly greater gains between pre-test and post-test ($F(2, 81) = 18.74; p < .001$), while the first two conditions did not result in results different from each other ($p > .05$; no additional statistics given). Perhaps surprisingly, students in the third experimental conditional experienced a significant drop in their self-efficacy ratings after the instructional period ($\chi^2 = 6.31; p < .05$), despite the gains in their performance. While not supported by similar research, the authors attribute this finding to a prior lack of awareness regarding which features of their AAE dialect were not aligned with the Standard English dialect. The thorough reporting and statistical analysis completed by the researchers, along with the low p-values, give this study a high level of internal validity.

Wheeler (2006) reported on one third-grade teacher's transformation after her in-service education class on teaching speakers of nonstandard dialects. The class was taught by the researcher, who presented the in-service teachers with essays written by elementary school students who all spoke AAE dialect. The teachers were asked to analyze the essays and uncover patterns in the student's

language, which helped them understand that AAE dialect is not “incorrect” English, but rather its own rule-based variety of the language.

The teacher who was the focus of the case study, who worked in an elementary school in Tidewater, Virginia, had seen an achievement gap between her African-American and white students, and after taking the researcher’s class, believed that she could address this problem by teaching language differently. Her goal was to teach her students, who were predominantly African-American, about language variation and how to translate between their AAE dialect and the SE dialect. She had them brainstorm places that they considered “formal” and “informal,” and talked about the clothes and behavior that they would expect in each of those places. The teacher then expanded this to the idea of language, and worked with students to create charts, where one side of a chart had the “informal” AAE dialect version of a statement and the other side had the “formal” SE dialect version of the same statement. Throughout the year, the teacher would refer students to the charts when they needed to translate from AAE dialect to SE dialect. After one year of teaching code-switching and contrastive analysis in this way, the performance of African-American students in the teacher’s class dramatically improved: African-American students and white students were equal on state-wide reading and writing tests. These results align with the other related studies in this subsection, and the researcher cites other studies in which similar results have been found, lending high credibility and transferability to these findings, though the study would have benefited from more detail about the students in the focus teacher’s class.

National Curricula as a Means of Teaching the Standard Dialect

The final two studies in this section examined two national curricula for teaching the standard dialect in their international settings, each of which had distinct flaws. In a critical discourse analysis of Peru's official first-year language high school textbook, De los Heros (2009) found that, despite calling for respect of indigenous languages and language diversity, the content and rhetoric of the text does not actually endorse language diversity, but contains a hidden curriculum that advances a prescriptive view of language privileging a standard Spanish dialect. Lockwood (2006) used quantitative and qualitative methods to understand levels of awareness and knowledge of written standard English dialect features among ten- and eleven-year-old children in two schools in England over a six-year period, finding that there were variations in the features of the standard dialect that were recognized, and distinct gender differences to recognition, but that the national curriculum meant to improve standard English dialect usage had no positive impact.

De los Heros (2009) conducted a critical discourse analysis of *Talento: lengua y comunicación* (Talent: language and communication), the official Peruvian language text book for first year high school students, which was adopted in 2004. The analysis included an examination of conjunctions and other devices that establish relationships between sections of text; use of mood, modality, and pronouns to establish the author's stance and a relationship between the author and the reader; use of passive voice, impersonal forms, and nominalization to turn processes into events without explaining how they

occurred; and linguistic features and resources used to trigger assumptions and make direct or implied connections to other texts.

De los Heros found that while the textbook *Talento* does discuss diverse cultural traditions and social groups, such as speakers of Quechua or the Andean Spanish dialect, it does not promote language diversity. In the entire 247 pages of the book, only six examples of language variation are mentioned, and all are portrayed negatively and labeled with phrases such as “deformed language.” The book also privileges written language over spoken language, and failed to explain how language functions within a social context. The author concludes that the textbook furthers language prescriptivism. The methodology of the study is well established, and the author draws on discourse analysis studies of similar lexical items in order to support her conclusions. There were also sufficient examples with explanations for the study to be confirmed by a third party.

Through a survey containing both structured and unstructured response questions, and yielding mostly quantitative data, Lockwood (2006) explored which features of Standard English dialect were recognizable to students who had been exposed to the National Literacy Strategy in England. Three separate groups of 100 children, ages 10-11, from two primary schools in the south of England, participated in the survey. The students were surveyed in the summer terms of 1999, 2002, and 2005; the same survey was used each time, and the same number of boys as girls was represented each year. Nineteen examples of non-Standard English dialect features were given in the survey, and students

were asked to identify them and provide the Standard English dialect equivalencies. Over the six years that the study was conducted, England adopted as new National Literacy Strategy as part of the National Curriculum, which placed emphasis on students learning the features of the Standard English dialect.

While the researcher did not provide an analysis of statistical significance, he found that over the six years, performance on the survey actually declined; the performance of girls' ability to recognize features of non-Standard English dialect declined by 7.1%, and the performance of boys by 0.2%. The author posited that the National Language Strategy needs revision with different strategies in order to effectively teach the Standard English dialect. The researcher clearly delineated the limitations of the study, while also providing overall survey results, leading to a high level of objectivity. A statistical analysis of the survey results would have strengthened the findings.

Summary of Section Two

Section two of this chapter examined methodology for teaching the standard dialect to speakers of nonstandard dialects. The first subsection included three studies, Godley et al. (2007), Dyson and Smitherman (2009), and Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994), which examined traditional error correction as a means of teaching standard grammatical features. Godley et al. (2007) and Dyson and Smitherman (2009) offered examples in which error correction was not successful; in contrast, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) experienced success with their highly scaffolded program for English language learners.

The second subsection explored ways of using the students' knowledge of their nonstandard dialect in order to teach the standard dialect. Leaverton (1975) and Rickford and Rickford (1994) both studied how dialect readers might improve acquisition of Standard English dialect, but results were inconclusive. Bull (1990) reported on an effort to teach Norwegian students to read in their regional dialect before teaching one of the standard Norwegian dialects, a program that was largely successful. Ball (1994) demonstrated that a program to teach standard dialect forms incorporating multicultural and African-American literature was successful, and the six studies on contrastive analysis approaches—Yiakoumetti (2006; 2007), Schierloh (1991), Baxter and Holland (2007), Blake and Sickle (2001), Fogel and Ehri (2000), and Wheeler (2006)—also exhibited success, though there were several flaws throughout these studies, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

The final subsection reviewed two studies of national curricula: De Los Heros (2009) reviewed a required textbook that was part of the language curriculum in Peru, and Lockwood (2006) surveyed students to understand how the national curriculum in England had improved their understanding of standard dialect forms. Neither study yielded results in support of their respective curriculum.

Improvement of Teacher Attitudes toward Nonstandard Language

In her seminal volume on African American English dialect usage in the United States, Smitherman (1977) calls for a change in teacher attitudes towards speakers of nonstandard dialects: "What is needed to prevent further

miseducation of black kids is a change in teacher attitude and behavior, a complete reordering of thought about the educational process and the place of black students in that process” (p. 216). The final section of this chapter contains six studies that examine how teacher attitudes towards nonstandard dialects can be influenced to align more closely with the nonjudgmental views of linguists, based on an understanding of language variation. The first two studies investigate the education and attitudes of pre-service teachers. Bowie and Bond (1994) questioned whether teacher attitudes towards language variation were improved through their pre-service coursework in a survey study of 75 pre-service teachers, and surprisingly found a majority of responses (41%) to be negative, as opposed to 32% positive and 27% indifferent. Tapia (1999), in her “Modern American Grammar” class for pre-service teachers, had the teacher candidates survey the public in order to understand the complexity of commonly held attitudes towards language variation, and found that her students were generally able to reflect on what they had learned and devise ways of addressing language variation issues in their classrooms.

The next three studies review how different programs for in-service teachers on language variation affected teacher attitudes. Pietras and Lamb (1978) surveyed thirty elementary teachers who worked in inner-city schools and had received in-service training on nonstandard dialects, and found that these teachers had more positive attitudes towards nonstandard dialects, but the study contained potential confounding factors. Spanjer and Layne (1983) surveyed 75 writing teachers who took part in a workshop on teaching writing as a process

approach, and found that after completion of the workshop, teacher attitudes toward language variation had become more similar to those attitudes held by linguists. In a quasi-experimental study of 73 teachers enrolled in master's level teacher education programs, Fogel and Ehri (2006) found that learning about AAE dialect improved the teachers' attitudes toward the dialect, but that improvement was only enough to bring attitudes from a slightly negative to a neutral response.

The final study in this section is Souto-Manning's (2009) reflective case study of her interactions with a first grade African-American boy in her class, in which she recognized that the language biases present in the school as well as her own biases had caused her and other teachers to misunderstand his contributions because he spoke primarily AAE dialect.

Bowie and Bond (1994) conducted a survey to investigate whether pre-service teachers were learning to respect and appreciate AAE dialect as a valid form of the English language in their education coursework. The respondents included 75 pre-service teachers from a large urban university; 86% were white, and 92% of those were female. Three-fourths of the respondents were undergraduate education majors, while the remaining quarter were graduate students seeking elementary education certification. In the school system in which many of the respondents will be teaching, 81% of the students were African American. Participation in the survey was voluntary, so the researchers noted that respondent bias might be present.

The survey instrument was an adapted version of the Language Attitude Scale, and contained 25 items worded such that twelve were favorable to AAE dialect and thirteen were not. Responses were given on a three-point Liker-type scale (agree, no opinion, disagree), and the survey also contained one open response question to gain a better qualitative understanding of respondent attitudes. The surveys were administered at the end of education class sessions, and instructors introduced the topic in order to ensure that students understood what was meant by “Black English,” the term used for AAE dialect in the survey.

The results of the survey showed little understanding of AAE dialect by the respondents. Sixty-one percent agreed that AAE dialect had a “faulty grammar system,” and only thirty-nine percent agreed that trying to eliminate students’ usage of AAE dialect could be psychologically damaging. While 52% agreed that AAE dialect was socially acceptable, only 39% believed it should be permitted in the classroom.

Sixty-three percent of respondents reported that they had received some exposure to the topic of AAE in their education classes, but only nineteen percent said that it had been addressed at any substantial level. Four negative statements about AAE dialect received more “disagree” responses from those who had been exposed to the topic of AAE dialect: “Black English is an inferior language system,” ($\chi^2 = 8.9, p < .05$); “One of the goals of the American schools should be the standardization of the English language,” ($\chi^2 = 7.5, p < .05$); “Black English should be discouraged,” ($\chi^2 = 9.0, p < .05$); and “The sooner we eliminate Black English, the better,” ($\chi^2 = 9.1, p < .05$). These results suggest

that even a limited exposure to the topic of AAE dialect in an educational course can have some effect on pre-service teacher attitudes.

The responses to the final open-ended question ranged widely, some containing blatant racist remarks while others demonstrated a desire for teachers to be more sensitive to the language of their students. Overall, the researchers noted that the most negative responses to this question came from students who claimed that they had never been exposed to the topic of AAE dialect in their coursework.

As noted, there is a possibility of respondent bias to the survey, and the statistical analysis was not extensive, but the results of the analysis suggest internal validity. Inclusion of the survey instrument and a more thorough reporting of the results to each question would improve objectivity.

While the exact education on AAE dialect that Bowie and Bond's (1994) respondents received is unclear, Tapia (1999) examined a particular strategy for educating pre-service teachers about language variation. In a case study of students in the researcher's "Modern American Grammar" class, a required class for teacher candidates gaining endorsements at the secondary level at Eastern Connecticut State University, teacher candidates developed surveys to learn about the attitudes of the general public toward language diversity and nonstandard dialect usage. They developed their survey questions about a particular nonstandard usage that they had researched, and asked their survey questions to college professors, college students, relatives, students and teachers from K-12 schools, employers and co-workers, and strangers. By

having the teacher candidates develop their own questions and present them to others, the researcher hoped to give them an opportunity to practice discussing the sensitive topic of language plurality with a wide range of people, as they might have to do when they are teachers. During and after the project, the researcher engaged in class discussions and individual conferences with students, during which attitudes about the project emerged.

The researcher stated that in general, the students in her class felt that the assignment was worthwhile, and that it allowed them to consider how the “correctness” of a language is culturally constructed. Three teacher candidates’ learning was explained in detail. One teacher candidate expressed a greater understanding of how Standard English dialect and nonstandard dialects could coexist in her classroom, and that teachers need to explain to students how, even though it is an unfair judgment, many people will make assumptions about the social and intellectual worth of individuals based on the language that those individuals employ. A second teacher candidate explained in her project report how she now understood that nonstandard language usages should be validated, as the language of certain contexts like the home, even while Standard English dialect is taught. The third teacher candidate, however, continued to express prescriptive attitudes toward language in her report and reflection on her project, making connections between nonstandard language usage and low levels of education, for example. The researcher did point out that this teacher candidate missed a fair number of classes and thus opportunities for class discussions on descriptive versus prescriptive grammar.

Lack of details about the teacher candidates and a vague description of student reactions to the class make the confirmability of the study weak, but the study provides the perspective of a teacher educator and a possible method for exposing teacher candidates to attitudes towards language diversity in an authentic way.

In a larger study of inner-city elementary school teachers' attitudes toward nonstandard dialects, Pietras and Lamb (1978) considered how the attitudes of teachers who had received in-service training on non-standard dialects might be affected. An anonymous survey was distributed to teachers at five inner-city schools, and thirty teachers who had received the in-service training were among the respondents. The instrument was two pages in length and contained eighteen items, and had been field tested, reviewed, and revised with the assistance of people who held a wide variety of views on language variation. The questions were based on the Language Attitude Scale, and responses were given on a five-point Likert-type scale.

The multiple correlation ($R = .72$) resulting from the analysis of the group that had received training versus the remaining respondents who did not indicated that more than fifty percent of the variance of the group was accounted for by the training. This suggests that training might help improve teacher attitudes towards nonstandard dialects, but pre- and post- workshop scores were not recorded, limiting the internal validity of the findings, since it cannot be determined if the workshop on nonstandard dialects had any effect on

responses. It is possible that the teachers who signed up for the in-service training already had more positive views of nonstandard dialects.

In a quantitative survey study, Spanjer and Layne (1983) asked whether training in teaching writing as a process approach would also cause teacher attitudes toward language to be more consistent with those of linguists. The participants in the study were 78 writing teachers, who taught elementary through college students, in metropolitan Atlanta schools and colleges. Ages ranged from 25 to 55, and most were white females. Thirty-eight of the participants were elementary or middle school teachers, while 41 were secondary and postsecondary teachers.

The subjects participated in one of three consecutive summer workshops, the curriculum for which was adapted from the University of California, Berkeley, Bay Area Writing Project. Subjects were given a pre-test approximately one month before attending the workshop, and a post-test on the final day of the workshop. The testing instrument assessed attitudes toward language with a focus on standard language and on language study and teaching. It contained 100 items to be rated on a four-point, agree-disagree scale. To compare the participants' responses to those of linguists, ten linguists from American universities were recruited to complete the survey.

Scores on the post-test were higher than the pre-test, with an average pre-test score of 43.78 and post-test score of 52.50; a higher score was indicative of closer alignment with the views of the linguists. A two-way repeated measures analysis of variance was performed, and the only significant factor

affecting scores was the timing of the test ($F= 23.31$; $p < .001$). This indicates that the subject's attitudes changed to become more like those of linguists, who view language variation as natural and desirable, though according to the researchers, the study merely measures correlation and does not attempt to prove causation.

The study appears to have high internal validity, given the very low p-value. Objectivity would have been improved by the inclusion of the testing instrument and detailed scoring for each question. The article also could have been improved by explaining the curriculum of the workshops, as it is unclear what about the curriculum would have affected teacher attitudes toward nonstandard dialects.

Fogel and Ehri conducted a quasi-experimental study on teacher education about AAE dialect, which included the question of whether learning about AAE dialect would improve teachers' attitudes toward the dialect. The participants were 73 teachers who were currently enrolled in three different master's level teacher education programs in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut tri-state area. Ages ranged from 22 to 55, with a mean age of 33.4 years. Sixty-three of the participants were women, and ten were men. Seventy-eight percent were white, twelve percent African-American, seven percent Hispanic, and three percent Asian. The average years of teaching experience was 4.9, and ranged from zero to 28 years. Participation in the study was voluntary.

The participants were trained and tested in one session lasting approximately one hour. The average group size was 6.6 teachers, and teachers were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions. Prior to instruction, participants were assessed on their knowledge of AAE dialect and their attitudes towards it; after instruction, the effects of the training were assessed with a sentence translation task and a story writing task, as well as another attitude language assessment. The language attitudes assessments are the point of relevance for this paper. These assessments contained thirteen items to be answered on a one-to-five rating scale.

Three levels of instruction were taught, and each of the second and third experimental groups added to the components of the previous group. The first experimental group had exposure to text written in AAE dialect, which involved reading three stories written in the dialect. The second experimental group had that same exposure to AAE dialect, but also had explicit instruction in translating between AAE dialect and SE dialect. The third experimental group had the components of the second group, as well as time to practice translating text from AAE dialect to SE dialect, and sentence-by-sentence feedback on their work.

Correlations between the language attitudes pre- and post-assessments were high ($r = .89$), indicating high reliability of the instrument. Differences in pre-treatment attitudes were not significant across groups ($F(2, 70) = 2.51$; $p > .05$). On the post-treatment attitudes assessment, there was a statistically-significant main effect of test time ($F(1, 70) = 23.21$; $p < .001$), but no main effect based on experimental treatment group or interaction between the two variables. This

indicates that even the minimum exposure to AAE dialect at the level of the first experimental group improved the attitudes of the teacher participants. Those who had greater exposure to AAE dialect (i.e. the third experimental group) had a somewhat greater attitude shift (11% for the third group, 9% for the second group, and 4% for the third group), but this did not occur at the level of statistical significance. There was also no correlation between the participants' post-treatment translation and writing assessments and their attitude scores ($r_s = .03$ and $.04$, respectively; $p > .05$), indicating that skill with AAE dialect is not a predictor of language attitude. One other important item to note is that while attitudes toward AAE dialect did improve, the mean scores on the assessment were still in the neutral range: the mean ratings increased from 2.8 per item to 3.0 per item. The scores and statistics for the study were very thoroughly reported, and the researchers attempted to account for any interaction of variables, giving the study a high level of internal validity and objectivity.

Souto-Manning (2009) recorded her experience with one of her students, an African-American boy, while she was teaching first grade at an elementary school in the southern United States, and how her attitudes towards his nonstandard language evolved over time. In her reflective case study, she described how the boy spoke primarily AAE dialect, and throughout kindergarten had spent more than half of his days in detention, usually for speaking out of turn. Souto-Manning discovered, by reading his records, that the boy was sent to detention for language and culture clashes with his peers and his kindergarten classroom teacher. He exhibited interactional patterns, such as answering

rhetorical questions, that caused his kindergarten teacher to believe that he was “acting out,” and incapable of behaving properly.

Souto-Manning spent the next year as the boy’s classroom teacher, in which she systematically attempted to remove him from the role of “trouble-maker” and show other students that his AAE dialect was not to be devalued. She placed him in a leadership position, and had him explain to his classmates the difference between the phrases “I am” and the AAE variant “I be,” and what situations called for which verb usage. By making the different English dialects a point of discussion in her classroom, Souto-Manning concluded that the other students began to respect this student, and that all of the students were enriched by learning about differences in communication styles. Souto-Manning also found that journaling about her interactions with the boy allowed her to recognize patterns where she might be misunderstanding his communication style and thus his learning needs. While this is only one case study, and thus the conclusions drawn are not necessarily transferable to other contexts, the study suggests that teachers can benefit from reflection when working with students who speak different English dialects and have different interaction styles than their own.

Summary of Section Three

The studies contained in this section focused on changing negative teacher attitudes towards nonstandard dialects. Bowie and Bond (1994) and Tapia (1999) both studied pre-service teachers; Bowie and Bond (1994) found that the majority of pre-service elementary teachers that they surveyed had negative attitudes towards AAE dialect, while Tapia (1999) examined how

learning about language variation and the attitudes of the public could change pre-service teachers' beliefs on nonstandard dialects in the classroom. Pietras and Lamb (2001), Spanjer and Layne (2001), and Fogel and Ehri (2006) all attempted to change the current language attitudes of in-service teachers, and each was correlated with some measure of success, though the Fogel and Ehri (2006) study had the strongest results. Finally, Souto-Manning (2009) presented a case study of her own relationship with a child who spoke AAE dialect, and explored how her reflections on their communication helped her improve both her instruction for the student and the attitudes of other, SE dialect-speaking students towards his nonstandard dialect.

Summary

Chapter 2 presented a review of research in three broad topic areas: language awareness and instruction in language variation; methodology for teaching the standard dialect, such as the use of dialect readers and contrastive analysis; and ways in which teacher attitudes toward nonstandard dialects can be improved in order to provide a more culturally responsive education environment.

Several studies focused on understanding language variation and its impact on education. MacRuairc (2011a; 2011b) and Harrison (2004) both examined language attitudes and classroom experiences of students who speak nonstandard dialects of English. Brown (2011) and Crinson and Williamson (2004) both demonstrated that students have a metacognitive awareness of the contextuality of language, and Ball (1995) showed that high-achieving

bidialectal students use this awareness to achieve specific rhetorical effects. Godley and Minnici (2008) and Chisholm and Godley (2011) demonstrated how to improve students' understanding of the situationality of language and the subjectivity of dialect prestige through explicit instruction in language variation, and Youssef and Carter (1999) and Shoba (2010) provided two examples of classrooms that fostered understanding and appreciation of nonstandard language usages.

A number of studies that examined methodology for teaching the standard dialect to speakers of nonstandard dialects were then discussed in the second section of this chapter. Godley et al. (2007), Dyson and Smitherman (2009), and Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) all explored traditional error correction as a means of teaching the grammatical features of the standard dialect. Leaverton (1975) and Rickford and Rickford (1994) had inconclusive results in their explorations into how dialect readers might improve acquisition of Standard English dialect. Bull (1990) reported on a successful effort to teach Norwegian students to read in their regional dialect before teaching one of the standard Norwegian dialects, while Ball (1994) demonstrated that a program to teach standard dialect forms that incorporated multicultural and African-American literature was successful. Contrastive analysis approaches were found to be successful in Yiakoumetti (2006; 2007), Schierloh (1991), Baxter and Holland (2007), Blake and Sickle (2001), Fogel and Ehri (2000), and Wheeler (2006). In studies of national curricula in Peru and England, respectively, neither De Los Heros (2009) nor Lockwood (2006) found results in support of their curriculum.

The final section of the chapter contained studies focused on changing negative teacher attitudes towards nonstandard dialects. Bowie and Bond (1994) and Tapia (1999) both studied pre-service teachers; Bowie and Bond (1994) found that the majority of pre-service elementary teachers that they surveyed had negative attitudes towards AAE dialect, while Tapia (1999) examined how learning about language variation and attitude could change beliefs about nonstandard dialects. Pietras and Lamb (2001), Spanjer and Layne (2001), and Fogel and Ehri (2006) all explored ways of changing the current language attitudes of in-service teachers. In a case study of her own teaching, Souto-Manning (2009) explored how her reflections on communication with a student who spoke a nonstandard dialect of English helped her improve both her instruction for the student and the attitudes of other, SE dialect-speaking students towards his nonstandard dialect.

Chapter 3 summarizes the findings of this research, offers implications for classroom practice, and suggests areas for future research.

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, it is the responsibility of the public schooling system to prepare students to be active members of society, which means teaching all students how to utilize the Standard English dialect. Chapter 2 reviewed research that explored methods for doing so in a culturally responsive way, through language awareness and instruction in language variation, methodology options for teaching the standard dialect, and ways of making a positive impact on teacher attitudes toward language variation.

This chapter contains a discussion of the findings from each section in the previous chapter, as well as the classroom implications that can be inferred from those findings. Finally, areas for future research are suggested.

Summary of Findings

The following summary sections review the research findings of the previous chapter.

Language Awareness and Appreciation of Variation

The studies reviewed in this first section of Chapter 2 show the extent to which students are already aware of language variation and the stigma that nonstandard dialects can carry, as evidenced in MacRuairc (2011a; 2011b), Harrison (2004), and Crinson and Williamson (2004). In the school where Brown (2011) conducted his research, students were permitted to express themselves in AAE dialect where appropriate; this study had related findings to Ball (1995), who showed that African American students who were successful writers were

already manipulating AAE dialect forms in their writing. These findings support the explicit teaching language variation in classroom, particularly to avoid the dissatisfaction that the students in MacRuairc (2011a; 2011b) and Harrison (2004) felt about the language used by their teachers, but also because the research suggests that this instruction might improve students' ability to express themselves.

Godley and Minnici (2008) and Chisholm and Godley (2011) offered examples of how such explicit language awareness instruction might take place, and the strength of the studies suggest using this methodology in the classroom (see Classroom Implications below). Creative approaches to dialect appreciation, such as those found in Youssef and Carter (1999) and Shoba (2010) might also be employed, but those studies could have limited transferability outside of their international contexts.

Methods for Teaching the Standard Dialect

Several methods for teaching the standard dialect were presented in the research in this section. Error correction methodologies, such as those studied in Godley et al. (2007) and Dyson and Smitherman (2009), showed a disconnect between teacher goals and student understanding. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) found success with their error correction method, which was also accomplished through a form of editing conferences, but their subjects were college-level English language learners with potentially different motivations than the public school students in the previous two studies. These three studies do not provide strong support for implementing error-correction methodology in the classroom.

Methods including dialect readers, such as those examined in Leaverton (1975) and Rickford and Rickford (1995) were largely inconclusive, though Bull (1990) met with more success in his study of Norwegian students. It is unclear, however, if the results of that study are transferable to a U.S. setting. The contrastive analysis methods, however, examined in Yiakoumetti (2006; 2007), Shierloh (1991), Baxter and Holland (2007), Blake and Sickle (2001), Fogel and Ehri's (2000), and Wheeler (2006) look more promising. The approach outlined in Fogel and Ehri's (2000) study, in which students were given an explanation of the rules of Standard English dialect, and guided practice transforming sentences from AAE to Standard English dialect, was the most convincing based on the integrity of the study and the gains made.

Improvement of Teacher Attitudes toward Nonstandard Language

Since teacher attitudes towards students' language are so important to student success, the studies reviewed in this section have strong implications for teacher education. The negative attitudes of pre-service teachers were delineated in Bowie and Bond (1994), and while Tapia (1999) attempts to improve the language awareness of her students through exposure to the language attitudes of the public, the study does not include enough detail to determine if this is a viable methodology.

In the studies of in-service teachers, Pietras and Lamb (1978), Spanjer and Layne (1983), and Fogel and Ehri (2006) all showed improvement in teacher attitudes after the participants learned about nonstandard dialects, but causation could not be proven in any one of the studies. It is clear from the results of Fogel

and Ehri (2006) that simply learning about the features of a nonstandard dialect is not enough to gain a positive attitude towards that dialect. And while Souto-Manning's (2009) case study provides one example of a reflective teacher changing her practice, it cannot be considered a common occurrence. Clearly, more research is needed to understand how teacher attitudes toward nonstandard dialects can be improved.

Classroom Implications

Wolfram, Adger, and Christian (1999) recommended that curriculum to teach Standard English dialect contain seven general principles: the curriculum should show students how people who speak their dialect make use of the standard dialect; it should encourage bidialectism by showing students when switching to the standard dialect could be beneficial; it should discuss dialect diversity; it should clearly explain the differences between the standard and nonstandard dialect; it should focus first on the most highly stigmatized features of the nonstandard dialect and their standard dialect equivalents; the spoken standard dialect that is taught should reflect the accent and norms of the local community; and the instruction should teach interaction styles of the standard dialect while respecting the conversational norms of the nonstandard dialect. These principles are largely followed when implementing a two-part language program involving language variation as well as an approach such as contrastive analysis.

Instruction in language variation is clearly an important part of increasing the cultural awareness of students. As suggested by Brown (2006, cited in

Chisholm & Godley, 2011), education in language variation should begin with an exploration of students' own language usage, and then build to a macro-level of understanding about societal structures and their relationship to language ideologies. The methods for teaching language awareness presented by Chisholm & Godley (2011) and Godley and Minnici (2008) have merit, and teachers should consider including them as part of language arts education.

Smitherman (1977) suggested that teachers “use what the kids *already* know to move them to what they *need* to know” (p. 219; emphasis in original). Students should be able to express themselves in the classroom in their language, both with their peers and the teacher, and use interactional styles such as call-and-response, which is a central part of African American English dialect. While none of the studies in this review of research explored African American interactional patterns, the concept of using what students already know about language to teach the Standard English dialect is fundamental to the contrastive analysis approach. The studies that examined contrastive analysis were stronger than more traditional error-correction strategies, so it is recommended that contrastive analysis be explored as a method for teaching the Standard English dialect.

In order to improve teachers' relationships with their students who speak nonstandard dialects of English, teachers need to have instruction in linguistics and in cultural speech patterns, and need to understand code switching and how language is used in context. This will allow them to identify any communication problems they have with students, and to adapt their teaching in a culturally

appropriate way (Gumperz and Hernández-Chavez, 1985). Winer (1993) suggests in her work on teaching students who speak Caribbean English Creoles that teachers of nonstandard dialect speakers must be educated in the social, cultural, and political backgrounds of their students, as well as the language of the students, both its features and variation from the standard dialect, and its history. One can imagine that knowledge especially of any historical language oppression would be of paramount importance. If language awareness and an understanding of the cultural and contextual uses of language helps students learn to understand and appreciate language variation, then perhaps this approach will be appropriate for pre- and in-service teachers as well.

Language awareness and understanding of variation addresses the need for cultural sensitivity when teaching the Standard English dialect. In concert with the contrastive analysis methodology, and perhaps approaches that incorporate nonstandard forms through dialect readers, language arts teachers can improve their students' mastery of the standard dialect while maintaining and respecting their students' native dialects.

Suggestions for Further Research

With regard to education in language variation, in the conclusion to their study, Chisholm and Godley (2011) suggested that similar work be conducted with students who are white, bilingual, or who identify as speaking only Standard English dialect, in order to confirm the study's findings or to provide additional insight into how to teach language variation. Teaching an appreciation of

nonstandard dialects to speakers of SE dialect would likely help in the area of social justice, which makes this a strong candidate for future research.

As mentioned above is the potential for future research on how to change the attitudes of pre- and in-service teachers toward nonstandard dialects. It might be possible to implement a program similar to that in Godley and Minnici (2008), with teachers instead of with students, though since most teachers are speakers of SE dialect, the program would likely need modifications.

Also mentioned above is a possibility for further research on dialect readers. Rickford and Rickford (1995) suggested that the only reason dialect readers had not become more popular in the past was because there was a negative response from parents and the general public about the role of nonstandard dialect usage in the classroom. Given the inconclusive research above, it might be time to revisit the issue again.

Conclusion

Because the Standard English dialect is the language of power in the United States, and students need to be able to negotiate codes of power in order to be successful, active citizens, it is the responsibility of public schools to teach the standard dialect. Chapter 1 explained how students who speak non-standard varieties of English will likely face discrimination in many educational and daily life situation, and while educators have a responsibility to fight such intolerance and teach acceptance and understanding of others whenever possible, they cannot change this harsh reality. Teachers must teach students how the standard language is written and spoken, but this must b done in a culturally

sensitive manner that respects language variation as a natural part of any society.

The studies reviewed in Chapter 2 provided insight into how knowledge of language variation and dialect awareness among students and teachers, along with specific instruction in standard language forms, can help improve the acquisition of Standard English dialect in a way that does not stigmatize nonstandard dialects. Studies explored: language variation and its impact on the educational experiences of young people, well as students' understanding and awareness of language variation; explicit instruction in language variation and the fostering of an understanding and appreciation of nonstandard language usages; methodologies for teaching the standard dialect to speakers of nonstandard dialects including error correction, dialect readers, contrastive analysis, and the implementation of national curriculums; and language attitudes of pre- and in-service teachers, as well as ways of improving teacher attitudes toward nonstandard dialect speakers.

Chapter 3 provided a summary of findings and discussion of classroom implications for this research. The findings suggest that cultural sensitivity and respect for language plurality can best be taught through explicit instruction on language variation. When paired with methodologies such as contrastive analysis for teaching the Standard English dialect, teachers can facilitate acquisition of the standard dialect while still maintaining students' native nonstandard dialects.

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