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**BEYOND LINGUISTIC PREJUDICE: THE SILENCING
ATTEMPT OF AFRICANITY'S INFLUENCES TOWARDS
VARIETIES OF RESISTANCE**

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Rubens Marques de Lucena

João Pessoa

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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso submetido ao Centro de Ciências Humanas, Letras e Artes da Universidade Federal da Paraíba como parte dos requisitos para a obtenção do grau de Licenciado em Letras – Inglês.
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¹ This section was written in Portuguese in order to contemplate all the people mentioned.

“If we are our language, and our language is us, then why not bring our whole selves up into the text? So-called "standard" English, especially "academic" English, as many know from experience, can be cold, exclusionary. It can sometimes even obfuscate. For those of us who are multilingual, we appreciate being able to draw on multiple varieties in order to say something—and to say it exactly how we mean it.”

Geneva Smitherman

ABSTRACT

Considering all the agendas discussed nowadays, it is possible to notice that little attention has been paid to some aspects related to language, mainly when these aspects are attached to discriminatory attitudes towards certain ways of speaking and towards those cultures that have always been a target of prejudice and silencing. Thus, in the present work, we aim to understand what is behind the marginalization towards dialects with African influences, such as the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and some varieties of the nonstandard Portuguese spoken in Brazil that is very often viewed negatively. Furthermore, we also seek to reflect on the pedagogical implications of this debate in the Brazilian English teaching setting. To do so, it was used a qualitative and bibliographic research in order to learn about the features, the history, and the issues concerning these varieties of resistance, which are discussed in light of the concepts of linguistic attitudes, linguistic prejudice, and linguistic racism. To construct our theoretical framework and our analysis for this research we used as our references the works of Labov (1972), Pullum (1999) Rickford and Rickford (2000), Bagno (2015), Peterson (2019), among others. From the analysis, we could conclude that the discrimination and prejudice towards some varieties transcend the linguistic plane and it is attached to sociocultural, political, and ideological factors.

Keywords: Linguistic Prejudice. African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Teaching. Varieties of resistance. African Influences.

RESUMO

Diante de todas as pautas discutidas na atualidade, é possível perceber que pouca atenção tem sido dada a alguns aspectos relacionados à linguagem, principalmente quando esses aspectos estão atrelados a atitudes discriminatórias em relação a certas formas de falar e a culturas que sempre foram alvo de preconceito e silenciamento. Assim, no presente trabalho, pretendemos compreender o que está por trás da marginalização em relação a dialetos com influências africanas, como o inglês vernacular afro-americano (IVAA) e algumas variedades do português não padrão falado no Brasil, muitas vezes vistas de forma negativa. Além disso, também buscamos refletir sobre as implicações pedagógicas desse debate no cenário do ensino de inglês no Brasil. Para tanto, adotou-se uma pesquisa qualitativa e bibliográfica com o objetivo de conhecer as características, a história e as problemáticas dessas variedades de resistências, as quais são discutidas à luz dos conceitos de atitudes linguísticas e do preconceito e do racismo linguístico. Portanto, para construir nosso referencial teórico e nossa análise para esta pesquisa, utilizamos como referências os trabalhos de Labov (1972), Pullum (1999) Rickford and Rickford (2000), Bagno (2015), Peterson (2019), entre outros. A partir das análises pudemos concluir que a discriminação e o preconceito em relação a certas variedades transcendem o plano linguístico e estão associados a fatores socioculturais, políticos e ideológicos.

Palavras-chave: Preconceito linguístico. IVAA. Ensino. Variedades de resistência. Influências Africanas.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The three components of language attitudes.....	23
Figure 2: Types of racism.....	27
Figure 3: Jury of English majors (Double Negative?).....	33
Figure 4: Null copula- quote by Gwendolyn Brooks.....	34

LIST OF TABLES AND ACRONYMS LIST

Table 1: -Th sound substitution for /t/ and /f/.....	37
Table 2: -Th sound substitution for /d/ and /v/.....	37
Table 3: Different realizations of vowel sounds in AAVE.....	38
Table 4: Common vocabularies in AAVE.....	40
Table 5: Evidence of African languages influences in the Black English Vernacular.....	41
Table 6: Theorists' thoughts as to the stigma towards AAVE.....	45

AAVE - African American Vernacular English

BEV - Black English Vernacular

SWE - Standard White English

SWVE – Southern White Vernacular English

* Other terms used to refer to AAVE: Ebonics (ebony + phonics) and Spoken Soul.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	12
CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	19
CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	28
1.2 Nature of research.....	28
1.3 Analysis procedures and data collection.....	29
CHAPTER 3 - A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CHARACTERISTICS AND HISTORY OF A VARIETY OF RESISTANCE	31
3.1 Main aspects of the African American Vernacular English	31
3.1.1 Negation	32
3.1.2 Copula omission/ zero copula	33
3.1.3 Invariant be	34
3.1.4 Subject-verb agreement.....	35
3.1.5 Stress (remote been) and unstressed been	35
3.1.6 Phonetic and Phonological features	36
(I) The case of <i>-th</i> sound	36
(II) Weakening of final consonants	37
(III) Metathesis	37
(IV) Vowels.....	38
(V) Word Stress.....	38
(VI) Intonation.....	39
3.1.7 Vocabulary.....	39
3.2 The legacy of African Influences in the English spoken by African Americans and in Brazilian Portuguese	41
CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	45
4.1 Pedagogical implications	50
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	52
REFERENCES	54

INTRODUCTION

Both American and Brazilian histories are marked by an atrocious and brutal process of slavery characterized by the genocide and epistemicide of a large number of people brought from different parts of the African Continent to be colonized and wiped out by those who held power. These people had their culture and their own language, which for a long period received constant attempts of being silenced, but that resisted and nowadays strongly live in the language and the culture of Brazilians and Americans, although whiteness tries to deny it.

Considering that, many concepts help us to understand the existence of an oppressive attitude towards the living Africanity influence, which has to be learned and used as a weapon to continuously combat the different faces of discrimination, racism, and intolerance very present in our society. Linguistic Prejudice, Linguistic Racism, Epistemicide and Linguicide, Language Attitudes and Ideology, Structural and Institutional Racism are some of the concepts that need to be discussed as a way to understand why non-white² people who are users of specific varieties are still the target of different kinds of discrimination.

Sociolinguistics is an area that has turned its eyes to the study of the language in use, making room for the idea of Linguistic Prejudice, in which some ways of speaking are stigmatized, while there is a widespread belief that there is a more correct pattern that should be spoken by everybody, because it is more prestigious and more accepted, and of course this pattern is based on the language of whiteness. Bagno, in his book entitled “Linguistic Prejudice”, brings up as one of the biggest myths existing in the Brazilian society, the idea of linguistic unity. According to him:

Linguistic prejudice is based on the belief that there is only [...] one Portuguese language worthy of this name and that it would be the language taught in schools, explained in grammars and cataloged in dictionaries (BAGNO, 2015, p.64, our translation)³.

In this quotation, he points out the denial of the multilingual character existing in the Portuguese language. In the United States, the mindset does not seem to be much different, since what we refer to in this work as, “Standard White English” (SWE) is also imposed by schools and broadcasted by the mass media as the perfect model that everyone should follow.

² In general, this term refers to people who are not ethnically white, which would include Blacks, Asians, Latins, etc.

³ “O preconceito linguístico se baseia na crença de que só existe [...] uma única língua portuguesa digna desse nome e que seria a língua ensinada nas escolas, explicada nas gramáticas e catalogadas nos dicionários.”

As a result, this idea contributes to the marginalization of non-standard dialects, in which the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or as preferred by Labov, Black English Vernacular (BEV) is a target of several criticisms in the United States. In the case of Brazil, this downgrading can be observed in the use of non-standard Portuguese, as well as to specific varieties, such as the ones spoken in the Northeast, that constantly needs to fight against the harsh manifestations of prejudice.

As to this kind of prejudice, it is noticeable that the media has a great influence. First, because certain groups and people from specific regions are commonly underrepresented in the shows, newscasts, movies, *etc.*, and when this happens the representations are exaggerated, and they are normally portrayed negatively. Bagno (2015, p. 68) seems to agree with this idea since he reminds us of the prejudice towards some ways of speaking. In his words, this is “a true accident against human rights⁴⁴”. When he mentions that, he is referring to the way how people from the Northeast are portrayed in the soap operas in Brazil, in a grotesque way in order to provoke laughter and mockery. If we link this with the way how Black communities are usually depicted in American shows we can notice something similar, for example, in a movie composed mostly by white people, the black character is normally the funny one or the most exaggerated.

Compared to some time ago, some of these facts seem to be slowly changing due to the unstoppable fight of different groups of resistance, such as the Black movement; however, it is crucial to continue to be attentive to these ways of veiled racism, which is reinforced by the mentioned institution. Besides that, it is needed to effectively battle for the denaturalization of practices that as result of the colonization process have become normal in our society. As to the media influence, Almeida (2019) comments:

Racism constitutes as a whole the complex social imaginary that is constantly reinforced by the media, the cultural industry, and the educational system. After years of watching Brazilian soap operas, an individual will end up becoming convinced that black women have a natural vocation for housework, that the personality of black men invariably oscillate between criminals and naive people, or that white always have complex personalities or that they are born leaders, that they are meticulous and rationals in their actions (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 65, our translation)⁵

⁴⁴ “[...] um verdadeiro acidente aos direitos humanos” (BAGNO, 2015, p.68)

⁵ “O racismo constitui todo um complexo imaginário social que a todo momento é reforçado pelos meios de comunicação, pela indústria cultural e pelo sistema educacional. Após anos vendo telenovelas brasileiras, um indivíduo vai acabar se convencendo de que mulheres negras têm uma vocação natural para o trabalho doméstico, que a personalidade de homens negros oscila invariavelmente entre criminosos e pessoas ingênuas, ou que homens brancos sempre têm personalidade complexas ou que são líderes natos, meticulosos e racionais em suas ações.” (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 65)

Because his book “*Structural Racism*” addresses aspects of racism in general and because his work is not inserted in the area of linguistics, little attention is paid to the concept that we are referring to as linguistic prejudice; nevertheless, this quote serves to illustrate that behind people’s discrimination towards ways of speaking there is an ideology that exists in our society and that is reproduced and reinforced by the communications industry.

When it comes to the way Northeastern people speak in some regions, among other phenomena, the pronunciation of [d] and [t], characterized by the absence of palatalization after the [i] vowel, normally is a feature that draws people’s (from other parts of Brazil) attention. Nonetheless, the emphasis given to it does not seem to be positive. Bagno also brings a similar discussion to our attention explaining that people from the Southeast, who are users of the palatalization in the referred consonants, find it funny when they hear somebody from rural areas in the Northeast pronouncing the word in Portuguese: “*oito*” (eight) as “*oitchu*”, that is, using the palatalization for [t]. For the author it is an interesting aspect to analyze since it refers to the same phenomenon as the one used by southerners and if it is the same phenomenon, why is that a reason for mockery, laughter, and derision? According to him, in situations like that, what is involved is not just a linguistic matter, but a negative ideology towards the speaker and the geographic region where he comes from.

In Brazil, some studies, such as the one done by Gonzalez, has demonstrated strong influences of the Africanity in the Brazilian Portuguese, which, as mentioned by Nascimento (2019, p. 54), has been a victim of an attempt of silencing by the Standard Norm taught in schools, even though it continues very much alive. Based on this view, Gonzalez (1988) came up with a term that highlights this influence, which she names “*Pretoguês*” (Black Portuguese). According to the author,

What I name “*Pretoguês*” (Black Portuguese) is nothing more than the Brazilian Portuguese Africanization (remembering that the colonizer called the African slaves as “*Black*” or “*Creoles*”, the ones born here in Brazil) it is easily verifiable mainly in the Spanish of the Caribbean region. Similarities even more obvious can be seen if our gaze turns to music, the dances, the beliefs systems etc. Needless to say, how much this is covered by the ideological veil of whitening, it is repressed by Eurocentric classifications such as “*popular culture*”, “*national folklore*” etc, that minimize the importance of black contribution. (GONZALEZ, 1988, p. 70).⁶

⁶ “[...] aquilo que chamo de ‘pretoguês’ e que nada mais é do que marca de africanização do português falado no Brasil (nunca esquecendo que o colonizador chamava os escravos africanos de “pretos” e de “crioulos”, os nascidos aqui no Brasil) é facilmente constatável, sobretudo no espanhol da região caribenha. [...] Similaridades ainda mais evidentes são constatáveis, se o nosso olhar se volta para as músicas, as danças, os sistemas de crenças etc. Desnecessário dizer o quanto isso é encoberto pelo véu ideológico do branqueamento, é recalcado por classificações eurocêtricas do tipo “cultura popular”, “folclore nacional”, etc, que minimizam a importância da contribuição negra (1988, p. 70, our translation)

Although the Portuguese language did not go through a process of creolization due to the contact with African languages, there is no doubt of their influence through a broad process of irregular linguistic transmission that, in the words of Lucchesi (2009, p. 71), brought significant consequences for the formation of the current Brazilian linguistic reality, mainly for its nonstandard varieties. Thereby, we highly agree with Gonzalez that this influence is downplayed because of an ideological veil that makes us see our own culture and history through a Eurocentric lens and from the colonizer's speech.

In the United States, some scholars, such as Labov, Rickford, Smitherman, and others have been worried about the study of the AAVE, which despite its confusing origin bears a vivid influence on the African languages. Users of this dialect are frequently discriminated against since the logic existing in this variety is questioned and the speakers are stereotyped as ignorant, grotesque, or illiterate.

Hence, the point here is to understand that the stigmatized varieties in Brazil and the United States generates discrimination that in spite of being materialized in linguistic attitudes seems to transcend mere linguistic stigmatization. This idea was raised by Stein (2020, p. 53), in which he mentions the double negation⁷, a very common and natural feature in the Ebonics⁸ dialect, as well as in many other languages such as French, Spanish and Portuguese. Despite being present in these languages it is highly condemned by the American English standard norm, which we consider to be attached to linguistic supremacy responsible for downgrading some dialects. As stated by Nascimento (2019):

However, if language was created by the subject when classifying the world, it also creates the subject who, when enunciating the world, enunciates himself. An extract from this is that in the United States and Canada, as shown by researchers Ryuko Kubota (2009) and Nugrahenny Zacharia (2010), non-whites (Blacks, Asians, etc) are the ones who suffer most from the imposition in the most different places. The idea of language is totally linked to the idea of superiority (NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 19, our translation)⁹.

⁷ According to Peterson (2020), "[...] as is typical for nonstandard varieties, African American English tends to feature what is called multiple or double negation. For example: Ain't nobody can't beat me at chess. which translated into standardized English means something like "No one can beat me at chess" (PERTERSON, 2020, p. 110-111)

⁸ Ebonics refers to the language of black people. Ebony stands for Black and Phonics for the Study of Sound. In this text, it is used as a synonym to African American Vernacular English since it is also used in some research.

⁹ "Entretanto, se a língua foi criada pelo sujeito ao classificar o mundo, ela também cria o sujeito que, ao enunciar o mundo, se enuncia. Um extrato disso é que nos Estados Unidos e Canadá, segundo nos mostram as pesquisadoras Ryuko Kubota (2009) e Nugrahenny Zacharias (2010), os não brancos (negros, asiáticos, etc) são os que sofrem mais frente a imposição nos mais diversos locais. A ideia de língua está totalmente ligada à ideia de superioridade." (NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 19).

Therefore, our biggest concern in this investigation is to understand the possible reasons for the marginalization of dialects with African influences, such as the AAVE spoken in the United States, as well as the prejudice towards the use of nonstandard Portuguese and some varieties of this language viewed as negative.

In this research, it is assumed that the marginalization towards AAVE and to some Brazilian Portuguese varieties (mainly the ones spoken in the Northeast) goes beyond linguistic prejudice. Furthermore, it may be attached to some social, political and ideological factors, in which we believe it has to do with the person behind the language, their skin color, their history, the place where one comes from or is inserted, the ideology brought up from the culture of this person or the community one participates, and the idea of a linguistic and cultural superiority imposed by the colonization that is still alive in different structures of our society.

At the beginning of Peterson's book entitled "Making sense of bad English" it is presented a very convenient reflection to the problem discussed so far. She poses the questions:

Why is it that some ways of using English are considered "good" and others are considered "bad"? Why are certain forms of language termed elegant, eloquent, or refined, whereas others deemed uneducated, coarse or inappropriate? (PETERSON, 2020, p.1).

These questions are attached to the idea, as stated by the author, of a "standard language culture", in which mostly people who belong to an elite group have access to. She also agrees with us in the aspect we defend that what is behind this, is not restricted to a linguistic bias, but to an ideology that transcends that. According to her "[...] these principles are based on social factors rather than linguistic issues and highlights some of the real-life consequences of these perceptions" (PETERSON, 2020, p.1).

The changes in the world have been opening doors to new discussions and reflections on the spaces that minorities and discriminated groups should occupy in our society. Representativeness and Empowerment are definitely the words of this century, a time when we increasingly seek diversity and claim for privileges previously refused to us who went through attempts of silencing. This shift represents a breakthrough, even though it moves at a slow pace. Notwithstanding, some ways of prejudice need to receive a little more attention since sometimes it seems that attacks towards ways of speaking do not impact as much as other acts of violence. As said before, the language is one of the channels for the materialization of discrimination, and therefore violence towards the way how oneself expresses must also be combated. On the word of Peterson:

Language is more than just a means of communicating. It is one of the most important and revealing social manifestations of who we are and where we come from. To criticize someone's language assumes a position of superiority and a right to judge this person. It is never just about language. Rather, marginalization through language becomes a proxy for racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and elitism. It is incredible that in this day and age- even among those who claim to celebrate diversity in other ways- language remains a socially accepted means of targeting others for marginalization and ridicule. The openness that many profess to have toward ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and gender, and so on, simply does not extend to language variation. (PETERSON, 2020, p. 33).

Taking that into account, the importance of this investigation consists in opening a space of discussion, in which we start to look at racial issues as an idea that runs through linguistic issues. Consequently, we can think not only about linguistic prejudice but also about the existence of linguistic racism¹⁰, aspect that sometimes is taken for granted considering all the agendas that are normally taken to the roundtables and debates in general.

Even though our focus on this work falls on what happens in the United States and Brazil, we conceive that this is a global issue. Moreover, we also consider that institutions should give due importance to this matter because of the negative impact it can have on a person's life and survival. As to that, in the book "Language in the Inner City", Labov (1972, p. 202) points out the struggles of many African American children in the classroom. According to him, "Teachers [...] look upon every deviation from schoolroom English as inherently evil, and they attribute these mistakes to laziness, sloppiness or the child's natural disposition to be wrong." Besides that, to the situation of reading failures these children present, he considers that to be a "cultural and political conflict in the classroom" (1972, p.243), a problem that some people have been closing their eyes to.

Our intention to carry out this investigation started due to the fact that during the degree in English Studies¹¹ At UFPB we had the opportunity to participate in some courses that approached the different varieties of the English language. In the Basic English II course, it was required for the group to elaborate a presentation based on the different kinds of English spoken around the world. Each group had to select a variety of the English language and research the topic presenting its main aspects. Thus, because of the enriching and instigating experience, we started to turn our eyes to other horizons of the English language use, as well as other ways of speaking it apart from the standard norm addressed in many didactic materials.

¹⁰According to Nascimento (2019, p. 19) language is a "space for the production and continuity of racism and is in the language that racism materializes its ways of domination."

¹¹ Letras-Inglês

Secondly, we consider that the motivation to conduct this research has to do with our concern in understanding the issues related to the prejudice towards specific dialects¹², which according to the hypotheses presented in the introduction, we assume it transcends linguistic bias. Thus, as a researcher in the area of linguistics, and also as a teacher of Modern Foreign Languages, we express our social commitment to instigate the critical view to these problems and to deliver useful information to Brazilian teachers of English as a foreign language to reflect and have special attention when working with the varieties of English in a classroom.

In this research we aim to discuss some aspects of the African American Vernacular English dialect, also the issue approached among authors involving the prejudice towards this variety, and then to draw a parallel with the linguistic problems that happen with some varieties of Brazilian Portuguese focusing on the Northeastern dialect.

Thus, the specific objectives of this investigation consist in:

- Discussing aspects of the structure of the AAVE, the issue involving this dialect, and how it relates to the linguistic prejudice towards the ways how people speak in Northeast Brazil.
- Analyzing the reasons behind the language attitudes that sometimes culminates in the discrimination and intolerance of some varieties in the light of the works existing that addresses the topic.
- Reflecting on how Brazilian teachers of English as foreign language could approach these issues in their classrooms.

Therefore, this work is organized into four chapters. In the first one, we discuss the theories that contribute to enlighten the problem presented in this section. In the second, we detail the methodology used, in which we cover information about the type of research and the procedures we used in this investigation. In the third, we present some of the main linguistic features of the AAVE, the theories concerning its origins, and we explain how African influences are present in these dialects of resistance. In the fourth, we present the results and discussions from the analysis of quotations found in works of authors that approach the issues involving stigmatized ways of speaking, and lastly, we make a brief discussion as to the pedagogical implications of the theme in Brazilian education.

¹² African American Vernacular English and some Brazilian dialects.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is undeniable the influence of Black communities nowadays in many different aspects of American culture. Despite the evident negative attitude expressed by a portion of society, it is possible to identify their contribution to language and notice their presence in music, art, food, clothing, and many other segments. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider that there is still much to achieve in terms of rights, representation, and respect. Even so, differently from past experiences, Black people have achieved some advancements; however, we cannot close our eyes to the existence of misconceptions and prejudice towards the African American community in the United States.

When mentioning in this research the terms AAVE (African American Vernacular English), BEV (Black English Vernacular), or Ebonics, we are referring to the definition Labov (1972) presents in his work “Language in the inner city”, as a way to prevent misunderstandings due to the widespread use of the term “Black English”, popularly used as a synonym to BEV, but that according to him refers to something broader.

By the “black English vernacular” we mean the relatively uniform dialect spoken by the majority of black youth in most parts of the United States today, especially in the inner city areas of New York, Boston, Detroit, Philadelphia, Washington, Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, Los Angeles and other urban centers. It is also spoken in most rural areas and used in the casual, intimate speech of many adults. The term “black English” is not suitable for this dialect [...] Black English might best be used for the whole range of language forms used by black people in the United States, a very large range indeed, extending from the Creole grammar of Gullah spoken in the sea Islands of South Carolina to the most formal and accomplished literary style (LABOV, 1972, p. xiii).

In order to break some of the distorted ideas concerning the Black speech, Rickford and Rickford (2000) developed a book named “Spoken Soul”. As stated by them: “One purpose of this book is to help rescue Spoken Soul¹³ from the negativity and ignorance in which it became mired during the Ebonics debate” (RICKFORD and RICKFORD, 2000, p. 9). In their work, the authors allow us to enlarge our vision not only regarding the dialect, but also the rich universe of the culture, history, and give us the chance to get to know, some of the different social actors, such as writers, preachers and prayers, comedians, singers, toasters¹⁴ and rappers

¹³ A term coined by Claude Brown in his work: “Manchild in the Promised Land” to refer to the Black Speech, also used in the book written by Rickford and Rickford (2000) to present an overview of the Black Vernacular English.

¹⁴ “A DJ who accompanies reggae with improvised rhythmic speech”. (LEXICO, 2021)

that sometimes are not as represented as they should be. Lastly, they bring up some issues as to these communities in education, media, and identity.

One of the misconceptions introduced by the authors relates to the stigma concerning the grammar and pronunciation of AAVE, in which some individuals tend to connect it with the poor and working-class. An attitude that is also expressed by some African-Americans who belong to the middle and upper classes. On the word of the authors:

When we consider that Ebonics pronunciation and grammar are used most frequently by poor and working class African Americans, and that it was primarily the comments of middle and upper class African Americans heard over the airwaves and read on the Internet in 1996 and 1997, their disdain is not surprising (RICKFORD and RICKFORD, 2000, p. 8).

Besides that, they point out the importance of the dialect to American society as a mark of Black identity, which “it is the symbol of culture and a life-style that have had and continue having profound impact on American popular life” (2000, p. 10). In the authors' view, losing that identity can be compared to the loss of one's own soul. Moreover, as an example, they mention that when we decide to learn another language, we do not need to leave behind our own; therefore, why is it necessary to cast off AAVE to use mainstream English¹⁵? In this aspect, we notice a strong claim by the authors for an identity that, as stated in the title of our work, has always been a victim of silencing attempts. They illustrate that using the piano metaphor and that of the Chinese philosophy: “the fact is that for many of our most beautiful melodies, we need both white keys and the black, in the same way that, Chinese dualist philosophy, the yin is as essential as the yang.” (2000, p.10).

In this sense, making a connection with the Brazilian setting we could think about the pressure some people from the Northeast who migrate to the Southeast receive, especially the ones who have to work in the media, to mitigate their accent in order to speak in a way more similar to the “standard Portuguese” spoken in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (requirement that also happens in the local media). This imposition demonstrates a lot of the negative attitude and the value judgment people make of certain ways of speaking, but not only that since there are also the judgments of other's identity and culture involved. Maybe that is the reason why we perceive a kind of standardization when we turn our televisions on, and rarely hear somebody whom we could identify with.

¹⁵ Considered normal, and having or using ideas, beliefs, etc. that are accepted by most people (CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY, 2021)

Initially, based on Bagno's (2015) ideas we could attach this issue to what he refers to as linguistic prejudice, although we also consider that it only represents a part of the problem. According to the author, linguistic prejudice is based on a set of myths believed by a good portion of society, which he explains in eight sections of his book's first chapter. The first one has to do with the idea of unity, which in his words is ingrained in Brazilian culture and is very harmful to education because it takes linguistic diversity for granted and fosters monolingualism. Secondly, the other myth seems to be very specific to Brazilian society at first sight, but we can identify it in other societies as well. The myth refers to the conception that Brazilian speakers do not know the Portuguese language and only in Portugal it is properly spoken. In this section, he strongly criticizes the fact that education in Brazil is still very attached to the European grammar rules and he points out that Brazilians know very well their own Portuguese and that this Portuguese presents many characteristics that make it different from the one used in Portugal. Consequently, it could in no way be considered wrong. Other myths are also discussed during the whole chapter, in which the author problematizes and deconstructs many of these beliefs.

In American society, a similar logic is observed when the media, the school, and the population impose Standard English as the only socially acceptable variety to have professional opportunities, whereas BEV is put at the margins and in some cases not even considered as an American English dialect since it is evaluated, for example, as "a child disposition to be wrong", (LABOV, 1972, p. 4), a thought that Labov strongly criticizes stating that "the idea that dialect differences are due to some forms of laziness or carelessness must be rejected with equal firmness" (p. 10).

All that position impregnated, reinforced, and socially spread relates to the attitudes (mostly expressed through language) individuals have towards ways of speaking that historically became stigmatized, treated as inferior and that has received different forms of discrimination as a result of colonialism. According to Agueyisi e Joshua (apud MORENO FERNÁNDEZ, 2009, p. 177), the study of language attitudes is extremely important in the sociolinguistics field in order to know more about the choice for a language in multilingual societies, the concept of intelligibility, linguistic planning, or language teaching and that it also affects variation and linguistic change processes. Thus, a language attitude can be expressed both in positive and negative ways. To the author:

A favorable or positive attitude can make a linguistic change happen more quickly, that in certain contexts the use of one language predominates over the use of another, that in the teaching-learning of a foreign language it is more effective, that certain

linguistic variants confine to less formal contexts and others predominate in neat styles. An unfavorable or negative attitude can lead to the abandonment and forgetfulness of a language or prevent the diffusion of a variant or a linguistic change (MORENO FERNÁNDEZ, 2009, p. 177, our translation).¹⁶

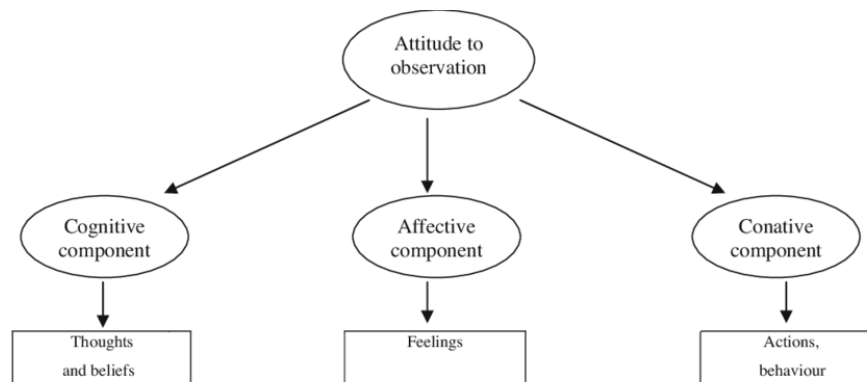
Peterson (2020) seems to agree with Moreno Fernández when considering attitudes as a social manifestation that reveals who we are and where we come from. Therefore, it means that language attitudes are directly connected with Identity. In Moreno Fernández's view: "It is logical to think that since there is a relationship between language and identity, it must be manifested in the attitudes of individuals towards these languages and their users (MORENO FERNÁNDEZ, 2009, p. 178, our translation).¹⁷ He also presents the project model proposed by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) which supposes that a linguistic individual conduct unveils not only a person's identity but also their position in a social group. This way, as asserted by Peterson, when somebody has a negative attitude towards others, this person puts himself/herself in a position of power and superiority granting for oneself the permission to judge someone else. (p. 33).

Moreno Fernández (2009, p. 181) remarks that an attitude implies the presence of several elements and subelements. In his words, it starts with an assessment (affective component), a thought or a belief (cognitive component), and then a conduct (conative component) as seen in figure 1. Thereby, when certain attitudes are expressed through language it opens a door for the practice of discrimination, such as xenophobia, racism, homophobia, sexism, among others.

¹⁶ "Una actitud favorable o positiva puede hacer que un cambio lingüístico se cumpla más rápidamente, que en ciertos contextos predomine el uso de una lengua en detrimento de otra, que en la enseñanza-aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera sea más eficaz, que ciertas variantes lingüísticas se confinen a los contextos menos formales y otras predominen en los estilos cuidados. Una actitud desfavorable o negativa puede llevar al abandono y el olvido de una lengua o impedir la difusión de una variante o un cambio lingüístico." (MORENO FERNÁNDEZ, 2009, p. 177).

¹⁷ "Es lógico pensar que puesto que existe una relación entre lengua e identidad, ésta ha de manifestarse en las actitudes de los individuos hacia esas lenguas y sus usuarios" (MORENO FERNÁNDEZ, 2009, p. 178)

Figure 1: The three components of language attitudes.



Source: Sierra (2011)

Because negative attitudes influence the status of a language and generate value judgments, we can assert that linguistic prejudice has as one of its branches, what Nascimento (2019) names as “linguistic racism”, in which racial and linguistic prejudice are intertwined. To discuss the term, the author takes a historical tour, firstly problematizing the word “negro” as being a concept created by whiteness and not as being a natural concept. In his words: “Black people from Africa, before being colonized and kidnapped, did not name themselves “Blacks” or claimed the “Black” identity as naturally theirs” (NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 12, our translation)¹⁸. He also comments that in this process of survival, the ones named ‘negros’ had to adapt their way of speaking and erase the features of their origins since they were obliged to use the colonizer’s language, generating multiple changes in it. Hence, in the author’s perspective: “Language [...] is a mark of domination and where the structuring figure of racism also takes place (NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 17, our translation)¹⁹.

This brutal process of silencing and annulment of another person’s culture and knowledge is called “epistemicide”, which in turn, is related to “linguicide” a kind of extermination that happens through language (CARNEIRO, 2011, apud NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 13). This action is easily recognizable in all the processes of colonization, in which in the case of Brazil and the United States happened both with slaves and natives and today still has its forms of manifestation, for example when it is denied to some groups the right to also be a subject of their language. Nascimento considers that as a product of coloniality and highlights

¹⁸ “Os negros africanos, antes de serem colonizados e sequestrados, não se chamavam como “negros” ou reivindicavam para si a identidade “negra” como naturalmente deles” (NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 12).

¹⁹ “A língua [...] é uma marca de dominação e por onde também se dá a figura estruturante do racismo”.(NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 17)

the strong influence of the press and the media in the emphasis of the prejudice towards the Black community.

For that reason, it was necessary the emergence of a decolonial movement that has been progressively gaining strength when it comes to opposing and acting against the still existing eurocentric view that tries to make other cultures invisible and disregard the experience, history, identity, and language of others. The decolonial project also emerges as a space for critical dialogue, seeking the paradigm's deconstruction, and joining forces to fight against racism, coloniality, prejudice and many other discriminations. With respect to the eurocentrism formation, Dussel (apud BERNARDINO-COSTA AND GROSGOUEL, 2016) points out:

From the 16th century, therefore, the formation of Eurocentrism [...], understood as the dominant thought of the modern/colonial world, that allowed the legitimization of imperial domination and exploitation. Based on this idea, the other (without a certain religion, no writing, no history, no development, no democracy) was seen as backward in relation to Europe. Under this other, the "myth of modernity" was exercised in which modern civilization described itself as the most developed and superior and, therefore, with the moral obligation to develop the primitives, regardless of the will of those who are named as primitive and backward. (DUSSEL, 2015, apud, BERNARDINO-COSTA AND GROSGOUEL, 2016, p. 17, our translation)²⁰

This dominant thought reverberates both in the discourses and attitudes people have towards some dialects and cultures. When it is expressed through language, besides having a strong possibility of being attached to linguistic racism, it can also be understood, according to Peterson (2019, p.39) as “othering”. In her view, “Designating the way someone uses language as ‘Bad English’ is an active and effective means of othering”. In other words, othering happens when somebody judges and categorizes other people as an outlander, which normally happens when it comes to pronunciation since people tend to classify those who do not have a white variety in a very negative way (p. 48). In this regard, the author strongly believes in the influence of social elements such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status as the main factors for the aversion towards ways of speaking of certain locations. She considers language as a space for the accentuation of inequalities, in a way that it benefits certain groups over others. In her words:

²⁰ “A partir do século XVI iniciou, portanto, a formação do eurocentrismo [...] entendido como o imaginário dominante do mundo moderno/colonial que permitiu legitimar a dominação e a exploração imperial. Com base nesse imaginário, o outro (sem religião certa, sem escrita, sem história, sem desenvolvimento, sem democracia) foi visto como atrasado em relação à Europa. Sob esse outro é que se exerceu o “mito da modernidade” em que a civilização moderna se auto descreveu como a mais desenvolvida e superior e, por isso, com a obrigação moral de desenvolver os primitivos, a despeito da vontade daqueles que são nomeados como primitivos e atrasados.” (DUSSEL, 2015, apud, Bernardino-Costa and Grosfoguel, 2016, p. 17)

Language is used as an effective tool against people who are already in a disadvantaged position. The people who are fortunate enough to benefit from standard language culture are able to ensure that those who already have access to Standard English continue to benefit from what it has to offer. (PETERSON, 2020, p. 59).

Many Brazilian researchers such as Lélia González, Silvio Almeida, Djamila Ribeiro among others had and have been interested in studying the struggles of Black people in Brazil due to the inequality and the physical, psychological and symbolic violence suffered by non-white people during their whole life as one of the effects of racism. Although these authors do not have specific eyes to the area of linguistics or the relation between language and race, their works bring significant contributions to our investigation, making room for several connections. As an example of that, Almeida (2019) brings up two important terms to understand how racism is impregnated in our society: structural and institutional racism.

Almeida (2019, p. 35) remarks that in debates concerning social matters it is possible to identify many definitions for the word racism. For didactic purposes, he listed three terms to compile these definitions that according to him are extremely important despite the fact that many authors treat them as if they were synonyms, when in fact they represent “specific dimensions of the phenomenon”. Considering that, he suggests the existence of (1) an individualist, (2) an institutional, and (3) a structural racism.

The individualist conception refers to an abnormality practiced by specific groups, which is usually connected to individuals' behaviors who act in isolated situations. The author states that this conception is very limited since it disregards the complexity of the phenomenon that has a long history and concrete effects on society. For him, it typically makes room for moralist statements²¹.

On the other hand, the Institutional conception considers that racism is not restricted to isolated behaviors, but as the attribution of privileges and disadvantages based on race within the institutions, being normally more subtle compared to the first one (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 37-38). With regard to that, he says:

The main argument of those who affirm the existence of institutional racism is that racial conflicts are also part of institutions. Thus, racial inequality is a characteristic of society not only because of the isolated action of racist groups or individuals, but fundamentally because institutions are hegemonized by certain racial groups that use institutional mechanisms to impose their political and economic interests. (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 49-40, our translation)²²

²¹ In the book he explains that these statements are expressed in sentences, such as: “racism is wrong”, “we are all human”, “how can you be racist in the 21st century?” (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 35, our translation).

²² “A principal tese dos que afirmam a existência de racismo institucional é que os conflitos raciais também são parte das instituições. Assim, a desigualdade racial é uma característica da sociedade não apenas por causa da ação

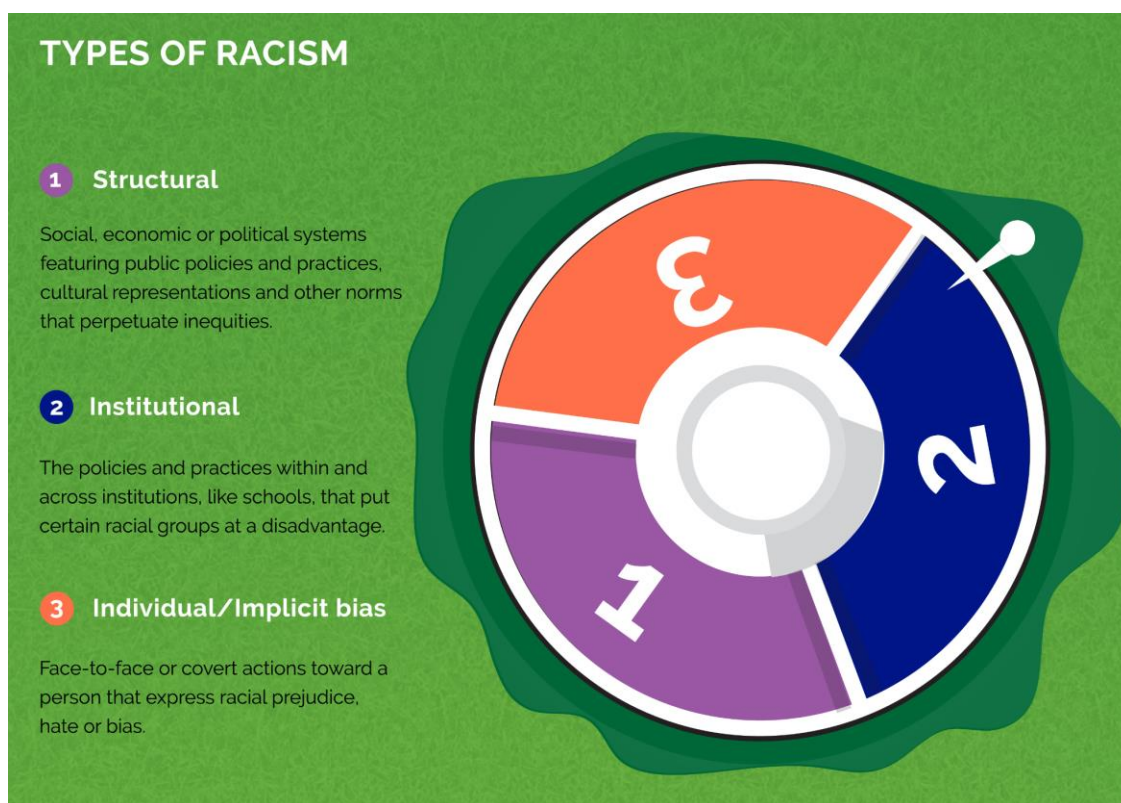
Considering this logic, within the institutions there is a system that works favorably to the continuity and maintenance of the domination and discrimination mechanisms through the imposition of rules and standards of conduct that make it natural their dominance (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 40). He mentions, as an example, the prevalence of white men in public institutions such as, the judicial, the legislative, universities, *etc.*, and private institutions, in which these individuals are commonly company heads. However, it does not limit to that, since it is also inserted in the norms established in culture, beauty standards, and in the mechanisms that make it difficult for black people to ascend socially. According to Hamilton and Ture (apud ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 46) “Institutions act in the formulation of rules and imposition of social standards that attribute privileges to a particular social group, in this case, whites.”²³. In this sense, one of the most distinctive features of this kind of racism relates to how power works in social relations, that is, the power one individual has in the other and more than that, how a group exerts its domination and control in others, either directly or indirectly through institutions.

Finally, in the structural conception, it is considered that racism is ingrained in the social structures and not restricted to individual actions. In other words, it is taken as “normal” in the political, economic, and the judicial spheres and also in the family environment (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 50). According to the author, the biggest manifestation of that is social inequality, which is normally taken for granted and is historically and systematically reproduced. He also adds that the judicial accountability to individuals who commit racist acts is not enough to change a racist society that works as “a machine that reproduces racial inequalities” (p. 51). Seeking a more didactic approach to these three dimensions we present in figure 2 an infographic that summarizes what has been discussed so far.

isolada de grupos ou de indivíduos racistas, mas fundamentalmente por que as instituições são hegemônicas por determinados grupos raciais que utilizam mecanismos institucionais para impor seus interesses políticos e econômicos.” (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 49-40).

²³ “As instituições atuam na formulação de regras e imposição de padrões sociais que atribuem privilégios a um determinado grupo social, no caso os brancos.” Hamilton and Ture (apud Almeida, 2019, p. 46)

Figure 2: Types of racism



Source: RANKIN (2017)

Taking all that into account, how can we relate these dimensions with the problem brought up in this work? As mentioned previously in this work, “language [...] is a mark of domination and where the structuring figure of racism also takes place (NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 17, our translation)²⁴, that means that the forms of domination are materialized through language and reproduced by the different spheres of society. In the author’s view the idea of language is totally connected with the idea of superiority, in which those who do not adapt to the established norms are excluded and silenced. However, he suggests that we also look at language as a place of fight and as space for resistance to battle against the racialization project that results from modern thought. Therefore, we consider the three dimensions directly connected with language since it is one of its first ways of expression. This way, linguistic prejudice bears much more issues that cry out for debate, reflection, and effective anti racist policies.

²⁴ “A língua é uma marca de dominação e por onde também se dá a figura estruturante do racismo” (NASCIMENTO, 2019, p. 17)

CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter we are going to present in three sections the methodological pathways developed to carry this research out. In the first one, we explain the nature of the research and why it is inserted in a qualitative study. Lastly, in the second, we mention the data used to conduct the analysis and discuss in more detail the procedures applied in the present work.

1.2 Nature of research

This work consists of a bibliographic research, and concerning its objectives, it is descriptive-interpretive. To conduct it, we selected a set of quotations found in books, papers, and articles that address the subject in question. Later, we analyzed them aiming to confirm the hypotheses raised as to people's negative attitudes towards stigmatized dialects. According to Universidade Federal de Goiás (2008) the bibliographic research:

Comprises the data collection of the whole bibliography already published in the form of books, periodicals (magazines), theses, annals of congress, indexed in databases in online format or cd-rom. Its purpose is to provide the student or researcher with access to literature produced on a given subject, serving as support for the development of scientific works and analysis of research. (UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE GOIÁS, 2008, our translation).²⁵

As to the approach, this is a qualitative research because we analyzed and interpreted the data collected reflecting on a social issue in which language plays an important role. To Bogdan and Biklen (2006, p. 4) a qualitative research can be described as “an umbrella term to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics”. This kind of research includes five features that help us to have a better understanding of its definition. It is naturalistic, it includes descriptive data, it is focused on the process, tends to be inductive, and considers ‘meaning’ as an essential aspect (BOGDAN AND BIKLEN, 2006, p. 4-7). In accordance with some of the aspects, Atieno (2019) states:

The qualitative research design is also known as the socio-Anthropological research paradigm .It is interpretative, and ethnographic in nature. The underlying approach

²⁵ A Pesquisa Bibliográfica compreende o levantamento de toda a bibliografia já publicada em forma de livros, periódicos (revistas), teses, anais de congressos, indexados em bases de dados em formato on-line ou cd-rom. Sua finalidade é proporcionar ao aluno ou ao pesquisador o acesso à literatura produzida sobre determinado assunto, servindo de apoio para o desenvolvimento de trabalhos científicos e análise das pesquisas. (UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE GOIÁS, 2008).

requires detailed observation, explanation and assumes that it is impossible to define exactly what elements are important and crucial and should be considered to the exclusion of others. It argues that validity is important than attempting rigorously to define what is being observed and by so doing study the whole situation. It attempts to study the whole situation in order to evaluate the complexity and ensure that their conclusion take account of both unique and general factors (ATIENO, 2009, p. 13, our translation).

1.3 Analysis procedures and data collection

To undertake this investigation, we selected a set of works that discussed the theories concerning the area of linguistics, sociolinguistics, sociology, and other fields, giving this text an interdisciplinary character, which leads us to also navigate by the seas of Applied linguistics at times. Furthermore, the works selected also addressed aspects related to the AAVE dialect regarding its history, vocabulary, grammar, phonetic and phonological aspects, to the social discussions and issues, as well as some case studies carried out in specific communities in the United States. Among these works, it is worth highlighting the ones that served as the basis to build our theoretical lines and our analysis.

As to the ones that dealt directly with the aspects of BEV we gave special attention in first place to “Language in the Inner city” by Labov (1972). This work is considered one of the most renowned books that investigates, through a sociolinguistic view, the vernacular used by Black adolescents from the inner cities in the United States. One of the biggest arguments used by Labov in this work is that AAVE is not simply a variety composed of slang, but a dialect that follows a well-formed set of rules and a complex logic, differently from what many critics believe. The second is named “Spoken Soul: The story of Black English” by Rickford and Rickford (2000), a book written by a linguist and a journalist, who are both Black and who wrote an informative manual addressing aspects of the culture, the language, the grammar, and the issues within the Black community, turning their eyes especially to the users of AAVE.

When it comes to the ones that covered the area of linguistics, its subarea sociolinguistics, and other fields such as sociology we used as basis: *Princípios de sociolingüística y sociología del lenguaje* by Moreno Fernández (2009), *Making sense of Bad English* by Peterson (2020), and the Brazilians authors Bagno (2015), Nascimento (2019) and Almeida (2019) with *Preconceito linguístico*, *Racismo Linguístico*, and *Racismo Estrutural* respectively.

To carry out the analysis, firstly, we presented the main and most stigmatized aspects of the dialect in question, as well as the aspects of its history, which among the theories presented here we defended the influences of the African origins. Besides that, we made a

parallel with the case of Brazil, as to the prejudice towards some dialects, and the strong influence of Africanity as well. We also brought forward some of the arguments raised by society and some critics who turn down speeches that diverge from the standard norm. Finally, we compiled some quotations found in books and other works that uphold our perspective concerning the existence of prejudice towards these ways of speaking that transcends a negative position to language.

CHAPTER 3 - A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CHARACTERISTICS AND HISTORY OF A VARIETY OF RESISTANCE

In this chapter, we intend to bring forward some of the main characteristics regarding the Black English Vernacular (BEV) highlighted in the articles and works we compiled for this investigation. However, it is important to point out that it is beyond the scope of this investigation to provide detailed linguistic information. The main objective of this section is to make our readers aware of the most common aspects in terms of language and the theories regarding its origins, also making room for some aspects of Brazilian Portuguese.

Knowing these features is extremely important to get closer to African American culture as well as to see the beauty existing in it, and to put aside some of the wrong and preconceived conceptions that people normally have towards it. Besides, it is important to instigate debate, respect, and to foster a better representation since the diverse and complex world that we live in cannot stand the idea of unity applied to language anymore. Therefore, it is time to hear the voice of those who have been silenced and let the world know, as mentioned by Rickford and Rickford (2000, p. 4), “[...] the vibrancy and vitality of Spoken Soul as an expressive instrument in American literature, religion, entertainment, and everyday life”.

3.1 Main aspects of the African American Vernacular English

There is no doubt that AAVE is a living language that has many different aspects from Standard English (SE). Recapping the words of Labov (1972, p. XIII) “it is a relatively uniform dialect spoken by the majority of black youth in most parts of the United States today”. In Rickford and Rickford (2000, p. 91) words, many people believe that “what sets black talk apart is its distinctive word usage, particularly the informal and usually short lived ‘slang’ expressions known primarily to adolescents and young adults”. Later he adds that “Spoken Soul, like any other language variety, is much more than slang, and much more than the sum of its words”. To Thompson, Craig and Washington (2004), “Many African Children speak AAE²⁶ at the time of school entry. This is [...] true of the large numbers of African American students who reside in major urban centers where it is the predominant linguistic system”.

²⁶ “[...] AAVE is often distinguished from African American English (AAE). AAVE relates specifically to a vernacular form, spoken principally by working-class African Americans. AAE refers to the speech of all African Americans, including middle -class African Americans. Middle-class AAE most often lacks the more stigmatized morphosyntactic variants, although some middle-class speakers may employ them for stylistic effect or to express solidarity”. (THOMAS, 2007, p. 451) .

The definitions given to the referred variety demonstrate its vitality and its importance within the community where it is spoken as a symbol of their identity. Furthermore, we can also notice by the definitions that it is more accentuated in the speech of the younger ones. It is interesting to notice that as observed earlier, the fact that AAVE is normally associated with “slang” does not mean that the dialect is limited to that, but that it is also a part of the BEV’s linguistic system. Nonetheless, many people refer to this dialect as a set of slang in order to build their argument against AAVE. Opposing to this idea Pullum (1999, p. 40) states:

Most speakers of Standard English think that AAVE is just a badly spoken version of their language, marred by a lot of ignorant mistakes in grammar and pronunciation, or worse than that, an unimportant and most abusive repertoire of street slang used by an ignorant urban underclass. [...] The majority of English speakers think that AAVE is just English with two added factors: some special slang terms and a lot of grammatical mistakes. They are simply wrong about this (PULLUM, 1999, p. 40-41).

In the development of his work, he claims for respect and acceptance of this dialect, and he also argues that the divergence from standard English does not make AAVE a bad version of it. In the title of the article he published in 1999 we can already see a very solid statement against this idea - “African American Vernacular English is not standard English with Mistakes”. Thus, in the next few sections, we are going to show some of the most recurrent aspects regarding AAVE that normally are easily recognizable in the speeches of BEV users in movies, series, novels, and different works that approach this dialect.

3.1.1 Negation

As to the case of negation in AAVE it is necessary to consider some aspects. The first one has to do with “the double negation”, multiple negation, or sometimes called negative concord. This is one of the most stigmatized features in this variety since critics normally refer to it as being illogical. This phenomenon consists of the use of a negative verb with a negative noun or pronoun. To Pullum (1999, p. 48) “The critics’ claim about this is that logic tells us that two negatives make a positive: if he did not see nothing²⁷, that means that he did see something, and it is illogical to use that form of words to mean the opposite”. In figure 3, it can be noticed a clear example of this thought in a comic strip. When the defendant says “I **didn’t** do [*nothing*]” and the audience thinks that this was a confession, it is possible to see that what is being considered is that he is not denying a crime, but confirming his guilt.

²⁷ With this statement the author is referring to the sentence: “*He didn’t see nothin’*”.

Figure 3: Jury of English majors (Double Negative?)



Source: Write with Jean (2014)

However, this interpretation is a peculiarity of the standard norm, or as the author suggests it is a classical interpretation of negation, in which one single negative particle is used to indicate negation. It is worth mentioning that the phenomenon of double negation is also something that happens in other languages such as Italian, French, Portuguese, and differently from what happens in the SWE, it is not an aspect negatively seen by the eyes of society.

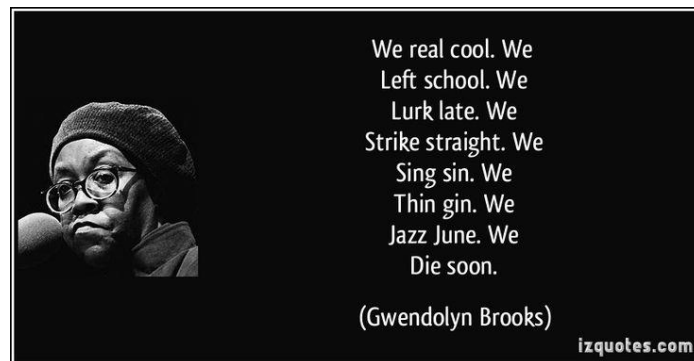
Continuing the discussion on this topic, there is also the case of “Negative Inversion”, that happens when a negative verb (Ain’t or can’t) introduces a sentence as in the examples that follow: “**Can’t** nobody beat ‘em” (cited in RICKFORD and RICKFORD, 2000, p. 124), “**Ain’t** nobody is going to find out” (cited in PULLUM, 1999, p. 49). This phenomenon normally occurs in declarative sentences and not in interrogatives, demonstrating this way that the dialect is logical.

Another curious occurrence when it comes to negation has to do with the use of “ain’t”. This could be considered one of the most popular aspects of AAVE, that in spite of being marginalized, nowadays is very common in music, not specifically in rap, but also in other styles, and not restricted to the users of the BEV (even though it started by them). “Ain’t” is usually used in place of “am not, isn’t, aren’t, don’t, hasn’t and haven’t”, that is, for the present tense negative forms and the perfect auxiliary, such in the examples: “I ain’t never seen nothing like it and You ain’t my sister.

3.1.2 Copula omission/ zero copula

Firstly, it is important to clarify that by copula applied to AAVE we refer to the forms of be, in its different forms: “be, been, being, am, are, is, was, and were”. When explaining this phenomenon, Pullum (1999, p. 45) states “The most popular myth about AAVE is that it involves misuse of the copula: that is carelessly omitted or is used in incorrect forms like be out of ignorance”. Again, the omission of the copula is a good example to demonstrate that this variety bears a logic since there are strict rules that tell in which cases the copula can be omitted. To Rickford and Rickford (2000, p. 114) “Zero copula provides a clear demonstration that the grammar of Spoken Soul is systematic and rule-governed”. Some examples of the copula deletion are: “*They eating*”, instead of “they are eating”, and “She linkin’ me... She linkin’ George too” (cited in LABOV, 1979, p. 719). In this sentence, the form “was” of be was omitted. Figure 4 shows another example of the phenomenon from a quote by Gwendolyn Brooks.

Figure 4: Null copula- quote by Gwendolyn Brooks



Source: PARSARD, Kyle - Yale University (2016)

3.1.3 Invariant be

As suggested by the title of the section, this phenomenon happens when the verb “to be” does not vary, keeping its original form. This is one of the most investigated cases by linguists, such as Wolfram (1969), Labov (1972), Bailey and Maynor (1985). In these and other scholars’ works, it is always discovered something new about the phenomenon. Wolfram (2004) seems to agree with the theorists stating and adding that:

Its structural and functional properties have now been studied in a number of different urban and rural settings, as well as its development and diffusion over time and place. Although there is disagreement as to how be_2 might be represented in the grammatical system of AAVE, most analysts agree that be_2 marks unique aspect referring to an intermittent activity, hence the reference to “habitual be” (Wolfram, 2004, 118)

Habitual be and be₂ are other terms used to refer to the same phenomenon and according to Wolfram, it is more recurrent in the speech of the youth who speak the vernacular, than it is in older generations. He declares that “it now has a strong association with Black youth culture” (2004, 119). In general, Invariant be is used to express an action that happens regularly, that is, a habitual event, for instance, “He be talking’ with this lady every day” (cited in RICKFORD and RICKFORD, 2000, p. 113). Other meanings of invariant be can be associated with the emphasis of the nature of an action or as referring to an event that happens in the moment of speech without implying a habitual action.

3.1.4 Subject-verb agreement

When it comes to subject-verb agreement we are referring to two types of phenomena, one that relates to (1) the absence of the third-person singular in the present tense “s”/ “es”, and another that concerns the (2) conjugation of “be” in the present and in the past.

Examples:

(1) *She walk/ She have money.*

(2) *The folks **is** home/ The folks **was** there.*

Sentences cited in Wolfram (2004, p. 122).

In Standard English (SE), the norm requires an “s” or “es” when the verb refers to the third-person singular; however, this is not the case in AAVE since these endings are normally eliminated as we can observe in (1). Rickford and Rickford (2000, p. 111) bring an interesting point of view as to this occurrence. They remark that “In getting rid of third-person s, you might think of AAVE as making the rules of English more regular, or as an advocate for equal opportunity”. This quotation opposes once again the belief of the dialect as being illogical. In (2) it is possible to notice another disparity from the SE since instead of “are” and “were” the verbs are used in the singular form both in the present and in the past tense. It demonstrates that the mark of plurality is done in a different way.

3.1.5 Stress (remote been) and unstressed been

The case of the past is particularly difficult to summarize since it covers a great deal of phenomena, exceptions, and meanings. Regarding the “Remote been” Wolfram (2000, p. 120)

asserts that it indicates a particular aspectual function since it refers to an event that occurred in a distant past. He uses as an example the sentence “*She BEEN²⁸ married*”. Despite its confusing meaning, it denotes that she is still married, but she had been married a long time (distant past). It is to be noted that sometimes “been” is written as “bin” to highlight its stressed pronunciation in AAVE.

There is also another version of “been” that is considered to be an unstressed version, this one does not have to do with “Remote Been”. According to Rickford and Rickford (2000, p. 117), it is similar to the forms “has been” and “have been”. As an example, the authors suggest the sentence: “*I been running*”. In this case, it indicates that at some point he was doing this activity; but it is not necessarily a reality now.

3.1.6 Phonetic and Phonological features

The aspects related to the pronunciation of AAVE are, according to Brown (1998 apud RICKFORD and RICKFORD, 2000, p. 98.) “communicative and meaningful”, contrasting with the thought that this variety is restricted to a set of slang. When it comes to it, the theorist adds that: “There are specific phonetic traits”. To the “soulless ear”²⁹, the vast majority of these sounds are dismissed as incorrect usage of English language”. As a consequence, there is a considerable stigma towards AAVE’s users that as said by Rickford et al. (2015, p. 11817) “trigger discrimination in the workplace, housing market, and schools”.

Besides that, it is necessary to draw attention to at least two points in this work. The first is that although we are mentioning some aspects related to pronunciation, we cannot forget that depending on several factors, in which the social ones play an important role, there are a few cases of variation among the speakers. Secondly, approaching each one of these aspects would make this work very extensive; therefore, here we present a couple of the most notorious ones.

(I) The case of *-th* sound

The *-th* sound in AAVE can be substituted by /t/, /f/, /d/, /v/ depending on the voicing aspect. If the *-th* sound is voiceless it will be produced as /t/ in most of the cases and as /f/

²⁸ It was written in capital letters to indicate that this is a stressed “been”.

²⁹ Expression used by Rickford and Rickford (2000) to refer to those people who are not familiar with the Black Vernacular English variety and that normally criticize it.

mostly at the end of words. See Table 1. The substitution for /d/ happens in cases in which the *-th* are voiced, and the rule applies to the majority of situations. However, the substitution from the interdental sound for the labiodental /v/ only happens in the middle or at the ends of words as shown in Table 2.

Examples:

Table 1. -Th sound substitution for /t/ and /f/

Word	Standard American English	AAVE
Think	/θɪŋk/	/tɪŋk/
Tooth	/'tu:θ/	/'tu:f/

Source: Cited in Rickford and Rickford (2000, p.105)

Table 2. -Th sound substitution for /d/ and /v/

Word	Standard American English	AAVE
Them	/'ðem/	/'dem/
Mother	/'mʌðə/	/'mʌdə/ or /'mʌvə/
Bathe	/beɪð/	/beɪd/ or /'beɪv/

Source: Cited in Rickford and Rickford (2000, p.105)

(II) Weakening of final consonants

This phenomenon is normally described as the deletion of the final consonants, but according to Rickford and Rickford (2000, p. 103) it does not clearly demonstrate what happens since “the practice of dropping the final g in words like walkin’ and singin’ - does not actually involve deletion, but the replacement of one type of nasal [...] with another”. In other words, what happens is the substitution of the velar nasal for the alveolar. Other examples of that can be identified in the words: “sleepin’, doin’ goin’, drinkin’ and others.

Another pronunciation aspect related to that has to do with the simplification of the clusters, in which now it really happens the deletion of the final stops, such as in: <<desk → des’ and hand → han’ >> (cited in Rickford and Rickford, 2000, p. 104). This phenomenon is not random and also follows the rule of voicing.

(III) Metathesis

According to the Oxford Learner’s dictionaries (2021), metathesis can be defined as “a change in the order of sounds or letters in a word”. The most notorious case of that happens in the word “ask”, which in the AAVE is pronounced as /æks/. Both Rickford (2000) and Thomas (2007) agree with the fact that this is the most stigmatized and stereotyped pronunciation of the dialect. Other examples of metathesis can be identified in the words *wasp* and *grasp*, in which /sp/ changes to /ps/.

(IV) Vowels

One of the most highlighted cases as to vowels has to do with the “Monophthongization of /aɪ/ in open syllables and before nasals or voiced obstruents” and the “merger of /ɪ/ and /e/ before syllable-final nasals” (Pollock and Meredith, 2001, p. 49). It is important to notice that some of these aspects also happen in a similar way in Southern White Vernacular English (SWVE).

Examples:

Table 3. Different realizations of vowel sounds in AAVE

Word	Standard American English	AAVE
pie	/paɪ/	/pa:/
ride	/raɪd/	/ra:d/
pen	/pen/	/pɪn/

Source: Cited in Pollock and Meredith (2001, p. 49)

(V) Word Stress

An aspect more related to prosody than to segmental variation is the word stress. In the case of AAVE, it has been found in some words a shift of the stress into the first syllable, differently from Standard English. According to Thomas (2007, p. 467) “This process is also well known in SWVE. Pederson et al. (1986-1992) found it among both African Americans and Europeans Americans in the Gulf states and more common among lower social levels”. The author presents as some of the examples to this particularity the words: “*DEcember, JUly, POlice, and HOtel*”.

(VI) Intonation

Finally, when it comes to pronunciation, there is a few research that has identified some variation in the intonation of BEV users. In general, suprasegmental features are not normally the focus of the works, and those who investigate dialects tend to worry much less about these aspects.

Theorists such as Tarone (1975), Lomans (1975), Jun and Foreman (1996) detected some peculiarities in the pitch and tone of the speech of speakers. Tarone and Lomans (1975 apud Thomas, 2007, 468) noticed, for instance, that in exciting and spontaneous utterances there is a tendency to use a wider pitch range that generally becomes a falsetto. However, in reading, chances are that this pitch becomes narrowed. This phenomenon is also pointed out by Rickford and Rickford (2000) when referring to the research of Rickford in 1972, in which it was identified a variation in the intonation of Black speakers who were encouraged to say the sentence: “Hey what’s happening”. On the author's words:

Acoustic phonetic analysis revealed that the two black speakers did indeed show wider variation in pitch and intonation (with their voices rising higher and falling lower) than the whites, even when their pronunciation of individual consonants and vowels was more similar. (RICKFORD and RICKFORD, 2000, p. 102).

Another aspect that was also found was in Jun and Lomans (1996) investigations. They perceived that at the beginning of sentences, AAVE speakers tend to raise their tone, and in *yes/no* questions (normally produced with a “rising final contour” in the speech of European Americans) was reported a variation ³⁰in the final contour, showing this way, an ethnic difference (THOMAS, 2007, p. 468).

3.1.7 Vocabulary

Rickford and Rickford (2000) make reference to two authoritative manuals to AAVE, “Juba to five: a dictionary of African American Slang” written by Clarence Major and “Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner” by Geneva Smitherman. Besides these, they also refer to some other informal glossaries that can serve as a good help to understand the words in this dialect better.

³⁰AAVE tends to present a falling final pitch in *yes/no* questions in threatening and formal events, and a rising final pitch in informal and familiar situations. Tarone (1973, p. 12)

One thing to consider as to this topic relates to the language dynamic, Pollock and Memphis observe that,

One of the greatest challenges in describing a nonstandard dialect such as AAVE is accounting for the dynamic nature of the system. Because of the relatively rapid changes that often occur in non-standard dialects, any static description of features is destined to become outdated quickly. (POLLOCK and MEMPHIS, 2001, p. 48)

Due to this dynamic nature of language, new studies need to be conducted constantly in order to analyze the directions by which the dialects are taken, and also consider the variables connected to it. Rickford and Rikford (2000, p. 93) note that a distinctiveness of the AAVE vocabulary is that it can clearly marks not only ethnic differences but also variation in social classes, according to them in the studies of Labov in 1992 that aimed at investigating how teenagers used and comprehended slang words it was noticed that the social variable ‘race’ ended up to be the most significant. In table 4 we present a list of the most common vocabulary in AAVE and the version of these words in Standard American English.

Table 4. Common vocabularies in AAVE

AAVE	Standard American English
The can	Jail
Smoke	weed
Blunt	getting high
Jack	Phone
Homeboy	A good friend
Fresh	New
A’ ight or i-ght	OK, All right
Type	Very
Crib	Home
Bounce	Leave
Celly	Cell phone
Krunk	Exciting
Wifey	Main girlfriend

Source: Present 5. Black English: vocabulary peculiarities What is. Accessed in 16/09/21

3.2 The legacy of African Influences in the English spoken by African Americans and in Brazilian Portuguese

The history of the African American Vernacular English until the present date is a little confusing. There are at least three theories with respect to its origins; therefore we can affirm that this is not a consensual subject among authors. According to Rickford and Rickford (2000, p. 129) the first theory as to the origins of AAVE concerns the influence of the African languages spoken by enslaved people who were brought to the United States during the 17th and 19th centuries. The second hypothesis disregards the “*Africanness*” origins since it considers that because of the catastrophic experience of slavery all the African linguistic features were extinguished making room for the influences of the English dialects spoken by white people who lived in America (Anglicist Hypothesis). The third one relates to the influence of creole varieties that are spoken nowadays in countries such as Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana, and Barbados.

One aspect that can be observed in research that approach this content is the strong influence of the African languages, mostly in pronunciation and grammar. This gives special credit to the first theory concerning the AAVE origins, which is also referred to as the Africanist hypothesis. Some examples identified in the book: “Spoken Soul” defended by Africanists ³¹that support the first theory are:

Table 5. Evidence of African languages influences in the Black English Vernacular.

Phenomenon	Example	Evidence
1. The <i>th</i> sound pronounced as /t/, /f/, /d/ or /v/	Thin as tin Them as dem	“The West African languages spoken by the ancestors of today’s African Americans did not include the <i>th</i> sound”. (Rickford and Rickford, 2000, p. 147).
2. The simplification of clusters by deletion of the final consonant	Test as tes’ Hand as han’	“[...] in the deep phonology of African American speech, in consonance with rules of the West and Niger-Congo African languages, certain

³¹ Theorists that defend the hypothesis that AAVE came from the African languages spoken by slaves who lived in America in the 16th and 17th centuries.

		consonant cluster or consonant blend do not occur". (Rickford and Rickford, 2000, p. 150).
3. R deletion after vowels	After as afta Your as yo	"It is reasonable to trace the absence of l and r after vowels [...] to the West African languages. British dialects did not start dropping r in this position until the mid 1700s after the basics of slave speech here were almost certainly long established". (Rickford and Rickford, 2000, p. 151).
4. Copula absence	He is happy as He Ø happy.	"Many West African languages and the deep, or basilectal varieties of Creole English in the Caribbean regularly have no copula before adjectives, [...] so this could be one model for copula absence in Spoken Soul." (Rickford and Rickford, 2000, p. 155).
5. Invariant be and remote past marked by been (aspect categories)	He is busy as He be busy. She BEEN married.	"The very presence of certain aspect categories in Spoken Soul [...] may be attributed to their prevalence in West African languages. Even the existence of a category of remote past may go back to distinctions in languages like LuGanda and KiKongo." (Rickford and Rickford, 2000, p. 154).

Source: Rickford and Rickford (2000)

Although the Africanist aspect brings excellent evidence to the probable origin of the AAVE, it is important to remember the two other hypotheses, the Anglicist and the Creolist,

these also play an important role in the formation of the dialect. The authors note that “[...] African, Creole, and British English sources must be acknowledged as having contributed to the development of Spoken Soul (Rickford and Rickford, 2000, p. 157). Another more recent historical aspect that needs to be mentioned is the Great Migration (approximately between 1915-1970), a period in which Black people went from rural South to the North, Midwest, and West and also an event that contributed to the divergence in the speech of Black and Whites. (THOMAS, 2007. p. 452)

A parallel can be made with Brazilian Portuguese, in which there is strong evidence of the legacy of Africanity not only in language but also in the culture as a whole. Luckesi et al. (2009) in the book “*O português afro-brasileiro*”³² advocate for this African influence and assert that both the Indigenous and African contribution has been ignored. In the author’s perspective:

On the linguistic level, the contribution of indigenous and African segments to the formation of the Brazilian linguistic reality has been belittled, sometimes for ideological reason determined by a vision of “cultural superiority” of the European colonizer, sometimes form immanent theoretical options, which circumscribe the internal logic of the linguistic system as motivations for how its changes. (LUCKESI et al. 2009, p. 330, our translation)³³

This influence is reinforced by González (1998, p. 70) and can be found in her famous quotation: “What I name “Pretuguês” (Black Portuguese) is nothing more than the Brazilian Portuguese Africanization”. Nascimento (2019, p. 54) also defends this origin stating that despite the constant attacks and attempts of silencing the Africanity mark in Brazilian Portuguese is very much alive. One of the possible influences of this Africanist origin can be noted in the change of the phoneme /l/ by the /r/ as in “*framengo*” according to González (1983, p. 238 apud Nascimento, 2019, p. 54). Other influences, in accordance with Castro (2001, p. 1 apud Nascimento, 2019, p. 55), can be found in the presence of vowels in pronunciation in words such as, “*ri.ti.mo or adi.vo.ga.do*”³⁴, in the deletion of the plural in the noun phrase: “*Os meninoX*”³⁵, for example, among other cases.³⁶

³² Afro-Brazilian Portuguese

³³ No plano linguístico, a contribuição dos segmentos indígenas e africanos para a formação da realidade linguística brasileiro tem sido menosprezada, ora por razões ideológicas determinadas por uma visão de “superioridade cultural” do colonizador europeu, ora por opções teóricas imanentistas, que circunscrevem à lógica interna do sistema linguístico como motivações para como suas mudanças;

³⁴ Rhythm and lawyer.

³⁵ The boys (realized without agreement between the article and the noun in Portuguese)

³⁶ Some of the authors, such as González and Castro, that defend the Africanist influence in Brazilian Portuguese state that these influences can be identified as in the examples above; however, it is needed to say that this is also a little controversial because some other theorists do not agree that there are enough evidence to say that this

Luckesi et al. (2009) support that the assumption that the popular varieties of Brazilian Portuguese affected by the changes caused by the linguistic contact among languages is one of the biggest proofs of the Africanity legacies left. He states that, “The historical process of formation of the Brazilian linguistic reality points to the occurrence of significant changes of the popular varieties of Portuguese, due to the contact between languages.” (LUCKESI et al, 2009, 1053).

Therefore, it is notorious that both the Black Vernacular English and the popular varieties of Brazilian Portuguese carries an African heritage in many linguistic and cultural aspects, not normally brought to light but that can be evidenced from the research of those who have been trying to investigate the effects of prejudice and racism towards these varieties.

influence affected these cases. Nonetheless, we add this to our research as one possible legacy of the African languages just as we pointed out in the paragraph.

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As presented in the introduction, we assume that the discrimination towards varieties of resistance such as the AAVE and dialects of Brazilian Portuguese has something beyond the linguistic stigma, such things encompass social factors, the speaker himself and his/her socio-history, the geographic region, *etc.* To discuss and verify this idea, from the works of authors who approach the topic in question, we organized a table in which we compiled a set of quotations that confirm the hypothesis raised. As noted in table 6, on the right side, we placed the name of the work and the author, and on the left, the aspects related to the factors involved in discriminatory attitudes. Later, we interpret and analyze these perspectives to see to what extent our hypotheses are verifiable.

Table 6. Theorists' thought as to the stigma towards AAVE

AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS	QUOTATIONS
(1) O inglês vernacular afro-americano: descrição e implicações sociolinguísticas. (STEIN, 2020).	“Is it possible, then, that AAVE’s discrimination has something that transcends linguistic stigmatization? Why do some linguists seem to want to blame the speakers of this variety as the ones who are corrupting the English language?” (STEIN, 2020, p. 53, our translation). ³⁷
(2) Preconceito Linguístico. (BAGNO, 2015).	“[...] what is at stake here is not the language, but the person who speaks that language, and the geographic region where that person lives.” (BAGNO, 2015, p. 69, our translation). ³⁸
(3) Uma análise tradutológica do Inglês Vernacular afro-americano sob o olhar da sociolinguística. LIMA, 2017).	“We conclude that the issue of African American Vernacular English and its speakers is political, sociocultural and extremely prejudiced, and that it goes far beyond the linguistic plane, also affecting the society in which we live, and especially the people who reproduce this variety.” (LIMA,

³⁷ “Será, então, que a discriminação do AAVE tem algo que transcende a estigmatização linguística? Por que alguns linguistas parecem querer culpar os falantes dessa variedade como os únicos que estão corrompendo a língua inglesa.” (STEIN, 2020, p. 53).

³⁸ “[...] o que está em jogo aqui não é a língua, mas a pessoa que fala essa língua e a região geográfica onde essa pessoa vive.” (BAGNO, 2015, p. 69).

	2017, p. 12, our translation). ³⁹
(4) African American Vernacular English is not standard English with mistakes. (PULLUM, 1999).	“They can try to make the case that speakers of AAVE are bad or stupid or nasty or racially inferior if they want to, but they will need arguments that do not depend on language, because linguistic study of AAVE makes one thing quite clear: AAVE is not standard English with mistakes” (PULLUM, 1999, p. 58).
(5) Making sense of “Bad English”. (PETERSON, 2019).	“The further distinction lent through physical appearance is an automatic visual cue that causes others to mentally place someone in a certain social group [...], an example is to be made of people of African descent in the United States, whose families were not part of the institution of slavery. Independent immigrants from Africa have, in many ways, been decisive in their effort to distance themselves from descendants of slaves and their history.” (PETERSON, 2019a, p. 69).
(6) Making sense of “Bad English”. (PETERSON, 2019).	“Certain features of a language become associated with certain social groups, and the language, rather than the people directly, becomes the target of blame and denigration. It is one step removed, then, but it is still racism and classism. Think about it: when you criticize certain aspects of a language, who do you consider the main users of these linguistic features? Is it really the aspects of language you don’t like, or is it, at its core, aspects of the speakers associated with those language features?” (PETERSON, 2019b, p. 34).
(7) Língua e Políticas de exclusão: O caso do Inglês vernacular Afro-americano (EBONICS). (XAVIER, 2007).	“What seems to be behind all this controversy around the AAVE is the attempt to explain a flawed and inconsiderate educational system in American society as to African Americans education. The problem around Ebonics has a political, cultural, ideological, and prejudiced nature, transposing the linguistic field, and also affecting the social sphere.” (XAVIER,

³⁹ "Conclui-se que a problemática acerca do Inglês Vernacular Afro-Americano e de seus falantes é político, sociocultural e extremamente preconceituoso, e que ela vai muito além do plano linguístico, atingindo também a sociedade em que vivemos e principalmente as pessoas que reproduzem essa variedade." (LIMA, 2017, p. 12).

	2007, p. 4, our translation). ⁴⁰
(8) If Black English isn't a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is? (BALDWIN, 1979).	"The argument concerning the use, or the status, or the reality, of Black English is rooted in American history and has absolutely nothing to do with the question the argument supposes itself to be posing. The argument has nothing to do with language itself but with the role of language. Language, incontestably, reveals the speaker. Language, also, far more dubiously, is meant to define the other--and, in this case, the other is refusing to be defined by a language that has never been able to recognize him." (BALDWIN, 1979, p. 798).
(9) African American Vernacular English and Education. (LANEHART, 1998).	"The reason that African American English has drawn such fire is not because it is inferior, but because it is spoken by Black people. (FOSTER, 1997, p. 11 apud LANEHART, 1998, p. 122).
(10) African American Vernacular English and Education. (LANEHART, 1998).	"[...] the choice for African Americans has been very limited historically because we have been told that our experiences do not matter or that they are not relevant, un part, because they are different and therefore inferior. We are again told we have to melt; we have to accomodate another's sociocultural and historical contexts because ours are not acceptable. That is not acceptable." (LANEHART, 1998, p. 130).

In quotation (1) it is possible to notice that the author raises a similar question to the one we are addressing in this work, and that is the reason why we put it in the first place. Even though he does not present in detail the aspects related to the prejudice towards the Black Vernacular variety, he demonstrates his concern regarding the problem stating that the discrimination "transcends linguistic stigmatization". One aspect that draws our attention in this quotation refers to the fact that according to him the negative attitude is also common among some linguists who believe that speakers of this dialect are damaging the English language. As

⁴⁰ "O que parece estar por trás de toda esta controvérsia em torno do AAVE é a tentativa de explicar um sistema educacional falho e desatencioso, na sociedade estadunidense, no que diz respeito à educação dos afro-americanos. O problema em torno do Ebonics é de cunho político, cultural, ideológico e preconceituoso, transpondo o campo linguístico e afetando também a esfera social." (XAVIER, 2007, p. 4).

a consequence, we assume that this posture could influence society negatively since those who apparently should descriptively look at language, are the ones who reinforce the existence of good and bad ways of speaking, and as a result, it is reproduced by schools, by the media, and many other institutions.

In quotation (2) we bring forward the thought of a Brazilian linguist who goes against the grain. He observes that one of the reasons that leads a person to discriminate against somebody for the way one expresses has to do with the geographic region, that is, the place where a person comes from. In Brazilian Portuguese, this idea is recurrent when plenty of people from other parts of the country associate the Northeast with drought, poverty, bad education, crime, among other stereotypes very distant from reality. However, this is also true for AAVE speakers, who normally are connected with poor urban places, and that for living sometimes in spots with economic disadvantages are tagged as uneducated, violent, impolite, *etc.*

Lima's argument concerning this problem in quotation (3) highlights two other aspects: The political and the socio-cultural. He agrees with our perspective when stating that prejudice goes "beyond the linguistic plane" and adds that it affects our society since in our everyday life we see very clearly the effects of this discrimination. The political and socio-cultural character according to the author is not only attached to linguistics, but also to the role this language has in society and to the way how the speaker will talk and self-identify in society (STEIN, 2017, p. 13). What can be noted is that they are put in an inferior position because they do not "fit" in what people consider to be correct and, as a result, it leads to segregation and exclusion.

In quotation (4) Pullum is very categorical when asserting that "AAVE is not standard English with mistakes". The idea of the users of this dialect as exterminators of the English language can fit well in this train of thought since what is believed by society is that they corrupt the language because they fill it with slang, a strange pronunciation and vocabulary, unique syntactic structures, *etc.* People normally believe that AAVE users are speaking a language that in spite of having similarities with the English language it is a deformation, deviation, and digression (the 3Ds) from the correct way of speaking. If by any chance this way of thinking were right, people's way of speaking in general, would also fit in the 3Ds conception since nobody speaks 100% according to the Standard Norm. The idea is that, as stated by Guy, 2010 (apud Lima, 2017, p. 11) the attack towards AAVE and some other dialects is a way of social control to keep a group in a position of superiority while keeping others in a lower position. This way, the first group maintains their dominance in many aspects in which language is also included.

Quotations (5) and (6) bring to our attention Peterson's statements found in the book "Making sense of *Bad English*", which supports many of the ideas of the present work. In (5) she refers to the physical appearance (skin color, features normally associated with Black people) as a non-linguistic aspect that plays an important role in the issue discussed. Firstly, because it puts people as belonging to a certain group, while it excludes them from others. Secondly, she notes that there is an effort by immigrants from Africa who live in the United States to dissociate themselves from their descendants (enslaved people and their history). Maybe it happens because this association, which we relate to coloniality, is still connected to racism and discrimination, or to their desire to approach ethno-racial dominant groups. In (6) she encourages the readers to reflect on the core of the problem, which as suggested by her questions, is linked to aspects of the association people make not only with linguistic features but also with the features of the speakers themselves. Besides the language, these speakers are also stigmatized for their phenotypic features, the group they are inserted in, their origins, *etc.*

Xavier, in quotation (7) also mentions the political, cultural, and ideological aspects as elements in the nature of the issue. This affects society as a whole and is clearly observed in the American education system as well as in its inability to deal with the problem, fostering exclusionary practices in the classroom, as presented by Labov (1972) especially in chapter 5 (The Logic of Nonstandard English) in the book "Language in the inner city".

In quotation (8), Baldwin reaffirms the AAVE as being a language of resistance when he remarks that "the other is refusing to be defined by a language that has never been able to recognize him". In this statement, it can be noted that users of the dialect fight a tireless fight to survive (both symbolically and literally). He also adds that the argument to the status of this variety is attached to American history, that is, all the journey Black people went through to keep their cultural heritage alive, having to fight against attempts of silencing mainly provoked by the colonization process and its effects nowadays.

In (9) Lanehart recognizes that the "fire", which can be understood as the criticism and discrimination against this dialect has nothing to do with its features itself but with who speaks it. Saying that, he seems to agree with some of the points of view mentioned previously. Lastly, in quotation (10), which is actually a complement to what was asserted in (9), the author, who also includes himself in the discourse for being an African American, points out one of the consequences of the epistemicide and linguicide discussed in the theoretical framework. It refers to the annulment of experiences considered inferior and the obligation to melt. In other words, it has to do with "*the melting pot ideology*" that obliges some people and languages to

lose their identity to adapt to the current standards and cultures considered to be in a position of superiority.

4.1 Pedagogical implications

Once having understood and reflected on the features, the history, and the issues involved with the African American Vernacular English it is necessary to have a look at why and how teachers should take this discussion to their classrooms. Plenty of the professionals that work with language have heard or participated in the debate of the importance of working with different varieties of the English language in a classroom. This is not an easy job, and it requires research from the teacher, and a reflection when it comes to, for example, understanding that in a single country there are many varieties and dialects.

One important fact to take into consideration is that due to the reduced time and conditions we have in our Brazilian schools, it is hard and almost impossible to teach all the “Englishes” existing in the world. But how can we make our students aware of the existence of this deep ocean if we are not aware of that in the first place?

We also believe that being aware of the “menu” of possibilities is not enough, it is also necessary to give special attention to the way how these ways of speaking are being addressed. Without considering that, it is very likely that instead of giving students the chance of knowing different varieties, they create an idea full of stereotypes and prejudices towards some of these varieties. To carry out this work, the teacher needs to be prepared to go beyond the surface. At the same time he addresses linguistic features, he also fosters a debate regarding the issues that it involves. This work should be done, without value judgments, and encouraging the students to investigate the topic, and opening spaces for them to express their critical thought and concerns related to what he has researched and learned. This should include their beliefs towards the theme and the similarities they find with the issues of their own language.

We also believe that the teacher should address these varieties as a possibility of communication in the English language but also being aware and letting their students aware of other options that can be used in different settings such as the academic, the casual, the familiar, *etc.* When teaching the AAVE, the teacher should also highlight its presence in music, movies, TV series, and some literary works, and not only limit the discussion to the negative perspective that generates the issue.

Maybe, this way, from a specific class some students will arouse curiosity to go further in the research of this and other varieties and enlarge their horizons as to different ways of

speaking in the English language. As a result, it can also contribute to encouraging them to reflect on the issues in the Brazilian setting and to develop an intercultural attitude, in other words, to act with respect and tolerance towards ways of speaking around the world and within their country as well as to dialogue with different cultures.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Sometimes when dealing with some aspects related to language it is worth it sailing by other seas to encounter answers to issues that are not always restricted to the linguistic plane. By this work, it was possible to see how historical aspects⁴¹, ideologies, and certain attitudes to language are intrinsically related to the attacks suffered by varieties of resistance and how these issues are naturalized in society, reproduced, and sometimes not even taken as a problem worthy of discussion.

By the comprehension of some theories and concepts such as linguistic prejudice, linguistic racism, epistemicide, linguicide, language attitudes and ideology, structural and institutional racism it was possible to learn why nowadays it is still needed to debate and fight for rights and equity policies in many aspects of our social life, in which language plays a special role.

In this work, we understood some of the struggles of users of some dialects such as the African American Vernacular English and some Brazilian Portuguese dialects (especially the Northeastern dialects) that are very often the target of discrimination and prejudice. Besides that, we also noticed how users of these varieties are represented negatively by the mass media and sometimes even by some scholars in academia. Furthermore, we discussed that despite the changes with this respect, due to the fights of some movements, there is a need to stay attentive since the issue discussed is still present in our society, and manifested especially in symbolic ways.

Throughout the discussion raised, it was possible to verify that the stigmatization towards these varieties goes beyond linguistic prejudice and it is connected to ethnic, social, cultural, political, and ideological aspects, such as the speakers themselves, their history, their geographic region, their culture, their physical appearance, the group they are inserted in, their socioeconomic status, and also the existence of a cultural superiority that seeks to maintain their dominance towards marginalized groups through a kind of social control.

Related to this we also defended the Africanity influences, which we consider to be very much alive in the American and Brazilian culture and many linguistic aspects of these varieties as we presented in the section that approached the main features of the Black Vernacular dialect, and where we also brought a piece of information as to the broad process of linguistic transmission as a result of the contact Brazilian Portuguese had with African languages.

⁴¹ Colonization, slavery, etc.

To contribute and add even more to the discussion we found it indispensable to present some of the more common aspects of the AAVE, as well as some knowledge of the theories that are associated with its origins. When it comes to the linguistic features with mentioned aspects such as the negation, the copula omission, the invariant be, the subject-verb agreement, and the remote “been”. Moreover, we also mentioned some phonetic and phonological aspects, such as the substitution of the “-th sound” for other phonemes, the weakening of final consonants, the metathesis, the different realizations of some vowel groups, the word stress, and some peculiarities of intonation. Lastly, we also added a table with a lexicon group characteristic of the dialect.

In the historical section, we mentioned the three theories identified in our readings that explains a little bit of the dialect origins. Among the theories, we pointed out the Africanist, Anglisticist, and Creolist theories. Despite our belief in the Africanist influence, we acknowledged that chances are of the contribution of the three perspectives in the development of the BEV.

Lastly, from the use of quotations found in works that approached the thematic line we are addressing, we discussed and interpreted the authors' perspectives trying to unveil some of the elements involved in the stigmatization of dialects of resistance. Additionally, we opened a space to reflect on our social responsibility as educators when working with these varieties in our classrooms. With this respect, we mentioned the importance of going beyond the surface and fostering a debate that leads students to develop an intercultural posture and critical thinking as to issues concerning the language and its different ways of speaking.

In a nutshell, we believe the approach we give to language in this research needs to be considered because it reveals the sufferings people go through for belonging to a certain group or speaking in a specific way. Furthermore, language should awaken our interest because of the annulment and silencing of these people's voices, experiences, identity, and culture that mostly happens through it. This concern is the engine that instigates us to investigate the aspects behind the discriminated people (in which, I include myself) suffer for expressing their/our identity in communicative situations. Therefore, we consider that only by being aware of that, it is possible to strengthen our shields to continue battling and amplifying our voices that nobody has ever completely managed to silence, despite the multiple attempts.

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