

Pontificia Universidad Católica del
Ecuador



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Seréis mis testigos

Linguistics

**“The role of AAVE in the L2 English
Classroom from a teacher’s perspective”**

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1. Introduction: Investigation problem and justification.

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a distinct variety of English predominantly spoken in urban areas. AAVE possesses unique grammatical structures and vocabulary features that set it apart from Standard English. Although often perceived as an informal mode of English, it represents a legitimate and complex linguistic system.

Globally, there are numerous varieties of English, but this research specifically focuses on AAVE due to its prevalence and usage within Ecuador. AAVE has a rich phonological and grammatical history, making it a significant dialect within the spectrum of English varieties. It is anticipated that AAVE will continue to be prominent and gain greater recognition alongside Standard English.

The purpose of this project is to evaluate if African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or other forms of non-standard English are being integrated into Ecuador's educational curriculum. While Ecuador's educational system is generally regarded as effective, there is significant potential for improvement. English language teaching is vital for our academic growth, and often prioritizes standard English as the only acceptable form. However, examining English education from the perspective of non-standard English offers an intriguing approach. This is the primary focus of my project. A crucial aspect of this project is understanding the teaching methods our educators use to develop the linguistic skills of future graduates. By conducting an extensive survey of educators in Quito, we can obtain balanced insights into the presence and application of non-standard English within our educational system. This investigation aims to reimagine English language instruction in Ecuador, thereby enhancing opportunities for international engagement.

The survey will include questions about the integration of AAVE into classroom teaching and educators' familiarity with AAVE and its relevance to their professional environment. Although these questions may appear straightforward, they are deeply significant for the overall goals of this research.

Recent international rankings of English proficiency in Ecuador have shed light on English teaching in the country. Methodologies and practices have been called into question, sparking a debate on which practices are most adequate for foreign English teaching. It is often questioned whether teachers should teach nonstandard varieties of English in the classroom including AAVE. Some instructors argue that students should only be taught the standard, while others advocate for exposing students to several varieties of English. This polemic will be examined in this paper.

2. Objectives

Analyze how teachers in the public and private educational system in Ecuador work with AAVE.

1. Compare, the importance of non-standard (AAVE) and standard English for a different way of learning.
2. Illustrate, with my survey how English is being taught.
3. Prioritize, AAVE on the educational system as another resource for learning.
4. Collaborate, with teachers with more information regarding African American Vernacular English and how it is being spoken by native people.

3. Literary review

Zang (2020) presents distinct linguistic features regarding African American Vernacular English (AAVE), notably recognized as Ebonics. AAVE has been a subject of extensive discourse among sociolinguists, who contend that it transcends mere colloquialisms, positing it as a distinct language variant apart from conventional English. While quantifying its speakers remains challenging, various linguistic characteristics—namely, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical structures—distinguish AAVE from standard English.

Regarding vocabulary, AAVE employs standard English words with nuanced meanings shaped by its dialect. The adoption of terms from West African languages imbues words with layered connotations, such as "bogus" meaning "fake" and "dig" signifying "understand." Additionally, calques or loan translations, as evidenced by phrases like "bad eye" for "nasty look," highlight the lexical richness of AAVE (Sidnell, n.d.).

In terms of pronunciation, phonological studies underscore variations in consonant and vowel articulation, including distinctive "th" sounds, vowel stress, and nasalized vowels. These phonetic intricacies contribute to the phonological identity of AAVE, enriching its oral expression (Sidnell, n.d.).

Crucially, grammatical structures in AAVE diverge from standard English conventions. The use of the verb "be" exemplifies this distinction, as AAVE employs it non-conventionally, deviating from standard English's copular function. Furthermore, grammatical markers of tense and agreement manifest differently in AAVE, as exemplified by constructions like "he has been married" (AAVE) versus "he has been married" (standard English). Negation also operates uniquely in AAVE, with features such as the utilization of "ain't" in place of standard negations like "have not" or "did not," as well as the phenomenon of negative inversion (Sidnell, n.d.).

Jose (2021) illustrated with the finding of the educational implications of AAVE. The recognition of its linguistic validity by the Oakland School Board in 1996 marked a progressive departure from conventional pedagogical norms. This recognition aimed to empower students of color by acknowledging and incorporating their linguistic heritage into educational practices, akin to approaches in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.

Critics, however, have contested the integration of AAVE into educational curricula, leading to contentious debates and policy reversals. Despite initial opposition, linguists have championed AAVE as a legitimate language variety with distinct grammatical rules, underscoring its cultural significance and educational potential (Jose, 2021).

Reflecting on English language instruction in Ecuador, challenges persist in achieving comprehensive proficiency among educators. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) benchmarks Ecuadorian English teachers at a proficiency level (B2) indicative of independent language use. However, disparities in proficiency levels among teachers underscore the need for enhanced training and resources to ensure effective English language instruction (Ureña, 2014).

Efforts to address these challenges, such as the "Go Teacher" project initiated by the SENESCYT in 2013, have sought to improve English language proficiency among Ecuadorian educators. Despite such initiatives, sustained progress remains elusive, necessitating a comprehensive review of existing educational policies and practices (Ureña, 2014).

De Angelis (2022) stated that African American Vernacular English underscores broader concerns regarding English language education in Ecuador. As Ecuador endeavors to enhance its global competitiveness and educational standards, addressing deficiencies in English language instruction emerges as a pivotal imperative. Informed by international assessments and scholarly discourse, efforts to bolster English language proficiency must be prioritized to ensure Ecuador's integration into the global community. This article addresses the pressing concerns confronting our nation's educational landscape. It delineates the apprehensions stemming from international assessments regarding Ecuador's proficiency in the English language, highlighting significant deficiencies across various metrics, particularly in proficiency.

Media headlines decrying Ecuador's English language proficiency relative to other nations reflect a sobering reality. Institutions such as Education First (EF) and the English Proficiency Index (EPI) serve as primary arbiters of this evaluative process, furnishing critical insights and assistance aimed at ameliorating our citizens' English language skills. In an era marked by globalization, Ecuadorians must cultivate linguistic proficiency to

navigate an increasingly interconnected world and uphold educational standards commensurate with global norms.

A longitudinal examination spanning the past decade reveals discernible trends in Ecuador's English language proficiency, thereby informing strategic interventions necessary to fortify our nation's educational framework.

Report year	Ecuador's score	Category	Regional ranking
2021	440	Very low proficiency	18 of 20 countries
2020	411	Very low proficiency	19 of 19 countries
2019	46.57	Very low proficiency	19 of 19 countries
2018	48.52	Low proficiency	13 of 17 countries
2017	49.42	Low proficiency	13 of 15 countries
2016	49.13	Low proficiency	9 of 14 countries
2015	51.67	Low proficiency	5 of 14 countries
2014	51.05	Low proficiency	4 of 14 countries
2013	46.90	Very low proficiency	9 of 13 countries
2012	47.19	Very low proficiency	9 of 13 countries
2011	44.54	Very low proficiency	10 of 13 countries

Chart 1: Scores of Ecuador in the EF and EPI rankings from 2011 to 2021.

The Education First and the English Proficiency Index categorize proficiency levels from "very low" to "very high," with Ecuador consistently positioned within the "very low" to "low" proficiency range, thereby placing it among the countries with relatively lower English proficiency. As is customary in many nations, Ecuador employs a framework delineating six levels of linguistic competence: A1 and A2 representing basic proficiency, B1 and B2 indicating intermediate or independent proficiency, and C1 and C2 signifying proficient or advanced mastery. According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), language mastery encompasses communicative competence, encompassing linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies (Council of

Europe, 2021). Aligning with the CEFR standards, proficiency in English implies the ability to engage with others on sociocultural levels.

Although Ecuador's proficiency level stands at A2, classified as "low," this designation does not imply a complete absence of English knowledge and application. Individuals at this proficiency level exhibit initiative and possess the capability to engage in positive interactions, initiate conversations, respond appropriately, and pose familiar questions. Moreover, they demonstrate comprehension of simple sentences, employ common expressions, and articulate basic descriptions of personal backgrounds, routines, and past events.

Understanding the foundational aspects of this proficiency level is crucial as Ecuador endeavors to advance its English proficiency. By examining the framework established by the Common European Framework of Reference and its implications for Ecuadorian results, avenues for addressing this challenge emerge. Notably, Adeline De Angelis has proposed a solution to enhance English proficiency in Ecuador through the implementation of the TOEFL exam (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Unlike the EF and EPI assessments, the TOEFL exam offers individualized scores and comprehensive feedback, evaluating proficiency across the four language skills: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Data derived from TOEFL exams conducted between 2013 and 2020 diverge from those depicted in Chart 1, presenting results as average scores, as illustrated in Chart 2.

Report year	Ecuador's average score	Equivalent CEFR level
2020	86	B2
2019	84*	B2
2018	491	B1
2017	519	B1
2016	512	B1
2015	507	B1
2014	496	B1
2013	495	B1

Chart 2: Ecuador's average TOEFL scores and CEFR equivalencies.

Based on the second table, we can ascertain that English proficiency in Ecuador remains at an intermediate level, specifically between B1 and B2.

De Angelis (2022) has identified various factors from both charts, noting discrepancies likely due to differences in sampling. When individuals prepare for the TOEFL exam, they often study intensively to achieve a higher score, partly because the TOEFL is a paid exam, which adds pressure to perform well. Unlike the TOEFL, which evaluates specific skills, the EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) does not offer such assessments. Despite this, the EF and EPI results still paint a discouraging picture of Ecuador's English proficiency, as the country has consistently ranked last in Latin America since 2018. However, when comparing TOEFL exam results, it appears that Ecuador's English proficiency is on par with other countries overall.

To fully understand the current state and developments in English proficiency in Ecuador over the past decade, we must analyze the results provided by EF and EPI more narratively. "The Education First (EF) and the English Proficiency Index (EPI) have

shown that Ecuadorians struggle with learning English, or perhaps the Ecuadorian educational system is ineffective at teaching it” (De Angelis, 2022, p.4).

While these observations do not offer direct solutions for improving English proficiency or equity in education, the charts help identify potential areas for enhancement in the educational system. Ecuador’s proficiency level is not exceptionally low, nor is it a cause for embarrassment compared to other countries. As De Angelis (2022) suggested in her project, exploring alternative approaches to English learning is essential for guiding Ecuador toward educational equity and quality. The increasing number of Ecuadorians traveling to countries like the United States and Canada underscores the importance of English and non-standard English as a means of skill development. Therefore, the educational system and instructors must adopt diverse strategies and provide better guidance to those learning English.

4. Methodology (1-2 page)

The forthcoming survey will specifically target teachers residing in Ecuador, encompassing both the public and private sectors. The data collected will provide new insights into teachers' knowledge and perspectives regarding African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and its potential benefits for the educational system.

This survey will be conducted online, primarily utilizing tools such as Google Forms and Facebook as the main platforms for this investigation. To undertake this project, digital instruments, and online platforms will be employed rather than physical ones, as it is essential to analyze various factors to achieve the research objectives. Although the survey will be disseminated virtually, I have enlisted the assistance of friends working in private institutions around Quito to help distribute the survey to their fellow English teachers.

The survey is created with Google Forms and once finished I will copy the link of my survey and send it to the teachers. The utilization of Facebook as my main digital platform will let the teachers know what kind of topic I am implementing and what am I most centered on. With the help of my tutor Janine Matts, I had the opportunity to use two

Facebook pages which were “Ecuadorian Public School English Teachers” and “Ecuadorian English Teachers Community” which will help me gather more data from other provinces and not just Pichincha. I will answer any difficulties or problems they might have with the questions presented in my survey, with the survey there will be a little section explaining my project, what is it about, and thanking the community for their service. The survey will consist of multiple-choice questions first to understand in which category will the teachers be placed, as in age, gender, and even if they are local or foreign teachers. Teachers in their early 20s and above will be acquainted with this survey since I must analyze how our teachers know about the subject presented and how they are or will be implementing this information in their classes.

My project is heading towards the non-probability sampling because I want to identify the organization they work for, the years of experience they have, their gender, their age, their availability, and mainly the knowledge they have about my topic. The Non-probability sampling is mainly the first level of my project, to be more precise I will use convenience sampling since I will need easy access to teachers around Ecuador, and, the internet will help me. As said before, “Facebook” and other platforms are key for the gathering of data, it will give me as the researcher time to evaluate their answers and time for my fellow teachers to reply to my survey at any time given.

My investigation has many factors, but the primary one is the difference between standard and non-standard English. Other points to discuss are if teachers know about the topic and how they are going to implement it in their classes.

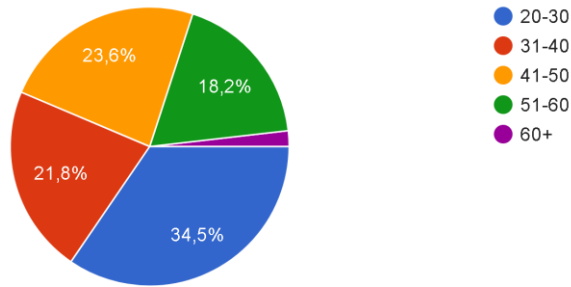
Not to discriminate against other types of dialects, but my project is centered on AAVE only. I am aware there are many other English languages, but African American Vernacular English is the most talked about in America since we can see and listen to people (mostly teenagers) talk this way.

After Analyzing the results from the Survey I will continue with a thorough examination and conclude if I targeted my objectives using graphics to demonstrate the use of AAVE.

I am basing my project on a quantitative and qualitative approach to understand the number of teachers that have this new approach of teaching or if they know about AAVE and how they would implement it in their classes.

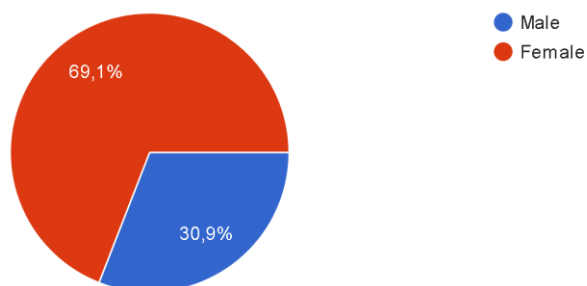
5. Data Analysis

Age
55 respuestas



The data extracted from the survey reveals that, out of 55 respondents, the majority of teachers in Ecuador are aged between 20 and 30. Following this age group, the next largest group consists of teachers aged 41 to 50, followed by those aged 31 to 40 and 51 to 60. There was only one teacher in the category of 60 and above. It is evident that a significant proportion of young teachers are present in Ecuador, which will be advantageous for my investigation.

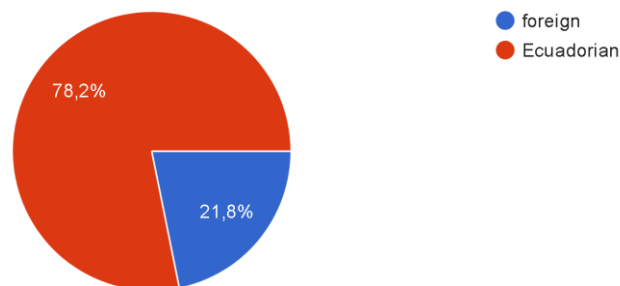
Gender
55 respuestas



In this chart, we can observe that a huge percentage of teachers are female leading with 69.1% and male teachers at 30.9%.

Are you a foreign or Ecuadorian teacher?

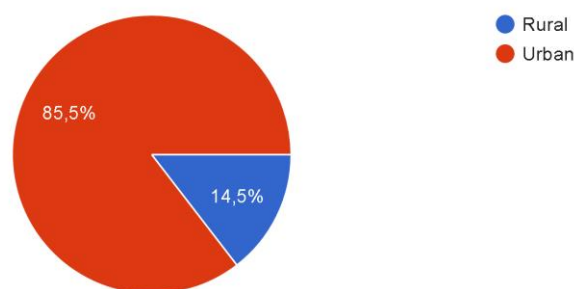
55 respuestas



It is remarkable to observe that Ecuador has a higher proportion of native teachers compared to foreign ones. This data allows us to draw specific conclusions. In response to questions about familiarity with African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and their knowledge of it, most teachers indicated they were not familiar with the concept and would not know how to teach this dialect or any other variant of non-standard English. Given that most of these teachers are natives, it is clear they do not possess a concrete understanding of this dialect or other English variants.

Do you teach in a rural or urban area?

55 respuestas

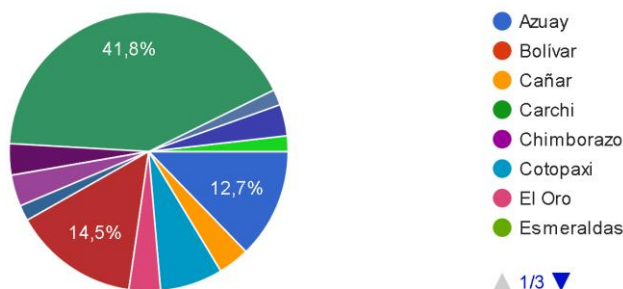


The survey results indicate a higher percentage of urban teachers working in Ecuador, which provides a clearer perspective on the necessity of incorporating AAVE or non-standard English into the curriculum. Interestingly, non-standard English is not commonly addressed in their classes, despite AAVE phrases and words being more frequently encountered in urban areas. This observation presents an opportunity to reassess and understand why Ecuador's educational system does not provide teachers with

more comprehensive information regarding the teaching of English, including its various dialects.

In what province do you work?

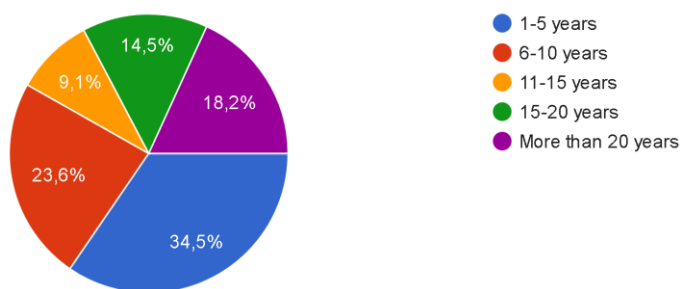
55 respuestas



It is remarkable to note the diversity of teachers across Ecuador who contribute to the advancement of English as a second language education. The majority of teachers, comprising 41.8%, are located in the province of Pichincha, totaling 23 individuals. Additionally, there are 8 teachers from Guayas, 7 from Azuay, 4 from Cotopaxi, 2 each from Pastaza, Loja, El Oro, and Cañar, as well as Santo Domingo, Imbabura, Tungurahua, and Santa Elena each have 1 teacher who participated in this survey, contributing valuable insights that will inform decisions regarding the integration of AAVE into the education system.

How many years have you been teaching English:

55 respuestas

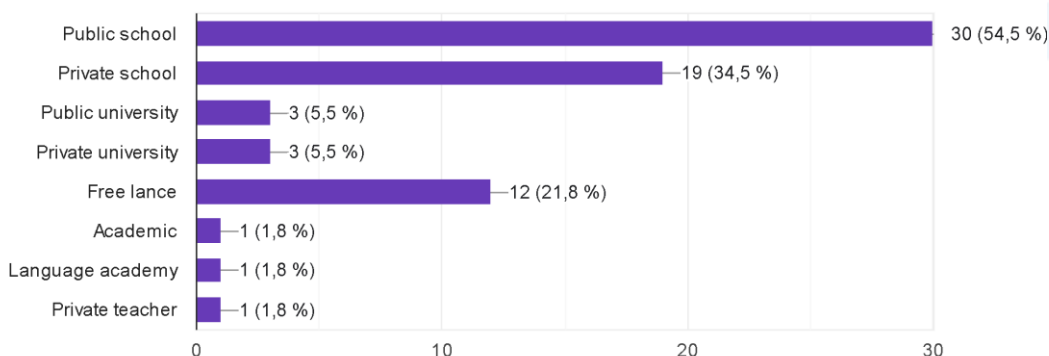


It is noteworthy to observe that in Ecuador, there are more English teachers with less than 5 years of experience than those who have been teaching for 20 years or more. This trend underscores Ecuador's emphasis on providing opportunities to recent graduates who may

possess contemporary knowledge relevant to topics such as the one I am investigating. Specifically, there are 20 teachers with 1 to 5 years of teaching experience, double the number of teachers with over 20 years of experience in English education.

What type(s) of institution do you work at? Mark all that apply.

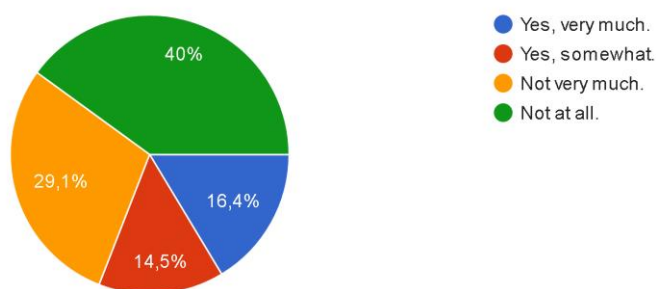
55 respuestas



In this part of the survey, I gave the option to the teachers to choose the institution or sector(s) they work at and we can identify that we have 3 categories that stand out the most. Public schools with 54.5% which means 30 people work there, private schools with 34.5% (19 people), and finally freelance with 21.8% (12 people).

Are you familiar with African-American Vernacular English (AAVE)?

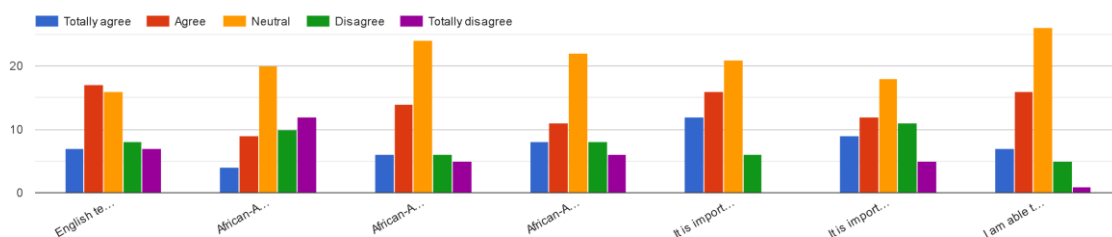
55 respuestas



It is striking to observe the lack of awareness among teachers in Ecuador regarding African American Vernacular English (AAVE), also known as non-standard English. AAVE has been studied and integrated into some communities in America for a significant period, highlighting the need for Ecuadorian teachers to be better equipped with tools to address this topic. Over time, while we see other Latin American countries

improving their English proficiency, Ecuador continues to lag. This project is instrumental in gaining insights into why the English education system in Ecuador is not progressing effectively year after year. The largest percentages in my survey were 40% and 29.1% of respondents who were unfamiliar with AAVE.

For the following affirmations, indicate how much you agree with them.



I found a lot of information from my fellow English teachers regarding this part of the survey. In the first affirmation stated “English teachers should only teach standard English” there was a higher percentage of people that still think that standard English is enough for students or people in general to learn English. We have different varieties of English all around the world. African American Vernacular English is not the only variety of English out there, and I am aware of that, but teachers in Ecuador should not emphasize only standard English but be more open-minded when teaching English.

When asked if “African American Vernacular English is an inferior dialect of English” I almost saw a division since 12 people agreed that it was not, but 20 people thought it was neutral. “Neutral” being the highest option can mean that AAVE is at the same level as standard English, but it is not taught in the classes.

“It is important to me for my students to understand AAVE”, in this section I was surprised that not even one teacher selected the “totally disagree” option and just 6 out of the 55 teachers selected the option of “disagree”. This makes me think that even though teachers do not know about AAVE that well they are eager to learn about it and teach their students about it. In this section “neutral” was the highest percentage with 21 people and it is safe to say that teachers seem to think that both standard and non-standard should be taught equally.

In addition, the section that said if they were able to understand all AAVE. Only 8 teachers were able to understand what this is, and 26 teachers were not very familiar with

the topic but did comprehend the term. Giving the option of “neutral” the highest in this whole section.

If you marked that you have some familiarity with AAVE, how would you characterize it? In other words, what do you consider to be some of its most noticeable features?

55 respuestas

No

Grammatically incorrect and a very big problem to a more standardized English

My answer is neutral

I think the pronunciation of the "r" is something characteristics as well as some words in vocabulary terms.

No idea

I am not familiar at all. That is the reason it is nit possible to answer it.

A few

I am not familiar

It is new to me.

In a qualitative assessment of teacher responses regarding African American Vernacular English (AAVE), 20 out of the 55 surveyed teachers indicated they had no prior knowledge or understanding of AAVE, expressing responses such as "no idea" or "I don't know about it." However, within this group, 5 teachers expressed a keen interest in learning about AAVE despite their initial lack of familiarity with the topic.

Conversely, the remaining 35 teachers were aware of AAVE and provided informed responses. Despite their awareness, these teachers generally expressed reluctance to incorporate non-standard English into their classroom teaching practices.

This dual perspective provides insights into the varying levels of familiarity and willingness among Ecuadorian teachers regarding the integration of AAVE into English language education. We can observe some of the positive and negative feedback my participants responded:

Positive	Negative
Some of the most noticeable features of AAVE are consonant cluster reduction, the-fronting, dropping -g in the -ing endings, absence of auxiliary verbs, use of multiple negative, unique lexicon, use of ain't, zero copula	Grammatically incorrect and a very big problem to a more standardized English.
Nonconjugation of the be verb for the subject	Not exactly, because it is not well known this AAVE
Its quick rhythm summarizes grammar	
Verb conjugation and the double negatives	

Regarding the affirmative responses, it is apparent that respondents were knowledgeable about African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and non-standard English. They provided insights such as awareness of the use of double negatives, unique vocabulary, and a more fluent pronunciation among speakers of AAVE.

Conversely, in the negative responses, one teacher expressed concern that integrating AAVE into teaching practices would significantly disrupt the teaching of standard English and therefore would not advocate for its inclusion. Another teacher admitted unfamiliarity with AAVE, stating it is not widely recognized, which appears contradictory given AAVE's longstanding historical presence.

This contrast in responses highlights the diverse perspectives and challenges associated with introducing non-standard English, such as AAVE, into educational contexts.

In general, what are your feelings about teaching other dialects of English in the classroom other than the "standard"? Please explain your answer.

55 respuestas

I do not think it's a good idea at all, we should try to prioritize a dialect that most learners comprehend. Prioritizing "black English" is unfair to other regions bad cultures dialects.

My answer is neutral

I think it is important but it can be very confusing for some students so I personally teach first the standard rules and then I share with my students that there are other dialects in English just in the same way it happens in Spanish. I've been teaching dialects to higher levels.

It Will be helpful

I am not familiar using it. Sorry!

I feel comfortable since my students learn a lot

To teach we must be into the language I mean with foreign teachers that help us

I consider that it is some heavy to have differents dialectos in the English language.

In this section, we had a lot of great answers from the teachers, both positive and negative feedback, but the ones that made an impact in this investigation were the following:

Negative answers:

- “I do not think it's a good idea at all, we should try to prioritize a dialect that most learners comprehend. Prioritizing "black English" is unfair to other regions' bad cultures dialects.”
- “I consider that it is some heavy to have different dialects in the English language.”
- “If the students are very advanced and have the extra time to study other dialects, then sure. But I think class time is best spent on the standard and students can study other dialects on their own or in graduate studies.”
- “I am not against it; however, it is important to consider the time constraints. Hardly do teachers have time to help their learners develop their language skills at standard levels, let alone specific dialects. I believe ESP programs can include AAVE if necessary.”

We still have a close-minded idea of how impactful AAVE, and other dialects can be in a student learning the language (English). Perhaps the perspective of teachers that gave these answers is correct on continuing with standard English teaching but as I have learned in the past years the world evolves, languages evolve, and so do people, we can not stay still with the same ways of approach when we want to teach English to our students we have to keep innovating, and giving our students more tools for them to develop their skills with English.

Positive answers:

- “I think it’s a good idea to teach students other dialects and help them to be more open-minded about the diversity that languages have”
- “I think it’s a good idea to provide more variety in class and help kids to be aware of other dialects”
- “Teaching other dialects of English in the classroom can be valuable for several reasons. Firstly, it promotes linguistic diversity and inclusivity, acknowledging the richness of language variation. Secondly, it helps students better understand and appreciate different cultural contexts and identities associated with those dialects. Lastly, it prepares students for real-world communication scenarios where they may encounter various forms of English, enhancing their linguistic flexibility and cultural competence.”
- “It's good for students to know they exist. It's good for them to be able to understand uncommon vocabulary and accents in case they come across it.”

There were many positive answers from the teachers but the ones that had more impact were the ones shown previously. Some teachers have the will to learn more about dialects and let their students know about them besides standard English. 36 teachers out of the 55 had good insights about teaching AAVE and other dialects to their students, they valued the importance of linguistic diversity and how fundamental it is to improve their communicative skills.

if you were asked by your coordinator to teach AAVE as part of your curriculum, how would you do it? What materials would you use?

55 respuestas

I don't know

I will do it meanwhile teaching some other dialects just to be fair and not selective. I would use mainly clips from movies where we can find AAVE

My answer is neutral

I would use videos and examples of people who speak AAVE and teach the pronunciation of some words if necessary. But I think it's also important that students decide which accent they will stick with because talking with a mixture of dialects may not be the best option.

Readings. Listenigs. Pictures

Visuals, audios, youtube classes, and so on

Cooperative learning strategies

Music

Various innovative approaches to integrating African American Vernacular English (AAVE) into classroom teaching were discussed. Traditionally, music, videos, clips, books, visual aids, and pictures have proven effective for teaching and learning AAVE. However, the focus of this question primarily centered on how teachers could expand their pedagogical repertoire and embrace new topics.

AAVE can feasibly be incorporated into the curriculum alongside standard English, facilitating the explanation of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, cultural context, and other linguistic aspects. Such an approach not only enriches teaching practices but also enhances educators' proficiency. Moreover, this methodology extends beyond AAVE to encompass other English dialects, thus broadening students' linguistic comprehension.

10. Conclusion

After analyzing the data gathered from the survey, I have concluded that the current perception of non-standard English, specifically African American Vernacular English

(AAVE), among teachers in Ecuador is notably low. Although I initially anticipated a certain level of familiarity with non-standard English varieties among English teachers in Ecuador, the extent of the lack of information on this topic was unexpected.

While there are various English dialects present in Ecuador, I chose to focus on AAVE due to its global recognition, particularly in Latin America. It is essential to recognize that society is advancing rapidly, and language is continually evolving in response to these changes. A significant percentage of respondents expressed interest in my project, providing valuable insights. Although some were unfamiliar with AAVE, they were nonetheless motivated to learn about it and consider its application in their classrooms. While AAVE is not the only English dialect, it is widely used by young people and in specific regions of the Southern United States, making it one of the dialects most closely related to Standard English.

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) possesses its own grammar, vocabulary, accent, and other distinguishing features that set it apart from Standard English, and its presence in society is continually growing. Ecuador is still refining its methods of teaching English, and incorporating new dialects, such as AAVE, could significantly enhance this process. Although some might argue that AAVE is not "correct" English or consider it an erroneous dialect, it is important to acknowledge the existence of various English dialects beyond AAVE, including British English, Canadian English, Australian English, Irish English, Pakistani English, Indian English, Nigerian English, and Caribbean English, among others. These diverse varieties should be taught more extensively in our educational system.

As an aspiring educator, I am committed to initiating positive changes in English teaching in Ecuador. Addressing the current gaps in our approach is crucial. Ecuador is a country with dedicated teachers, enthusiastic learners, and abundant opportunities. One of the primary objectives of my project is to enlighten individuals about innovative methods of teaching English. Instead of relying solely on traditional techniques such as filling in blanks with verbs or forming sentences in different tenses, we should embrace a more open-minded approach. This includes sessions focused on expanding vocabulary and practical usage in conversation.

AAVE is a dialect that everyone should be aware of, not merely because it is highlighted in this project, but because it serves as an excellent tool for future learning. By integrating AAVE and other English dialects into our curriculum, we can enrich the educational experience and better prepare students for a globalized world.

11. Recommendations

In the future, it will be intriguing to assess whether the country has made progress in English teaching. As we know, AAVE is not the only dialect that can be utilized to enhance language instruction. It would be beneficial to expand this project by employing additional resources and tools. For instance, incorporating digital learning platforms, interactive language software, and cultural exchange programs could provide a more immersive learning experience.

Moreover, conducting a comparative analysis between private and urban educational settings where English is taught would be highly valuable. This analysis could include evaluating the differences in teaching methodologies, resource allocation, student engagement, and overall proficiency outcomes. Understanding these differences and similarities would provide more specific insights into the comprehensive knowledge being imparted to the future minds of this country. Additionally, it would be worthwhile to examine the professional development opportunities available to English teachers, as well as the curriculum design and its alignment with global standards. By doing so, we can identify best practices and areas for improvement. Engaging with policymakers, educators, and linguistic experts to advocate for a more inclusive approach to English teaching that embraces a variety of dialects and cultural contexts would further enrich the educational landscape in Ecuador.

Overall, such a multifaceted approach would contribute significantly to elevating the standards of English education and preparing students to thrive in an increasingly globalized world.

12. Annexes

- Survey

African American and non-standard English in the EFL classroom

The purpose of this survey is to determine teachers' perspectives on incorporating AAVE and non-standard dialects in the EFL classroom. Your participation is anonymous and confidential, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any point with no consequence. The results will be used strictly for academic purposes. Thank you for your participation!

⋮

Age

- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 60+

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Otra...

Are you a foreign or Ecuadorian teacher? *

- foreign
- Ecuadorian

Do you teach in a rural or urban area? *

- Rural
- Urban

In what province do you work? *

1. Azuay
2. Bolívar
3. Cañar
4. Carchi
5. Chimborazo
6. Cotopaxi
7. El Oro
8. Esmeraldas
9. Guayas
10. Imbabura
11. Loja

12. Los Ríos
13. Manabí
14. Morona-Santiago
15. Napo
16. Orellana
17. Pastaza
18. Pichincha
19. Santa Elena
20. Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas
21. Sucumbíos
22. Tungurahua
23. Zamora-Chinchipec



How many years have you been teaching English: *

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 15-20 years
- More than 20 years

What type(s) of institution do you work at? Mark all that apply. *

- Public school
- Private school
- Public university
- Private university
- Free lance
- Otro: _____

Are you familiar with African-American Vernacular English (AAVE)? *

- Yes, very much.
- Yes, somewhat.
- Not very much.
- Not at all.

For the following affirmations, indicate how much you agree with them. *

	Totally agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally disagree
English teachers should only teach standard English in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African-American Vernacular English is an inferior dialect of English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African-American Vernacular English uses incorrect grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African-American Vernacular English has incorrect pronunciation of some English phonemes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to me for my students to understand AAVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important for me for my students to be able to speak AAVE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to understand all of AAVE.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you marked that you have some familiarity with AAVE, how would you characterize it? In other words, what do you consider to be some of its most noticeable features? *

Tu respuesta _____

In general, what are your feelings about teaching other dialects of English in the classroom other than the "standard"? Please explain your answer. *

Tu respuesta _____

if you were asked by your coordinator to teach AAVE as part of your curriculum, how would you do it? What materials would you use? *

Tu respuesta _____

13. References

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