PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DEL ECUADOR
FACULTAD DE COMUNICACIÓN, LINGÜÍSTICA Y LITERATURA
ESCUELA DE LINGÜÍSTICA

DISERTACIÓN PREVIA A LA OBTENCIÓN DEL TÍTULO DE LICENCIADO EN LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA CON MENCIÓN EN ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS

AFRICAN-AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COMEDY OF STEVE HARVEY

DIEGO ESTEBAN RUIZ LÓPEZ

DIRECTOR: MTR. JANINE MATTS

QUITO, 2019

“…soy loco pero no le hago daño a nadie.” (Héctor Lavoe)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my beloved parents Washington and Lucy who have been a great support in the accomplishment of this goal.

To my brothers Andrés and Francisco for being an inspiration of academic excellence and for always showing their love.

To my advisor Janine Matts for her time, patience and comprehension throughout the development of this dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

Stand-up comedy is one of the most representative forms of entertainment in the U.S. It plays a big role in the construction of identity of the various communities. It is the place where comedians can openly discuss about sensitive topics related to culture, such as racism, politics and religion. For minority groups such as African-Americans, it is a suitable environment to be honest and straightforward about social injustices. Humor is the channel through which comedians have been able to address these injustices and thus break the barrier of discomfort. African-Americans expose these topics using their language to affirm their identities, to promote pride for their community and to differentiate themselves from mainstream society. Based on this, the present study aims to describe and analyze the grammatical features as well as the rhetorical strategies that comedians such as Steve Harvey employ to build social identity.

RESUMEN

La comedia en vivo es una de las formas más representativas de entretenimiento en los Estados Unidos. Esta juega un papel importante en la construcción de la identidad de varias comunidades de dicha sociedad. Los comediantes pueden explayarse en este ambiente, al hablar sobre temas sensibles pertinentes a la cultura, tales como el racismo, la política y la religión. Para los grupos minoritarios como es el caso de los afroamericanos, este tipo de comedia resulta ser el ambiente propicio para hablar honesta y directamente acerca de las injusticias sociales. El humor es la herramienta con la que se ha podido traer a colación tales injusticias sin necesidad de sentirse incómodo. Los hablantes afroamericanos disponen de su lengua para hablar al respecto, y así lograr respaldar sus identidades, fomentar el orgullo en sus comunidades, y diferenciarse de la sociedad dominante. Dicho esto, el presente estudio tiene como objetivo describir y analizar las características gramaticales así como las estrategias retóricas que los comediantes como Steve Harvey emplean en la construcción de la identidad social.

INTRODUCTION

This study collects information about African American Vernacular English (AAVE) from one of the most faithful sources, i.e., stand-up comedy routines. Its purpose is to describe the use of this variety in the construction of identity for the African-American[1] community. Many researchers have worked on the grammatical characteristics present in AAVE. The most prominent scholars are William Labov and Walt Wolfram, who began their work in the early 1960s. Based on the work of these two researchers, AAVE has been looked at through the eyes of sociolinguistics, dialectology and education. There have also been studies that analyze this variety in literature and the media (Huber, 2018; Fought, 2010; Trotta & Blyahher, 2011; Roald, 2013). However, to my knowledge, no one has done a descriptive analysis about the use of this variety in the stand-up comedy routines of the renowned Steve Harvey. He was chosen mainly because his popularity has gone beyond the African-American community. Another reason is because his speech is spontaneous and each routine is full of AAVE features.

The present study promotes awareness of this variety in students of English as a Foreign Language. English is widely spoken in many countries as a lingua franca and taught as a foreign and second language. However, in daily life, English-language learners (ELLs) lack competence to properly communicate with the various native speakers of the language. Few are aware that, like other languages, English has many dialectal variations apart from the two taught in formal contexts, Standard British English (SBrE) and Standard American English (SAE). This assertion includes not only students, who are in the process of learning the language, but also teachers who have never heard of certain varieties such as the one discussed in this study, i.e., AAVE. Such disregard may have originated because speakers may link this variety with illiteracy and ignorance. Many researchers (Green, 2002; Labov, 2012; Mufwene et al., 1998) debunk this notion stating that it has its own grammar as any other varieties do.

This study will also serve as a source of information for future graduates and non–graduates in linguistics who are concerned about raising awareness of this variety. In the field of teaching, it is surely necessary for both teachers and students to be aware of one of the most representative and studied varieties in the United States. To support this,

[1] The terms *African-American* and *black* are used interchangeably throughout the present study. It does not imply any discrimination.

Zienkiewicz (2008) affirms, "AAVE is spoken by 80-90% of African Americans, at least in some settings" (AAVE Defined section, para. 2). The 2010 U.S. Census registers that African-Americans constitute 13% of the total population, which is an equivalent of 38.9 million people (Rastogi et al., 2011). Today, the popularity of AAVE is beyond the limits of the African-American community. It has also influenced the media, and this is why the White American[2], White-Latino and White-Asian communities also use some of its features, although with less frequency and in restricted contexts. In addition, the need to know about AAVE is fundamental for literary translators because they must be familiarized with its grammar in order to transmit the original message as faithfully as possible so that the meaning is not lost.

Concerning personal interests, this study was mainly carried out with the purpose of promoting awareness of this variety. Although AAVE is part of an ethnic minority, it certainly deserves attention from students, teachers and translators. This study began with the interest of knowing more about how comedians use the language and what the implications towards the construction of identity are. These topics captured my interest since I studied them in Sociolinguistics and Dialectology.

This study is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 gives an overview of the origins of AAVE, its most common grammatical features and its status in society and the media. It discusses as well about the most important subject fields associated with education, language and society. Chapter 2 briefly explains the materials and methods used during the course of the investigation. It presents the type of study as well as the corpus and techniques used to conduct the analysis. Chapter 3 offers quantitative and qualitative analyses of the morpho-syntactic features of AAVE found in the corpus, presented in tables and also in prose. It also contains an analysis of the social dichotomy established through the juxtaposition of AAVE and SAE. Finally, this dissertation concludes with a brief summary of the results and the goals achieved through the analysis of the speech of comedian Steve Harvey. It also provides some recommendations and ideas for further study in the area of AAVE and comedy.

[2] The terms *White American* and *white* are used interchangeably throughout the present study. It does not imply any discrimination.

Research purpose

The purpose of this research is to provide a descriptive analysis of AAVE morphological and syntactic features present in the speech of Steve Harvey and how he uses the language as a tool to manifest social identity. This will be accomplished through a close revision of short excerpts of some of his routines. This study's scope is not broad enough, however, to include the analysis of other features of AAVE such as phonological and lexical ones given the time limit.

Objectives

General

The main objective of this study is to elaborate a descriptive analysis of AAVE grammar and how it relates to social identity by observing how Steve Harvey uses the language in his routines.

Specific

- To identify, classify and quantify the grammatical features present in the performances of the stand-up comedian Steve Harvey.
- To describe two instances of each grammatical feature and compare them with their SAE counterparts through a qualitative analysis.
- To analyze multiple instances of the three transcriptions concerning the dichotomy of "us" African-Americans or AAVE speakers and "them" White Americans or SAE speakers.

CHAPTER I - LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the most relevant theoretical information that supports this study. It deals with the historical notions and perspectives concerning the origins of AAVE. It introduces some basic theories about society, identity and language. It also describes the most common grammatical features of AAVE.

1.1. African American Vernacular English

AAVE is a non-standard variety of English shared among the African-American community in the U.S. Labov (1972) describes it as the uniform variety primarily used in low-income urban areas as well as in rural areas. He specifies that it is the form that speakers from all ages use in daily conversations. The term *vernacular* precisely defines AAVE as the form used in familiar domains. Labov (2012) says, "[it] is the basic linguistic system that a child learns first, masters perfectly, and uses with unerring skill in later life with family, friends and peers in intimate situations…" (p. 47). Thus, the vernacular could be described as the variety used in private settings. AAVE grammar has particular characteristics not found in other varieties, e.g., the use of the particle *ain't* as a preterit marker and the inclusion of some aspectual features such as *habitual be*.

1.2. The origins of AAVE

This section introduces the history and evolution of AAVE. There are many points of view concerning its origins. Below are the three major sociolinguistic theories that account for its origins.

1.2.1. Anglicist Hypothesis

According to Davis, AAVE is the result of a transformed variety of earlier varieties of English brought to the United States. It is not only the case of AAVE, but also of SAE and many white vernaculars (1971, as cited in Hannah, 1997). This theory claims that AAVE originated from the contact among groups of enslaved African speakers who did not have a common language. Over time, their native languages disappeared and they had to learn and accommodate to the speech of their European masters. This position affirms that AAVE is strongly rooted to both earlier British and European American varieties (Carpenter, 2009).

1.2.2. Creolist Hypothesis

Creolists Rickford and Stewart defended the notion that AAVE came from one or more slave proto-creoles already existing throughout the South in the colonial period (as cited in Carpenter, 2009). These creoles were believed to be hybridized languages, which resulted from the mixture of British English (BrE) and West African languages. Some researchers still think this is true as they account for the evidence of pidgins as being the base for creoles. When slaves were brought to America, few of them had a common language and they had to build a language to communicate. Pidgins were reportedly created as forms of simplified communicative language, which gave way to the complexity of creoles (Kachru et al., 2009). Creole proponents, such as Dillard and Rickford hold the idea that AAVE comes from "earlier creoles derived from even earlier pidgins" (as cited in Hannah, 1997, p. 339).

1.2.3. Neo-Anglicist Hypothesis

This hypothesis is reportedly a reinterpretation of the Anglicist hypothesis. Both agree that earlier AAVE resembles the British varieties brought to the USA. However, this hypothesis claims that AAVE progressively diverged from other white vernaculars (Wolfram & Thomas, 2002). Moreover, Mufwene assures that AAVE and Southern White Vernacular English (SWVE) appear to have been the same regional form until the Jim Crow Laws were instated (1991, as cited in Lanehart, 2015).

The Anglicist, Creolist and Neo-Anglicist hypotheses demonstrate that AAVE history and evolution is extensive. However, Labov (2012) states that in spite of the many theories that backup the origins of AAVE, "[it] is clearly a dialect of English rather than a separate creole language" (p. 46) With time, it diverged and grew as a separate vernacular variety. This fact contributed significantly to the enrichment of its grammatical, phonological and lexical features. In sum, these three theories are relevant because they account for the development of this important English variety.

1.3. Historical labels for AAVE

There are many labels used to refer to the speech of the African-American community in the U.S. Linguist Lisa Green prefers the term *African-American English* (AAE). She points out that it is a "linguistic system, with well-defined rules" (as cited in Finegan & Rickford, 2004, p. 76). In regards to this term, Labov (2012) states, "some

linguists use [it]…to designate the full range of English used by African-Americans throughout the United States" (p. 40). Other labels for this variety include, "Negro dialect, American Negro Speech, Black Communications, Black dialect, Black street speech, Black English, Black Vernacular English, African American language, and African American Vernacular English" (Finegan and Rickford, 2004, p. 77). The authors mention that these labels have changed because the social environments and the many ideologies that were present at that time have also changed.

Of all these terms, linguists use the abbreviation AAVE most frequently. They emphasize that it refers to the speech of African-Americans used in familiar and personal domains, where they exclude the use of SAE (Labov, 2012; Rickford, 2012). AAVE is also defined as the "geographically uniform grammar found in low-income areas of high residential segregation" (Labov, 2010, p. 348). One of the major causes for high residential segregation is the Great Migration. Many African-American southerners moved to northern urban cities looking for job opportunities. However, they moved "into areas of each city that became increasingly segregated, with increasing poverty and unemployment" (Labov, 2012, p. 46). These assertions account for the uniformity of AAVE across the U.S. Racial segregation has brought negative consequences to the African-American community, but at the same time it has given them the opportunity to preserve AAVE. Concerning the uniformity of this variety, Baugh defines it as the speech that African-Americans use when interacting with homogeneous speakers (1983, as cited in Labov, 2010).

Finegan and Rickford (2004) mention the term *Ebonics*, which comes from a compound of the words *ebony* and *phonics*. The first word means "black," and the second means "sounds." The entire blending literally means "black speech" (Rickford, 2012). In 1973, psychologist William Roberts coined this term to refer to the speech of African-Americans. However, Dr. Ernest Smith was the first to adopt this term "…for the use reflected in the Oakland School Board resolution" (Labov, 2012, p. 79). On December 18, 1996, the Oakland School Board decided to issue a resolution declaring Ebonics the primary language of African-American students at schools. They resolved to use the language of the students so they can acquire and master academic skills in SAE. In spite of the negative connotations, this is the reason why today this term is the best known to the public.

1.4. Standard American English

SAE is a variety of English spoken in the U.S. It is the dominant variety needed for success in any academic, diplomatic or working environment. Most people link it with formal domains. Tanner (2011) states, "[it] is the language used on high stakes tests and the language form that can open the door to a higher education, improved career/job opportunities, and moving up in socioeconomic status" (p. 1). Any speaker can easily understand SAE because there is no regional differentiation in its structure. Local news and other formal broadcasting media use SAE to inform the population. PBS (2005) point out that it is "an *idealized* dialect - meaning, it's not really spoken anywhere, but instead is acquired through professional training" (Standard American English section, para. 6). People do not learn SAE in the North or in the South, but rather through education, i.e., at school, high school and college. Thus, its grammatical properties constitute the norm and rules for mainstream society. Its features are known as unmarked or unnoticed because they are socially accepted.

1.5. AAVE vs. SAE

AAVE and SAE are varieties of AmE, which are commonly juxtaposed one against the other. The result of doing so leads to the establishment of a dichotomy. Researchers who seek to grant recognition of minority varieties such as AAVE tend to highlight their linguistic features and show their cultural contributions in mainstream society. Their objectives are to promote pride for the community, to build social identity and to speak out against social injustices.

AAVE is one of the most studied varieties in the field of education because of the many controversies it has brought concerning its status in society. Researcher Heath mentions the dichotomy between "school talk" and "at home talk" (1982, as cited in Fought, 2006, p. 192). She helped White American teachers modify their teaching methodologies by using information found in the speech of African-American students. Her aim was to promote the idea that the learning process is a two-way path because both teachers and students receive input from each other. Concerning the findings of this study, teachers were amazed that their students brought relevant questions to the classroom, which could be useful for all students.

AAVE has also been relevant for sociolinguistic studies. Smokoski (2016) carries out an analysis about the use of AAVE on social media, e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr by speakers of other ethnicities. Her study pretends to discern whether a feature in any given post or commentary is authentic or is just an stylization, i.e., the use of the most common or stigmatized features of AAVE. The dichotomy in this study lies in the truthfulness concerning the use of a given feature. This study concluded that speakers of other ethnicities, especially White Americans, misuse AAVE features to create self-images. The inadequate and excessive use of these features led to a bad reputation of this variety of English. For African-Americans, it represents a source of pride and value; however, stylizers, as the author calls them, perpetuate the misuse of these features in social media.

Lastly, AAVE is also important in the field of literature and narrative texts. Kochman (1983) wrote a book about the conflict between black and white styles (as cited in DiOrio, 2011). He describes AAVE as an emotional, cheerful and passionate language whereas he describes SAE as a cool, cheerless and dispassionate language. The dichotomous point is made clear through this differentiation and each characteristic serves as a marker for the construction of social identity. For him, AAVE encourages people to take an active role in which participation is essential. DiOrio (2011) cites two examples from Kochman's book where an African-American male poses a problem and complains about it. The first example is a transcription of his speech and the second example is a transcription of the same excerpt to SAE. The author mentions that the meaning got lost in the process of transcribing because the grammatical features and the rhetorical strategies faded away. He concludes relating this process with slaves as they adopt a totally distinct way of speaking from their oppressors.

1.6. Dialectology

Dialectology is commonly defined as "the study of how sounds, words and grammatical forms vary from one dialect to the other within a single language" (Wong, 2012, p. 12). The author defines a dialect as a plain variety of a language, which is usually considered to be of low-prestige. She adds that it is mostly associated with common social groups. Moreover, she mentions that a dialect is often regarded as an unsound form of language, which is spoken in remote areas. In spite of these negative connotations, she argues that there is no logical reason to think about dialects in terms of superiority with respect to each other, but rather as varieties of a given language.

Along these lines, AAVE is considered a "social dialect[3]" because it is often associated with low-status groups of speakers. This term refers to the existing correlation between the linguistic features and the group's prestige in society (Finegan and Rickford, 2004, p. 59). This means that speakers' choices of any specific words and phrases during speech reflect much about their social background. The authors mention that society tends to determine the differences in language through the *principle of linguistic inferiority*. This concept suggests the idea that the dialects of subordinate groups tend to carry negative connotations. They are usually regarded as deviations of mainstream group languages.

Today, the field of dialectology is concerned with "variations to linguistic structures caused by social factors and focuses especially on cities or urban areas with high mobility" (Wong, 2012, p. 16). It should be noted that, "New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Detroit, and Chicago, the homeland of AAVE" (Labov, 2012, p. 46) are urban areas with high mobility. Social factors such as the migration of African-Americans to northern cities as well as the racial division encouraged researchers to see how the structure of AAVE changed over the years. Dialectology focuses especially on AAVE because it is greatly different from other varieties in its structure. AAVE also became relevant for this field because it was commonly related to social problems, such as the low academic performance of students and the increasing poverty in largely segregated areas.

1.7. Sociolinguistics

Researchers define sociolinguistics as the study of language in relation to society (Van Herk, 2018; Hudson, 1980). Through this definition, it is accurate to say that language is important to understand society and vice versa. Sociolinguistics also studies language in casual conversations and the media (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Van Herk (2018) states that this field has an empirical approach because researchers work with evidence found in the real world. He argues that their job is to describe and explain what occurs in spontaneous speech, and to do so they often use recordings. Their job is to "look at frequently occurring language features in long stretches of speech, count and look for correlations and describe findings in terms of tendencies and probabilities, rather than absolute rules" (Van Herk, 2018, p. 13).

[3] The authors consider that SAE is a social dialect as well (see Finegan and Rickford, 2004, p. 60).

It is essential to define what the terms *society* and *language* are. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) refer to society as, "a group of people who are drawn together for a certain purpose or purposes" (p. 2). On the other hand, they describe language as "a system of linguistic communication particular to a group" (p. 2). These two definitions explain how groups of people accomplish their many purposes through language. Both terms are inextricably linked in the sense that a language is the basis for a society to communicate and develop.

1.7.1. Social identity

Tajfel (2010) states that social identity characterizes individuals as appertaining to a social group or groups of people that have a set of attitudes and beliefs about their surroundings. He argues that this sense of belonging to a group comes from the individuals' self-concept adopted from the group they interact with. In this sense, a group can be defined in terms of psychological interdependence. The goals of such interdependence lead to "…satisfaction of needs, attainment of goals or consensual validation of attitudes and values…cooperative social interaction, communication, mutual attraction, and influence between individuals" (Tajfel, 2010, p. 15). This topic relates to stand-up comedians because they often represent the community and are the ones responsible for achieving these goals on stage.

1.8. AAVE in society

In order to better understand what AAVE is, McCrum et al. state, "…For some, it is an authentic means of self-expression…For others, who prefer the norms of Standard English, Black English represents the disadvantaged past, an obstacle to advancement, something better unlearned, denied or forgotten" (1996, as cited in Kuthe, 2007, pg. 209). African-Americans have different opinions regarding AAVE and not all of them identify with it or use it. The reason for this division maybe due to the strong stigma that some speakers hold against this variety of English. Spears affirms, "[languages are] stigmatized because its speakers are stigmatized" (2001, as cited in Smokoski, 2016, p. 5). This means that languages are viewed as prestigious or marginalized depending on the speakers' status in society. Most formal settings reject the use of non-standard varieties, and speakers are required to use the language of mainstream society in academic and professional environments. Nanda and Warms (2018) point out that AAVE is a variety of ethnic minorities and most of its speakers are conscious that it carries negative connotations.

However, it is constantly growing and diverging from other vernaculars. AAVE is in constant innovation because its speakers continually introduce new terms and words. They have gained cultural and linguistic independence by building their own identity.

Researchers Rahn and Smitherman argue that AAVE represents a means of rebelliousness and emancipation for young speakers (as cited in Danesi, 2017). African-Americans use it as a potential tool to express their thoughts about their surroundings. Danesi (2017) comments that AAVE is also a strong response towards racism and he defines it as a "linguistic antidote to inherent racism" (Groups and Vocabulary section, para. 4). Throughout history, oppressed people have often adopted a form that is quite distinct from that of their oppressors, precisely to rebel against them and to establish their own group identity (Rubtsova, 2011). U.S. racial and social segregation is considered to be a contributor to the survival of AAVE until today. Mufwene (2014) explains how in the late nineteenth century, racial segregation resulted in the issuance of strong laws for public facilities in the northern and southern states. Their living conditions as well as job opportunities were different from those of the white population. Such disregard caused some African-Americans to rebel and the law was forced to take radical actions on the matter because they were considered a threat to the white supremacist ideology. By the mid-twentieth century, African-Americans had to move to northern and western cities for better job opportunities. However, segregation did not stop and AAVE represented an impediment to progress. This is one of the leading causes that not only gave birth to this variety of English, but also increased the chance of keeping it safe. Roberts (1974) explains, "Opponents of [the so-called] assimilation argue that the only way to preserve African-American culture is to keep it separate, enabling it to serve as a source of pride" (p. 40). Advocates of assimilation also think that the African-American community should maintain their cultural pride; however, they reject the idea that separation is the answer. Instead, they say that assimilation somehow avoids racism and contributes to the enrichment of the mainstream culture.

AAVE became popular in the field of education at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Oakland School Board resolution encouraged researchers to study the academic achievement of African-American students at schools. Most of these studies took place in northern metropolitan cities. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) examined the gap in reading achievement of ethnic minorities. This study found

that students of low-income areas were under the basic level in reading skills. The gap was high in the first years but students showed improvements in recent years (Labov, 2012, p. 68). Moreover, the author, in collaboration with two universities, developed a research program that supported the use of AAVE to accomplish these skills. Later, this program was tested on a national scale under the name of *The Reading Road*. Its objectives were "to develop alphabetic knowledge, to take into account children's home language, and to deal with the central conflicts of children's everyday life" (Labov, 2012, p. 87).

1.9. AAVE in Stand-up comedy

AAVE has been studied in many areas related to mass media. Fought and Harper show that commercials, TV shows and films reproduce the least amount of AAVE features while stand-up comedy routines portray the highest frequency of features (2004, as cited in Fought, 2006). This study carried out a quantitative analysis of AAVE features found in recent TV shows, films and stand-up comedy routines. It confirmed what Fine and Anderson call, "the general strategy of *black but not too black*" (1980, as cited in Fought, 2006, p. 67), which consists on the portrayal of features that are not inherent in AAVE but are rather shared with other vernaculars. This study was based on these two author's research in which they went through an analysis of selected features of AAVE in TV shows from the 1970s. Findings concluded that these shows did not use exclusive features of AAVE but rather stigmatized forms commonly found in other varieties of English.

Since the 1970s, AAVE has been a focus of attention for stand-up comedy routines. African-Americans have maintained group identity through its use. Stand-up comedy allows speakers to express themselves in a humorous way about the world that surrounds them. At the same time, it lets them convey relevant issues to the audience, like how different cultures can be with respect to "class, gender, ethnicity or other social differences, many of which are, to some extent, taboo or at least subjects that require being handled with caution" (Falk, 2010, p. 3). Strausbaugh (2006) explains that humor is essential in U.S comedy because it functions as a means through which both African-American and White American comedians express what they really think about each other. Popular culture has given this variety a great opportunity to grow through the years. TV shows, series, stand-up comedies, and music have been the channel for AAVE speakers to achieve this goal.

1.10. Discourse Analysis

Discourse is the process whereby knowledge, thoughts, experiences, beliefs, emotions, and other faculties of the mind are put into words. It represents language put in context and speakers use it to portray their social identities as well as to perform their social interactions (Strauss & Parastou, 2014). Discourse does not analyze isolated words as they convey only literal meaning; rather, it analyzes the association of words and other elements of language. In this sense, words cannot be void of context, because otherwise there would be no possibility for interpretations. Speakers and interlocutors are involved in the construction of discourse meaning. In this process, the speakers convey a message and interlocutors make inferences based on concepts and previous knowledge about the topic in question. Discourse can be categorized under different metaphorical frameworks named *genres*. They shape the structure of the words and messages to be conveyed. They also modify discourse in a way that is suitable for a specific kind of audience and within a specific context, such as that of stand-up comedy routines (Strauss & Parastou, 2014).

1.11. Critical Discourse Analysis

This field of study views discourse as a social practice that speakers carry out on a daily basis. It takes a close look at words, phrases and concepts to break down the notions and stigmas that people create to convince others about something. In social life, people are used to what they continually hear. They repeat it and pass it on until it becomes a general truth. The work of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to dismantle this process, make it evident to the eyes, and in this way promote social change (Strauss & Parastou, 2014). CDA commonly takes a micro-macro approach towards discourse. The micro-level analysis looks at specific words and how they relate to others to form sentence patterns. It also considers other elements of language such as rhetorical strategies with the intention of seeing how they relate to convey macro-level concerns, e.g., cultural, political and social differences.

This field is essential for the analysis of Harvey's speech because it considers the relationship between words and other elements of language. CDA examines the reasons for the comedian to choose specific grammatical features in different contexts. The comedian talks about daily life events and CDA helps to discern the intentions behind his messages. He addresses certain topics in an attempt to complain, ironize, mock and so forth. CDA

considers as well the rhetorical strategies that shape the comedian's discourse to build social identity. The following section explains these strategies and their use in detail.

1.11.1. Rhetorical strategies

African-American comedians index their social identities not only through grammatical features but also through other means. This category deals with the rhetorical strategies that they use to go beyond the superficial meaning of language. In this respect, Schwarz (2010) says that comedians use these strategies "to express their real intention without using direct and offensive language…to express [their] aggressiveness and therefore their power over specific opponents. [They] can also contribute to shared knowledge" (p. 122). This statement points out the goals that African-American comedians seek to achieve through the use of language. They communicate a message to the audience and address sensitive topics without being overtly direct. These strategies also allow African-American comedians express their indignation towards social injustices and in this way confront their oppressors. Lastly, they use these strategies to affirm their identities, to connect with the audience, and to differentiate themselves from others.

Some of these strategies are *call and response*, *directness*, *marking*, *rapping*, *signifying* (Fought, 2006; Green, 2002). The first strategy is specially restricted to religious events. It explains the interactional process where the minister introduces a statement and the congregation replies in order to show consent. African-American parents use the second strategy with more frequency than White American parents do when they are giving instructions to their children. The third strategy is a way of imitating other people's attitudes and language in an exaggerated manner. African-Americans usually do so as a "signal of ingroup membership…because making fun of others is a way of asserting…intimacy with [the group]" (Fought, 2006, p. 164). The fourth strategy is a way of reproducing a message with a double-entendre. Comparisons are commonly linked to this resource because they do not imply a direct message. Finally, the fifth strategy is defined as a spontaneous speech that is commonly found as rhymes. It conveys socio-cultural information to the interlocutor. The next section describes the grammatical features present in AAVE.

1.12. Grammar of AAVE

Scholars have done extensive research on AAVE features and their evolution. In 2008, linguists agreed that its grammar has been found more often than not to be similar across the United States (Labov, 2012). Linguist Lisa Green indicates, "one of the goals of research in African-American vernacular English (AAVE) has been to provide a description of the properties of the verbal elements in its system" (as cited in Mufwene et al., 1998, p. 37). Along the lines of this assertion, she states that the verbal system has been an essential matter for AAVE studies mainly because of the remarkable differences it shows with respect to other vernaculars. The most salient features are detailed below.

1.12.1. Non-standard main verbs

AAVE speakers use main verbs differently from SAE speakers. Wolfram (2004) says that the main verb takes an irregular pattern. The first case occurs when the past is used instead of the past participle. Some examples are: *You probably have **broke** your ankle* (You probably have broken your ankle), *They had **began** that project a long time ago* (They had begun that project a long time ago). The second case occurs when the past participle is used instead of the past. Some examples are: *We **gone** there yesterday* (We went there yesterday), *They **frozen** the meat on Monday* (They froze the meat on Monday). The third case occurs when the bare root is used instead of the past. Some examples are: *She **sing** that song at the party* (She sang that song at the party), *He **take** her to a restaurant* (He took her to a restaurant). Green (2002) affirms that African-American speakers use these verbs to emphasize in the meaning of the utterances. In addition, Labov et al. (1968) note that irregular main verbs are sometimes regularized. Some examples are: *He **runned** three miles* (He ran three miles), *We **knowed** that* (We knew that), *It **flied** away* (It flew away).

1.12.2. Subject-verb agreement

Subject-verb agreement (SVA) in AAVE can be identified by the absence of the third person singular *–s*. De-attachment of this morphemic suffix is pervasive mostly among teenagers of the African-American urban population (Wolfram, 2004). This suffix distinguishes AAVE from other vernaculars because it can be easily detected from the perspective of SAE as a trait of third person singular *–s* absence. Some examples are: *She **talk** like a white girl* (She talks like a white girl), *He **run** slower than you* (He runs slower

than you), *It **don't** rain everyday* (It doesn't rain everyday), *She **have** the violin* (She has the violin). A similar phenomenon occurs in the present and past forms of the verb *to be*. This feature is named *be leveling* and it consists of replacing present and past tense forms for *is* and *was*. Some examples are: *What **is** you doing?* (What are you doing?), *They **is** trying to take a picture* (They are trying to take a picture), *We **was** there yesterday* (We were there yesterday).

1.12.3. Copula and auxiliary omission

Parsard (2016) states that copula *be* appears in most tenses in AAVE. However, it is frequently omitted in the forms of *is* and *are*. Labov (1972) argues that copula *be* is omitted in declarative sentences such as in *He happy* (He is happy), *She doing her homework* (She is doing her homework), *They trying to catch you* (They are trying to catch you). He also states that it is omitted in questions as in *You interested?* (Are you interested?), *They done?* (Are they done?), *Why she tired?* (Why is she tired?). AAVE speakers omit the auxiliary verb *have* as well as the copula *be*. Some examples are: *They been there before* (They've been there before), *We broken the door* (We've broken the door), *You never done it* (You've never done it). There are also some reported cases where auxiliary *do* and *did* are omitted, such as in *Where you live?* (Where do you live?), *What you do yesterday?* (What did you do yesterday?), *Why they come here?* (Why do they come here?)

1.12.4. Negative inversion

Wolfram (2004) explains that AAVE speakers tend to invert the negative auxiliary and the indefinite subject, such as in ***Didn't nobody** watch that movie* (Nobody watched that movie), ***Don't nobody** own the ball* (Nobody owns the ball), ***Can't nothing** hurt you* (Nothing can hurt you). Besides, Pullum (1999) affirms that AAVE speakers exclusively use *ain't + indefinite subject* in declarative sentences (as cited in Wheeler, 1999). Some examples are: ***Ain't nothing** gon' happen in here* (Nothing is going to happen here), ***Ain't nobody** gon' be there* (Nobody is going to be there), ***Ain't nobody** playing in the classroom* (Nobody is playing in the classroom). These utterances have undergone the process of SAI (Subject-Auxiliary Inversion), which is a question pattern that consists of switching positions between the subject and the auxiliary. They follow the structure of questions precisely for emphasis (Labov, 2012).

1.12.5. Negative concord

Negative concord is a notorious feature of AAVE and other vernaculars of the English language. Linguists have addressed this feature with different names such as *multiple negation* and *pleonastic negation*. Martin and Wolfram describe negative concord as the use of "two or more negative morphemes to communicate a single negation" (1998, as cited in Mufwene et al., 1998, p. 17). In SAE, negation is placed on one morpheme only, while in AAVE multiple negative morphemes are used to negate an entire clause. Some examples are: *I **ain´t never** see **no** car like that one* (I have never seen any car like that one), *She said she **ain't no** little girl* (She said that she is not a little girl), ***Nobody ain't** saying **nothing*** (Nobody is saying anything), ***Nobody ain't** buying a gift with **no** money* (Nobody is buying a gift with any money). The use of several negative markers gives these utterances a more emphatic meaning compared to an utterance in SAE where just one negative marker is allowed.

1.12.6. Ain't

Howe (2005) affirms this feature is not exclusive of AAVE but it is shared with other vernaculars. However, AAVE speakers use it the most in preverbal and auxiliary positions. It replaces the various forms of the verbs *to be, to do* and *to have* in negative statements (Wolfram, 2004). Following are the cases in which *ain't* can appear in an utterance:

1.12.6.1. Ain't *as* be + not

In this case, the non-standard particle *ain't* works both as an auxiliary and as a copula in the present tense (Howe, 2005). Some examples of auxiliary *ain't* are *She **ain't** talking to them* (She is not talking to them), *I **ain't** wearing socks* (I am not wearing socks), *We **ain't** there yet* (We are not there yet). Some examples of the copula *ain't* are *They **ain't** my friends* (They are not my friends), *He **ain't** the best* (He is not the best), *It **ain't** your business, bro* (It is not your business, bro).

1.12.6.2. Ain't *as* do + not

Non-standard particle *ain't* appears as an auxiliary in *do + not* contexts. Today AAVE speakers use this feature exclusively before the verb *gotta*, although it is not always the case (Howe, 2005). Some examples are: *You **ain't** gotta use it* (You don't have to use

it), *She **ain't** gotta be there* (She doesn't have to be there), *We **ain't** gotta wash it* (We don't have to wash it). Sometimes it also appears before the verbs *want, have,* and *know* such as in *They **ain't** want no more trouble* (They don't want any more trouble), *He **ain't** have no money* (He doesn't have any money), *You **ain't** know how to play baseball* (You don't know how to play baseball).

1.12.6.3. Ain't *as* did + not

AAVE speakers use the non-standard particle *ain't* as an auxiliary in *did + not* contexts. This feature is exclusively found in urban AAVE. Some examples are: *She **ain't** do that* (She didn't do that), *We **ain't** speak properly* (We didn't speak properly), *He **ain't** notice she was there* (He didn't notice that she was there), *You **ain't** turn it off yesterday* (You didn't turn it off yesterday), *They **ain't** come last week* (They didn't come last week). The past tense that *ain´t* carries in these examples can only be perceived either because other tenses or adverbs are present in the utterance that indicate it is in the past, or because the context in which the utterance appears refers to the past (Howe, 2005).

1.12.6.4. Ain't *as* have + not

Non-standard particle *ain't* also appears as an auxiliary in *have + not* contexts. AAVE speakers prefer to use *ain't* in the present perfect instead of the auxiliaries *have/has*. Some examples are: *I **ain't** done it before* (I haven't done it before), *He **ain't** been in that country* (He hasn't been in that country), *They **ain't** eaten those pears* (They haven't eaten those pears), *We **ain't** seen it before* (We haven't seen it before). The present perfect tense can only be detected in these utterances if the main verb is properly conjugated (Howe, 2005).

1.12.7. Future markers

AAVE speakers express the future with tense markers such as *finna*. The word *finna* is the result of contracting the words *fixing + to*. This feature is used to talk about an immediate future, i.e., something that is about to occur. Green (2002) says this feature "precedes non-finite verbs, which are not marked for tense and agreement" (p. 70). Some examples are: *I'm **finna** tell you something* (I'm about to tell you something), *She **finna** climb the tree* (She is about to climb the tree), *They **finna** go outside* (They are about to go outside). Smith (2009) affirms that copula *be* is optional before this marker. There are

some other future tense markers such as remote future *gonna* or *gon'*, which strictly derive from phonological processes and are also used by SAE speakers in informal contexts.

1.12.8. Habitual be

In AAVE grammar, habitual *be* may also be referred to as *non-finite be* and *invariant be*. These two terms refer to the aspect of an intermittent action (Wolfram, 2004). The semantic use of habitual *be* is said to be unique of AAVE grammar. Some examples are: *He* ***be*** *working* (He is usually working), *We* ***be*** *cleaning the floor* (We are usually cleaning the floor), *She* ***be*** *absent* (She is usually absent). These utterances convey the meaning that the subjects are customarily doing this action.

1.12.9. Stressed been

Stressed *been*, otherwise called remote present perfect *been,* is a complex feature because it implies various meanings. Labov (2012) says that AAVE speakers use *been* in an utterance to imply that "the statement is true, it has been true for a long time, and it is still true" (p. 60). Some examples are: *I* ***been*** *an English teacher* (I have been an English teacher for a long time and I still am), *We* ***been*** *studying* (We have been studying for a long time and we still are), *She* ***been*** *working hard* (She has been working hard for a long time and she still is.) In the case of the first example, the following can be interpreted: "It is true that I am a teacher, it has been true for a long period of time, and it is still true because I am still working as a teacher."

1.12.10. Completive done

Wolfram (2004) says that completive or perfective *done* occurs in preverbal auxiliary position with past tense verbs. Some examples are: *He* ***done*** *talked to them* (He has finished talking to them), *She* ***done*** *wrote the letter* (She has written the letter), *We* ***done*** *picked up the package* (We have picked up the package). He also argues that it can occur with bare verb stems. Some examples are: *They* ***done*** *leave the West Side* (They just left West Side), *He* ***done*** *eat that burger* (He just ate that burger), *She* ***done*** *bake the cake* (She just baked the cake). Concerning the latter examples with bare verb stems, the first utterance evokes completion of the action in recent past. The second and third utterances emphasize only on the completeness of the action.

1.12.11. Verb got

AAVE speakers use the verb *got* differently from SAE speakers. In AAVE, *got* is used in the present tense, while SAE *got* is used for the simple past and past participle. Trotta and Blyahher (2011) mention that the verb *got* denotes, "obtaining or gaining possession of something" (p. 25). They state that it replaces the AmE *have* and BrE *have got*, which denote possession or ownership. Some examples are: *I ain't* ***got*** *the correct answer* (I don't have the correct answer), *She* ***got*** *something to say* (She has something to say), *He* ***got*** *a lot of money* (He has a lot of money). When *got* is followed by the preposition *to* it becomes a modal verb, which expresses necessity. In AAVE, it is commonly heard as *gotta*. Some examples are: *We* ***gotta*** *invite her* (We have to invite her), *He* ***gotta*** *do his job properly* (He has to do his job properly), *They* ***gotta*** *come to the meeting* (They have to come to the meeting). Note that the use of *gotta* is common today in both AmE and BrE.

1.12.12. Non-standard pronouns

AAVE has some different subject and object pronouns from other vernaculars. One of them is the second-person plural pronoun *y'all*. It is the result of contracting the second-person plural *you* and the adjective *all*. In SAE, it can mean *you guys, you all,* and *all of you*. Some examples are: ***Y'all*** *look tired* (You guys look tired), ***Y'all*** *waiting for the bus?* (Are you guys waiting for the bus?), ***Y'all*** *is crazy* (You guys are crazy). Schneider (2008) registers non-standard singular and plural reflexive pronouns, such as *hisself, theyselves, ourselfs*. Some examples are: *He be talking to* ***hisself*** (He is usually talking to himself), *They wanna draw* ***theyselves*** (They want to draw themselves), *We gotta watch the show* ***ourselfs*** (We have to watch the show by ourselves). Trotta and Blyahher (2011) argue that AAVE speakers use the object pronoun *them* to replace the demonstrative pronouns *those* and *these*. Some examples are: *Look at* ***them*** *boys from the hood* (Look at those boys from the hood), *She got* ***them*** *shoes* (She has those shoes), *They like* ***them*** *apples* (They like those apples).

1.12.13. Non-standard adverbs

Huber (2018) says that AAVE speakers sometimes omit the *-ly* derivational morpheme from adverbs. They become intensifiers before adjectives but they can also occur after verbs. Some examples are: *They gon' solve this real fast* (They are going to

solve this really fast), *She gon' cook real hot meat* (She is going to cook really hot meat), *We walk slow* (We walk slowly), *I write clear* (I write clearly).

1.12.14. Existential it

AAVE speakers use the pronoun *it* in existential constructions where SAE speakers use *there is* and *there are*. Mufwene et al. (1998) argue that these utterances "announce the existence of persons, places, and things, which have not already been established in a discourse" (p. 25). The authors also affirm that existential *it* is a void word because it lacks a referential meaning. It is used as well with the particle *ain't* in negative utterances. Some examples are: ***It's** a marker on the desk* (There is a marker on the desk), ***It's** two girls outside the classroom* (There are two girls outside the classroom), ***It** ain't no boxes here* (There aren't any boxes here).

1.12.15. Appositives

Sidnell (2002) says that AAVE speakers make anaphoric reference through appositives or pleonastic pronouns. These pronouns make reference to an antecedent. Some examples are: *She said Tom and Jimmy, **they** gotta do it* (She said that Tom and Jimmy have to do it), *That man standing over there, **he** my father* (That man standing over there is my father), *Mrs. Johnson, **she** the new teacher* (Mrs. Johnson is the new teacher). AAVE speakers mark redundancy and emphasis in the antecedent through the insertion of the subject pronoun.

1.12.16. Article omission

The article is a grammatical category that is frequently omitted in AAVE. Huber (2018) affirms that the definite article *the* is more frequently omitted in contrast with the indefinite article *a*/*an*. Some examples are: *Police officer helped the boy* (The police officer helped the boy), *Man over there took your bag* (The man over there took your bag), *Good looking guy run around the corner* (A good looking guy ran around the corner).

1.12.17. Subject pronoun omission

Wheeler (1998) affirms, "Subject pronouns are never omitted except…in very casual telegraphic usages [as in]…*Will write more soon* to save words in a telegram or on a postcard" (p. 47). Still, there are some cases found in literary texts and in contemporary speech where subject pronouns are omitted. Some examples are: "[I] *couldn't git her*….

[You] *holdin' me up*" (Huber, 2018, p. 214). Other examples are *Say he was there* (He said that he was there), *Ain't gotta tell you nothing* (I don't have to tell you anything). There are some cases where the subject is omitted and the verb stands alone with no complement such as in *Say* (She said). The subject for this example can only be inferred from previous context. Cukor-Avila (2002) affirms that AAVE speakers use the verb *say* to cite direct speech or constructed dialogue. Note that this feature is very common, especially when AAVE users speak fast.

1.12.18. Relative pronoun omission

McCoy (2016) states that AAVE speakers omit the relative pronouns *that, who* and *which* from *subject + relative clause* constructions. Some examples are: *There's a man got a revolver in his pocket* (There is a man who has a revolver in his pocket), *She got a dog barks very loud* (She has a dog that barks very loud), *I know somebody can do it for you* (I know somebody who can do it for you). Note that the relative clause is directly attached to the subject it describes with no relative pronoun in between.

1.12.19. Associative plural an' 'em

Labov et al. (1968) explain that AAVE speakers use this feature to refer to a specific relevant character and the peer group who usually interacts with this character. Some examples are: *Will **an' 'em** ain't coming* (Will and those guys aren't coming), *Jordan **an' 'em** gon' cook today* (Jordan and those guys are going to cook today), *James **an' 'em** gon' leave the country* (James and those guys are going to leave the country). There are some instances where the specific relevant character is not a proper noun but a subject pronoun such as in *He **an' 'em** playing basketball* (He and those guys are playing basketball).

1.12.20. Cleft sentences

O'Neill (2014) says that cleft sentences are composed of subordinate clauses or phrases that complete the missing information of the main clause. Both the main clause and the subordinate clause are usually linked by *is* or *was*. Some examples are: *Why I came is **I came** to fix the shower* (I came to fix the shower), *What you did is **you did** your homework* (You did your homework), *What she ate is s**he ate** noodles* (She ate noodles). Note that a wh-word introduces the main clause and the subject and the verb are repeated in the subordinate clause. Contrasting the previous examples, there is no need for repetition

in order to fulfill the missing information, such as in *Why he's here is* ***the boss called him*** (He's here because the boss called him), *Why we're good is* ***you trained us properly*** (We are good because you trained us properly), *How they noticed is* ***they made more research*** (They noticed because they made more research). In all these examples the main clause and the subordinate clause can be inverted with no change of meaning.

1.12.21. Possessive who

Labov et al. (1968) argue that it is common of AAVE speakers to use the relative pronoun *who* instead of the possessive pronoun *whose* to indicate possession. Some examples are: *I know* ***who*** *money was that* (I know whose money that was), *You know* ***who*** *phone is this?* (Do you know whose phone this is?), *He know* ***who*** *wallet is this* (He knows whose wallet this is).

1.13. Phonology

Aside from the fact that AAVE shares grammatical features with white vernaculars, such as Appalachian English (AppE) and SWVE, it also shares phonological aspects with them. AAVE received great influence from British colonizers and it is not a coincidence that some of its phonological features resemble Cockney features. Some examples are *g-dropping*, *non-rhoticity* or *r-lessness*, *realization of "th" as /f/ or /v/*, *l-vocalization*, *undipthongization*. Unfortunately, however, the scope of this project does not allow for a phonological analysis, since it focuses exclusively on grammar and language use.

1.14. Lexicon

Researcher Fought (2006) indicates that AAVE lexicon has greatly influenced teenagers from different social groups. They use many of these words because they tend to prefer "the 'coolness' of AAVE than…the prestige of the standard" (p. 139). However, the following study will not cover lexical items because there is still not a concrete AAVE dictionary. Hence, it is very difficult to determine the actual etymological source of the words and phrases found in the stand-up routines.

Overall, this section has presented the most important information that supports this study. It defined AAVE, its history and its origins, which were crucial for a better perspective of what this variety is and where it comes from. It compared SAE and AAVE in the fields of education, sociolinguistics and literature. Moreover, it introduced basic

theories about society, identity and language, which were useful to perceive what AAVE is for its speakers and for the mainstream community. This section discussed as well about the portrayal of AAVE features in stand-up comedy routines. Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis were also suggested to understand what occurs in natural speech. Finally, this section presented the rhetorical strategies and the most common grammatical features found in AAVE. The following section describes the methodology carried out for the present study.

CHAPTER II - METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a description of the study, the materials and methods used during the course of the investigation. The main reason for choosing stand-up comedy routines instead of other sources of information is because they provide semi-spontaneous and fluent speech, which makes them a more reliable source to obtain the desired results. The first section introduces the type of study that was carried out for the analysis. The second section introduces the type of corpus, which is the source of information. The last section presents the type of analysis, which explains how the data was systematized.

2.1. Type of study

This study is a descriptive analysis of discourse based on the stand-up comedy routines of Steve Harvey. It is merely a case study because its findings cannot be generalized to the entire population of AAVE speakers. It aims to provide the readers with an analysis of how stand-up comedians use language as a humoristic channel to deal with several issues in society. The primary reason why this particular comedian was chosen for the present study is because of the notoriety of his use of AAVE and his popularity that extends outside of the African-American community. He uses humor as a channel to establish a dichotomy between AAVE and SAE. He brings up daily life events to relate to the audience, the African-American community, and society in general.

2.2. Type of corpus

The corpora information was obtained from three excerpts of YouTube videos specifically chosen because they deal with racial identity-related topics. Transcriptions were done using personal competence in AAVE grammar. Each transcription was obtained through an exhaustive review of the three chosen videos[4]. A native speaker served as a filter to review and correct these transcriptions in order to support their fidelity. Lastly, each transcription was given a number and the lines in each one of them were numbered as well to facilitate their identification for the analysis. Thus, T1[5] is the transcription from the video entitled “Steve Harvey - Don’t Trip He Ain’t Through With Me Yet.” This excerpt is taken from the routine “Don’t Trip He Ain’t Through With Me Yet” broadcasted in 2006 in Atlanta, Georgia and it lasts one hour and thirty minutes. T2 is the transcription from the

[4] Inaudible material is presented as follows in the three transcriptions: (inaudible).
[5] Transcription one was taken from minute 46:00 to minute 54:35

video entitled “Steve Harvey: Chuuuuch vs. Service - You Do Know There is a Difference Right?” This excerpt is taken from the routine “One Man” broadcasted in 2001 in Augusta, Georgia and it lasts fifty-seven minutes. T3[6] is the transcription from the video entitled “Steve Harvey Still Trippin - 1” This excerpt is taken from the routine “Still Trippin” broadcasted in 2008 in Newark, New Jersey and it lasts one hour and forty-six minutes.

2.3. Type of analysis

This study offers two analyses. The first analysis is quantitative and qualitative in nature, since tokens of the morphological and syntactic variables were counted as well as analyzed through prose. For the quantitative analysis, a table was designed in order to classify the morphological and syntactic features present during the stand-up routines. All the examples in each category include the transcription number and the line where they were found, e.g., (T1, L15). This facilitated the qualitative analysis where two examples of each feature were described in terms of how they relate to social identity. In the second analysis, multiple instances were located where AAVE and humor are used as tools that mark social identity as well, as a dichotomy between “us” and “them,” AAVE speakers and SAE speakers, blacks and whites.

[6] Transcription three was taken from minute 25:35 to minute 34:41

CHAPTER III - DATA ANALYSIS

The following chapter is divided into three sections. The first section introduces a biographical description of Steve Harvey. The second section presents a quantitative analysis as well as a qualitative analysis of the morpho-syntactic features in the stand-up routines of Steve Harvey. For the quantitative analysis, a table was drawn to classify the instances of each grammatical feature. For the qualitative analysis, two instances were compared and contrasted with their SAE counterparts in regards to their structure. The third section analyzes multiple instances of the three transcriptions concerning the dichotomy of "us" African-Americans or AAVE speakers and "them" White Americans or SAE speakers. The three transcriptions are referred to as T1 for transcription number one, T2 for transcription number two, and T3 for transcription number three.

3.1. Steve Harvey

Steve Harvey is a comedian, actor, author and TV host who was born in Welch, West Virginia on January 17, 1957. He grew up with his parents in Cleveland. Later, he went to Kent State University but he dropped out to work in sales and other undefined jobs. In 1985, he participated in a competition where he won a contest doing comedy. He felt excited about this and started his career in stand-up comedy routines. By the 1990s, he became popular in well-known comedy clubs as well as on TV. Three years later he appeared in the famous TV series *Def Comedy Jam* broadcasted by HBO. He also became the host of the TV show named *It's showtime at the Apollo* where he worked for seven years from 1993 to 2000. In 1994, he starred a TV comedy named *Me and the Boys* where he was a single parent with two kids. Two years later he also starred *The Steve Harvey TV Show* where he played a music teacher who was a funk musician. Today, Harvey is the host of one of the most famous game shows named *Family Feud* where two families compete for prizes. He also manages his own show named *Steve TV Show*, which is transmitted nationwide (Bauer, 2019).

3.2. Grammatical features as markers of social identity

3.2.1. Non-standard main verbs

The following table represents the instances of non-standard verb groups present in the transcriptions of the three video excerpts.

NSMV
all hell woulda broke loose in that mall (T1, L45)
My momma woulda came (T1, L46)
Ain't had no buttons on it (T1, L56)
I shoulda knew (T2, L15-L16)
I ain't had no business going (T2, L16)
you have ever see? (T3, L26)
black women woulda tored (T3, L39)

Table 1. Non-standard main verbs

Seven instances of non-standard verb groups were identified in the transcriptions. In T1, Harvey talks about how differently white and black people discipline their kids. He tells a story about a white boy who told his mother "*bite me, mom!*" The comedian replies, "all hell woulda broke loose in that mall," explaining what could have happened if he had said this to his mother[7]. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*all hell would have broken loose in that mall*." Note that in AAVE the main verb takes the past form while in SAE the main verb takes the past participle form in perfective tenses. Both utterances make reference to a hypothetical situation in the past. However, Green (2002) notes that the verbal paradigm *have + simple past* is used to mark emphasis in affirmative utterances.

Another example occurs in T2 when Harvey talks about white and black people going to church. He says, "I shoulda knew right there I ain't had no business going 'cause I ain't never been to service before,"[8] explaining that he felt uncomfortable about being invited to "*service*" by white people. In SAE, the verbal paradigm would be *have + past participle* as in "*I should have known right there…*" As mentioned above, in AAVE the main verb follows the *have + simple past* structure to highlight the meaning of the utterance. Note that modal verbs *woulda* and *shoulda* result from the reduction of the perfective auxiliary *have*.

[7] This is one of the cases where a brief explanation is given to contextualize the utterance.
[8] Note that the tables do not display the complete utterances. However, in some cases, they are extended in the description for more context.

3.2.2. Subject-verb agreement

Below is a table that displays the instances of subject-verb agreement present in the transcriptions of the three video excerpts.

SVA
Southern whites and blacks is pretty much the same (T1, L1-L2)
white folks is different (T1, L2)
I don't know where the "n" go (T1, L12-L13)
all of them was a different color (T1, L29-30)
when it come to going to church (T2, L8)
the activity that go on (T2, L19)
Where was you at last night? (T3, L22)
Who house was you at last night? (T3, L22)
Is these not the ugliest women...? (T3, L25)
their mommas was home (T3, L31-32)
They was hiding them (T3, L38)
They is the most (T3, L41)

Table 2. Subject-verb agreement

Concerning SVA, 12 instances were identified in the transcriptions. In T1, Harvey emphasizes that Southern white and black people are very similar but he says, "Get up north, white folks is different." In AAVE, plural nouns like *folks* take third person singular verbs. This would be unacceptable for SAE speakers because plural subjects always take the verb *are*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*You get up north, white folks are different*."

The lack of SVA does not only occur with copula *be* but with many other regular and irregular verbs. For instance, in T2 he says that church is the building somebody attends while *chuch* is "the activity that go on once you get inside the building." In this utterance, he omits the third person singular *–s* morpheme from the verb *go*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*the activity that goes on once you get inside the building*," which follows SVA rules because the suffix *–s* is attached to the verb.

3.2.3. Copula and auxiliary omission

Following are the tables that display the instances where the copula and auxiliary verbs were omitted in the routines.

CAO
they a lot like black people (T1, L1)
They just different (T1, L3)
When the last time...? (T1, L11)
What you mean *to die for*? (T1, L16-L17)
Why you gon' bring him...? (T1, L17)
Leave that boy where he at (T1, L17-L18)
ya'll in the middle? (T1, L22)
"Steve tripping" (T1, L23)
"Where he at?" (T1, L27)
black lady standing there (T1, L49)
You feel? (T1, L55)
Y'all remember that coat...? (T1, L55)
if we gon' have (T2, L3)
If you gon' pass out spots (T2, L5)
that pretty much (T2, L8)
he their buddy (T2, L24)
"Who the hell y'all talking to?" (T2, L30-L31)
we used to it (T3, L6)
We the only ones (T3, L9)
you sitting next to her (T3, L13)
tell this crazy heffer you sitting next to (T3, L14)
This story over! (T3, L15)
You an' 'em heffers gon' get killed (T3, L16-L17)
When they coming? (T3, L17)
What time they gon' be here? (T3, L17-L18)
You know the hell you catching right now with...? (T3, L20)
Where you at? (T3, L22)
Why her car red? (T3, L24)
White people know these women ugly (T3, L26-L27)
this where the story (T3, L30)
this a whole 'nother story (T3, L32-L33)
you walking out (T3, L35)
Here another way (T3, L39)
We sick of this fool (T3, L46)
My momma coming down (T3, L47)
Who you know in the space program? (T3, L57)
Who you know give a…? (T3, L58)
We having trouble down here (T3, L62)
we catching down here (T3, L63)
You gon' drag us up to the moon...? (T3, L63-L64)
We going up (T3, L65)
What you gassing your car with? (T3, L67)
She gon' put a diaper on (T3, L71)

Table 3. Copula and auxiliary omission

Harvey omits copula and auxiliary verbs 43 times in the three transcriptions. In T1, he says, "they a lot like black people," explaining that Southern white and black people are very similar. In this utterance, he omits copula *be*, which is the linking verb between the subject and the following adjectival phrase. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*they are a lot like black people*." Note that in SAE, the copula *be* can never be omitted from the utterance.

In another example from T3, he talks about polygamy and he explains that black men would not stand having more than one wife. He expresses a complaint to the audience through the rhetorical question "You know the hell you catching right now with one, one?" This question has dropped the auxiliary *do* at the beginning as well as the copula *be* right after the subject of the embedded section, i.e., between "you" and "catching." Mufwene et al. (1998) show that embedded questions like this avoid SAI and then copula *be* omission takes place. In SAE, embedded questions also avoid SAI as in, "*Do you know the hell you are catching right now with one, one?*"

3.2.4. Negative inversion

The following table shows examples where the negative auxiliary and the subject switched positions in the transcriptions.

NI
Ain't nobody else (T3, L8)
Don't nobody want that! (T3, L43)
Ain't no black woman (T3, L68)

Table 4. Negative inversion

There were three instances of negative inversion found in the transcriptions. In T3, Harvey talks about the news and he says, "Ain't nobody else got no liquor store." This declarative utterance is the result of switching the positions between the indefinite subject and the negative auxiliary *ain't* to mark emphasis in the meaning. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*Nobody else has a liquor store*."

Another example occurs in T3 when he talks about the four hundred kids who were taken off a polygamist compound. He says that if black kids would have been taken as hostages, they would be complaining, "Don't nobody want that!" This utterance has also undergone through negative inversion although auxiliary *do* is not common in AAVE. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*Nobody wants that!*" Note that the negative auxiliary *don't* has been removed and therefore the verb takes the third person singular.

3.2.5. Negative concord

The table[9] below depicts the instances where more than one negative marker appears in an utterance in the transcriptions of the three video excerpts.

NC
y'all won't say nothing (T1, L6)
You can't do none of that (T1, L32)
You ain't coming in my house with a tattoo nowhere (T1, L33-L34)
You ain't chipping in on the rent or nothing else (T1, L34-L35)
you don't stay here no more (T1, L35-L36)
*wadn't doing nothing (T1, L52)
Ain't had no buttons on it (T1, L56)
ain't no need (T2, L12)
I ain't had no business (T2, L16)
I ain't never been to service before (T2, L16-L17)
I ain't never been to service (T2, L17)
Ain't no emotion in it (T2, L25)
But I ain't ask for nothing (T2, L40)
they ain't got nothing to do with black folks (T3, L2)
this ain't got nothing to do with us (T3, L4-L5)
Ain't nobody else got no liquor store (T3, L8-L9)
You ain't gotta look for no details at eleven (T3, L16)
You ain't spending no time with me (T3, L23)
we ain't got nothing to do with it (T3, L40)
Don't nobody want that! (T3, L43)
You ain't got no hot sauce? (T3, L43-L44)
it ain't got nothing to do with us (T3, L53)
they ain't got nothing to do with us (T3, L56)
Ain't no black woman in here gon' put no diaper on (T3, L68)

Table 5. Negative concord

There were 24 instances of negative concord in the transcriptions. In T1, Harvey first meets the son of the white lady and he complains about the boy's tattoos. He says that if one of his sons had a tattoo on, he would tell them "You ain't coming in my house with a tattoo nowhere." This utterance makes emphasis in the meaning with both negative markers *ain't* and *nowhere*. In SAE, this would be unacceptable because more than one negative marker is not allowed. Hence, in SAE, this utterance would be expressed as follows: "You are not coming in my house with a tattoo anywhere."

He uses negative concord again in T3 when he tells the audience about the story of a white astronaut woman who wore a diaper during a car trip. He says, "Ain't no black woman in here gon' put no diaper on." This utterance has multiple negative markers that give even more emphasis to the meaning. Note that it is common for AAVE speakers to

[9] Although this study does not allow for a phonological analysis, the table above shows an example with a phonological feature "wadn't." In SAE, this would be "*wasn't.*"

use negative indefinite pronouns, such as *nothing*, *nobody*, *no one*, and *nowhere*. They also use quantifiable subjects headed by the negative particle *no*, e.g., *no* idea, *no* apples, *no* shoes and so on. SAE utterances only allow one negative marker as in, "No black woman here is going to put a diaper on."

3.2.6. Ain't *as* be + not

These tables show the examples where the negative particle *ain't* was used instead of copula *be* + *not* in the discourse.

AB+N
Ain't a lot of men (T1, L2)
it ain't your show (T1, L4)
I ain't even gon' lie to you (T1, L12)
"Yeah, I guess…guess it is, ain't I?" (T1, L15)
You ain't coming (T1, L33)
You ain't chipping in (T1, L34)
It ain't gon' work (T2, L9)
It ain't happening (T2, L10)
you ain't gon' be (T2, L11)
they sure ain't gon' be (T2, L12)
ain't no need (T2, L12)
Ain't no emotion in it (T2, L25)

that ain't how black people pray (T2, L31)
Ain't nobody else (T3, L8)
we ain't in the story at all (T3, L11)
You ain't spending (T3, L23)
You ain't taking (T3, L33)
You sure ain't coming (T3, L34)
"You ain't my dad!" (T3, L45)
You ain't my daddy (T3, L47)
I ain't your son (T3, L47)
she ain't stopping… (T3, L67)
How you ain't gon' stop? (T3, L67)
Ain't no black woman (T3, L68)

Table 6. Ain't as be + not

There were 24 instances of auxiliary *ain't* as *be* + *not* identified in the transcriptions. In T1, Harvey tells people that he does not care about their opinion and he tells the audience "You might disagree but it ain't your show." He uses the negative marker *ain't* instead of copula *be*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*You might disagree but it is not your show*." Note that the negative maker *ain't* is replaced by the third-person copula *be*.

Another example occurs in T3 when he comments on the fact that the white astronaut woman traveled to her destiny with no intention of stopping to use the restroom. He says to the audience "How you ain't gon' stop?" This question shows once again how *ain't* replaces the corresponding conjugation of auxiliary *be*. In SAE, this question would be, "*How are you not going to stop?*" Note that in SAE, direct questions go through SAI. On the other hand, direct questions in AAVE tend not to invert the subject and the auxiliary.

3.2.7. Ain't *as* do + not

The table below shows the instances where *ain't* was used instead of auxiliary *do* + *not* in the transcriptions.

AD+N
they ain't got (T3, L2)
You ain't got to run (T3, L3)
this ain't got (T3, L4)
We ain't got to be there (T3, L8)
You ain't gotta look for no details (T3, L16)
we ain't got (T3, L40)
You ain't got…? (T3, L43)
You ain't gotta run (T3, L53)
it ain't got (T3, L53)
they ain't got (T3, L56)

Table 7. Ain't as do + not

Concerning this feature, 10 instances were identified in the transcriptions. In T3, Harvey talks about the difference between black and white people regarding the news on TV. He says, "they ain't got nothing to do with black folks," referring to the stories about white people on the news. This utterance clearly reflects the use of *ain't* instead of the auxiliary *do*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*they do not have anything to do with black folks.*"

Another example occurs in T3 when he talks about black people involved in robbery and he says, "We ain't got to be there before eleven." The negative marker *ain't* is used once again as a replacer of the auxiliary *do*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*We do not have to be there before eleven*."

3.2.8. Ain't *as* did + not

Below is a table that displays the instances where the negative marker *ain't* was used instead of auxiliary *did* + *not* in the routines.

ADi+N
Ain't had no buttons on it (T1, L56)
I ain't had no business going (T2, L16)
But I ain't ask for nothing (T2, L40)
You ain't take the trash out (T3, L23)

Table 8. Ain't as did + not

There were four instances of *ain't* as *did* + *not* identified in the transcriptions. In T1, Harvey remembers his mothers' coat and he says, "Ain't had no buttons on it."[10] In this utterance, existential *it* has been omitted before the negative auxiliary *ain't*. He uses this feature as a replacer of the negative auxiliary *do* in the past. In SAE, this utterance would be, "It didn't have any buttons on it."

Another example occurs in T2 when he talks about going to church with white people and he says, "I ain't had no business going." This utterance uses the negative auxiliary *ain't* instead of the past tense auxiliary *did*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*I did not have any business going*." It is important to mention that sometimes the tense of the negative auxiliary *ain't* can only be determined through context because it could stand for *do* + *not* or *did* + *not*.

3.2.9. Ain't *as* have + not

Below is a table of instances in which *ain't* was used instead of the auxiliary *have* + *not* in the transcriptions.

AH+N
I ain't said (T1, L11)
I just ain't never spelled *isn't* (T1, L13)
I ain't never been to service before (T2, L16)
I ain't never been to service (T2, L17)
If you ain't (T2, L21)

Table 9. Ain't as have + not

[10] AAVE speakers use *ain't* + *past* and *non-past* forms of the main verb (Green, 2002, p. 39).

There were five instances where Harvey used auxiliary *ain't* instead of the auxiliary *have* in the transcriptions. In T1, he talks about the story where the white lady used *isn't*. He says, "I ain't said an *isn't* ever in my life." This utterance replaces the auxiliary *have* for the non-standard negative marker *ain't* to make reference to a perfective form. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*I have not said an isn't ever in my life*."

Another example occurs in T1 when he is talking about the same white lady using *isn't*. He says, "I just ain't never spelled *isn't*." Once again, note how this utterance replaces the auxiliary *have* for the non-standard negative marker *ain't* to form the present perfect. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*I just have never spelled isn't*." Note that in AAVE and SAE, the main verb remains in the past participle form.

3.2.10. Future markers

The following table presents the instances where the future marker *finna* was used in the three transcriptions.

FM
I know something finna jump off (T1, L44)
you finna bring (T3, L14)

Table 10. Future markers

Harvey uses many future markers in his routines but the one concerning this study, i.e., *finna* is found twice in the transcriptions. In T1, he tells the story about the white lady and her son. He says that the white lady called his son a second time after he had told his mother "*to bite*" him. Scared of what could have happened this time, he said, "I know something finna jump off." He uses the future marker *finna* because he felt that something bad was about to happen. This feature is precisely used to talk about events that correspond to the immediate future. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*I know that something is about to happen*."

He uses *finna* once again in T3 when he talks about polygamous couples. He tells the men in the audience to tell their partners "You finna bring four, five more of them to the house." In this utterance, he aims to emphasize in the immediacy of the action. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*You are about to bring four or five more of them to the house*."

3.2.11. Habitual be

The table below shows the cases of habitual *be* present in the three transcriptions.

Hbe
They be praying (T2, L23)
They just be talking to God (T2, L25)
you be standing there (T2, L40)
I be paying attention to stuff (T3, L1)
You be hearing on TV all the time (T3, L59)
Be messing with (T3, L65)
you be putting that Depend on you (T3, L69)

Table 11. Habitual be

Harvey uses habitual *be* seven times in the transcriptions. In T2, he talks about how white people pray to God and he says, "They just be talking to God," complaining about the way they do it. The non-finite form of *be* in this utterance expresses habituality, i.e., they customarily pray the way they do it. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*They are usually just talking to God*."

Another example occurs in T3 when he is talking about the news and he says, "I be paying attention to stuff." Once again, this utterance presents the use of this feature to express habituality, meaning that he is always aware of what is happening around him. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*I am usually paying attention to stuff*." This feature is commonly used together with the *-ing* participle of the verb as seen in the two previous examples.

3.2.12. Stressed been

The following table displays the instances of stressed *been* present in the three transcriptions.

Sbeen
You been following this story…? (T3, L11)
I been married before (T3, L20)
I been watching this story (T3, L25)

Table 12. Stressed been

Harvey uses stressed *been* three times in the transcriptions. In T3, he introduces the topic of polygamy[11]. Within this topic, he says, "Don't let your wife make you think this is cool. Polygamous! This has got to be a white story. I been married before. Why would you want eight more of them?" He explains how it is to be married and complains that it would be a disaster with more than one wife. He uses stressed *been* to emphasize the fact that he has been married for a long time and he still is. He wants the audience to note that black men would not allow more than one woman because he considers this a crazy idea.

Another example occurs in T3 when he refers to the four hundred children taken off the polygamous compound and he says, "I been watching this story on the news." He uses stressed *been* in this utterance to emphasize that he has been watching this story on the news for a relatively long period of time. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*I have been watching this story on the news for a long period of time*." Note that in SAE, this utterance requires an external duration marker like the clause "*for a long period of time*." In AAVE, the verb *been* itself carries the durative aspect.

[11] See transcription number three for further information about the topic of polygamy.

3.2.13. Completive done

Below is the table that shows the instances of completive *done* present in the transcriptions of the three video excerpts.

Cdone
I done seen it (T2, L9)
I done try it before (T2, L14)
I done been to "chuch." (T2, L17)
if you done ever heard (T2, L20)

Table 13. Completive done

Harvey uses completive *done* four times in the excerpts. In T2, he talks about the difference about going to church among white and black people and he says, “I done seen it” He uses completive *done* to emphasize that he has already attended a “*service*” and was shocked about what he saw. In SAE, this utterance would be, “*I have seen it*”

Another example occurs in T2 when he suggests to the audience to attend a nearby church and he says, “I done try it before.” He uses this feature to place emphasis on his suggestion and in this way make the audience feel sure of his advice. Note that completive *done* takes not only past participles but also bare roots as main verbs. In SAE, this utterance would be, “*I have tried it before*.”

3.2.14. Verb got

The tables below show the instances of verb *got* present in the three transcriptions.

Vgot
I got two twenty three year old daughters (T1, L32)
I gotta see the rest of this (T1, L42)
he got a membership (T2, L24)
God got a list of titles (T2, L33)
we gotta go down (T2, L33)
You ain't got to run (T3, L3)
We ain't got to be there (T3, L8)
nobody else got no liquor store (T3, L9)
We the only ones got liquor stores (T3, L9)
A man got more than one wife (T3, L12)
You ain't gotta look for no details (T3, L16)
This has got to be a white story (T3, L19)
you got eight (T3, L21)
All of them got hairstyles (T3, L28)
we ain't got nothing to do with it (T3, L40)
You ain't got no hot sauce? (T3, L43)
you just got to hear (T3, L51)
You ain't gotta run (T3, L53)
it ain't got nothing to do with us (T3, L53)
they ain't got nothing to do with us (T3, L56)
you got on clean underwear (T3, L70)

Table 14. Verb got

There were 21 instances in total where Harvey used the verb *got* both as a main verb and as an auxiliary in the transcriptions. For example, in T1, when he heard what the son of the white lady told her, she asks Harvey to wait and he says, "Oh, I'm gon' hold on 'cause I gotta see the rest of this." In this utterance, he says that he is going to wait only because he feels the necessity to see what is going to happen next. He uses the modal verb *gotta* not only to communicate his necessity but also to emphasize it. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*Oh, I am going to hold on because I have to see the rest of this*."

Another example occurs in T3 where he uses *got* as the main verb when he talks about polygamy. He says, "A man got more than one wife" In this utterance, he uses the verb *got* to denote possession and to emphasize about the fact that a man could have more than one wife. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*A man has more than one wife*"

3.2.15. Non-standard pronouns

Below is a table that displays the instances of non-standard pronouns present in the three excerpts.

NSP
Lotta y'all agree (T1, L5)
y'all won't say nothing (T1, L6)
y'all in the middle? (T1, L22)
You know how y'all are (T1, L50)
Y'all remember that coat...? (T1, L55)
Who the hell y'all talking to? (T2, L30)
them titles (T2, L33)
y'all in the back (T3, L29)
Them black women (T3, L39)
them bed sheets (T3, L39)
them kids (T3, L49)
them little kids (T3, L49)
Be messing with y'all (T3, L66)
pee on theyself (T3, L69)

Table 15. Non-standard pronouns

Concerning non-standard pronouns, 14 instances were identified in the transcriptions. In T1, when Harvey is telling the story about the white lady and her son, he says that he saw a black woman and her son who were watching the whole affair. The black woman felt irritated because of the white boy's attitude. So Harvey says, "You know how y'all are." In this utterance, he uses the non-standard subject pronoun *y'all* to refer to all the black women in the audience who felt identified with the woman in the story. The use of this pronoun is restricted to an informal context in which a specific group of people known to the speaker is being alluded to. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*You know how you guys are*."

Another example occurs in T3 when Harvey explains how policemen covered the hostage kids with bed sheets. He says that if black kids had been hostages, "Them black women woulda tored through them bed sheets." In this case, he uses the object pronoun *them* instead of the demonstrative pronouns *these* and *those* to refer to a specific group of people or items. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*These black women would have torn through those bed sheets*."

3.2.16. Non-standard adverbs

Here is a table that shows the case of non-standard adverbs present in the three transcriptions.

NSA
real nice lady (T1, L9)

Table 16. Non-standard adverbs

Concerning non-standard adverbs, just one instance was identified in the transcriptions. In T1, when Harvey goes to the mall and first meets the white lady, he says to the audience that she was "a real nice lady." Note how he uses the adjective *real* instead of the adverb *really* to intensify the adjective *nice* and give emphasis to the whole adjective phrase. In SAE, this phrase would be, "*a really nice lady*."

3.2.17. Existential it

Below is a table that details the instances of existential *it* present in the three transcriptions.

Eit
it's a difference (T1, L6)
It's some stuff (T2, L10)
it's damn sure some stuff (T2, L11)
It's just some stories (T3, L1)
it's some stories (T3, L10)
it's just some stories (T3, L50)

Table 17. Existential it

There were six instances in total where Harvey used existential *it* in the transcriptions. For example, in T1, he says that he thinks, "it's a difference" when black and white people discipline their kids. He uses this feature instead of the existential constructions *there is* and *there are*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "there is a difference."

Another example occurs in T3 when he says, "it's some stories" referring to the news he heard about the polygamous compound. He uses this feature instead of the existential construction *there are* to refer to the plural noun *stories*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*there are some stories*." Note that existential *it* is used regardless of whether the following subject is singular or plural.

3.2.18. Appositives

The following table displays the instances of appositive constructions present in the three transcriptions.

APP
white people down South, they a lot like black people (T1, L1)

Table 18. Appositives

Harvey uses only one appositive in the transcriptions. It occurs in T1 when he is telling the audience that black and white southerners are very similar. He says, "white people down South, they a lot like black people." In SAE, this utterance would be, "*white people down South are a lot like black people*." Harvey uses the subject pronoun *they* to make reference to the previously mentioned white people. The use of this pronoun is redundant because the referent is already mentioned. Thus, there is no need to place the pronoun between the subject and the complement unless it is to mark emphasis.

3.2.19. Article omission

The following is a table that shows the instances where the definite and the indefinite article were omitted in the three transcriptions.

AO
real nice lady (T1, L9)
black lady standing there (T1, L49)
this woman puts under Depend diaper (T3, L66)
Cause whole time (T3, L69)

Table 19. Article omission

There were four instances found of article omission in the transcriptions. For example, in T1, when Harvey is talking about the son of the white lady, he says he saw, "black lady standing there with her little boy watching the whole thing." In this case, he omits the indefinite article at the beginning of the utterance before the adjective *black*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*A black lady was standing there with her little boy watching the whole thing*."

Another example occurs in T3 when Harvey tells the story about the woman who made a trip with diapers in a car, as she did not intend to stop. He describes the situation

and he says that black women would not do that. He says, " 'Cause whole time you be putting that Depend on you, you hear your mommas' voice in the background 'Make sure you got on clean underwear 'cause you go to the hospital.' " In this utterance, he omits the definite article before the adjective *whole*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*Because the whole time you are putting that Depend on you, you hear your mother's voice in the background 'Make sure you are wearing clean underwear because you go to the hospital.'* "

3.2.20. Subject pronoun omission

The following table[12] shows the instances where different subject pronouns were omitted in the transcriptions.

SPO
Ain't had no buttons on it (T1, L56)
ain't no need (T2, L12)
Ain't no emotion in it (T2, L25)
Shoot you in your face (T3, L48)
Had them little kids (T3, L49)
Be messing with y'all (T3, L65)
Leave us up there (T3, L66)

Table 20. Subject pronoun omission

There were seven instances found of subject pronoun omission in the transcriptions. In T1, while telling the story about how an African-American kid was hit by his mother, Harvey remembers his mother's coat and he says, "Ain't had no buttons on it." In this utterance, he omits the subject pronoun *it* before *ain't*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*It didn't have any buttons on it*."

Another example occurs in T3 when he says that if black kids had been taken as hostages, they would write rap songs with phrases such as "Shoot you in your face." In this utterance, he omitted the subject pronoun *I* before the verb *shoot*. This subject could only be inferred from context because previous phrases use the first-person singular. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*I shoot you in your face*."

[12] See the footnote on pg. 34 for an explanation of the example with an asterisk.

3.2.21. Relative pronoun omission

Below is a table that details the instances where relative pronouns were omitted in the three transcriptions.

RPO
I know some white people stay out in Beverly Hills (T2, L14)
Ain't nobody else got no liquor store (T3, L9)
We the only ones got liquor stores (T3, L9)
A man got more than one wife (T3, L12)
Who you know give a...? (T3, L58)
Ain't no black woman in here gon' put no diaper on (T3, L68)

Table 21. Relative pronoun omission

Relative pronouns were omitted six times in the transcriptions. An example takes place in T2 when he is telling an anecdote to the audience in which white people invited him to church and he says, "I know some white people stay out in Beverly Hills." In this utterance, he omitted the relative pronoun *who*, which should appear between "people" and "stay." In SAE, this utterance would be, "*I know some white people who live in Beverly Hills*."

Another example occurs in T3 when he says, "Ain't nobody else got no liquor store."[13] This utterance omits the relative pronoun *who* that should be between the noun phrase and the verb phrase. In SAE, this utterance would be, "There is nobody else who has a liquor store."

3.2.22. Associative plural an' 'em

The table below depicts the instances of associative plural *an' 'em* in the three transcriptions.

AP an' 'em
You an' 'em heffers (T3, L16-L17)

Table 22. Associative plural an' 'em

Harvey uses associative plural *an' 'em* just once in the transcriptions. In T3, when he is talking about polygamy, he addresses the men in the audience and their partners, and he says, "You an' 'em heffers gon' get killed." In this utterance, he uses the associative

[13] This is an example where existential *it* was omitted before the negative particle *ain't*.

plural to refer to the women who are sitting next to the men he is referring to. Labov et al. (1968) mention that this feature is different from the one found in other vernaculars because it is used to refer to the head of a specific group and his peers. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*You and those ladies are going to get killed*."

3.2.23. Cleft sentences

The following table displays the instances of cleft sentences present in the three transcriptions.

CS
I think the only way to kill racism is we got to do more things together (T2, L1)
Some news stories is just, well, white stories (T3, L2-L3)
Her plan is she ain't stopping (T3, L66-L67)

Table 23. Cleft sentences

There were three instances of cleft sentences found in the transcriptions. For example, in T2, Harvey sarcastically says that black and white people should do things together. He says, "I think the only way to kill racism is we got to do more things together." The missing information of the main clause, i.e., *the only way to kill racism* is fulfilled with the response in the subordinate clause, i.e., *we got to do more things together*. Note that only the subordinate clause has the structure of an independent clause. However, both complement each other in meaning. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*I think that the only way to kill racism is to do more things together*."

Another example occurs in T3 when Harvey talks about the woman who travelled with the diapers and he comments, "Her plan is she ain't stopping." This cleft is composed of a noun phrase with the missing information and the subordinate clause, which carries the missing information. Both clauses are linked by the third-person singular conjugation of the copula *be*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*She does not plan on stopping*."

3.2.24. Possessive who

The following is a table that displays the case of possessive *who* in the three transcriptions.

Pwho
Who house was you at last night? (T3, L22)

Table 24. Possessive who

There was only one instance of possessive *who* in the transcriptions. In T3, Harvey talks about the fact of having more than one wife and he imitates the hypothetical voices of these women. He says that they would be asking questions such as "Who house was you at last night?" This is a clear example in which he has replaced the possessive pronoun *whose* for the non-standard use of *who*. In SAE, this utterance would be, "*Whose house were you at last night?*"

This section explained the morpho-syntactic features present in Harvey's discourse. They were compared and contrasted with their SAE counterparts to see the differences. This led to the establishment of a dichotomy between AAVE and SAE, a process that will be explained in more detail in the section below.

3.3. Dichotomy of "us" and "them"

The dichotomy of "us" and "them" serves to characterize AAVE and SAE as two mutually exclusive poles. The pole "us" stands for AAVE speakers while the pole "them" stands for SAE speakers. Comedian Steve Harvey uses the rhetorical strategies as the main resource to state the linguistic differences between AAVE and SAE. He also uses them to give a better perspective of the cultural differences that exist between African-Americans and White Americans. This process concludes in the construction of social identity. Harvey presents sensible topics on stage, which must be handled with caution. However, he uses humor to break this barrier and achieve the purpose of this dichotomy. He uses AAVE as the primary code to interact with the audience when he talks about African-Americans and White Americans. In turn, the audience can confirm their identity as well.

When Harvey is on stage, he talks about "them" to introduce a topic and then he talks about "us" to state the differences. There are some instances where he extrapolates a situation about "them" into "us." This means that African-Americans sometimes become

the hypothetical protagonists in White American situations. African-Americans and White Americans are represented with social stigmas in the dichotomy. Thus, humor is essential to break these barriers and create a suitable atmosphere to speak with ease. To better understand humor, Fought (2006) says that it is "an indirect way of enforcing cultural norms, [a] signal of ingroup membership [and] a way of fighting, subverting, or at least drawing attention to social injustice" (p. 164). Cultural norms comprehend a set of sensible topics that must be handled with caution and the most appropriate way to do so is through the use of humor. The comedian uses this resource because he seeks to identify with the audience as well as to make them feel identified with him. It can be used as well as a potential weapon to deal with topics related to social inequality.

Besides being a comedian, Harvey is an ambassador of culture because he fosters pride for the community when he talks about attitudes, customs, ideologies and language. In this respect, Falk (2010) says, "Comedians are elaborate linguists, probably, without even being aware of it themselves.… [They] have to be [familiar with the] language and its peculiarities in order to be able to portray their different characters, situations, and emotions" (p. 3). This means that comedians' duty is beyond the labor of making the audience laugh. They must first develop their identities as individuals in society. Then they must share it with other speakers and their cultures to get inside their worlds. Also, they must become proficient users of their own language and they have to be acquainted with the language of the other.

The three excerpts analyzed in this dissertation deal with different topics where Harvey puts AAVE and SAE on two opposing sides to distinguish their characteristics. The first transcription deals with the problem of discipline. As previously mentioned, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes argue that African-Americans instruct their children more directly than White Americans do (1998, as cited in Fought, 2006). She details different aspects about discipline between them. The second transcription talks about the difference between the African-American church and the White American service. The third transcription discusses how different African-Americans and White Americans are represented on TV news.

3.3.1. Transcription 1

The main idea of this transcription lies in how differently African-Americans and White Americans discipline their children. Harvey criticizes that northern White Americans raise their children in a different way. He tells the audience that he went to the mall to buy something for his wife. He met a white lady who gently approached him because she was amazed to encounter him. She said, "*Oh goodness! It is you, isn't it?*" Harvey over-dramatizes White Americans to mock about their attitudes and linguistic features. Then he asks the audience with sarcasm "When the last time you said an *isn't*?" This is a rhetorical question that they do not need to reply because the answer is obvious. The audience laughs because they may have never used the word *isn't* before. These two utterances support the fact that Harvey has to master linguistic skills in both varieties to establish a difference. After he asked the question to the audience, he says, "*Ain't* is my word." Harvey uses this utterance to establish the dichotomy between SAE and AAVE.

After this, the comedian detaches from the standard use of the language when he says, "I ain't said an *isn't* ever in my life." He uses the perfective tense[14] to say that he is unacquainted with the word *isn't*. Later, he adds the fact that he does not know how to spell this word and he says, "I ain't gon' lie to you. I don't know where the 'n' go, the apostrophe. None of that! I just ain't never spelled *isn't,* and what for?" These utterances show an excessive use of negative morphemes to emphasize the comedian's disregard for the word, its structure and use. After this, he replied to the lady "Yeah, I guess it is, ain't I?" Harvey uses *ain't* in this tag question to confirm his identity, i.e., the words that describe his speech.

Later, the white lady says, "*Oh my goodness! If my son were to see you, oh he would just to*[15] *die for*." Harvey says that he felt really annoyed because the white lady used the phrase "*to die for*," and he overtly tells the audience "and that's another phrase they use that throws me." The comedian continuously builds social identity by expressing what bothers him about "them." After this commentary, he asks, "What you mean *to die for*?" This question highlights the dichotomy because it depicts SAE as something odd for AAVE speakers. This question may have the following structure: "us" [What you mean]

[14] This tense is particularly used by AAVE speakers (Green, 2002, p. 39).
[15] Note that the comedian hyper-corrects his use of SAE because he inserts the full infinitive after the modal verb *would*. This proves the use of marking, which consists in imitating other people's attitudes and language in an exaggerated manner.

and "them" [*to die for*]? Harvey does not bother to infer the figurative meaning of the phrase "*to die for*," and this is why he sarcastically says, "Why you gon' bring him out here then? Leave that boy where he at." He proves his disregard for the white lady's speech through this question because he chose to take the phrase "*to die for*" as literal.

Afterwards, the white lady asked, "*Would you mind signing an autograph for my son*?" Harvey intentionally used the corresponding politeness features of SAE in this question to mark a difference with AAVE. He agrees to do so and he says, "So she said. I said, where is he at?" He uses copula *be*, which is not a common feature of AAVE. However, this may be the result of the confusion he had when he said, "So she said. I said…" In this sequence, he did not plan to say, "So she said…." Thus, it can be inferred that this phrase could have influenced the insertion of the copula *be*. After this, the white lady makes a request and she says, "*If you could come this way, he is in the mall*." Harvey asks, "Where he at?" again. Note that this time he omitted the copula *be* because there is no interference of the introductory phrase "She said."

When the comedian first met the white boy, he was amazed about his appearance. He asked the white lady about his age and she said that he was fifteen years old. He reacts and tells the audience "Fifteen! You can't do none of that in my house…. You ain't coming in my house with a tattoo nowhere 'cause you know why? You ain't chipping in on the rent or nothing else. You can put the tattoo on but you don't stay here no more." This reprimand is full of negative concord to show that discipline is a serious topic for black people. Through this reprimand, he meant to say, "You are not allowed to behave like *them* and if you do so, these are the consequences." It is interesting to see that when he brings up a story about white people, he puts black people as hypothetical characters of the story. He makes the audience realize that black people would not fit in situations where white people are the protagonists. These utterances support the claim that African-American parents instruct children more directly than White American parents do. They show as well that humor is not used to talk about linguistic differences only, but also about social differences such as discipline.

Following the story, the white lady calls her son and the boy replies, "*Hey, bite me mom!*" She tells Harvey to hold on and he says, "Oh, I'm gon' hold on 'cause I gotta see the rest of this." He assumes that the white boy is getting in trouble and he expresses his desire to wait because he wants to see what will happen. Then the lady called him again

and the boy told her "*I said,* '*bite me, mom!*' " Harvey went to hide somewhere else because he said, "Something finna jump off." He uses the future marker *finna* to express that something was about to happen. He felt amazed because of the lady's lack of concern towards her son's attitude and he says, "Cause if I'da ever told my momma to bite me, Oh Lord! All hell woulda broke loose in that mall. It woulda been Armageddon in that mall. My momma woulda came through there on a three-headed horse with some sixes on her head. She'da killed everybody in there." The use of *signifying* in this sequence of events conveys exaggeration. Harvey uses non-standard verb groups, such as "woulda broke," "woulda came," "woulda been," and "she'da killed" to highlight how different it would have been if a black boy had told his mother what the white boy told his mother. These utterances show the extrapolation of events where African-Americans become the hypothetical subjects in White American situations.

Next, he says, "In the meantime, black lady standing there with her little boy watching the whole thing. Ohhh…oh… She was through. You know how y'all are." In the first utterance, he omits the indefinite article to emphasize that it is not a random black lady but instead he wants the ladies in the audience to feel identified with her. He describes her as being "through," which is a common term that AAVE speakers use to describe somebody who is angry. The attitude of the black lady conveys the indignation of African-Americans towards the indifference that White Americans display with respect to discipline. This point shows that both humor and language are used to bring to the forefront social differences, as Fought (2006) reflects. In the last utterance, Harvey uses the non-standard pronoun *y'all* to make the women in the audience identify with the lady he described in the story. AAVE speakers use this pronoun only when they feel comfortable enough or "at home" to address someone this way.

After this, the black[16] lady asked her son "Did you hear that right there? You bet not ever in your black life tell me to bite you," as she was beating the boy. She gave her son an example of how he should not behave and to do so, she used physical as well as verbal discipline. Harvey uses this event as a crucial point to highlight the use of *directness* by African-American parents. When the black lady finished beating the boy, she moved away an instant while holding the lapels of her coat. Then he asks the audience "Y'all

[16] The term *black* implies no discrimination throughout the study. It is interchangeably used instead of *African-American*.

remember that coat your momma had? Ain't had no buttons on it? She had to come up to the school one time…You tried to walk behind her 'cause the coat was embarrassing you." Harvey brings up anecdotes and experiences about daily life events to treat cultural aspects. Note that he uses the subject pronoun *y'all* as an identity marker to make the audience feel familiar with the situation. He also uses negative concord to identify the coat as something special because it did not have any buttons. In consequence, the audience creates a mental image to confirm what it means to be a member of the African-American community. This claim supports the idea that rhetorical strategies contribute to shared knowledge[17].

Finally, the black lady told her son "You bring your black little self down here. Don't you worry about this button on the coat. If your daddy had stayed with us, I'd have some money for a button on the coat." In the first utterance, she again used the adjectives "black" and "little" as intensifiers to make her son realize that he needs to obey her command. Note as well that the imperatives in the first two utterances account for the use of *directness* as the primary rhetorical strategy. This resource establishes the dichotomy because the white lady did not bother to discipline her son in any way while the black lady disciplined her son both verbally and physically. The two well-structured SAE utterances at the end demonstrate the use of *marking*. The comedian uses this strategy to make fun of the black lady's attitudes, and in this way he builds a bond with the African-American community.

3.3.2. Transcription 2

This transcription is important to better understand the dichotomy. Harvey introduces a serious social injustice using humor and sarcasm. At the beginning of the routine, he says, "I think the only way to kill racism is **we got to do more things together**…as black and white. I really do. I think we oughta go on more picnics together. I think we oughta have more company outings. I think if we gon' have positions passed out in corporate America, we oughta proportionately have the same amount of corporate positions as everybody else. If you gon' pass out spots in the cabinet in the White House, you oughta pass them out proportionately. Let us have the same as everybody else. You know, I think **we oughta do a whole lotta things together**." The phrases in bold[18] depict clear examples of the rhetorical strategy named *signifyin*g. African-Americans employ this

[17] See Schwarz (2010) for the use of rhetorical strategies by stand-up comedians.
[18] Only this transcription uses bold font to highlight two utterances from the whole context.

resource to humorously pass on messages with double meanings. Through these statements, the comedian does not mean that African-Americans and White Americans should do things together, but rather his intention is to criticize inequality concerning government jobs.

Harvey reinforces this point when he says, "Now, when it come to going to church, that pretty much where I think we oughta just draw the line." He establishes the dichotomy through the use of *signifying* to convey the message that, based on his experience, it would not be suitable for black people to share a cultural aspect such as going to church with white people. This time he does not mean, "we got to do more things together." After this, he says, "It ain't gon' work! I done seen it! It ain't happening! Trust me!" These imperative utterances persuade the audience that going to church is completely different in both communities. Harvey uses as many features as possible to get the audience to identify with this idea.

Once Harvey convinced the audience of this fact, he says, "Trust me! It's some stuff going on at some white folks' church that you ain't gon' be able to get next to. And it's damn sure some stuff going on at your church that they sure ain't gon' be able to get next to." These two utterances appropriately exemplify the dichotomy given that he is familiarized with the two processes, i.e., church and service. He uses existential *it* to talk about the same fact in the two utterances. However, in the second utterance, he adds emphasis through the intensifier "damn" and the adjective "sure" to describe the kind of church he knows best. After this, he says, "So ain't no need of busing over to your favorite church. Just go to the one that's around the corner from your house. I done try it before." He uses negative concord in these suggestions and then he uses completive *done* to highlight that he is already acquainted with the process.

After this, Harvey recalls an anecdote and he says, "I know some white people stay out in Beverly Hills and one time they asked me to go to service with them." This phrase introduces the other side of the coin, i.e., the service. He did not like the idea of being invited and he says, "I shoulda knew right there I ain't had no business going…" Harvey uses *signifying* to avoid being direct because he knew that he should have thought twice before going. He regrets having accepted the invitation because it resulted in a letdown. After this, he explains the reason why it was not convenient to go and he says, "cause I ain't never been to service before. I done been to 'chuch'. I ain't never been to service."

The comedian encourages pride for African-Americans because he says that he has never been involved in an activity like going to church with white people. He treats the "*service*" as something strange and this lets him differentiate from them. In the second utterance, he uses completive *done* to emphasize that he is only familiarized with "chuch." In this way, he confirms his affiliation with the audience. He repeats the first utterance at the end to ratify his detachment from the white community and because he seeks to focus on what is new for him than what he already knows.

Afterwards Harvey explains what "chuch" is for him and he says, "I said it right 'to chuch, c-u-r-c-h[19], chuch.' Not *church*. *Church* is the building you attend. 'Chuch' is the activity that go on once you get inside the building." Through this explanation, he clarifies the great difference between "*church*" and "chuch." He uses no AAVE features for the utterance that describes "*church*." On the other hand, he avoids SVA when he talks about the activity he is familiarized with, i.e., "chuch." These utterances affirm Rubtsova's point of view concerning the fact that ethnic minorities use their varieties as markers of identity that differentiate them from the mainstream culture to promote pride. These two terms are different in their pronunciation and in their meaning. However, the latter is the one of our concern because it relates to the rhetorical strategy named *signifying*. This strategy is important to understand these terms because the comedian gives each word a different meaning. Harvey gives more importance to the activity than the place and this becomes notorious in the language. Thus, the dichotomy would be represented as follows: "them" [*church*] and "us" [chuch].

Later, the comedian tells the audience that he felt amazed about white people praying. He says, "I don't know if you done ever heard white people pray or not. If you ain't, you need to go at least one time. It's an amazing thing!" He invites the audience to experience something that shocked him about white people praying. Then he complains, "These people happen to be Catholics." He conveys a strong stigma about Catholics because he says that the white people he met at the church are very similar to them. In the following utterances, he makes some remarks to reinforce this point. He says, "They talk to God like he stayed next door. You know, like he their buddy. Like he got a membership at the "Y." They don't shut their eyes. Ain't no emotion in it." According to Kochman, these utterances depict the lack of affection and emotion that characterizes White Americans

[19] The comedian intended to spell *c-h-u-c-h*.

(1981, as cited in Fought, 2006). Harvey teases about the fact that white people reach God differently from black people. This allows the audience to identify themselves as members of the African-American community. He describes them as being too confident and careless towards a situation that would normally produce affection and emotion.

After this, the comedian says, "They just be talking to God. '*Oh Father God. You know, Father, we just wanna thank you for warm days and sunny raise. Oh Father God. You know, Father. You know, if you could just watch over young Tim going back and forward to school each and every day. Oh Father God. And Oh Father, you know, if you could just stop on by, we'll be here 'til noon. Oh Father God*.' " Harvey uses habitual *be* at the beginning to make the audience see this prayer as something customary. The repetition of interjections and the insertion of requests about daily life events reinforce the point that white people show no affection or emotion. The comedian arranges the words and phrases in this prayer in purpose to tease White Americans. Then he asks, "Who the hell y'all talking to?" Note that, although the pronoun *y'all* is used to address members of the same community, he uses it to sarcastically address the group of white people he is referring to. He asks this question on purpose because he does not feel identified with how they reach God and then he says, "Cause that ain't how black people pray. No, no. Black people go to God totally different." This critique shapes the identity of African-Americans because it differentiates them from the mainstream community.

Before Harvey introduces the prayer, he says, "Black people go to God with reverence and respect. See, black people know God got a list of titles and we gotta go down all them titles before we start asking for something." These utterances serve as markers of social identity because they show the attitudes that black people adopt towards the act of reaching God. Kochman justifies Harvey's argument by stating that African-Americans "show passion and emotions that reflect an engagement with the material, as well as a serious and sincere attitude about [an argument]" (1981, as cited in Fought, 2006, p. 179). This point affirms the dichotomy between African-Americans and White Americans concerning their stances towards specific religious events such as the act of reaching God.

Finally, he introduces the prayer by saying, "Oh black people give it up when they pray, 'Gracious God our father, Lord of lords, King of all kings, ruler of the universe, Alpha and Omega, beginning and the end, bright and the morning star, hair like lamb's

wool, feet like bronze clay, wings that mount up and fly away!' " Note that he uses the phrase "give it up" to stress that black people's prayers are very special. It is full of biblical names and descriptions that make special reference to God in contrast with the prayer of white people, which contains repetitive words and fillers. Black people put emotion into their prayers to make them stand out. Once the prayer ends, he says, "We ask all these things in his name, let the church say, Amen, Amen." This last string of utterances exhibits the rhetorical strategy named *call and response*. It describes a set of norms that African-Americans employ when they go to church. This strategy is common in religious events where the preacher says something and the congregation replies with pre-established structures and phrases such as the word "Amen."

3.3.3. Transcription 3

In this transcription, Harvey talks about how different white and black people are represented on TV news. He mentions, "It's just some stories out there… You know they ain't got nothing to do with black folks." He affirms that black people can notice when they are involved or not in a story because they are easily able to perceive if the news is about African-Americans or White Americans. He links this idea with the following utterance where he says, "Some news stories is just, well, white stories." The comedian aims to show that stories about white people go unnoticed for black people. He emphasizes his disregard when he says, "You ain't got to run around the corner and look at the TV screen and know who is about. You can hear that this ain't got nothing to do with us." These utterances confirm that language is enough for AAVE speakers to identify who is being talked about on the news.

Then he says, "When white people get bad news, they don't know how to handle it." This utterance implies that white people do not get bad news as frequently as black people do. Although this social problem may influence black people's identity, he deals with it using humor. After this, he says, "I wanna share with them how to handle bad news 'cause, see, we used to it. We get bad news all the time." He mocks about the condition of African-Americans in society to confirm his membership with the community. Although this may be an exaggeration, he manages to draw attention to social injustice through self-criticism. This proves that humor is the result of laughing at the most embarrassing of oneself (Rickford and Rickford, 2000, as cited in Fought, 2006).

Following the previous utterances, he quotes the next piece of breaking news: "*Two people robbed liquor store, three people dead. Details at eleven*," and he replies, "We ain't got to be there before eleven…that's us!" He is not even concerned with getting informed about any details because he knows that black people are regularly involved in such situations. He treats sensible social topics like this using humor as a strategic tool to build identity and to differentiate himself from the mainstream community. He affirms that black people are involved in the breaking news story when he says, "Yeah, ain't nobody else got no liquor store. We the only ones got liquor stores. So, that's probably gon' be us." He uses AAVE to be as straightforward as possible in confronting this social injustice. In the last utterance, he uses the adverb *probably* to add sarcasm to the situation so that the audience notices that it is something obvious.

Afterwards, Harvey says, "But it's some stories. When you hear them, you know, you know we ain't the story at all." He addresses the audience with the phrase "You know!" to identify with them and to persuade them about his point. Then he asks them "You been following this story about these polygamous?" He asks this question because it is an uncommon topic in the African-American community and this is why he emphatically says, "That is so not a black story right there." Phrases like this reflect the voice of the community as a whole. He illustrates this point with daily life events such as when he says, "Fellas, you sitting next to her right now. Go home this evening and tell this crazy heffer you sitting next to, you finna bring four, five more of them to the house tomorrow." He challenges the audience to experience this in order to prove his argument right. When he says this, he wants to convey the following statement to the audience "I trust you not to be angry with me about this. I'm doing something potentially risky to show that you and I are both members of the same group, and understand that this is not to be taken seriously" (Fought, 2010, p. 164). Comedians are experts on transmitting this sort of uncomfortable messages to the audience to break the ice.

In response to such challenge, he says, "This story over…you can roll the credits. You ain't gotta look for no details at eleven. You an' 'em heffers gon get killed." Harvey is *signifying* through these phrases because they imply that it would be impossible for black people to accept such a notion like having more than one wife. The audience laughs as a signal of mutual agreement because they know as well that this challenge would cause a disaster. He teases the audience and exaggerates the story to highlight its meaning.

Moreover, this point suggests that the dichotomy serves not only to compare grammatical structures but also to enforce cultural norms because it dictates what is acceptable and unacceptable inside a community.

Following the story, he says, "Polygamous! This has got to be a white story." This statement describes the social stigma that African-Americans hold against White-Americans. Then he says, "I been married before. Why would you want eight more of them? You know the hell you catching right now with one? One?" He tells his personal experience as a husband to identify with the audience. He considers his wife a burden and this is why he complains that having more than one wife would be a terrible idea. To close this story, he mimics imaginary voices that would be saying, "Where was you at last night? Where you at? Who house was you at last night? You ain't spending no time with me. You ain't take the trash out. Your car's due. The car note was due last night. Why her car red? I wanted the red car." The comedian over-dramatizes these utterances to make the audience associate past experiences with this situation as an evidence of ingroup membership to build social identity.

Afterwards he gives details about the polygamous compound in the news' story. He says that the women inside were so ugly that even white people, while watching the news would say, "*Jesus Christ! For the love of God! For crying out loud!*" White Americans tend to use these types of interjections to convey amazement or indignation. Harvey also complains about the looks of these women when he says, "These Jane Hathaway looking heffers. All of them got hairstyles like A&B. They dress like Betsy Ross and y'all in the back making flags." He relates their looks with old peculiar characters in the history of White Americans to make the audience realize that the situation was odd. He teases them and their culture to gain ingroup membership with the African-American community. Moreover, he uses *signifying* to suggest that these women looked awful. Despite offensive words are explicit; this strategy modifies the language through comparisons to minimize the impact. Both *marking* and *signifying* prove that comedians use the language to manifest their real intentions towards members of the White American community.

Later, he explains this story in detail and he says, "this where the story really, really wadn't about us. They go to the compound. Take off four hundred of the kids and their mommas was home. What?" He complains about the negligent attitude these women displayed towards such a serious situation like this. He marks the dichotomy point when he

says, “If there was one black mother on the building, this a whole ‘nother story right here. You ain’t taking a black momma’s baby. Not while she’s out! You better pick them up at the school somewhere. You sure ain’t coming to the house and I’m leaving, and you walking out with them. This woulda been a whole ‘nother story.” He argues that black mothers would have not let this happen under any circumstance, and if so, the breaking news would be saying, “*Four ATF agents found murdered at the compound! Six buses turned over and burned! Seventeen agents missing! Presumed hostage! This story’s gotten ugly folks!*” As overwhelming as this piece of news sounds, Harvey uses SAE in an attempt to persuade the audience that the difference between black and white people is significant. He portrays black people as members of society who do not take a passive attitude towards social injustice but rather claim and fight for their rights, albeit in an exaggerated manner as he makes the audience perceive.

Then Harvey explains how the police officers took the children away from the compound and he says, “They was hiding them in the sheets like that. And while little kids go get on. Them black women woulda tored through them bed sheets!” Note that his use of AAVE features becomes notorious in complaints. The last utterance shows the dichotomy because black women would have acted subversively towards the authority. This point proves the extrapolation of events where African-Americans become the hypothetical protagonists in contexts related to White Americans. After, he tells the audience “Here another way you know we ain’t got nothing to do with it. If you take four hundred black kids, you gon’ bring them back.” These hypothetical situations serve as markers of social identity because they define the attitudes that African-Americans would take in places where White Americans would not. Then he argues, “Black kids do not make good hostages. They is the most worrisome ass little kid. Four hundred of them! You gon’ bring their ass back.” This utterance provides the reasons for the previous statement. Harvey argues that African-American children behave subversively towards situations like this.

After this, he says that authorities would not stand listening to them saying, “I don’t eat that! Don’t nobody want that! You ain’t got no hot sauce? We want hot sauce! Man! Hey! Ah! Not up in here.... You ain’t my dad!” He quotes this statement full of negative markers to depict black children as rebellious. He says that they would be complaining, “Yeah! You better take us back. You better take us dad. We sick of this fool ‘cause it is wack. You ain’t my daddy and I ain’t your son. My momma coming down here to bring a

gun. Crack! Crack! Yeah! Crack! Crack! Shoot you in your face. Pa! Pa! Pa!" The comedian employs *rapping* as the main strategy in this sequence of utterances to represent the voice of African-American teenagers expressing their complaints. It shows how they use language to fight against social injustices because most of it includes claims and threats addressed to their oppressors. In addition, the comedian over-dramatizes these children to affirm his identity as a member of the African-American community.

Later, Harvey introduces another piece of breaking news "*Astronaut drives nine hundred miles with a Depend diaper on in an attempted murder scheme. Details at eleven*." He laughs with sarcasm and says, "Yeah! That's some white folks. You already know they ain't got nothing to do with us." He convinces the audience that it is easy to recognize the language of TV news because it is very formal. Then he argues, "First of all, listen how the story started, '*Astronaut*.' Who you know in the space program? Who you know give a damn about the space program? We could care less about the space program." The comedian uses AAVE to mock about the lexicon as well as the irrelevant content of the story. This complaint depicts the voice of the African-American community. It is not a personal matter because the comedian uses the plural pronoun *we* to make the audience identify with his argument.

Then he quotes a piece of breaking news about the space program again. He says, "*Oh! We're planning on taking our first trip to the moon and two thousand and fifteen people are signing up. Cause could be anywhere up to a million dollars*." Then he reacts, "We don't give a damn if it's free! We can't have black ass to the moon! We having trouble down here! You effen take us up there and mess us over. All this hell we catching down here. You gon' drag us up to the moon and treat us funky too?" The last four utterances illustrate the voice of African-Americans' collective demanding their rights and fighting for them. Harvey shows no concern for this sort of stories because they focus on trivial matters, which are not beneficial for the black community. He seriously argues that social injustice would continue being the same either on earth or on the moon. However, despite this is a sensitive matter, the comedian lessens the impact through the use of language and humor. He juxtaposes the pronouns *we* and *you* to confront White Americans through a battle of arguments. The purpose of doing so is to criticize social differences, but most of all the negligence of mainstream community towards African-Americans.

After this, the comedian expresses the real needs of the black community members: "We try to get a house in the suburbs, that's all we want, nice ass house with a yard. Man! You going up to no damn moon. Be messing with y'all. Leave us up there." Through these statements, Harvey achieves the goals of group interdependence, which are "[the] satisfaction of needs, attainment of goals…communication, mutual attraction, and influence between individuals" (Tajfel, 2010, p.15). Furthermore, he exposes once again the issue of social injustice. As previously mentioned, the role of comedians does not only lie in making the audience laugh but also they must become ambassadors of attitudes, culture and language. These aspects are important for the community because, through them, they can affirm their identities as members of a group. Finally, he goes further explaining that the white astronaut woman put on a diaper because she decided not to make any stops during her trip. He says, "Ain't no black woman in here gon' put no diaper on and then pee on theyself on purpose." Harvey considers that it is a crazy idea for black people. This point reflects the dichotomy because the cultural norms that govern the attitudes of black and white people are different.

In sum, this section has explored the most relevant instances where the comedian uses humor and language for different purposes, such as building social identity, promoting pride for the African-American community, differentiating from mainstream society, breaking the barriers of discomfort, enforcing notions and concepts related to culture, drawing attention to social injustice, and the most important of all, making the audience feel like "at home." The dichotomy of "us" and "them" was crucial as well to achieve these objectives because it served as a balance to measure both cultures under the perspective of the comedian and the audience. The three routines were full of socio-cultural aspects that made them a rich source of discourse analysis. Throughout the routines, Harvey dealt with some taboo matters such as, indiscipline as the result of bad parenting, inequality concerning job opportunities, differences concerning religious customs, and social stigmas on the news. These topics were useful as well to discuss about the linguistic differences that exist between the two varieties.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

This study conducted a descriptive analysis of the grammatical features and the rhetorical strategies that Steve Harvey used to build social identity. In consonance with the objectives, the following can be concluded:

- The tables in the first analysis show that stand-up comedy routines portray a high frequency of AAVE features. Copula and auxiliary omission is the most representative feature of all.
- Previous studies focused on lexical, morpho-syntactic and phonological differences only, failing to consider rhetorical strategies, which give a clearer perspective about the process of building social identity.
- The dichotomy of "us" and "them" is more comprehensible through the SAE counterpart of each AAVE feature. This allows the reader to be fully aware of the morphological and syntactic differences that exist between the two varieties.
- The qualitative analysis of each feature supports previous statements made about AAVE regarding the fact that it is a linguistic variety with a sound grammar.
- Regarding the analysis of rhetorical strategies, discipline, religion and the media contextualize the dichotomy of "us" and "them" to better understand linguistic as well as cultural differences between the two varieties.
- Harvey embodies White Americans at some point in each of the three transcriptions, which is key to understanding the portrayal of characters of other ethnicities in his stand-up comedy routines and thus further establishes the divide between "us" and "them." This process suggests that stand-up comedians must be aware of linguistic and cultural differences to portray their various characters.
- Critical Discourse Analysis significantly helps to identify the intentions behind the comedian's discourse. Teachers and literary translators can both benefit from this analysis to get acquainted with the implications of language in use.
- The five rhetorical strategies are useful in defining cultural aspects of the African-American and White American communities. Teachers may find it useful to show students the meaning of words beyond structure in their classroom.

4.2. Recommendations

This is a case study, which cannot extrapolate its results to the entire African-American population because of its scope and also because of the social factors involved. However, there are many areas that were not addressed in the present study, which might be interesting to consider for future research.

- To carry out a descriptive analysis of the phonological and lexical aspects of the speech of comedians like Steve Harvey.
- To do a comparative study of classic and contemporary comedians like Bill Cosby and Steve Harvey.
- To analyze if there have been substantial changes concerning grammatical or phonological aspects in different routines of any specific comedians like Steve Harvey, Dave Chappelle, Eddie Murphy, etc. over time.
- To determine what are the most commonly addressed topics among comedians and what rhetorical strategies they use to discuss them in public.
- To analyze the differences between male and female African-American comedians and their impact upon the audience.
- To expose EFL students to Steve Harvey's routines and determine their attitudes towards this particular dialect.
- To compare the grammatical features and manifestation of identity through language use of African-American comedians to that of comedians of other minority varieties, such as Chicano English.
- To analyze Afro-Ecuadorian Spanish according to grammatical features and determine if they are similar to "standard" Ecuadorian Spanish features.
- To investigate the link between Afro-Ecuadorian Spanish and the role this variety plays in the manifestation of social identity.

Bibliography

Bauer, P. (2009). *Steve Harvey: American Comedian, Actor and Talk Show Host*. Retrieved form https://www.britannica.com/biography/Steve-Harvey

Carpenter, J. (2009). *Voices of Jim Crow: Early Urban African American English in the Segregated South*. Retrieved from https://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/1085/D_Carpenter_Jeannine_a_200904.pdf;sequence=1

Chambers, J., & Trudgill, P. (2004). *Dialectology*. Retrieved from https://epdf.tips/dialectology-cambridge-textbooks-in-linguistics.html

Cukor-Avila, P. (2002). *She say, She go, She be like: Verbs of Quotation Over Time in African American Vernacular English*. Retrieved from https://www.ling.upenn.edu/~kroch/courses/lx556/Cukor-Avila2002.pdf

Danesi, M. (2017). *Language, Society, and New Media: Sociolinguistics Today*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=EzJDDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

DiOrio, C. (2010). *Narrativizing Success: Attitudes toward African American Vernacular English in the Composition Classroom*. Retrieved from https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1067&context=etd

Falk, O. (2010). *Representations of Ethnicity in Stand-up Comedy: A Study of the Comedy of Dave Chappelle*. Retrieved from https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/23796/1/gupea_2077_23796_1.pdf

Finegan, E., & Rickford, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Language in the USA*: *Themes for the Twenty-first Century*. Retrieved from https://epdf.tips/queue/language-in-the-usa-themes-for-the-twenty-first-century.html

Fought, C. (2006). *Language and Ethnicity: Key Topics in Sociolinguistics*. Retrieved from https://the-eye.eu/public/WorldTracker.org/College%20Books/Cambridge%20University%20Press/0521848431.Cambridge.University.Press.Language.and.Ethnicity.Sep.2006.pdf

Green, L. (2002). *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction*. Retrieved from https://epdf.tips/african-american-english-a-linguistic-introduction.html

Hannah, D. (1997). Copula Absence in Samaná English: Implications for Research on the Linguistic History of African-American Vernacular English. *American Speech*, 72 (4), 339-372. doi:10.2307/455493.

Howe, D. (2005). *Negation in African American Vernacular English**. Retrieved from https://www.ucalgary.ca/dflynn/files/dflynn/Howe2005.pdf

Huber, S. (2018). *African American Vernacular English as a Literary Dialect: A Linguistic Approach*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=t8pjDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

Hudson, R. (1980). *Sociolinguistics*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=B2kST7BcVtwC&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Kachru, B., Kachru, Y., & Nelson, C. (2009). *The Handbook of World Englishes*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=PpeXINCnDbIC&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Kuthe, D. (2007). *African American Vernacular English*. Retrieved from https://www.grin.com/document/77753

Labov, W., Cohen, P., Robins, C., & Lewis, J. (1968). *A Study of the Non-Standard English Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED028423.pdf

Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=snEEdFKLJ5cC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

Labov, W. (2010). *Principles of Linguistic Change: Cognitive and Cultural Factors*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=uwMTUk4g2IoC&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Labov, W. (2012). *Dialect Diversity in America: The Politics of Language Change*. Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press.

Lanehart, S. (Ed.). (2015). *The Oxford Handbook of African American Language*. Retrieved from http://mufwene.uchicago.edu/publications/EMERGENCE%20OF%20AFRICAN%20AMERICAN%20ENGLISH%20-%20OHAAL%202015.pdf

McCoy, T. (2016). Subject contact relatives. In *Yale Grammatical Diversity Project: English in North America*. Retrieved from http://ygdp.yale.edu/phenomena/subject-contact-relatives.

Mufwene, S., Rickford, J., Bailey, G., & Baugh, J. (1998). *African-American English: Structure, History and Use*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=cbJ6rOwuRQgC&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Mufwene, S. (2014). *The English Origins of African American Vernacular English: What Edgar W. Schneider has taught us*. Retrieved from http://mufwene.uchicago.edu/publications/ENGLISH%20ORIGINS%20OF%20AAE%20-%20FEST%20FOR%20EDGAR%20SCHNEIDER%202014.pdf

Nanda, S., & Warms, R. (2018). *Culture Counts: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=LS0LDgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

O'Neill, T. (2014). Repetition clefts. In *Yale Grammatical Diversity Project: English in North America*. Retrieved form http://ygdp.yale.edu/phenomena/repetition-clefts

Parsard, K. (2016). Null copula. In *Yale Grammatical Diversity Project: English in North America*. Retrieved from http://ygdp.yale.edu/phenomena/null-copula

PBS. (2005). Standard American English. In *Do You Speak American?* Retrieved from https://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/standardamerican/

Rastogi, S. et al. (2011). *The Black Population: 2010: 2010 Census Briefs*. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2011/dec/c2010br-06.pdf

Rickford, J. (2012). *What is Ebonics (African American English)?* Linguistic Society of America. Retrieved from https://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/what-ebonics-african-american-english

Roald, M. (2013). *Code-switching in The Wire*. Retrieved from http://bora.uib.no/bitstream/handle/1956/6844/106843144.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Roberts, K. (1974). *African American Issues*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=31my_ppvd00C&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

Rubtsova, V. (2011). *African English is the Dialekt of English*. Retrieved from http://venec.ulstu.ru/lib/disk/2011/Warafutdinova1.pdf

Sidnell, J. (2002). *African American Vernacular English (AAVE) Grammar*. Retrieved from https://cdt.org/files/2017/11/Outline_of_AAVE_grammar___Jack_Sidnell_2002_1_Afr.pdf

Schneider, E. (2008). *Varieties of English: The Americas and the Caribbean*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=bGjixKTt9JcC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

Schwarz, J. (2010). *Linguistic Aspects of Verbal Humor in Stand-Up Comedy*. Retrieved from https://publikationen.sulb.uni-saarland.de/bitstream/20.500.11880/23601/1/Linguistic_Aspects_of_Verbal_Humor_Verlagsversion.pdf

Smith, A. (2009). The history of be fixing to: Grammaticization, Sociolinguistic Distribution and Emerging Literary Spaces. In Staub, Peter & Jason Zentz (Eds.), *Yale Grammatical Diversity Project: English in North America*. Retrieved from http://ygdp.yale.edu/phenomena/fixin-to

Smokoski, H. (2016). *Voicing the Other: Mock AAVE on Social Media*. Retrieved from https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1706&context=gc_etds

Strauss, S. & Parastou, P. (2014). *Discourse Analysis: Putting our Worlds into Words*. New York and London: Routledge.

Strausbaugh, J. (2006). *Black like you: Blackface, whiteface, insult & imitation in American popular culture*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=xMbEqJCywl8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Tanner, C. (2011). *Standard American English, Dialects, and Creoles*. Retrieved from http://www.daviesskyschools.org/userfiles/1634/Classes/25627/LPA1%20620.1.1-21%2023%20-Tanner%20-%20Oct%202011.rtf.

Tajfel, H. (2010). *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Retrieved from https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=q0wFY3Dcu1MC&oi=fnd&pg=PR11&dq=identity+&ots=qvoiyb8rOq

Trotta, J., & Blyahher, O. (2011). *Game done changed: A look at selected AAVE features in the TV series The Wire*. Retrieved from http://ojs.ub.gu.se/ojs/index.php/modernasprak/article/viewFile/677/629

Van Herk, G. (2018). *What is Sociolinguistics?* Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=lMk2DwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. (2015). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Retrieved from http://lx16.yolasite.com/resources/%5BRonald_Wardhaugh%2C_Janet_M._Fuller%5D_An_Introductio(BookZZ.org).pdf

Wheeler, R. (1999). *The Workings of Language: From Prescriptions to Perspectives*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=my_W8iC7WnQC&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Wolfram, W. (2004). *The Grammar of Urban African American Vernacular English*. Retrieved from http://faculty.winthrop.edu/kosterj/ENGL507/assignments/WolframUrban_AAE.pdf

Wolfram, W. & Thomas, E. (2002). *The Development of African American English*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=D_4zekybWXIC&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Wong, J. (2012). *Sabah Malay dialect: Phonological Differentiation in Social Context*. Retrieved from http://studentsrepo.um.edu.my/5575/3/3.Chapter_2.pdf

Zienkiewicz, S. (2008). *African American Vernacular English (AAVE)*. Retrieved from https://www.pdx.edu/multicultural-topics-communication-sciences-disorders/african-american-vernacular-english-aave

Works Consulted

Arends, J., Muysken, P., & Smith, N. (Eds.). (2008). *Pidgins and Creoles: An Introduction*. Retrieved from https://books.google.es/books?id=TDA2K3Y0CAYC&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Ball, A., Smitherman, G., & Spears, A. (2003). *Black Linguistics: Language, Society, and Politics in Africa and the Americas*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=3bF3LtQfxU4C&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Bednarek, M. (2018). *Language and Television Series: A Linguistic Approach to TV Dialogue*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=LsBtDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Brown, K. & Ogilvie, S. (2009). *Concise Encyclopedia of Languages of the World*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=F2SRqDzB50wC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

DR. WISDOM. (2016, December 18). *Steve Harvey Still Trippin - 1* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2fvnc7

ELLO, (n.d.). *Standard and Prestige*. Retrieved from http://www.ello.uos.de/

Grosjean, F. (2010). *Bilingual: Life and Reality*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press.

Harvey, S. (2018, August 23). *Steve Harvey: Chuuuuch vs. Service - You Do Know There is a Difference Right?* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKOS5jdzzzU

Johnson, F. (2000). *Speaking Culturally: Language Diversity in the United States*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=rQl-NrllUekC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

Music4You. (2017, January 14). *Steve Harvey – Don't Trip He Ain't Through With Me Yet* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x58ib28

Reyes, A. (2005). Appropriation of African American slang by Asian American youth. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 2005, 509-532. Retrieved from http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/english/angela-reyes/repository/files/18942789.pdf

Rickford, J. (1996). Regional and Social Variation. In McKay, S., & Hornberger, N. (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching* (p. 176). Retrieved from https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=0dHaYnma8ooC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

Romaine, S. (2017). *Pidgin and Creole Languages*. Retrieved from https://books.google.es/books?id=EKk0DwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false

Widawski, M. & Kowalczyk, M. (2015). Black Lexicon: Leksyka angielszczyzny afroamerykanskiej. In Widawski, M., *African American Slang: A Linguistic Description* (p. 478). Retrieved from https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/12_92.2King.pdf

Annexes

Transcription 1 (T1) - "Steve Harvey - Don't Trip He Ain't Through With Me Yet"

See, white people down South, they a lot like black people. Southern whites and blacks is pretty much the same. Get up north, white folks is different. Ain't a lot of men here that tell you something right there. They just different. You might disagree but it ain't your show. I think black people and white people sometimes discipline their kids different. Lotta y'all agree with me but sit next to him and y'all won't say nothing. So I'm cool with that part too. I just think it's a difference sometime[20]. I was in the mall one day and this white lady stopped me. I was in a department store. My wife had sent me in there to buy something and I was in the department store and a white lady came into, real nice lady. She said, "*Oh goodness! It is you, isn't it?*" And you know that even threw me right there "*isn't it*?" When the last time you said an *isn't*? Ain't is my word. I ain't said an *isn't* ever in my life. I don't even know how to spell it. I ain't even gon' lie to you. I don't know where the "n" go, the apostrophe. None of that. I just ain't never spelled *isn't*. And what for? She said, "*It's you, isn't it?*" And so I just said, "Yeah, I guess…guess it is, ain't I?" She said, "*Oh my goodness! If my son were to see you, oh he would just to die for*." And that's another phrase they use that throws me. What you mean *to die for*? Why you gon' bring him out here then? Leave that boy where he at. She said, "*Would you mind signing an autograph for my son?*" That's one thing I never do. I never turn down children for pictures and autographs and I never turn down the elderly 'cause I just think old people made the way possible for me and kids. You just ought not kill the kids dream about you. So I do that every time whether I want to or not. Now, y'all in the middle? Hey, whatever. You know, get passed it. "Steve tripping." Whatever! So I said… You know, I didn't want to but I said, "Yeah, I[21] do it." So she said. I said, "Where is he at?" She says, "*If you could come this way, he is in the mall*." Then you know, I don't really wanna do all this now lady. You oughta have him right here but I said, "cool". So I go out there. I said, "Where he at?" She said, "*There he is right there*." This little crazy looking little boy. You know how they have their hair in a Mohawk. He had about five spikes in his head and all of them was a

[20] This case will not be analyzed because it is the result of a phonological process.
[21] This case will not be analyzed because it is the result of a phonological process.

different color. This boy had tattoos all over, had earrings in his nose and stuff. I (inaudible), I said, "How old is he?" "*He's fifteen*." See right there, right there. Fifteen! You can't do none of that in my house. I got two twenty three year old daughters, a twenty-year-old boy, a fourteen boy and a eight boy. You ain't coming in my house with a tattoo nowhere 'cause you know why? You ain't chipping in on the rent or nothing else. You can put the tattoo on but you don't stay here no more. Now come home with the tattoo, I put my foot so far! It…Ok. (inaudible) "almost had me right there." I was…I was in pretty deep on that but felt good too. That been…. I was about to just brrr! So I looked that. I said, "Well ok, ma'am if you can call him (inaudible)." She said, "*Bobby! Bobby! Would you come here for a moment*?" That boy turned around…I tell…this is no lie. "*Hey, bite me mom!*" Now, I'm standing there. She said, "*Hold on*." Oh, I'm gon' hold on 'cause I gotta see the rest of this. She said, "*But Bobby! Look who's here!*" "*I said, bite me mom!*" So when he said it at the second time. You know, I went and got behind something 'cause I know something finna jump off. 'Cause if I'da ever told my momma to bite me, Oh Lord, all hell woulda broke loose in that mall. It woulda been Armageddon in that mall. My momma woulda came through there on a three-headed horse with some sixes on her head. She'da killed everybody in there. I'm sitting there and I'm looking at little Bobby. In the meantime, black lady standing there with her little boy watching the whole thing. Oh…oh…She was threw. You know how y'all are. Ooof! "Lord Jesus. Lord Jesus keep me. Oh Jesus! Oh Jesus!" Her little boy was standing there, wadn't doing nothing. She looked at that little boy. She said, "Did you hear that right there? You bet not ever in your black life tell me to bite you. I bite[22] your back off. God, I bite you. Don't you run from me. Don't you, don't you…Don't you. You feel? Bet not…I bite you the back off." Y'all remember that coat your momma had? Ain't had no buttons on it. She…She had to come up to the school one time. You had to…You tried to walk behind her 'cause the coat was embarrassing you. You bring your little black self down here. Don't you worry about this button on the coat. If your daddy had stayed with us, I'd have some money for a button on the coat.

[22] This case will not be analyzed because it is the result of a phonological process.

Transcription 2 (T2) - "Steve Harvey: Chuuuuch vs. Service - You Do Know There is a Difference Right?"

I think the only way to kill racism is we got to do more things together, you know, as black and white. I really do. I think we oughta go on more picnics together. I think we oughta have more company outings. I think if we gon' have positions passed out in corporate America, we oughta proportionately have the same amount of corporate positions as everybody else. If you gon' pass out spots in the cabinet in the White House, you oughta pass them out proportionately. Let us have the same as everybody else. You know, I think we oughta do a whole lotta things together. Now, when it come to going to church, that pretty much where I think we oughta just draw the line. It ain't gon' work. I done seen it. It ain't happening. Trust me. It's some stuff going on at some white folks' church that you ain't gon' be able to get next to. And it's damn sure some stuff going on at your church that they sure ain't gon' be able to get next to. So ain't no need of busing over to your favorite church. Just go to the one that's around the corner from your house. I done, I done try it before. I know some white people stay out in Beverly Hills and one time they asked me to go to service with them. I shoulda knew right there I ain't had no business going 'cause I ain't never been to service before. I done been to "chuch." I ain't never been to service. I said it right "to chuch, c-u-r-c-h[23], chuch." Not "*church*." "*Church*" is the building you attend. "Chuch" is the activity that go on once you get inside the building. That's what I'm talking about. Boy! I went to service with these white people. I don't know if you done ever heard white people pray or not. If you ain't, you need to go at least one time. It's an amazing thing! These people happen to be Catholics. I don't even know who they…They be praying…They talk to God like he stayed next door. You know, like he their buddy. Like he got a membership at the "Y." They don't shut their eyes. Ain't no emotion in it. They just be talking to God. "*Oh Father God. You know, Father, we just wanna thank you for warm days and sunny raise. Oh Father God. You know, Father. You know, if you could just watch over young Tim going back and forward to school each and every day. Oh Father God. And Oh Father, you know, if you could just stop on by, we'll be here 'til noon. Oh Father God*." I'm

[23] The comedian intended to spell *c-h-u-c-h*.

standing there the whole time looking around and going “Who the hell y’all talking to?” ‘Cause that ain’t how black people pray. No, no. Black people go to God totally different. Black people go to God with reverence and respect. See, black people know God got a list of titles and we gotta go down all them titles before we start asking for something. Oh, black people give it up when they pray. “Gracious God our father, Lord of lords, King of all kings, ruler of the universe, Alpha and Omega, beginning and the end, bright and the morning star, hair like lamb’s wool, feet like bronze clay, wings that mount up and fly away! Greatest giver of the giverness that didn’t ever give anything to the givers that didn’t ask to be given (inaudible). We ask all these things. In his name, let the church say, “Amen, Amen.” And you be standing there going “But I ain’t ask for nothing.”

Transcription 3 (T3) - "Steve Harvey Still Trippin - 1"

See, I be paying attention to stuff. It's just some stories out there where you just go…You know they ain't got nothing to do with black folks. Some news stories is just, well, white stories. You ain't got to run around the corner and look at the TV screen and know who is about. You can hear that this ain't got nothing to do with us. And when white people get bad news, they don't know how to handle it. I wanna share with them how to handle bad news 'cause, see, we used to it. We get bad news all the time. "*Two people robbed liquor store, three people death. Details at eleven*." We ain't got to be there before eleven damn it. That's us. Ain't nobody else got no liquor store[24]. We the only ones got liquor stores so that's probably gon' be us. But it's some stories when you hear them, you know, you know we ain't in the story at all. You been following this story about these polygamous? That is so not a black story right there. A polygamous. A man got more than one wife. Fellas, you sitting next to her right now. Go home this evening and tell this crazy heffer you sitting next to you finna bring four, five more of them to the house tomorrow and see how long…Did…Did…you can roll…This story over! This story…You can roll the credits. You ain't gotta look for no details at eleven. You an' 'em heffers gon' get killed. "Go get them. When they coming? What time they gon' be here? Bring them on. I'd love to meet them. Go get them, please." Don't let your wife make you think this is cool. Polygamous! This has got to be a white story. I been married before. Why would you want eight more of them? You know the hell you catching right now with one, one? Now, you got eight of them talking to you. "Where was you at last night? Where you at? Who house was you at last night? You ain't spending no time with me. You ain't take the trash out. Your car's due. The car note was due last night. Why her car red? I wanted the red car." Would you shut your ass up! And I been watching this story on the news. Is these not the ugliest women you have ever see? Where did they find these women? White people know these women ugly. White people look at the news just go, "*Jesus Christ! For the love of God! For crying out loud!*" These Jane Hathaway[25] looking heffers. All of them got hairstyles like Aunt Bee[26]. They dress like Betsy Ross[27] and y'all in the back making

[24] This case will not be analyzed because it is the result of a phonological process.
[25] This is a fictional character from the TV series *The Beverly Hillbillies*.
[26] This is a fictional character from the TV series *The Andy Griffith Show*.

flags. What's happening here? And then this where the story really, really wadn't about us. They go to the compound. Take off four hundred of the kids and their mommas was home. What? If there was one black mother in the building, this a whole 'nother story right here. You ain't taking a black momma's baby. Not while she's out! You better pick them up at the school somewhere. You sure ain't coming to the house and I'm leaving, and you walking out with them. This woulda been a whole 'nother story. "*Four ATF agents found murdered at the compound! Six buses turned over and burned! Seventeen agents missing! Presumed hostage! This story's gotten ugly folks!*" They was hiding them in the sheets like that and while the little kids go get on. Them black women woulda tored through them bed sheets and…Here another way you know we ain't got nothing to do with it. If you take four hundred black kids, you gon' bring them back. Black kids do not make good hostages. They is the most worrisome ass little kid[28]. Four hundred of them! You gon' bring their ass back. You gon' be so tired of hearing, "I don't eat that! Don't nobody want that! You ain't got no hot sauce? We want hot sauce! Man! Hey! Ah! Not up in here." You gon' get so sick of hearing, "You ain't my dad!" Black kids writing rap songs about you. "Yeah! You better take us back. You better take us dad. We sick of this fool 'cause it is wack. You ain't my daddy and I ain't your son. My momma coming down here to bring a gun. Crack! Crack! Yeah! Crack! Crack! Shoot you in your face. Pa! Pa! Pa!" You pick them kids up on Wednesday, you carry their ass back by Friday. Had them little kids up in there for thirty damn days. And then it's just some stories where like once again you just got to hear. There was a big story last year. I was in…I was in the room. I was ironing. And I had an iron going. I was ironing. And you know you just hear the story. You ain't gotta run in there 'cause it ain't got nothing to do with us. And I was ironing. And the new[29]…CNN came on, they said, "*Astronaut drives nine hundred miles with a Depend diaper on in an attempted murder scheme. Details at eleven*." Yeah! That's some white folks. You already know they ain't got nothing to do with us. First of all, listen how the story started "*Astronaut*." Who you know in the space program? Who you know give a damn 'bout the space program? We could care less about the space program. You be hearing on TV all the time "*Oh! We're planning on taking our first trip to the moon and two thousand and fifteen people are signing up.*

[27] This is a historical character who is recognized as the first upholsterer of the US flag.
[28] This case will not be analyzed because it is the result of a phonological process.
[29] This case will not be analyzed because it is the result of a phonological process.

Cause could be anywhere up to a million dollars." We don't give a damn if it's free! We can't have a black ass to the moon! We having trouble down here! You effen take us up there and mess us over. All this hell we catching down here. You gon' drag us up to the moon and treat us funky too? We try to get a house in the suburbs. That's all we want: nice ass house with a yard. We going up to no damn moon. Be messing with y'all. Leave us up there. Then they said this woman puts under Depend diaper. Her plan is she ain't stopping…What you gassing your car with? How you ain't gon' stop? When you stop, pee! Ain't no black woman in here gon' put no diaper on and then pee on theyself on purpose. 'Cause whole time you be putting that Depend on you, you hear your mommas' voice in the background "Make sure you got on clean underwear 'cause you go to the hospital." She gon' put a diaper on…pee on herself to go [k]ill[30] somebody.

[30] The comedian says, "heal" during the routine. However, the whole story in the news explains that she was going to "kill" somebody.