LANGUAGE CONTACT IN THE INNER CITY:

THE ACQUISITION OF AAVE FEATURES

BY BILINGUAL HISPANIC

ADOLESCENTS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the

University of North Texas in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Jeffrey Alan Coleman, B.A.

Denton, Texas

August, 1998
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction.

While the use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE)\(^1\) in the South has been well studied (Bailey & Maynor 1985a), the acquisition of AAVE features by Hispanics in the South has yet to be documented. Although researchers have studied the maintenance of Spanish in the Southwest and the encroachment of English among Spanish speakers, no one has looked at the kind of English that Hispanics in this region are acquiring. The present thesis investigates this issue through research in an inner-city area of Dallas known as Oak Cliff. In this study, four bilingual Hispanic adolescent males who attend predominantly African American schools and/or have strong ties to African American communities in Oak Cliff were interviewed over the course of the 1996-1997 school year. The speech of these four subjects was then analyzed for the presence of two AAVE grammatical features, \textit{be} + \textit{v} + \textit{ing} as an habitual and zero copula. It is the hypothesis of this thesis that AAVE features will be present in the speech of the four subjects mentioned above.

\(^1\) African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a dialect of English spoken by many African Americans. It is also found in the speech of some non-African Americans.
Research on second dialect acquisition.

Second dialect acquisition is the process by which a person or persons from one dialect group adopts, to some degree, the phonological and grammatical features of a second dialect. This process has been referred to in recent research (Rampart 1995) as dialect crossing. Sociolinguists working in Northern urban areas have shown that Hispanics who come in contact with African Americans sometime acquire AAVE features. Wolfram (1971, 1974) demonstrates this for Puerto Ricans living in New York City. His results indicate that Puerto Ricans with both extended and limited contact with African Americans acquire AAVE phonological variables, while only those with extended contact acquire grammatical variables.

Poplack (1978) examines six phonological variables in the speech of Anglo, African American and Puerto Rican children in Philadelphia to determine the extent to which bilingual Puerto Rican children are acquiring local Philadelphia speech patterns and/or AAVE features. The six phonological variables which Poplack identifies as indicators of Philadelphia speech community affiliation are: (ow) as in dome, (uw) as in scoot, (aw) as in mouse, (r#) as in card, (ay) as in tight and (aeh) as in sad.

Poplack's results indicate that while the Philadelphia 'accent' is prominent in the speech of Puerto Rican girls, a considerable degree of AAVE phonological features are present in the speech of the Puerto Rican boys. This is true despite
the fact that both boys and girls in this research report that they associate entirely, or almost entirely, with other Puerto Ricans. These findings are contrary to previous research (Labov 1968 et al, Wolfram 1971, 1974) which suggests that our speech is most influenced by the speech of our peers with whom we have strong sociological ties. Many of the Puerto Rican boys in Poplack's study claim a fellow classmate, an African American, as one of their closest friends at school, even though this child names people other than his classmates as his best friends. In fact, most of his friendship ties are with children outside the school, giving him a somewhat elevated status with the Puerto Rican boys at school. The fact that the Puerto Rican boys seem to be acquiring some aspects of AAVE phonology may indicate that it is not the extent of contact that influences dialect acquisition, rather, Poplack suggests it may be attributable to what has been called 'covert prestige'. (Labov et al 1968, Trudgill 1976)²

In an investigation of dialect acquisition, Payne (1980), studied children and adolescents who moved from one dialect region to another and examined the extent to which they acquired phonetic and phonological characteristics of the new dialect. Her research focuses on families living in three distinct types of neighborhoods in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania: Mobile, Mixed, and Local.

---
² Covert prestige is the term given to the hypothesis that certain traits of non-standard speech carry prestige with standard speech users. It is termed 'covert' because these speakers do not admit to having the traits in their formal speech and is thus hard to define.
Mobile neighborhoods are ones in which most of the families are temporary residents from outside Pennsylvania. These families are also characterized by the parents having been born and raised in another 'dialect area' as well as the children being raised, at least partly, in a different 'dialect area'. The second neighborhood, Mixed, is made up of approximately equal numbers of families from outside Pennsylvania and 'local' families whose parents and children both were born and raised in the Philadelphia dialect area. Finally, the Local neighborhood is a neighborhood which consists mainly of what was described earlier as local families: both parent and child being born and raised in the Philadelphia dialect area. Payne analyzes the speech of these children to determine the extent of acquisition of the 'Philadelphia pattern'. (See Payne 1980 for a more detailed description of the phonological variables involved and a description of the 'Philadelphia Pattern'). Her results show that virtually every child who moved from out of state to Philadelphia either 'acquired' or 'partially acquired' the 'Philadelphia pattern' and that the younger children are when they move to King of Prussia, the greater the possibility that they will acquire the 'Philadelphia pattern'. Payne concludes that though the 'dominant' influence in acquiring the 'Philadelphia pattern' for the phonological variables comes from parents, peer contact also plays a major role in the pattern of acquisition for the out-of-state children.
Ash and Myhill (1986) investigate dialect acquisition of African-American and Anglo residents of Philadelphia, testing them principally on ten phonological, grammatical and lexical variables. The phonological variables tested were the deletion of final -n, the monophthongization of /ay/ in free syllables and before voiced consonants as in *lie* and *tide*, respectively, the alternation of *a* and *an* and *[bə]* and *[bɪ]* in vowel-initial words, and -t and -d deletion in word-final consonant clusters. The three grammatical variables tested were the absence of third singular -s, copula deletion, and possessive -s deletion for nouns in attributive positions, as in "Her boyfriend car got stolen."

The final feature, a lexical one, is the distribution of the use of *dude* and *guy* in casual speech (Ash and Myhill 1986). Their study explores the degree of contact and its influence on dialect crossing between African-American and Anglo speech communities. Their data suggest that African-Americans who have 'more personal contact' with Anglos use fewer AAVE grammatical variables and more Standard English variables (p. 38). This is true for phonological and lexical variables as well, though to a lesser extent. Results for the Anglo informants appear to be partially reversed. Those who have extended contact with AAVE speakers tend to acquire AAVE phonological and lexical variables much more readily than they do the grammatical ones.

---

3 For purposes of this study, Ash and Myhill combined Puerto Rican and African-American informants under the single heading of 'African-American'.
Hatala (1976) evaluates the speech of Carla, an adolescent white female in a primarily African American school in Camden, New Jersey. Carla was judged unanimously, on a speech identification test, as African American by 46 African Americans who heard a sample of her speech. Hatala's results are challenged by Labov (1980) whose own analysis of Carla's speech reveals that although her prosody and lexical markers were similar to AAVE, she used very few AAVE grammatical features. Because of this, Labov suggests that Carla's acquisition of AAVE is incomplete, and therefore he judges her not to be a member of the 'African American speech community'.

Jacobs-Huey (1997) extends Hatala's and Labov's 'Carla' studies to examine who speaks AAVE and what it means to speak AAVE. Her subjects are three graduate students in their mid-twenties attending a university in the northeast. Ron, an Anglo, and Mike and Greg, African Americans, are all from middle-class families. Ron's contact with African American culture as a youth came from a nearby African American neighborhood and through rap and hip-hop music. Jacobs-Huey examines the speech of these three informants quantitatively through an investigation of the presence of AAVE features in the speech of the informants. Jacobs-Huey's results demonstrate that while Ron incorporates many phonological, lexical, and prosodic features of AAVE in his speech, his use of AAVE grammar is quite limited. This pattern is similar to the one Labov (1980) found in Carla's speech in that she also achieved mastery of
numerous AAVE lexical, syntactic, and prosodic features as well as successfully integrating herself socially in the AAVE speaking community, but she acquired very little in the way of AAVE grammar. Though Ron does not display much AAVE grammar, his use of copula deletion (see Ch 1 p. 12) is greater than either Mike's or Greg's, both of whom are African-American. Ron has a copula deletion rate of 31% while Greg and Mike's percentages are 2% and 3% respectively. Jacobs-Huey remarks that Ron's use of copula contraction and deletion conforms to the following grammatical constraints identified in previous AAVE research (Labov 1969; Wolfram 1974; Bailey and Maynor 1987; Rickford et al. 1991 and Cukor-Avila 1995) to the extent that he would be considered an 'authentic' AAVE speaker. Greg and Mike on the other hand, are categorized as 'lames' with regard to AAVE. Though Ron's copula deletion rate (31%) is striking, a closer look at the data reveals that this percentage represents only 12 incidences of copula deletion out of a total sample of 41 tokens.

Jacobs-Huey further investigates the speech of her three research informants through a reaction survey given to 92 participants: 45 African Americans, 33 Anglos, 8 Latinos, and 6 Asian Americans. These participants listened to excerpts of the three informants and then made evaluations about the class and

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4 *Lames* is a term first introduced to sociolinguistic writing by William Labov. Its origin comes from the late sixties inner-city African-American vocabulary and is defined as, "isolated individuals who are detached from the group by either their participation in a separate value system or by their lack of participation in the vernacular culture" (Labov 1968).
ethnicity of each. Her results indicate that 92% of the participants believed that Ron was African American, the same number that classified Mike as African American. Greg was classified as African American by 85% of the respondents.

In a similar study, Cutler (1997), examines the speech of an affluent white adolescent named Mike, who lives in a wealthy neighborhood in New York City. Mike has had very limited contact with African Americans; most of his exposure to AAVE is attributed to listening to rap and hip-hop music and television programs. In fact, one of Mike's AAVE 'linguistic role models' is an Anglo friend who lives in the projects on the lower east side of Manhattan. Cutler explains that the characteristics of Mike's speech which are most closely aligned with AAVE are phonological. Of the eight phonological variables Cutler lists, only two are identified as being what she terms 'common' in Mike's speech. The other six are present either 'occasionally' or 'never'. Mike demonstrates a sporadic use of AAVE grammatical features as well. Cutler indicates that Mike sometimes uses such AAVE grammar as the past perfect in narrative style, One day I had went to the store, concord with forms of be, She be laughing at everything, negative concord, He don't never tell the truth, question inversion, I asked her did she give him the money, and left dislocation My mother she never tells me what to do. However, of the 18 AAVE grammatical features Cutler investigates, none of them were acquired, as she states, "with any regularity.... though some do appear occasionally in his speech" (Cutler 1997).
Cutler's findings, along with previous research (Labov 1972; Labov 1980; & Ash and Myhill 1986) suggest AAVE grammatical features are very rarely acquired, and with little success, by people who speak AAVE as a second dialect.

Direction of investigation.

Labov (1980), Payne (1980), Ash & Myhill (1986), Jacobs-Huey (1997), Cutler (1997) and Wolfram (1971,1974) have demonstrated that non-native speakers of a dialect can acquire phonological and lexical features of that dialect more easily than they can acquire its grammatical features. This thesis investigates this issue further through an analysis of the acquisition of habitual be and copula absence, both of which are established grammatical features of AAVE. Specifically, the extent to which the use of these two features is acquired by bilingual Hispanics who have substantial contact with African Americans is explored. If these variables are present in the speech of these youths, it will be determined whether or not they are also acquiring the constraints for the use of these forms.

Description and research of invariant be.

Invariant be is one of the grammatical features most widely identified and studied in AAVE. Sociolinguists have evidence that invariant be has been present in the speech of African Americans for over 150 years (Bailey, Maynor, and Cukor-Avila 1991). Data from the recordings of former slaves indicate that
the function of invariant be was simply as a replacement for am, is, are and Ø.

Research on more contemporary speech (Baugh 1983) narrows its function and indicates four contexts in which invariant be is predominant:

(1) Preceding verb + ing construction.

He be hiding when he knows she's mad.

(2) Before locatives.

They don't be on the streets no more.

(3) Before noun phrases.

Leo be the one to tell it like it is.

(4) Before adjectives.

He be crazy when he's been drinkin.

Historically, invariant be has occurred in a number of environments.

Ongoing research suggests, however, that its function is becoming increasingly more specified. Cukor-Avila (1995) provides evidence from the speech of older AAVE speakers, (those born before WWII), who use invariant be before noun phrases, before adjectives, for habitual actions and for states of being. The younger speakers, (those born after World War II), restrict their use of invariant be to a single aspectual function, habitual. Cukor-Avila states, "What these differences between earlier and more recent varieties of AAVE suggest is that be2 has become increasingly restricted syntactically to a position before V+ ing and semantically to an habitual function" (Cukor-Avila 1995).
The term be$_2$ is used by researchers on AAVE to describe the use of a more contemporary form of invariant be from a form which was prominent in earlier AAVE. In earlier varieties of AAVE auxiliary deletion of will and would before be+v+ing was common (Bailey and Schnebly 1988), as in examples 5 and 6.

(5) On the fifth of May, we be going on vacation to California.

(6) Back in the eighties, we be listening to Sugar Hill Gang all the time.

Bailey (1993) suggests that this invariant be has been reanalyzed in contemporary AAVE to mean habitual/durative action in the present tense. This reanalyzed form is what has been termed be$_2$.

Cukor-Avila's research concurs with earlier studies, (Bailey 1987, 1993; Bailey and Maynor 1989), suggesting that this be has become more specified through time. This earlier research also shows that invariant be, now has a more narrowly defined grammatical function and position, that of indicating habitual or durative meaning in a v+ing construction. An example of this is shown in (7) below, where be working indicates an habitual action using the verb construction of v+ ing.

(7) John be working till 3:00 in the morning.

Copula contraction and deletion.

Along with invariant be, copula contraction and deletion, seen in examples 8-13 below, is an AAVE feature which has been scrutinized extensively.
Whether negotiating the most accurate methods to study the copula (Wolfram 1974; Baugh 1980; Romaine 1982; Rickford et al. 1991) or debating its linguistic constraints (Labov 1969; Wolfram 1974; Baugh 1983; Bailey and Maynor 1985a, 1985b, 1987; Rickford et al. 1991; Bailey 1993) copula deletion and contraction has been a popular topic among sociolinguists for almost thirty years. Examples 8-13 demonstrate third-person singular and plural full, contracted, and deleted forms.

(8) She is a high school student. (3rd singular full copula)
(9) Those guys are getting arrested. (3rd plural full copula)
(10) He's a Norteño from way back. (3rd singular contracted copula)
(11) They're doing the job tonight. (3rd plural contracted copula)
(12) He Ø doing the job with Alex. (3rd singular deleted copula)
(13) They Ø going into enemy territory. (3rd plural deleted copula)

One of the larger methodological debates in the study of the AAVE copula is whether or not to include it's, that's, and what's when counting copula forms. Labov (1969, 1972) argues that they should not be counted because it is unclear as to whether they are contracted forms at all. He contends that these forms, which are frequently pronounced 's, tha's, and wha's are quite possibly copula deletions rather than contractions. To make this argument, he proposes phonological rules that allow [t] to assibilate to the following [s] followed by the
deletion of the copular [s]. However, other researchers (Bailey and Maynor 1987; Poplack and Sankoff 1987) argue for the inclusion of it's, that's and what's. Poplack and Sankoff cite evidence that indicates deletion precedes assimilation and additionally, both research teams find variation in copula forms following it, that, and what subjects. Methodological issues such as this make comparative copula studies difficult at best.

Other grammatical features.

While the primary focus of this investigation will be the use and distribution of invariant be and copula absence, other AAVE features will also be discussed and analyzed. Aspectual marking with steady, and perfective done are two additional AAVE characteristics which will be examined in the speech of the subjects in this study. Quotative be like will also be discussed.

Research on the use of steady as an aspectual marker is fairly limited in AAVE literature. (However, see Dayton 1996 for a recent in-depth analysis of steady). Baugh (1983: 87) defines it as, "a predicate adverb which has the unique aspectual function of indicating that the action of a particular verb is conducted in an intense, consistent and continuous manner". It is most often used before progressive verbs, (verb+ing constructions), such as They steady fighting. Steady, in this example, serves to indicate a durative or habitual action that is carried out in an intense manner. Further, most AAVE speakers would
not accept the use of steady before stative verbs. They would be more apt to accept the sentence *You steady typing that paper* and reject sentences such as *You steady appearing confused* based on the type of verb used.

Baugh also describes a second, less common function of this feature. *Steady* can also function as a continuative used before prepositions to indicate 'consistency and persistence'. This function as an 'intensified continuative' makes *steady* unique from all other continuatives. Examples (14) and (15) illustrate this function.

(14) He is continually up in your face.

(15) He *steady* up in your face.

Example 14 describes an action that occurs all of the time while example 15 describes the manner in which the action is performed during a specific event: consistently and persistently.

Perfective *done*, as described by Labov (1972, 1998) and Baugh (1983), has evolved in AAVE to become a perfect particle that in some instances functions to signify a completed action in the not-so-distant past. In this context, *done* is almost synonymous to *already*. In other instances it functions as an intensifier, similar to the meaning of *really*. The following examples illustrate these two functions respectively:

(16) He *done* went to the movies with Ana. (completive)

(17) Johnny *done* messed it all up this time. (intensive)
Labov (1998), describes a third use for perfective done that does not have either of the two functions discussed above. He suggests that when done precedes certain action verbs, it can signify an expression of 'moral indignation' which could be translated as 'had the nerve to' (Labov 1998 pp. 125-126).

The present study investigates the distribution of these AAVE features through research in an inner-city section of Dallas known as Oak Cliff, an ideal location for this study. During the past twenty-five years, the population of Oak Cliff has changed from largely African American to include a substantial number of Spanish-speaking immigrants from Mexico and Central America, as well as Mexican-Americans from Texas. However, their neighborhoods remain fairly distinct, with the majority of Hispanics living in the central and northern part of the community and African Americans living in the south and southwest areas. The distinct makeup of Oak Cliff's neighborhoods is also reflected in the ethnic diversity of its public schools. Despite the fact that there are limited opportunities for contact between African American and Hispanic youth at school, sports and gangs provide an arena for extended contact on a daily basis. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth description of the founding and history of Oak Cliff.
CHAPTER 2

THE RESEARCH SITE

Background.

Dallas, Texas is a city divided by a river. The Trinity River runs just west and south of the downtown district, and the area which lies to the south and west of the river is known as Oak Cliff (see figure 1). Oak Cliff differs from the rest of Dallas in a number of ways, most notably in its economic and racial make-up. This difference is due in large part to the divergent histories of Dallas and Oak Cliff.

Though Oak Cliff is now a part of the city of Dallas, it wasn’t always so. Oak Cliff’s history is rooted in a campaign by the then Republic of Texas to populate northern Texas. In 1841, a group of businessmen authorized by the Republic were offering free land to any settlers that would come to north Texas. Married couples received 640 acres and single settlers received 320 acres free of charge, with the only stipulation being they had to live on the land they were given for at least three years and cultivate no less than 15 acres. In that first year, a man by the name of John Neely Bryan came to Texas from Tennessee and began homesteading land on the northeastern banks of the Trinity. Four
Figure 1: Map of Dallas, Texas
years later, William H. Hord and his family also relocated to north Texas and began settling the area just on the other side of the river from Bryan's land. The region that Bryan settled, on the north banks, soon became known as Dallas while the section across the river was termed Hord's Ridge, after its first settlers.

Through an election on August 31, 1850, after an extremely close vote, the city of Dallas defeated Hord's Ridge to become the county seat of Dallas county. The election was close and had long-lasting implications.

The outcome soon stunted Oak Cliff's growth and smothered the area's immediate future. If Hord's Ridge had become the county seat, the courthouse, a focal point for power brokers in early Texas, would have been in Oak Cliff. Transportation between opposite shores of the unpredictable Trinity River would, out of necessity, have been improved. As it was, people living on Hord's side of the river had more need to cross the Trinity than the people on Bryan's side. The few economic centers developing in Dallas county were on Bryan's wing. If Hord's Ridge had become the county seat, the economic impetus, the bureaucratic flow - the structure of organized county activities - would have steered to Oak Cliff. Instead, Oak Cliff's chance to be at the forefront of North Texas development was thwarted. The temptation arose for Dallas to proceed without evaluating the consequences, needs or demands of Oak Cliff. That fear would later, concretely, manifest itself. To say that Dallas was better organized politically in 1850 would be an
overstatement. But Oak Cliff's defeat, by a mere 28 votes, was ominous and crucial (Minutaglio & Williams, 1990, pp. 27-28).

For a while, it appeared as if Oak Cliff would withstand this defeat and prosper in spite of the setback. Through the late 1800's and the early part of the 1900's Oak Cliff became the home of not only wealthy and influential people, but it also housed a number of prestigious establishments. During this time, Oak Cliff boasted an elevated railway to carry people across the Trinity to and from Dallas, the Oak Cliff Women's College, the Summer Opera Pavilion which gained national attention for its performances, and Oak Cliff Park (later renamed Burnett Field), home of the Oak Cliff baseball team of the Texas Baseball league.

 Ironically, at the same time Oak Cliff appeared to be prospering and rivaling its neighbor across the river, events were taking place that would adversely affect it for a long time to come. For one reason or another, the major investors in Oak Cliff began to leave town, taking their money and influence with them. Because of this, Oak Cliff found it increasingly difficult to compete with Dallas, and so on March 17, 1903, after a hard-fought battle, Oak Cliff was annexed by Dallas. As a part of the larger city, Dallas began building its more affordable housing units in Oak Cliff. New housing construction was mostly middle income units, and the once stately mansions were divided into multi-family rental units. Researchers state that this event was one which contributed, as much as any, to
the 'Blue-collarization' of Oak Cliff. By 1940, the majority of Oak Cliff's residents were renting rather than buying their homes. Nearly two-thirds of the housing was renter-occupied. By 1970, the percentage was still rather high at 59%, compared to 47% in Dallas as a whole.

Oak Cliff remained a predominantly 'white' community through the mid 20th century. The 1950 census put the Oak Cliff population at 97% white. Through the 60's and 70's, however, the racial make-up of Oak Cliff changed drastically, due in large part to school desegregation. This put into motion a phenomenon commonly known as 'White Flight'. Anglos began moving out of Oak Cliff at unprecedented rates. As whites moved out, minorities moved in, taking advantage of low-cost housing. Table 1 indicates the demographic change that has taken place in Oak Cliff over the last 30 years.

Table 1

Demographic Statistics of the Three Prominent Races Represented in Oak Cliff (in percent)5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Hispanic</th>
<th>% African-American</th>
<th>% Anglo</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Some percent totals do not equal 100% due to the manner in which the census data was calculated for Hispanic populations in the years 1970, 1991, and 1996.
The present ethnic make-up of Oak Cliff provides an ideal site to conduct the research outlined above on language crossing.

The setting.

The subjects in this study attend two schools in Oak Cliff: Plainview High and Hilltop Elementary. Plainview High School is located in the southernmost region of Oak Cliff in a predominantly African American neighborhood. This is reflected in the make-up of its student body. Plainview's enrollment of 1700 students is 93.5% African American, 5.7% Hispanic and .77% other (11 Anglos, 1 Asian, and 1 American Indian). Hispanics at Plainview have daily contact with African Americans whether in the classroom, social settings or through participation in extracurricular activities. Hilltop Elementary school is located in a largely Hispanic neighborhood in north Oak Cliff. Of the 745 students that attend Hilltop, 80.1% are Hispanic, 11.1% are African American, 7.1% are Anglo and 1.6% are Asian and American Indian (see figure 2).

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6 The names for the two schools in this research are pseudonyms. This is done in order to make every effort to protect the anonymity of the research participants.
Figure 2: Oak Cliff area of Dallas
CHAPTER 3

GATHERING THE DATA

The subjects.

The subjects for this study are four adolescent Hispanic males who have close friends and ties in the African American community. They were recorded by the author in a series of interviews, individually and in peer groups, over the course of the 1996-1997 school year.

Daniel is a ten-year-old fluent Spanish speaker in the fifth grade at Hilltop Elementary school. He has grown up in a household with his mother, who speaks very little English, and one younger brother. The small amount of English that his mother knows comes as a result of her employment at the county hospital. Daniel's parents are divorced but since his father lives nearby, Daniel sees him frequently. Both of Daniel's parents speak very little English, consequently Daniel grew up learning Spanish as a first language. Though Daniel is currently in ESL classes and is classified as LEP (Limited English Proficient), he has near-native proficiency in spoken English. This situation is not as ironic as it first appears. The classification of a student as Limited English Proficient is determined through standardized testing which gauges
students' academic English abilities rather than their interpersonal English fluency. Daniel can use English relatively well in casual situations but has difficulty when it is used as an instructional tool. Daniel seems to enjoy school, though he indicates that he struggles with the academic work and frequently gets in trouble for one reason or another. He is currently in the band - he plays the clarinet - and enjoys his gymnastics classes, also offered through the school. The student population of Hilltop and its surrounding neighborhoods are predominantly Hispanic; however, Daniel lives in a neighborhood that is mostly African American. Most of his friends at school are Hispanic but all of his friendships he identifies as being from his neighborhood are African American males, and it is his neighborhood friends with whom he spends the majority of his free time. Two of Daniel's neighborhood friends also attend Hilltop; however, Daniel indicates that he does not spend much time with them at school. The majority of the discussions with Daniel about leisure activities revolve around his group of neighborhood friends. Daniel and his friends seem to enjoy the usual activities of a ten-year-old: they ride bikes, climb trees, and play baseball frequently. While Daniel is aware of gang activity in his neighborhood and has mentioned a couple of incidents in which he and his friends were chased and threatened by older boys he knew to be in gangs, he says he is not a gang member and has no interest in becoming one.
Snoop, who is seventeen years old, is a junior at Plainview High school. Since age twelve, when he was 'jumped' into one of the larger gangs in the area, he has been an active participant in the gang culture of Dallas. His gang affiliation affects almost all facets of his life: dress, friendships, conversations, leisure activities. Snoop has a fairly extensive history of delinquency. He joined a gang at age twelve, the same age at which he began smoking marijuana. He admits to using other drugs as well, ranging from alcohol to cocaine. Snoop says that he has been in and out of the juvenile justice system, and at one point he was mandated by the court system to TYC (Texas Youth Commission). He was given a ten-year sentence for attempted murder and five auto thefts but was released after a year and a half on appeal. He has been the target of drive-by shootings and is eager to recount the stories and show pictures of the cars he was in when they were shot at. He also tells of an incident when he was at a party with his friends and violence broke out. The friend Snoop was standing next to was shot four to five times when rival gang members burst into the room shooting randomly. The lifestyle that Snoop leads appears to have had an effect on the way he views the future. In our conversations he expressed the desire to finish high school but has failed one year of school and is not certain that he will ever graduate. He has even expressed doubt that he will live to be an adult. On a number of occasions, he has discussed the possibility of other people "taking him out". He has also
indicated the desire to but uncertainty that he will live long enough to make it to his own wedding which is scheduled for July of this year.

Snoop lives with his mother and brother. Growing up, Snoop spoke both Spanish and English. At one point, he became somewhat agitated when asked if his mother spoke English. Though his mother can speak English, Snoop says that at home they speak only Spanish. He states that conversations with his neighborhood friends move freely between Spanish and English. In one of the sessions, Snoop made an interesting comment about this when he said:

Now if you hang around wit' me in, in, like my neighborhood, it's like everybody knows Spanish over there. So like, you, we just talkin' Spanish, 'blah blah blah', then we just start laughin' in English and talkin' in English, you know. Just a little mix, you know. It's just not English and just Spanish. It's not like that, you know. You know, we'll talk Spanish for a little bit, you know, say a couple of words like dat then talk, you know, then just change into English, you know.

Many of Snoop's primary ties are with African Americans rather than Hispanics, even though the gang he is in is made up of both African Americans and Hispanics. He says that many African Americans in his gang have learned some Spanish and that one member in particular has acquired it extensively.

Gary, who also attends Plainview, is fifteen-years-old and in his sophomore year. He is the middle child in a family that includes two sisters, his mother and
father. Of the four subjects in this study, Gary is the one most concerned with
the situation around him and in general in Oak Cliff. He is disturbed by the
violence and apathy that is present at Plainview and makes numerous
references to the damage that gangs and youth violence are causing Hispanics
as a group and his friends in particular. This is somewhat ironic since Gary is
the person who introduced me to Snoop and it seems evident that they are at
least close acquaintances. He says, however, that he has never been a
member of a gang and does not see the allure of that lifestyle. Although Gary
does not have any explicit gang affiliation he is quite knowledgeable about the
gangs in the area. As a younger teen he would act as a ‘runner’ for certain drug
dealers with whom he was acquainted. This gained him a reputation of being
affiliated with a specific group of people and thus with a certain gang
membership. Gary also admits that in the past he used drugs and hung around
with the ‘wrong crowd’, and as a result, was involved with the juvenile justice
system. He cites two reasons for motivating him to get out of the illicit drug trade:
seeing what drugs have done to his friends, and having respect for his parents.
Though he is no longer involved in drug activity, he is still viewed by some as
having this reputation.

Gary considers himself a ‘prep’ and is more interested in academic
endeavors than any of the others in this study. Last year he attended a Dallas
Magnet School for the Talented and Gifted but was expelled for truancy, and for
that reason, is back at his home school, Plainview. As a student at Plainview, he is currently in honors classes and is scheduled for AP classes in his Junior year. Gary also frequently discusses topics such as class rank, GPA and plans for college. He is the only Hispanic in his Honors classes and doesn't have many Hispanic friends at Plainview. He considers himself to have closer friendship ties to African Americans than to Hispanics both in and out of school.

Gary speaks predominantly English at home but he will occasionally speak Spanish. Both his mother, of Mexican descent, and his father, of Puerto Rican descent, are bilingual. Conversations with his grandparents are exclusively in Spanish. He grew up exposed to both languages but considers English his primary language and began studying Spanish formally five years ago.

Charlie is a fifteen-year-old Freshman at Plainview High School. He is one of a very few Hispanics on the school's football team and has all of the visible traits of being an athlete. He is stocky and muscular, and in each of our meetings, he was dressed in a jersey from a professional sports team. Most of his conversations centered around either sports (high-school and professional) or gang activity in the area. Charlie grew up in a neighborhood located just south of Plainview high school, and while the area as a whole is overwhelmingly African American, his immediate neighborhood is comprised of a number of Hispanic families. Many of Charlie's current friends are kids that he has grown up with from this neighborhood. On occasion, he uses the term
'gang' for this tight-knit group of neighborhood friends. Though most of these friends are Hispanic, Charlie believes that African Americans and Hispanics can 'get along' better than Hispanics with Hispanics. He joined a gang at age thirteen but now wants and is attempting to distance himself from their activities, partly because the gang members have started getting involved with satanic rituals. However, the main reason he states for wanting to get out of the gang is athletics. His main motivation for staying in school is his participation on the football team; our discussions of future plans consistently involve earning a college football scholarship so he can help his family. Charlie lives with his mother, who is Anglo, and father, who is Hispanic. He grew up speaking Spanish and English. He says he speaks English at home but with his friends he speaks both Spanish and English.

Gang activities have also had an effect on Charlie's life. Both Charlie and Snoop relate that they used to be close friends and used to 'drink together' but recently they have had a falling out of sorts. They both state that they wish it weren't so but that they can no longer hang out together because of problems between Snoop's gang and Charlie's 'neighborhood friends'. Charlie and Snoop both feel that the risk is too high of appearing to be weak by members of their respective affiliations. In fact, they had not talked to each other in the month prior to taking part in this research.
Method of data collection.

Data for this paper was gathered in two ways: individual and peer group interviews. All contacts with the adolescents in this research were made at their respective schools during times that would not interfere with their academic studies: study hall, lunch, P.E. classes. Initial contact with Daniel was through his teacher with whom I had become acquainted in graduate school. I interviewed Daniel a number of times during the school year. On many occasions a classmate of his joined us. The interviews were conducted in the school building in various locations that provided the necessary privacy: the library, empty classrooms, vacant hallways.

Daniel's teacher was also instrumental in my introduction to the students at Plainview high school in that she introduced me to a friend of hers who taught there. He, in turn, introduced me to Gary who was a student of his and was willing to participate in this research. After a series of interviews with Gary, he introduced me to other friends of his, including Snoop and Charlie. The interviews at Plainview were carried out in a peer group setting in the school library. In these interviews, the number of students ranged from as few as two students to as many as seven or eight. Almost without exception, during the
high school interviews my role quickly shifted from what Bell (1984)\(^7\) calls the addressee to an auditor (see figure 3) as the students would begin to talk, argue and joke among themselves. This had its drawbacks in that we were occasionally disciplined by the school librarian for becoming too loud and disruptive. This same drawback, however, was a benefit as well since there was a lot of spontaneous conversation by the students, enabling the recording of more unmonitored speech. In these boisterous sessions the problem of the Observer's Paradox\(^8\) was somewhat resolved.

\(^7\) Bell established a design to demonstrate the varying effects an interlocutor could have on the speech of research participants. His design is set up as a series of concentric circles. They move from speaker, to addressee, to auditor, to overhearer, to eavesdropper. Bell suggests that the further cut from the center that interlocutors are, the less effect they will have on the speech of the speaker.

\(^8\) The Observer's Paradox is a term, given by Labov (1972), describing the problem of how to study the way people speak when they are not being systematically observed.
Equipment and procedures.

The subjects were interviewed and recorded using a Sony TCM-359V Cassette recorder and a Sony ECM-F01 Flat Mic. All of the subjects were
made aware that the conversations would be taped but the recorder and microphone were situated so that they were as inconspicuous as possible: they were in full view during each of the tapings but their presence was downplayed as much as possible. In order to get the most reliable data possible, the informants were told that the interview was for the purpose of discovering what their social lives were like. Questions centered around topics such as family life, friendships, dating and where they spent their free time.

Once the recordings were made, a copy of each tape was created in order to help ensure that none of the data would be lost by some accident. Using the copies of the original tapes, the data were transcribed word for word onto the computer, then checked and rechecked for accuracy. From these transcripts, data for the previously discussed grammatical features were analyzed. (This includes present tense copula use, quotative be like, perfective done and aspectual marking with steady. Copula data included all forms of the present tense of be (am, is, are, be, Ø)). Following the methodology of previous research on the use of copula forms, (Labov 1969; Baugh 1980; Rickford et al. 1991; Cukor-Avila 1995), all instances of it, that and what as subjects were omitted, as were cases of third singular copula forms followed by a sibilant, as in:

(1) He (s, Ø) supposed to be there.

(2) She (s, Ø) staring at you.
Also eliminated from the results were instances of the third singular copula that appear in clause-final position as well as emphatic uses, as in:

(3) He's faster than John is.

(4) I see where our seats are.

(5) He is my father!
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Invariant *be*.

The results suggest that the adolescents in this study are acquiring the two AAVE features of invariant *be* and zero copula. There is a total of 534 forms of the Present Tense of *be* for the four adolescents as reflected in Table 2:

Table 2

Person/number distribution of forms of the Present Tense of *be* for four Oak Cliff teenagers (totals and percentages without *it's, that's, and what's*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gary</th>
<th>Snoop</th>
<th>Charlie</th>
<th>Daniel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am</td>
<td>35 (100%)</td>
<td>11 (92%)</td>
<td>38 (100%)</td>
<td>26 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>80 (76%)</td>
<td>20 (65%)</td>
<td>92 (83%)</td>
<td>62 (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>6 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>22 (21%)</td>
<td>9 (29%)</td>
<td>15 (14%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural &amp; 2nd singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are</td>
<td>40 (45%)</td>
<td>12 (40%)</td>
<td>39 (60%)</td>
<td>20 (61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>21 (24%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td>11 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>28 (31%)</td>
<td>13 (43%)</td>
<td>21 (32%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows that each of the students uses invariant *be* in their speech. Though this table includes 1st singular forms, when they are removed and the plural, 2nd and 3rd person categories are combined they produce the following percentages for invariant *be*: Gary (12%), Snoop (10%), Charlie (5%) and Daniel (17%). Daniel's use, at 17%, is the highest of the four informants for this feature. In fact, his frequent use of *be* has even been noticed by his ESL classmates. His teacher recounted to me an incident that demonstrates the extent to which he has incorporated invariant *be* into his speech. On one occasion, while teaching a lesson on the verb *to be*, she made the comment to the class that this verb is a little unique in that when you conjugate *to be*, you don't actually use the word *be*. The class, almost in unison, replied, "Daniel does."

While invariant *be* is not a new AAVE feature, its function has changed over time. Invariant *be* found in the speech of AAVE speakers born before WWII was generally a replacement for *am, is, are* and Ø and appeared before all syntactic environments with approximately the same frequency. It had no syntactic constraints binding its use. In contrast, contemporary AAVE speakers, born after World War II are using invariant *be* mainly in habitual contexts which frequently take the form of *be+v+ing*.

These present tense *be* data suggest that as these Hispanic adolescents are using invariant *be*. They are also acquiring the syntactic constraints for its use,
as shown in previous studies of adolescent African American AAVE speakers (Bailey & Maynor 1987, 1988 and Cukor-Avila 1995). A comparison of the four Oak Cliff adolescents with African-Americans born after 1970 in Cukor-Avila's Springville study illustrates this tendency, as seen in Table 3 below, which shows the syntactic constraints on the present tense forms of *be* for these two groups:

Table 3

Syntactic constraints on Present Tense forms for four Oak Cliff teenagers and Springville informants born after 1970 (each form as a percent of the total number of tokens in a given environment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>fit'im to</th>
<th>gonna</th>
<th>V-ing</th>
<th>loc.</th>
<th>ad/adv</th>
<th>NP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(72)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>(41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snoop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(39)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(60)</td>
<td>(44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1970 (Springville)</td>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>(99)</td>
<td>(54)</td>
<td>(94)</td>
<td>(124)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 Springville is a rural town located in Central Texas and is the research site for the data collection in Cukor-Avila's 1995 study.
These data show that the use of be before *v+ing* among the Oak Cliff informants is strikingly similar to the use of this feature by the Post 1970 generation of African Americans in Springville.\(^{10}\) The total usage of this feature for the four Oak Cliff adolescents is 34\%, only 4\% less than the Post 1970 generation of Springville residents.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that these Hispanic youths are acquiring the constraints for *be+v+ing* would be if their use of this form were confined to habitual meaning. Table 4, which shows the meaning of present tense forms before *v+ing*, suggests that this is the case. Sheila, an African-American AAVE speaking adolescent from the Springville study (Cukor-Avila 1995) is included in this table for purposes of comparison.

Table 4
Meaning of Present Tense forms before *v+ing*
for four Oak Cliff teenagers and Sheila
(each form as a percent of the total number of tokens in a given environment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited duration/Future</th>
<th>Extended duration/Habitual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>is/are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary (17)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snoop (3)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie (10)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel (4)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila (Springville) (9)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{10}\) Daniel's use of *be* before *-ing* is extraordinarily high at 68\%. His use of this feature exceeds the percent usage of the Springville informants.
Table 4 illustrates that the Oak Cliff adolescents use *be* most often to signify extended duration and/or habitual action. All of the informants, except Gary, use *be+v+ing* exclusively in grammatical environments which indicate habitual action.11 A chi-square analysis shows that the use of habitual *be* before *v+ing* is significant at the .05 level for two of the students, Gary and Daniel. Though Charlie and Snoop use *be* in this environment 28% and 36% respectively, it is not used significantly more than the other *be* forms, possibly because of the small number of tokens. However, in all of the instances where Charlie and Snoop used *be* before *V+ing*, it was to mark extended duration or habitual action.

The data discussed above suggest that the four Oak Cliff Hispanic adolescents are in the process of acquiring the AAVE constraints for the use of invariant *be* as well as the syntactic constraints for its use (See Appendices A and B for transcripts of conversations with the four Oak Cliff adolescents in this study). The following section will illustrate to what extent they are also acquiring zero copula and if they are using this feature according to AAVE constraints.

Zero copula.

Table 2, repeated as Table 5 below, shows that zero copula is present in all four of the informants' speech.

---

11 Gary's 6% use of *be* for limited duration or future action represents only one token.
Table 5

Person/number distribution of forms of the Present Tense of *be* for four Oak Cliff teenagers (totals and percentages without *it's, that's, and what's*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gary</th>
<th>Snoop</th>
<th>Charlie</th>
<th>Daniel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am</td>
<td>35 (100%)</td>
<td>11 (92%)</td>
<td>38 (100%)</td>
<td>26 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>80 (76%)</td>
<td>20 (85%)</td>
<td>92 (83%)</td>
<td>62 (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>6 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>22 (21%)</td>
<td>9 (29%)</td>
<td>15 (14%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural &amp; 2nd singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are</td>
<td>40 (45%)</td>
<td>12 (40%)</td>
<td>39 (60%)</td>
<td>20 (61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>21 (24%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>5 (8%)</td>
<td>11 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>28 (31%)</td>
<td>13 (43%)</td>
<td>21 (32%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Daniel demonstrates the highest percentage of invariant *be*, he is the one with the least zero copula. Again, combining the plural and 2nd & 3rd singular forms, Daniel has a zero copula rate of 4%. Snoop exhibits the highest percentage at 36%. Gary and Charlie demonstrate a rate of 26% and 20%, respectively. Daniel's low percent of zero copula is difficult to explain. In order to formulate a plausible explanation, more data would need to be collected.

Table 3, reproduced as table 6 below, illustrates that three of the four Oak Cliff adolescents' usage of zero before *v-ing* is similar to that of the post 1970 generation in Springville:
Table 6

Syntactic constraints on Present Tense forms for four Oak Cliff teenagers and Springville informants born after 1970 (each form as a percent of the total number of tokens in a given environment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>fittin' to</th>
<th>gonna</th>
<th>V+ing</th>
<th>loc.</th>
<th>adj/adv</th>
<th>NP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(72)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>(41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snoop</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charlie</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(39)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(60)</td>
<td>(44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daniel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-1970</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Springville)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/are</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>(99)</td>
<td>(54)</td>
<td>(94)</td>
<td>(124)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The exception again is Daniel, who exhibits no use of zero copula. The average rate of zero copula before v+ing for all four informants is 31% compared to a rate of 46% for the Springville teenagers. If the usage for only
Snoop, Charlie and Gary are averaged, their zero copula rate before v+ing is 36%, just a 10% difference from the Springville informants.\(^{12}\)

Tables 2-6 establish that the use of *be* and \(\emptyset\) are not haphazard in the speech of the Oak Cliff adolescents since they show similar constraints to those of AAVE speakers. Although the percentages aren't exactly parallel to AAVE usage, it is noteworthy that the Hispanic youths in this study are even using copula forms *be* and \(\emptyset\) at all. Table 7 (below) shows that the Oak Cliff speakers use standard forms of present *be*, (*is* and *are*), just over two-thirds of the time. This means that almost one-third of their copula forms are forms which they have acquired from AAVE: *be* and \(\emptyset\). As striking as these data are, an examination of the percent use of *be* and \(\emptyset\) for each speaker provides more detailed data about individual usage of these AAVE copula forms. Table 6 also displays the percent usage of *be* and \(\emptyset\) for each of the four Oak Cliff informants:

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gary</th>
<th>Snoop</th>
<th>Charlie</th>
<th>Daniel</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural and 2nd &amp; 3rd singular</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>is/are</em></td>
<td>366 (69%)</td>
<td>120 (62%)</td>
<td>33 (54%)</td>
<td>82 (80%)</td>
<td>194 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>be</em></td>
<td>56 (10%)</td>
<td>24 (12%)</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
<td>9 (5%)</td>
<td>17 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\emptyset)</td>
<td>112 (21%)</td>
<td>50 (26%)</td>
<td>22 (36%)</td>
<td>36 (20%)</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>194</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{12}\) This difference is not statistically significant.
This table shows that each of the four Oak Cliff adolescents uses the non-standard copula forms, *be* and/or Ø, at least twenty percent of the time. Daniel who uses these forms the least has a usage rate of 20%, followed by Charlie at 26%, Gary at 38%, and then Snoop with a full 46%. There are a few notable factors in these statistics. While Daniel has the least amount of non-standard copula forms at 20%, all of these non-standard tokens are invariant *be*. Daniel exhibits no zero copula in his speech. This means that invariant *be* constitutes a full one fifth of Daniel's total copula use. Snoop, at 46%, uses AAVE copula forms almost one-half of the time. This suggests that Snoop is almost as likely to use a non-standard copula form as he is a standard one.

While invariant *be* and Ø are the focus of this study, other AAVE features were discovered in the analysis of the Oak Cliff data. The use of 1st person *be*, quotative *be like*, perfective *done*, and aspectual marking with *steady* are all present in these data and are discussed below.

First person *be*, quotative *be like*, perfective *done*, and *steady*.

The use of *be* by the Oak Cliff adolescents also extends into other environments. Though not used in the final data calculations, Daniel displays an extensive use of 1st person *be*, as in the examples below.

(1) I just *be* getting on the ones that I have known. (waterslides)

(2) So sometimes I *be* walking to his house.
(3) I be going to Wet n' Wild, Galveston, Virginia.... West Virginia.

(4) Then I just be walking to school.

(5) I be making fun of my brother's teacher...

Likewise, Gary, Charlie and Snoop all use the quotative be like with extreme frequency. This feature has been the subject of previous research (Romaine and Lange 1991; Ferrara and Bell 1995). These studies, while providing extensive information on its use and grammaticalization through time, focus on the conjugated forms of be like, as in example 6 below.

(6) And he's like, "I'm not going anywhere without my surfboard."

The use of be like in the data from Gary, Charlie, and Snoop, however, occur with invariant be, as in example 7 below.

(7) She be like, "I go to the games every week."13

This invariant be like form is not mentioned in the research of either Romaine and Lange(1991) or Ferrara and Bell (1995). The use of invariant be like by the three adolescents in this study suggests that they are extending the use of this AAVE copula feature into a new domain.

There are three instances of perfective done found in the data from Oak Cliff. (see below) It is used twice by Gary and once by Charlie and each instance appears to conform to the guidelines mentioned above for AAVE usage.

(8) (already) She done been used and abused. (Gary)

13 Gary, Snoop, and Charlie also used other quotative markers such as say, go, tell, and conjugated forms of quotative be. None of the uses of quotative be were habitual.
(9) (already) But you know, I *done*, like, I *done* seen my girl with, like, like about four or five different guys. (Charlie)

(10) (really) It, it's like everybody, it's like everybody just lookin', just *done* got bigger and faster. (Gary)

Examples 8 and 9 demonstrate perfective *done* functioning as an adverb signifying 'already'. Example 8 was given as a reason why an ex-girlfriend of Snoop's is already considered old at age twenty-one and example 9 is an observation Charlie made about his girlfriend in a discussion about relationships. Example 10 was produced by Gary in a discussion about the size and speed of present-day professional athletes. Reading example 10 in isolation, it is possible to interpret *done* as meaning 'already', similar to examples 8 and 9. When taken in context of the conversation in which it was produced, however, it is evident that Gary means to convey that modern athletes are 'really' big and fast. In this sentence, then, *done* is functioning as an intensifier.

Aspectual marking with *steady*, also defined above, occurs in the speech of only one of the informants examined in this thesis. Snoop uses this feature four times, as listed below:

(11) Damn. And dis hoe *steady* wanted me to marry her.

(12) You know. *Steady* all the time. You know.

(13) I was *steady* bangin at that time.

(14) You know. But she *steady* wanting me to.... (marry her)

In examples 13 and 14, the use of *steady* is found in the grammatical
environment most common for this feature: before v+ing constructions.

Though the remaining two examples are in different grammatical environments, all four function to indicate an intense, habitual action.

Qualitative analysis of the data.

The criteria for judging who is and isn't an 'authentic' AAVE speaker has been an area of debate. As mentioned previously, Carla, an Anglo Jr. high school student in Hatala's (1976) study was judged unanimously by African American respondents to be African American. Labov (1980) judges Carla's speech as something other than AAVE on the basis of her limited use of AAVE grammatical features. Jacobs-Huey (1997), discussed above, played tape-recorded excerpts from the three subjects in her study (Ron, Greg and Mike), then asked the listeners to determine the speakers' ethnicity and social class. Though Ron, an Anglo, uses very little AAVE grammar, he was judged to be African American by 92% of the survey respondents. This was based primarily on his use of lexical items and prosody widely associated with the African American community, as well as his close approximation to AAVE phonology. In fact, over the last 45 years a number of race-identification studies have been conducted to determine the ability of respondents to successfully identify a speaker's race (c.f. Dickens and Sawyer 1952; Shuy, Baratz, and Wolfram 1969; Irwin 1977; Lass, Mertz, and Kimme! 1978; Haley 1990). Irwin (1977)
conducted a race identification study and found that participants correctly identified the speakers' race just over 90% of the time. Haley (1990), in a speech identification study, found that adults in his study were misidentified overwhelmingly more than children. His results also showed that African-American adults were misidentified at a greater rate than Anglo adults.

A qualitative analysis was also conducted in the present study. A tape recording of the speech of the Hispanic adolescents in this thesis and two African-American informants was constructed. The tape-recording consisted of two 10-15 second sound bytes from each of the Hispanic informants and one sound byte from each of the two African American informants. This tape was played for 56 survey participants who were then asked to identify the ethnicity of the speakers on the tape. The results, displayed in Table 8, show that the survey participants judged Daniel and Charlie as African-American 39% of the time while both Snoop and Gary were judged as African-American 33% of the time. This indicates that the survey participants misidentified each of the four Hispanic informants as African-American at least one-third of the time. Also, each of the informants was identified as Other over 10% of the time. In post-survey discussions with survey participants, many expressed that they felt that the speakers were either Hispanic or African-American, however, since they couldn't be completely sure of either choice they marked Other:
Table 8

Speech Identification of Four Oak Cliff Hispanic Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>44 (39%)</td>
<td>52 (46%)</td>
<td>16 (14%)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snoop</td>
<td>37 (33%)</td>
<td>62 (55%)</td>
<td>13 (12%)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>37 (33%)</td>
<td>61 (54%)</td>
<td>14 (13%)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie</td>
<td>44 (39%)</td>
<td>48 (43%)</td>
<td>20 (18%)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>162 (36%)</td>
<td>223 (50%)</td>
<td>63 (14%)</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results demonstrate that not only are Gary, Snoop, Charlie and Daniel acquiring AAVE grammar, they are also being identified as African-American based on their speech.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Because of the limited amount of tokens produced by the informants in this study, it is perhaps too early to make any definite conclusions about the extent of acquisition of AAVE grammar by the four Oak Cliff Hispanic adolescents. Even so, it is noteworthy that these Hispanic youths are using habitual be and zero copula, and more importantly, according to AAVE constraints. For the three oldest informants, Gary, Snoop and Charlie, the percentage of be+v+ing approaches that of African American AAVE speakers born after 1970. The data also suggest that they are also possibly acquiring the grammatical constraints for other features such as perfective done and aspectual marking with steady.

Another AAVE feature, innovative had+past, though not observed in the four informants in this study, was observed in the speech of an Hispanic adolescent male at Hilltop High school and also observed in the speech of an Hispanic female student attending another high school in Oak Cliff. According to Cukor-Avila (1995) and Cukor-Avila & Bailey (1995), use of innovative had+past represents a shift that has been occurring in AAVE since WW II with respect to the form and function of the past perfect. In Standard English, the past perfect is

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14 The Oak Cliff data for invariant be approximate AAVE constraints more so than Ø due to the lack of gonna in the speech of the informants. More Ø copula data would possibly yield results more similar to AAVE.
typically constructed in the form of had + past participle and means past before past as in:

1. She had written five letters before dinner.

Earlier studies (Labov et al. 1968, Wolfram and Fasold 1974), noted not only the frequent use of the past perfect but also that its form was changing. Both studies observed that the past perfect was used routinely, especially in the narrative orientation, and normally took the form of had + simple past rather than had + past participle, as in the examples below.

2. Standard English: They had gone to the store together.

3. AAVE: They had went to the store together.

They did not, however, explore how or whether its function was changing along with its form. More recent research (Cukor-Avila 1995, Cukor-Avila & Bailey 1995) suggests that past tense marking in AAVE has been changing over the last half of this century. Their results suggest that, like invariant be, had + past has been shifting both in form and function since World War II, resulting in a form they term innovative had + past. Rather than past before past, had + past functions as a simple past tense. Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995), suggest a path of grammaticalization for had + past whereby it first occurs in narrative background clauses, such as in abstract and orientation clauses, and subsequently moves to the complicating action clause. The second stage of the
reanalysis occurs when *had* + past functions as simple past outside of narrative discourse to describe isolated past events. This is seen only in the speech of AAVE speakers born after World War II.

Rickford and Rafal (1997) also discuss an innovative *had* + past construction in their data from East Palo Alto. Their analysis of and conclusions about the distribution of this form, which they term Preterite *had*, differ from those of Cukor-Avila and Bailey (1995). Results from Rickford and Rafal indicate that preterite *had* occurs only in narratives and only in the speech of pre-adolescents (Cukor-Avila and Bailey's data show the use of *had* + past in the speech of adults as well as children). Because this feature does not appear in the speech of older informants in their study, Rickford and Rafal suggest that this feature is age-graded; however, recent research by Cukor-Avila (1998) on the use of innovative *had* + past over time in the speech of a Springville teenager strongly suggests that this is not the case.

In collecting the data for this study, I encountered two high school students who had at least partially acquired innovative *had* + past in their speech. One female, in particular used it quite extensively in her speech. It is regrettable that neither of these students had the opportunity to be recorded.

Speech and social networks.

Studies (Eckert 1989) have shown that while public schools have the goal of providing a standardized education for the majority of a society's children, they
are also an arena for the creation of diverse social/peer group networks.

Through an ethnographic study of high school students, Eckert illustrates how, why and when social categories are formed. She collected data for this research over a two-year period in a Detroit area high school during the early 1980's. The focus of her study was on two distinct social groups within the school setting: Jocks and Burnouts. 'Jocks' is the title she gives to the 'popular' students who seem to be the ones who are succeeding in the school environment: athletes, cheerleaders, student government members, etc. 'Burnouts' is the name Eckert uses for the students who conflict with the school setting and rebel against what they feel to be conformity. They resist the system through activities such as smoking in the school courtyards, skipping school, abusing drugs and other activities that challenge the school's authority. Eckert identifies some of the reasons why these groups are formed, what activities they engage in and their views on the other social groups within the school.

This research has special significance for the present study in light of other studies such as Labov (1972), previously discussed, and Milroy (1980) which correlate the strength of peer/social network ties with the degree of linguistic similarity. Milroy (1980), through sociolinguistic fieldwork in Belfast, Northern Ireland, found that there is a correlation between the social group one identifies with and the dialect that person speaks. According to Milroy, this is true for both adolescents and adults. "First, it is clear that the link between closeness to
vernacular culture and high frequency of key vernacular linguistic variables is
general throughout the adult community; it is not merely adolescent groups who
use language in this way" (Milroy 1980: 175).

It is significant, then, that the two Oak Cliff adolescents who have the highest
percentage of habitual be, Daniel and Gary, are also the two who have the
closest ties to African American communities in Oak Cliff. Both Daniel and Gary
state that most of their friends are African American. In fact, as mentioned
above, everyone that Daniel names as a friend from his neighborhood is African
American; his best friend from the neighborhood, Mikey, is African American
and as a child, Mikey's mother was Daniel's babysitter. In conversations, Gary
has repeatedly expressed that he feels more comfortable "hanging out" with
African Americans than with Hispanics. Snoop and Charlie, while having
contact with the African American community, perhaps don't have the extent of
contact that either Gary or Daniel do. Snoop's closest ties are with his fellow
gang members, many of whom are Hispanic. Likewise, though Charlie is one of
the only Hispanics on the football team, his main social ties are
with a core group of friends from his neighborhood who are all Hispanic.

Future research.

One question that this study raises is, 'How do these adolescents speak in
different social and academic settings?' Do they switch dialects depending on
the speech environment? It seems apparent that in my conversations with these youths they were not performing for my benefit, but there is still the question of how they speak when an outside observer is not present. Gary's situation, in particular, is an interesting case. He is an honors student and plans on attending college; therefore, it would seem advantageous for him to employ one dialect in academic settings and another in his social activities. Does he adjust his dialect according to the situation he is in: formal or informal? If he does so is it conscious or unconscious? Questions of this sort are beyond the scope of this study but could be a possible direction for future research. Due to certain circumstances, all of the data for this thesis were collected through interviews and on school grounds in which an adult was present. It would be beneficial to discover how these adolescents speak in a more natural setting: with family, in the classroom, with friends.

The present study is a preliminary analysis of uni-directional dialect crossing. An extension of this research could be conducted through an investigation involving African American, Hispanic and Anglo participants whose main social identification and interaction is within their respective ethnic groups compared to participants who have social ties outside their ethnic group. A linguistic analysis of each group's speech would provide insight into the degree of and motivation for acquisition of a second dialect. It could also provide insight into multi-directional dialect crossing.
APPENDIX A

EXCERPT FROM INTERVIEWS WITH
SNOOP, GARY AND CHARLIE
Interviewer
Snoop
Gary
Charlie

Conversation #1

J- Yeah. Are drugs big in the gangs?
S- Oh Yeah.
G- Yeah. They run it. All the gangs run the drugs.
S- Yeah. But see we don’t run. They like... well Eastside.... I know the one's that like, from my neighborhood, them, them hoes don’t be smokin no rock.
J- Uh hmm.
S- That's one thing, you know..
C- Yeah.
G- Yeah, cause they'll sell 'em though.
S- We don't want to have no fiends in the gang.
C- We don't smoke no rocks, man. We don't smoke no rocks.
S- There's rock smokers in our neighborhood.
C- We don't shoot up. We don't shoot heroin. We don't smoke speed.
J- Heroin's getting big now, isn't it?
C- Yeah. Well, not in our neighborhood.
S- We don't smoke none of that. You know, we might do a little coke. You know. We might do a little coke, you know, but that's it. That's like the farrest we'll go, you know. And like, other drugs, but weed is like the main one, you know. East side, well, I don't know, I don't know about any other gang but I know Eastside, man, we got a rule and if you're in Eastside, you can't do Toly.
J- Oh, really?
G- Cause you be acting stupid, fool.
S- You can't do Toly cause you know, all them other gangs. All them other gangs be on that shit.
J- Yeah, that'll mess you up.
S- Man, Eastside, one of the rules in Eastside, man, you can't do Toly.
J- Uh hmm.
S- You can't do Toly. You do Toly for long, you gonna get your ass whooped.
Conversation #2

S- Damn. And dis hoe steady wanted me to marry her.
J- Really?
S- She would tell me. Uh, that if she was fittin to be with me, I needed to
work to support her and the daughter, you know.
J- Uh hmm.
S- And that if I wasn’t fittin to work and all this shit, that I didn’t need to be with
her. And she would always tell me. Well my mom tells me that you need support
her and all this, you know.
J- Yeah.
S- I was like, well say man, you’re not my family, you know. I said, “That’s not my
baby. How, how I’m just fittin to pop off an do that?”
J- Yeah.
S- You know. Steady all the time. You know. This a, a old woman already. You
know. What she want me for?
G- She done been used and abused. That’s my point.
S- You know it.
J- She’s old at twenty-one?
S- Yeah. Well, she’s not...
G- If you got a kid, I mean, it’s old. I mean....
J- Yeah, if you got a kid?
S- You know. And damn, it’s like, if you’re twenty-one, you’re really not...
you looking for someone that’s mature and shit, you know.
APPENDIX B

EXCERPT FROM INTERVIEWS

WITH DANIEL
J= Interviewer
D= Daniel

Conversation #1

J- Yeah? Which you like better, Six Flags or Wet n Wild?
D- Wet n Wild.
J- Wet n Wild? What's your favorite thing to do there?
D- Uh, In Wet n Wild?
J- Yeah. Which, do you have a favorite slide?
D- I haven't got on all the slides yet. I just, I just be getting on the one's that I have known.
J- Uh hmm.
D- Like the Black Hole. There's another one that, they be, uh, two of them, they be goin like that...
J- Uh hmm.
D- Twisting around like that. But when you get inside the hole...
J- Uh hmm.
D- It just feels like you be goin like that.
J- Oh. Wow. So you can't tell that you're whippin all around?
D- No.
J- Huh. That sounds like fun. Huh. That's your favorite one?
D- Yeah. And this other one, where you get a mat.
J- Uh hmm.
D- And you get on the slide. You have to play a race with the other person.
J- Uh hmm.
D- And you be goin down, and last time, last year, I met my friend, Mickie, over there.

Conversation #2

J- What do you like to do on Saturdays?
D- Saturdays?
J- Uh hmmm.
D- Ummm, I be, my mom be taking us to a store.
J- Uh hmmm.
D- It's called Bargain City Bazaar.
J- Oh yeah. Yeah.
D- Ummm, right there, umm, sometimes, she bee buyin us, umm, umm, belts...
J- Yeah.
D- Hats, shirts.
J- What else does she buy?
D- Ummm, this week she's gonna buy us a game for, a Sega game.
J- Oh really. Which one? Do you get to pick the one, or she just picks it?
D- I get to pick it.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


