

**Increasing Efficacy in Academic English Instruction:
A Case Study Seeking the Correct Balance between Contrastive Analysis Focus on Form
and Sociolinguistic Awareness Raising**

by

Niesha White

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Linguistics in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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Approval Page

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Abstract

Increasing Efficacy in Academic English Instruction: A Case Study Seeking the Correct Balance between Contrastive Analysis Focus on Form and Sociolinguistic Awareness Raising

By

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The term Academic English (henceforth AE) refers here to any form of English that includes features that are expected in academic settings, especially in academic writing, features that for the most part no one uses in his or her native English. Some parents may use many AE features in the home. Most people, however, must acquire the features of AE at school. Yet, the starting point of the current study is the recognition that the home varieties of English of upper- and middle-class children have many more AE features than the home variety of children of lower socioeconomic classes. And, because people of color make up a disproportionate percent of lower socioeconomic classes in the United States, students of color are less likely than white students to have AE features in their home variety. For students of any racial or ethnic group who grow up using vernacular English (henceforth VE) features such as those associated with African American Vernacular English, Nigerian English, Appalachian English, Ozark English, etc., the task of acquiring AE features is more challenging. The current study intends to illuminate the best way to teach AE features to college students who have not successfully incorporated these features into their writing.

The goal of the research presented here is to reveal the relative effectiveness of two elements found in many successful programs teaching AE features. The first element, contrastive analysis focus on form (CAFF), helps students focus on language structure in context and to see

the contrasts between the linguistic features that they use and the corresponding AE features. The second element, sociolinguistic awareness raising (SLAR), develops students' understanding of the sociolinguistic reality within which their variety exists. In the current study, students were exposed to three treatment conditions: 1. CAFF-only, 2. SLAR-only, 3. Combined (CAFF+SLAR). The study's main hypotheses are that SLAR instruction, present in both the SLAR-only and Combined treatment conditions, will increase participants' sociolinguistic understanding, as well as their VE and AE appreciation. And that these increases will facilitate and act as a catalyst for the CAFF instruction. Therefore, the Combined treatment condition will have as a result a greater decrease in VE features than the CAFF-only or SLAR-only treatment conditions.

The data collected for this study show that the Combined treatment condition was the only one that decreased the use of VE features in the participants' writing. These results suggest that the combination of SLAR and CAFF instruction may represent a better way to help students reduce vernacular English features in their academic writing than CAFF or SLAR on their own. Finally, this study provides evidence that SLAR instruction adds value to form focused instruction when the target is acquisition of AE features.

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List of Acronyms

AAVE – African American Vernacular English

ACT – American College Testing

AE – academic Englishes

CAFF – Contrastive Analysis Focus on Form

NAEP – National Assessment of Educational Progress

NYLE – New York Latino English

SLA – second language acquisition

SLAR – Sociolinguistic Awareness Raising

VE – vernacular Englishes

Introduction

1. Description of the Problem

The term Academic English (henceforth AE) refers here to any form of English that includes features that are expected in academic settings, especially in academic writing, features that for the most part no one uses in his or her native English. Some parents may use many AE features in the home. Most people, however, must acquire the features of AE at school. Yet, the starting point of the current study is the recognition that the home varieties of English of upper- and middle-class children have many more AE features than the home variety of children of lower socioeconomic classes. And, because people of color make up a disproportionate percent of lower socioeconomic classes in the United States, students of color are less likely than white students to have AE features in their home variety. For students of any ethnic or racial group who grow up using vernacular English (henceforth VE) features such as those associated with African American Vernacular English, Nigerian English, Appalachian English, Ozark English, etc., the task of acquiring AE features is more challenging. The current study intends to illuminate the best way to teach AE features to college students who have not successfully incorporated these features into their writing.

The goal of the research presented here is to reveal the relative effectiveness of two elements found in many successful programs teaching AE features. The first element, contrastive analysis focus on form¹ (CAFF), helps students focus on language structure in context and to see the contrasts between the linguistic features that they use and the corresponding AE features. The second element, sociolinguistic awareness raising (SLAR), develops students' understanding of the sociolinguistic reality within which their variety exists. In the current study, students were

exposed to three treatment conditions: 1. CAFF-only, 2. SLAR-only, 3. Combined (CAFF+SLAR).

The study's main hypotheses are that SLAR instruction, present in both the SLAR-only and Combined treatment conditions, will increase participants' sociolinguistic understanding, as well as their VE and AE appreciation. And that these increases will facilitate and act as a catalyst for the CAFF instruction. Therefore, if the hypotheses are correct, the Combined treatment condition will have as a result a greater decrease in VE features than the CAFF-only or SLAR-only treatment conditions.

Linguists have compiled extensive empirical evidence that any features of a given language variety are as systematic and complex as the features of any other variety (Green 2002, Labov 1972, Rickford 1999, Wolfram 1969). Shouldn't all variety features, therefore, command equal respect in an academic setting? The answer would be *yes* in an ideal world where people were not judged based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion or class. However, because we do not currently inhabit this ideal world and because various features and feature groupings² are key markers of race, ethnicity, class, and other social distinctions, users of these features encounter difficulties when entering school. Not only do they have to contend with judgments based on their feature use, they face the challenge of acquiring the features of AE needed to achieve success in school activities.

What would academic settings look like if all feature groupings of English were regarded with equal value and gained equal respect in school? Students would celebrate the differences between their own linguistic features and those of the school community to the point of inclusion of some VE features in academic discourse and writing (Canagarajah 2006). Students would then gain control of AE features and have one more tool leading them toward

academic success. What I intend to investigate in the current study represents an intermediate goal – to uncover the roll of CAFF and SLAR in successful AE instruction.

2. Historical Background

To make informed decisions about next steps in AE feature instruction in the U.S., it is important to look into the history of this enterprise. In 1976, Ann Arbor, MI saw a case known as the *Black English Trial* in which children whose speech included a group of features that are often subsumed under the name of AAVE were misplaced in special education classes because their language use was evaluated as being pathological. In ruling against the school’s practices, the judge, “opted to concentrate on the teachers and their training or lack of it”(Baugh, 1998). There was no change made to the linguistic classification that had been used to label the children. Another significant element of this trial was that the judge based the ruling on a law created to protect students’ civil rights. The law states:

No State shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin by the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs.
(Baugh 1998)

The ruling scratched the surface of the linguistic challenge of school districts serving children who use marked VE features. Stating that Title 20 applied to students who did not use AE features was a beginning. However, though the ruling prompted some movement in teacher education, it did not cause widespread change. Because Title 20 and similar laws are focused on speakers of English as a second language rather than students struggling with AE feature acquisition, they have not spurred any further policy changes to support students of AE. And the ruling did not address the failed classification method used to place children who use VE

features in special education classes, which is an issue that continues to plague students nationwide (Green 2002).

It was not until the late 1980s that the issue of AE feature instruction once again became a major issue for educators and the media as a part of what came to be known as the Ebonics controversy. Understanding the debate concerning Ebonics is vital to building any language program to help students struggling with AE features. In 1981, there was a program created to respond to the educational system's failure within the African American Community called the Academic English Proficiency Program. The program, centered in Oakland, California, focused on the use of VE features as a tool to teach AE features (Rickford, 1999). The Oakland resolution that gave rise to the Ebonics controversy proposed to extend the Academic English Proficiency Program, and thereby create more educational interventions for African American students in which issues of their linguistic diversity were taken into account. Understanding this connection is essential in dispelling the grand misunderstanding that the Oakland resolution was trying to teach VE features in place of AE features.

In *USA Today* (December 23, 1996), poet Maya Angelou expressed her anger concerning the resolution, saying she believed it to be, "very threatening, because it can encourage young men and women not to learn Standard English." Because the studies used as models in the current research also used VE features to teach AE features, it is important to understand why this method incites so much controversy.

A parallel can be drawn between students learning English as a second language and students learning AE features. For example, the reasoning that fuels the fear of bilingual education and the fear of using VE features to teach the AE features is based on the false notion that students are unable to successfully learn a new variety while maintaining the one they

already know. Does the first linguistic system interfere with the second? In fact, many studies have shown the value of using the home variety features to acquire the features of a second variety (Siegel, 1999). It is no longer a foreign concept to promote literacy skills in a first language for students learning a second language (Cummins 1991).

To understand the additional elements at work in AE feature instruction, we have to consider the divergence of second language acquisition (henceforth SLA) and AE feature instruction. Crucially, no one questions the legitimacy of languages like Spanish or Chinese, while many hold the belief that vernacular features mark a variety as subordinate, in terms of systematicity or linguistic complexity, to the academically accepted varieties. However, as is well known, there is no empirical evidence within the field of linguistics to support this idea (Labov 1972, Rickford 1999, Wolfram 1969, Green, 2002).

3. The Persistent Achievement Gap

The debate over how and why to teach key AE features that aid in academic success has quieted since the media uproar over Ebonics in the mid-1990s. However, the academic performance of African American children on reading and writing assessments that ignited the Ebonics debate has not been resolved. The persistent nation-wide gap between the academic performance of African American and Latino students and white students is evidence of the difficulties that students who do not command certain AE features continue to experience in school. Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (henceforth NAEP) Writing Report for 2002 and Reading Report for 2005 document the achievement gap. The percentage of African American and Latino eighth grade students performing at or above proficiency level in writing was 13 and 16 respectively, as opposed to 38 for white students. The

NAEP reading assessment exposed the fact that the percentage of African American and Latino students who performed at or above proficiency was 12 and 15 respectively, whereas 39 percent of white students were reading at or above proficiency level.

As mentioned in the introduction, the academic difficulties related to VE feature use are found across racial and ethnic boundaries in children of lower socioeconomic classes. It should also be noted, therefore, that the achievement gap occurs between socioeconomic groups.

According to the NAEP, of those eighth grade students who were eligible for free school lunches, an indicator of low socioeconomic status, 15 percent achieved proficiency in reading and 16 percent achieved proficiency in writing. Of the eighth grade students who were not eligible for free school lunches, 39 percent achieved proficiency in reading and 39 percent achieved proficiency in writing.

Language is an integral part of education. Not only is language a subject area of great importance, it is the conduit through which all content areas pass. Therefore, it is surprising that the educational system has not used relevant developments in linguistics to strengthen language instruction. To illustrate how language differences impact education, let us explore the performance of two neighboring districts in California.

Rickford (1999) compared the performance of two California schools on State writing tests. Palo Alto is a school district in the middle of Silicon Valley with a primarily white student body. Ravenswood is just across a freeway in East Palo Alto and has a primarily African American and Latino student body. The Palo Alto students were in the 94th percentile in the California state rankings in the third grade and the 99th percentile in the sixth grade. By contrast, the Ravenswood students were only in the 21st percentile in the California state rankings in the third grade and the 3rd percentile in the sixth grade. The startling disparity

between the writing performance of the Palo Alto and Ravenswood school districts demonstrates the shocking conditions that brought about the Oakland Resolution that started the Ebonics debate. (Rickford 1999)

There is a great lack of resources available in schools that serve students of color. “Teachers in highly successful school districts like Palo Alto [serving majority white middle class students] tend to be better paid and to have received better training than teachers in less successful districts like East Palo Alto[serving majority students of color and of lower socioeconomic classes]” (Rickford 1999).

Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to do better than students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and because students of color are disproportionately represented among the latter, the correlations between reading success and race discussed above must be partly attributed to socioeconomics, or class. (Rickford, 1999)

Personal experience offers anecdotal support of these facts. I received my master’s degree in teaching from the New School for Social Research, located in New York City, in 1998. In the last month of the program, an education administrator from Long Island, a suburban area near New York City, approached me. He offered me a job teaching at a mostly white school with a salary of \$80,000, approximately \$46,000 more than my starting salary at the time with the NYC Board of Education.

Though this is not the only element outside of language that affects the education of students of color, it reveals the extent of the problem. Significantly, educational policy aimed at improving education for students of color and students of lower socioeconomic classes needs to address many issues beyond language challenges. However, changing language instruction to include AE feature instruction has the added benefit of immediate implementation through strategic teaching training. As evidenced by the positive outcomes in studies reviewed in Siegel’s

(1999, 2003) work, focusing on AE feature instruction can have rapid and significant impact in many disenfranchised communities.

Despite years of exposure to AE features, many college students persistently use features that mark their writing as vernacular, which can have devastating effects on their overall academic performance (Coleman 1997, Rickford 1999). In his article, *Our Students Write with Accents: Oral Paradigms for ESD Students*, Coleman (1997)³ shares important insights into the educational challenges that students who grew up using marked vernacular features must face.

The oral configurations and practices of the language of some of our students are often in conflict with those of school-based English. Because we fail to address differences between speech and writing, some of the problems we encounter in literacy instruction are the result of trying to correct and explain oral language patterns and practices by using the rules and practices of the academic written language.
(Coleman, 1997)

The spirit of this challenge seems to be lost in the educational system. Moreover, where there is little work being done to assist students who use AAVE features, even less work is focused on helping students who use features associated with other VE varieties, e.g. NYLE, Nigerian English, Caribbean English, Asian Englishes, etc. The educational system continues to operate at a level of understanding that is essentially the same as the layman's: the system understands the need for specialized intervention for students learning English as a second language, but fails to see the complex issues at work for students learning AE features (Baugh 1998).

4. Definitions

First, the definitions for AE and VE being employed in this study will be reviewed.

Academic English: A term used in place of the more popularly accepted Standard English to signify the grouping of features expected in a given school setting. By using this term, I aim to challenge the myth of a singular standard variety. It should be noted, as well, that the features

that make up AE can vary depending on the region and level of the educational institution. AE, therefore, is a group of features “that satisfies the conditions for standardness” (Spears, in press).

Vernacular English: A term used to refer to a grouping of features that include features which do not satisfy the conditions for standardness (Spears, in press).

These terms give the basic distinction between AE and VE. However, there must be an appreciation for the complexity and variability of both features groupings in communities and individuals.

Each AAE [African American English] speaker has his own idiolect of AAE. We do not want to overstress the diversity within AAE, but we do not want to understress it either. So, for example, teachers must not assume that they will find all or most of the grammatical features commonly discussed in the AAE literature among their AAE-speaking students. Teachers should be aware of all the features of AAVE that they may encounter but focus on those they actually do encounter and use them to guide their teaching.
(Spears, in press)

As mentioned above, the available literature that addresses the teaching of AE features in the classroom suggests that programs that are successful include two elements: 1. CAFF, and 2. SLAR (Siegel 1999, 2003). From a careful review of the programs discussed in Siegel’s work on academic language instruction, I have created the following definitions of the two crucial elements to successful AE instruction.

CAFF: Instruction that – **1.** Increases the acquisition of AE structural and usage features that are key to academic success, **2.** Encourages control over the use of VE and AE features by focusing on the systematic similarities and differences between these varieties in the relevant contexts of students’ language use.

SLAR: Instruction that – **1.** Facilitates and encourages a sociolinguistic awareness of VE and AE based on historical, educational, social, political, and linguistic research, **2.** Aims to develop a positive self-image with regard to students’ language histories, **3.** Allows students to be more informed about the task of AE feature acquisition.

As shown in the review by Siegel (2003), these elements seem to positively impact AE feature instruction. However, there is still some distance to go to develop these findings into consistent educational practices. Siegel (2003) accurately noted that because each successful study reviewed included the two types of instruction delineated above, the relative effectiveness of or interaction between SLAR and CAFF is unclear. It is, therefore, impossible to establish which of these methods accounted for the shift in performance or if it was a particular combination of the two methods that were responsible for the success. The next step, therefore, is to clearly define the pedagogical methods that will promote effective implementation of SLAR and CAFF and to test their relative effectiveness, separately and in combination, in AE feature instruction.

Notes:

1. Many of these studies have not purely focused on the places of contrast between AE and the non-academic variety in question. Therefore, it seems more likely that the instruction in these studies is not the contrastive analysis of Lado (1957). Rather, a contrastive analysis that is combined with the focus on form model as described in the work of Doughty & Williams (1998).

2. I sometimes refer to features or feature groupings (e.g. the features of AAVE) in place of language variety/dialect names (e.g. AAVE) in order to avoid oversimplification of what makes up a variety/dialect.

3. ESD or English as a Second Dialect is a term often used to describe instruction of Academic English features.

Review of the Literature

1. Understanding the Divergence of AE and VE

1.1 VE Varieties Addressed in This Study

At the onset of this research concerning academic English (henceforth AE) feature instruction, I was aware of the linguistic challenge facing African American students, and, therefore, I focused solely on African American students. However, I soon realized that the struggle to acquire AE features for academic success did not exist only in the African American community. As illustration, when conducting pilot research in this area, I visited classrooms at a college in Brooklyn, NY and asked for volunteers who, among other things, had grown up speaking English or had been speaking English for many years. The students who came to work with me identified themselves as English speakers who struggled with AE, but the feature groupings they used included many vernacular English (henceforth VE) forms beyond those associated with African American Vernacular English (AAVE): Caribbean English (from Trinidad, Grenada, and Guyana), Chicano English, New York Latino English (henceforth NYLE), Nigerian English, Bengali English, and Chinese English. Working with these students brought about the realization that they were all confronting similar issues with regard to AE feature acquisition. At that point, a decision was made to open the study to any students whose features marked their varieties of English as vernacular. The study would have included any white students who spoke VE as well; however, there were no white students who exhibited VE features in this research setting. The following is a review of the literature pertaining to teaching AE features to students who have VE features in their speech and writing.

1.2 The Differences between AE and VE

All languages have features that are categorical or constant and features that are variable. In AE, there is little variability with regard to cases in which plurals are marked.

1a. She has eight sisters - AE

*1b. She has eight sister - AE

The marking of relative clauses and use of prepositional subordinators, however, are variable in AE, as seen in 2 and 3.

2a. The sister she lives closest to is a teacher - AE

2b. The sister that she lives closest to is a teacher - AE

3a. I like the place I live because it's so close to everything - AE

3b. I like the place I live in because it's so close to everything - AE

VE varieties, just like AE varieties, have categorical and variable features. A majority of the categorical features of vernacular and academic varieties are in fact the same. There are, however, a number of categorical AE features that are variable in VE.

The features that are variable in VE but categorical in AE are often used to negatively define the vernacular varieties. The variable features in VE can sometimes be included in a set of features that are not accepted as AE and, therefore, define the variety as vernacular (Spears in press). It is not surprising that language features used by groups with less societal power (e.g. African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Caribbean Americans, recent African immigrants, groups of lower socioeconomic status) are the very features that mark a person's language use as divergent from AE.

After reviewing some of the VE feature groupings most frequently found in New York City – AAVE, Chicano English, NYLE, Caribbean English, Asian Englishes – it was clear that these varieties of English have many features that overlap (Wolfram 2006). This fact makes the task of AE feature instruction in a classroom with speakers of multiple VE dialects less overwhelming for instructors. Some of the common features are listed below. I focused principally on morphological and syntactic features which, in my experience as a language instructor and administrator of a developmental writing program, often present challenges for students attempting to write in AE.

Table 1: Variable Features of VE	
Dialects	Common Syntactic Features
AAVE, NYLE, Chicano Englishes Caribbean Englishes, Asian Englishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zero copula – <i>He crazy</i> ▪ Invariant be – <i>He be walkin to work early</i> ▪ Marking of subject/verb agreement in alternative ways to adding verbal affix ▪ Variable marking of agreement in 3rd person singular forms alternatively to –s affix and some alternation of was/were ▪ Variable use of articles ▪ Preference for adverbs over tense/aspect endings to indicate tense ▪ Use of one form for simple past tense and past participle <i>I haven't wrote in a long time.</i> ▪ Use of <i>it</i> as an empty subject pronoun <i>It's four of us, there's two of them.</i> ▪ Perfective had in places where a simple past form would be in academic English <i>The cops had went to my house.</i> ▪ Negative concord <i>I didn't have no self confidence.</i> <i>I don't think nobody really knows anything.</i> ▪ Subject-auxiliary inversion in embedded questions (with Spanish speakers - could have origins in Spanish) <i>...then they asked them where did they live.</i>
(Cassidy 1961, Fought 2003, Green 2002, Kachru and Nelson 2006, Slomanson & Newman 2004, Wolfram 2006, Zentella 1997)	

The fact that I chose to focus on a limited number of features should not lead the reader to conclude that these are the only VE features of the above varieties that overlap. The feature

selection used for this study was based on the needs of the students in this study who were attempting to acquire the AE features necessary to exit remediation. For example, in future studies, where a higher level of academic literacy is the goal, the list of VE features could be expanded to include the following VE features: *-in which* used as an all purpose subordinator and prepositions which can be governed by different verbs in VE and AE, among others. Moreover, if this study was repeated with a group that spoke a single vernacular variety, it is likely that the inventory of features would have to be expanded to include some that are variety specific.

As mentioned above, many of the features that are used to mark language use as vernacular or academic are variable. Explaining variability is an important part of helping students contrast their use of a variable feature, with a constant feature. Therefore, I will offer here an example of the complexity involved in understanding variability in the feature grouping referred to as AAVE, which should be taken into account when helping students become more aware of the differences between VE and AE.

In reviewing the following section on two AAVE features, it is important to remember that the current literature on this variety only supplies a *shallow grammar* of this variety.

Shallow grammar refers to any one or the set of written grammatical descriptions as well as the set of approaches to grammatical study shackled by received theoretical questions, methodologies, and inventories of human language grammatical features, all of which contribute to the overlooking of important grammatical features in the languages under study.
(Spears in press)

Though it is very important to continue to establish a more complete set of features of AAVE, until that research is available, I will use the current research to begin the process of informing instructors who are encouraging contrastive analysis in their classrooms.

1.3 AAVE Plural Marker

As mentioned above, AAVE uses the plural marker *-s* variably, as in 4 and 5.

4. Natalie speaks many language. - AAVE

5. Her dreams gave her strength. – AAVE

The three factors posited to condition the variability of *-s* plural in this vernacular variety are: (1) Redundancy, (2) Phonological environment, and (3) Lexical preferences.

(1) Redundancy, also known as ‘Nonredundant pluralization’ refers to the fact that the *-s* marker appears variably. The *-s* appears least when there is another number or indicator of plurality in the immediate linguistic environment (Dillard 1972, Spears, in press). In his study of AAVE features used by African Americans in Detroit, for example, Wolfram (1969) found support for the use of bare nouns when there is another numerical marker in the environment.

(2) The phonological factor assumes that *-s* is syntactically present and variably deleted, especially when preceded by a consonant. Labov’s work with adolescents using AAVE features in New York City (1972) supported the existence of a phonological constraint on the occurrence of *-s* at the surface level. Yet this phonological effect was called into question by Wolfram (1969). In his work with AAVE in Detroit, Wolfram found a greater occurrence of bare nouns in plural contexts only when there was a preceding nasal, and this effect was minor. In his study in Washington, DC, Kessler (1972) also found a phonological effect when there was a preceding consonant. However, this too was considered a very weak effect, and the nature of the preceding consonant could not be determined from the data. Kessler did find, however, that the bare nouns in plural contexts were more reliant on a following pause than on preceding consonant or vocalic segments as reported by Labov.

(3) Lexical preferences are another factor discussed with regards to the variable use of *-s* to mark plurality. Certain count nouns may be analyzed as mass in AAVE and, therefore, no longer require plural marking. Labov (1972) found this to be true with *poster*, *cent*, and *year*. *Movie*, *cent*, and *dollar* were cited by Wolfram (1969) as not having *-s* marking in AAVE. And Kessler (1972) gave a third confirmation to the use of *cent* without a plural marking on the noun. The problem with the above findings, as noted by Poplack and Tagliamonte (1994), is that the lexical items do not form a class of any kind. Moreover, the evidence does not clearly support the fact that these items have been analyzed as mass nouns. For example, to confirm that the nouns are being analyzed as mass nouns, they would have to carry the full grammar of mass nouns, i.e., they would have to appear in sentences like, *how much movie did you see last week*, or, *how much cent do you have*.

A study of African-Nova Scotian English, ex-slave narratives, and Samaná English, by Poplack and Tagliamonte (1994) shows that there is an interaction between the morphosyntactic, phonological, and functional forces that is quite complex. The plural marker *-s* is more likely to be absent when nouns of weights and measure are present, especially when they combine with a quantifier. The differences found in constraints influencing the use of *-s* as a plural marker in AAVE is a reminder that AAVE, “refers in reality to a cluster of regional and social varieties”, (Spears in press). Therefore, the results of variability studies will vary depending on the language community being studied.

Little detailed research of variability concerning plural *-s* has been done in other vernacular English varieties. However, it is likely that there is overlap between AAVE and some of the other vernacular varieties (Wolfram 2006). In their book *World Englishes in Asian Contexts*, Kachru and Nelson (2006) discuss the fact that AE has a system of countability that

differs greatly from that of African, Caribbean, East Asian (e.g. Japanese English), and South Asian varieties of English (e.g. Bengali English). It is thought, therefore, that this difference results in variable use of plural *-s*.

1.4 Verb Number Markers in AAVE

Evidence from the feature grouping known as AAVE has demonstrated that verbal *-s* is variably used as a number marker that distinguishes between singular and plural verbs.

Therefore, when we get a verbal *-s* marker that signifies the subject is singular in AE in a sentence like *She comes to school early*, in AAVE we usually see *She come to school early*. This is a feature noted in other vernacular Englishes including NYLE and rural varieties in the South (Wolfram 2006).

In a study of verbal *-s* in the African American English Diaspora, Poplack and Tagliamonte (2004) delineated further the interplay of constraints at work in verbal *-s* variation in AAVE. There are three constraints on the use of verbal *-s* in AAVE: (1) Syntactic constraint, (2) Phonological constraints, (3) Aspectual constraint.

(1) The syntactic constraint is referred to as a type of subject constraint and accounts for the fact that verbal *-s* is variably omitted, especially after adjacent pronominal subjects (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2004).

(2) There are two phonological constraints at work in the variable appearance of verbal *-s* in AAVE. First, if there is a vowel in the preceding or following contexts, the verbal *-s* is favored. Consonants preceding or following the segment disfavor its appearance. This is clear in the following examples:

Preceding and following vowel -

6. They goes and comes

Preceding and following consonant -

7. He understand what I say

(Poplack and Tagliamonte 2004)

This context gives us the expected, though variable, outcome as expressed in the phonological constraint above.

The second phonological constraint is consonant cluster simplification. In AAVE, consonant clusters are reduced when both members of the cluster are voiced - *find* becomes *fin* - or both members are voiceless - *test* becomes *tes*. It is notable that this simplification occurs when there is a word initial vowel following the cluster, an environment in which many other dialects retain the cluster (Wolfram 1991).

(3) Finally, there is an aspectual constraint at work, which favors the verbal *-s* for any person when there is a habitual reading of the verb. Poplack and Tagliamonte (2004) confirmed the existence of this constraint in Samana English as seen in 9.

8a. She comes sometimes and passes the night with me

8b. They climbs all them trees

The effect of present tense habitual aspect was also observed in early African American English (Poplack and Tagliamonte 1989). Green (2002) confirms this aspectual constraint and offers the following example:

9. The devil haves us in a state of sin

‘The devil has us in a state of sin’

(Green 2002)

Each time an instructor observes a VE feature in a student’s writing or speech, he or she must help that student engage in contrastive analysis focus on form (henceforth CAFF) that keeps the complex landscape of multiple constraints and variability in mind.

1.5 Why Name Varieties?

Since there are few distinguishing features in the VE varieties analyzed in the present study, one might ask why it is important to name each variety, emphasizing their differences rather than their commonalities. I believe that naming these varieties and showing students their systematicity is an important ingredient in confronting the myth that AE is a superior linguistic system. Moreover, it is clear that an important aspect of AE feature instruction is helping students realize that there are two systems at work (Schmidt 1983). Focusing on distinguishing markers offers students powerful evidence that their variety is real and systematic rather than a diminished version of the academic variety (see Table 2).

Table 2: Distinguishing Syntactic Features of Each Vernacular English Variety	
Dialect	Distinguishing Features
NYLE or Puerto Rican English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loan translation: preposition transfer Lexical transfer: <i>She puts me nervous</i> from <i>Me pone nerviosa</i> (Zentella 1997)
Chicano English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepositions – used in non-standard ways – clear tie to Spanish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>For my mom can understand. For she won't feel guilty.</i> ○ <i>We're supposed to get out of here on June.</i> ○ <i>We all make mistakes along life.</i> <p>(Fought 2003)</p>
Caribbean English/Jamaican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The present progressive is expressed by using one of the auxiliary verbs <i>de</i>, <i>da</i>, or <i>a</i> – <i>Him see her gran pickney...dah read one story book – was reading.</i> ▪ <i>De</i>, <i>da</i>, and <i>a</i> are used like <i>be</i> in Jamaican English. - <i>Anywe' you de, we call you – Anywhere you are we'll call you</i> ▪ Where in Standard English we would see the expletive pronouns <i>it</i> or <i>there</i>, Jamaican English deletes the expletive and retains the <i>be</i> or uses <i>a</i> or <i>da</i>. <i>Is accident!</i> – <i>There is an accident, Hi da for me bible book – There is a bible for me.</i> ▪ <i>De</i> is quite like counterpart forms found in some West African languages, e.g., Ewe and Igbo (Cassidy 1961) (Pratt-Johnson 2006)
AAVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habitual <i>be</i> – <i>My ears be itching</i> – ‘My ears are always/often itching me’ ▪ Use of multiple negators to mark negation – <i>He ain't never hurt no one</i> – ‘He never hurt anyone’ ▪ Remote time stressed <i>bin</i> to mark a state or action that began a long time ago and is still relevant – <i>He bin married</i> – ‘He has been married a long time and still is’ (Wolfram 2006)
Asian Englishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduplication for emphasis – <i>Cut into small small pieces</i> ▪ Use of <i>yes, no?</i> as a tag question ▪ Expression of stative vs. dynamic meanings in ways alternative to verbs resulting in sentences such as – <i>He is having two cars, I was not knowing them</i> (Kachru and Nelson 2006)

The overall picture that is revealed by seeing where VE and AE features overlap and where there are differences is important information for instructors who use CAFF and/or sociolinguistic awareness raising (henceforth SLAR) in their teaching.

To clarify, the list of distinguishing features given above represents samples to help students and teachers recognize that the vernacular varieties are legitimate linguistic systems. In fact, if this study were done with a student population with more homogeneous vernacular features, it is likely that the students' variety-specific features would be more of a focus. Additionally, if the study were to be expanded to include the teaching of spoken features of AE, the list of features that distinguish one variety of vernacular from the next would expand greatly.

2. Review of Successful Academic Feature Instruction: Awareness Programs

A number of studies have been carried out, which respond to the issues of students faced with learning AE features in the U.S. or in similar situations in Australia with Aboriginal English and in Hawaii with Hawaii Creole English called *Pidgin*. This section will review research aimed at addressing academic language instruction when the VE features are perceived by many as a degenerate form of the local academic variety. By doing so light will be shed on the two elements of AE feature instruction to be used in this study. (Siegel 1999, 2003)

Siegel calls the academic feature instruction programs that combine CAFF and SLAR (as defined in the introduction) *awareness programs*. These awareness programs demonstrated great academic improvement for the students targeted. The following program descriptions will illuminate how CAFF and SLAR are incorporated in each intervention in order to inform current research.

2.1 Awareness Programs at the Primary Level

There have been three studies carried out at the primary level that were wide-reaching and showed promising results. One academic feature instruction project at the primary level was carried out in the Dekalb County School System in Georgia (Harris-Wright 1999). This project

promoted AE/AAVE bilingualism, teaching AE and school communication skills with great care not to devalue home varieties. The goals of this project were:

1. To foster student awareness and acceptance of the value of more than one way of communicating
2. To foster student awareness that American society values individuals who can use AE communication skills in appropriate settings and awareness of the impact upon educational, social, and economic goals of using vernacular features for all situations
3. To provide opportunities for students to practice AE features to increase their communication repertoires. To build in students, by using a contrastive analysis approach, an explicit awareness of AE phonology and syntax

(Harris-Wright 1999)

Classroom teachers who participated in the project were trained by a speech-language pathologist to teach AE features in a way that served the goals of the project. Teachers were asked to incorporate a contrastive analysis approach to their curriculum to help students develop an explicit awareness of the AE phonology and syntax. The results showed higher achievement on a standardized reading test than comparison students (Harris-Wright 1999). These results show great potential for literacy improvement for African American students; however, assessment of improvement in writing would have to be done to create a more complete picture of this program.

The Kerkrade Project, a second awareness program at the primary level, took place in the Netherlands from 1973 to 1982 and tested the use of the regional language features in the classroom (Van den Hoogen and Kuijper 1992). Three schools were included in the project, two primary schools and a nursery school. The population of the schools varied greatly. The

percentage of students using marked non-academic features ranged from 38 to 70 percent. For the purposes of the study, children were divided into four groups—working class vernacular variety speakers, middle class vernacular variety speakers, working class academic variety speakers, and middle class academic variety speakers. The project consisted of an ongoing set of professional development meetings. At each meeting there were goals set and questions posed. At each follow-up meeting, goals were monitored and updated. The following represent the main goals that drove the intervention:

1. To help children feel that home variety features were no longer taboo at school
2. To teach the academic features through an understanding of the systematic similarities and differences between the academic variety and the home variety and the academic problems that can result

(Van den Hoogen and Kuijper 1992)

The first goal was the focus of the first few months of the study. Teachers were asked to make it more comfortable for students and teachers to use the vernacular features in the classroom. They were instructed to gather information on which curriculum practices and techniques were most successful at bringing about vernacular feature use in the classroom. In the second phase of the project, teachers were encouraged to focus on the persistence of vernacular features when academic features were the target. The method for doing so was based on the language-neutral/language-specific hypothesis. The hypothesis argues that vernacular features persist depending on the second variety learner's level of awareness about the differences between the first and second variety. Based on this idea, the teachers aimed to illuminate the differences between the academic and home varieties, as well as how to negotiate the features of each. Finally, the project was evaluated to see how the methods of instruction used made a

difference in students' participation in the classroom. Evaluation of the project showed an increase in class participation among the students using vernacular features and an increase in mean length of utterances in these students (Van den Hoogen and Kuijper 1992). The evidence leaves questions about whether this participation would lead to improvements in academic achievement; however, involving students in classroom activities does seem like an imperative first step.

Project Holopono, carried out in Hawaii between 1984 and 1988, aimed to improve the academic achievement of 300 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. Half of these students were speakers of Hawaii Creole English or *Pidgin*, (Actouka & Lai 1989). The program was implemented in six schools. Additional services for students identified for the project included support from language arts teachers who had gone through training with the project and, at times, outside support from specially trained project instructors. The goals of the project were as follows:

1. To help new students understand the new school environment and the cultures represented within it
2. To help students perform satisfactorily in the basic curriculum
3. To help students acquire an academically accepted variety of English by employing comparisons between the academic variety and Hawaii Creole English
4. To help students develop a positive ethnic self-image, including a. an understanding of one's own culture, history, and language variety/ies; b. an awareness of and sensitivity to other cultures in Hawaii

(Actouka & Lai 1989)

The instruction included a focus on grammar, which contrasted the target academic features with the home variety features, as well as activities aimed at increased awareness and appreciation of the home variety. Data from the project showed an increase in the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) scores for 84 percent of the students (Acouta & Lai 1989). The LAS scales measure improvement in the areas of reading and writing, painting a clear picture of academic improvements that would greatly impact a students' overall success in school.

2.2 Awareness Programs at the Secondary Level

Another study conducted in Hawaii was implemented at the secondary school level (Afaga & Lai 1994). Project Akamai was carried out in much the same way as Project Holopono. Five project teachers worked with 24 classroom teachers and over 600 students using feature groupings referred to as Hawaii Creole English to implement the following goals:

1. To facilitate the acquisition of AE through the use of contrastive analysis between AE and Hawaii Creole English
2. To meet the grade-level promotion and Department of Education graduation standards
3. To maintain/enhance positive self-image with regard to ethnicity and language use and appreciation of other cultures

(Afaga & Lai 1994)

Activities in the classroom included instruction focused on grammatical structures with the use of contrastive analysis to aid in the understanding of vernacular variety features, as well as the acquisition of academic variety features. In addition, Project Akamai integrated Hawaii Creole English literature into the curricula to foster positive self-image in students using those features.

In the final analysis, students who participated in the project achieved 35 to 40 percent gains on an oral academic feature assessment (Afaga & Lai 1994). Proficiency in written AE was not, however, assessed.

The Caribbean Academic Program is another example of an AE feature instruction program at the secondary level (Fischer 1992). This study attempted to raise students' awareness of the differences between Caribbean creoles and AE, and it employed contrastive analysis-based form focused instruction. The goals of this project were as follows:

1. To help students achieve oral and written fluency in AE so that they may succeed in the academic curriculum by focusing on the structural differences between Caribbean English features and AE features
2. To teach students that they are not native speakers of AE and to provide them the historical and linguistic information to back up that assertion

(Fischer 1992)

The project, when evaluated, had been active for three years and was implemented through a professional development process. The curriculum developed for the project had seven aspects (listed below) that were reinforced throughout the year.

Language Theory – What is a language? Is Creole broken? Are some varieties better than others?

Discussion of Language-related Issues – Are Creole and English equal in our society? Do you want to know one/both and why? Should Creole be taught in school? Would teaching Creole help literacy? How do you deal with people who make fun of your language?

Writing in Creole – Students are periodically asked to write essays or letters in Creole. Literature in Creole is read and discussed.

Academic English Grammar – Oral, reading, and writing activities in English.

Caribbean Literature – Extensive use of original works about the Caribbean or by Caribbean authors to promote positive self image.

Translations – Students are asked to translate from Creole to AE and from AE to Creole.

Creole Days – A monthly class period devoted to oral expression in Creole. Students take turns performing poetry, riddles, stories, and songs in Creole.

(Fischer 1992)

The results of the Caribbean Academic Program were very promising. Where 73 percent of the participants were in the lowest level class at the start of the project, only seven percent remained in this class after one year of the intervention. In fact, after just one year, 81 percent had moved up at least one level. Finally, 26 percent were in the two highest level classes (Fischer 1992).

2.3 Awareness Programs at the Post-Secondary Level

There have been three awareness programs that take on the difficult task of AE acquisition at the college level. Hanni Taylor (1989) spearheaded *Project Bidialectalism* at Aurora University in Chicago in order to support African American students, a population with historically poor academic success rates at the college. She took on the challenge of the following project goals:

1. To design and develop a voluntary program with the Learning Assistance Center that fosters VE-AE bidialectalism
2. To foster students awareness of attitudes toward VE and AE and their usage
3. To increase expression of AE features and decrease interfering AAVE features in AE writing. And to use student compositions to identify AAVE features that interfere most

with AE writing and use a model of contrastive analysis based on Lado's (1957) theory to reduce these features in future writing

(Taylor 1989)

Taylor worked with a group of African American students outside of their regular class schedule who exhibited AAVE features. She engaged these students in a variety of form focused instructional tools, as well as ethnographic exploration to increase their AE feature acquisition and overall appreciation of their sociolinguistic realities. Taylor reports a 23.9 percent reduction in non-academic features in her students' writing (1989).

The second awareness program tested at the college level was created to assist two hundred African American students in California in developing use and control of AE features (Hoover 1991). The goals of the Hoover study included:

1. To combine grammar, composition, and literature, which utilize the ethnography of African-American communication.
2. To expand the concept of speech beyond code to sociolinguistic concepts such as topic, theme, key, nonverbal behavior, and speech acts.

(Hoover 1991)

These goals were developed and implemented by a group of Black Studies teachers. The students who participated in the study were exposed to an ethnographic grid of three registers of AAVE, which served as a structure through which to address some historical and linguistic aspects of the dialect and its features. The grid included information about the structure of AAVE, e.g. phonology, lexicon, grammar, as well as pertinent sociolinguistic information relevant to AAVE. At the end of the study, the students tested above mainstream students on a writing proficiency test.

Finally, the awareness program model was embraced by a study of adult learners in Cleveland, Ohio (Schierloh 1991). The study takes as their goals the following:

1. To increase students' independence in proofreading their writing for VE usage when AE writing is the target. The teachers studied student writing for VE usage patterns to help students translate from non-academic to AE features in written work
2. To engage in the above process in a way that respects the spoken language of each student

(Schierloh 1991)

In her description of the two-year action research project, Schierloh (1991) noted that the first step in helping students using VE features was for instructors to educate themselves concerning those features, as well as the rules of the features used by their students. Next, the instructors engaged in an analysis of their students' writing. Finally, the project, which included contrastive analysis focus on form instruction and awareness raising activities, was piloted in small groups before final implementation. The results of the final implementation show higher retention and a significant increase in performance on tests of AE for participants (Schierloh 1991).

2.4 Common Elements

Each example above has shown great potential for awareness programs in improving AE feature instruction. In reviewing the studies, each includes CAFF and SLAR goals (see Table 3).

Study	CAFF Goal	SLAR Goal
Van den Hoogen & Kuijper 1992	To teach the standard through an understanding of the systematic similarities and differences between AE and VE and of the language learning problems which result (Van den Hoogen & Kuijper 1992).	To help children feel that their ‘home language’ was no longer taboo at school (Van den Hoogen & Kuijper 1992).
Harris-Wright 1999	To provide opportunities for students to practice AE communication skills to increase their communication repertoires. To build in students, by using a contrastive analysis approach, an explicit awareness of AE phonology and syntax (Harris-Wright 1999).	To create in students an awareness and acceptance of the value of more than one way of communicating. To create in students an awareness that American Society values individuals who can use AE communication skills in appropriate settings and an awareness of the impact upon educational, social, and economic goals of using VE for all situations (Harris-Wright 1999).
Actouka & Lai 1989	To assist students in acquiring AE by employing comparisons between the academic variety and Hawaii Creole English (Actouka & Lai 1989).	To assist students to develop a positive ethnic self-image, including a. an understanding of one’s own culture, history, and language; b. an awareness of and sensitivity to other cultures in Hawaii (Actouka & Lai 1989).
Afaga & Lai 1994	To facilitate the acquisition of AE through the use of contrastive analysis between AE and Hawaii Creole English (Afaga & Lai 1994).	To maintain/enhance positive ethnic self-image in relationship to language use, as well as encouraging an appreciation for other cultures and languages (Afaga & Lai 1994).
Fischer 1992	To help students achieve oral and written fluency in AE so that they may succeed in the academic curriculum by focusing on the structural differences between Caribbean English and AE (Fischer 1992).	To teach students that they are not native speakers of AE and to provide them the historical and linguistic information to back up that assertion (Fischer 1992).
Taylor 1989	To increase expression of AE features and decrease interfering AAVE features in writing. Taylor used student compositions to identify AAVE features that interfered most with academic writing and used a model of contrastive analysis based on Lado’s theory to reduce these features in future writing (Taylor 1989).	To increase AAVE awareness of attitudes to VE and AE and their usage (Taylor 1989).

Hoover 1991	To combine grammar, composition, and literature which utilize the ethnography of African-American communication in its structure, theory, and content (Hoover 1991).	Expanding the concept of speech beyond code to sociolinguistic concepts such as topic, theme, key, nonverbal behavior, and speech acts (Hoover 1991).
Schierloh 1991	Increasing students' independence in proofreading their writing for VE usage. The teachers studied student writing for VE usage patterns and used these variety differences as a focus to help student 'translate' from VE to AE as a way too proofread written work (Scierloh 1991).	Engage in the above process in a way that respects the spoken language of each student (Schierloh 1991).

In his review of academic language instruction programs, Siegel (2003) accurately notes that because each study included the two types of goals delineated above, it is unclear the relative effectiveness of or interaction between CAFF and SLAR in improving academic dialect acquisition. It is, therefore, impossible to deduce how much of each of these methods accounts for the positive shift in performance or if it is the combination of the two methods that achieves success. The next step, therefore, is to clearly define the pedagogical methods that will promote effective implementation of SLAR and CAFF in order to test their relative effectiveness in the success of awareness programs for AE feature instruction.

3. Review of SLA Research Relevant to CAFF and SLAR

This section will explore second dialect acquisition (henceforth SLA) research that was used to construct the most efficient pedagogical formula for the AE feature instruction undertaken in this study. As seen in the review of the awareness raising studies in the previous section, the common strains in successful AE feature instruction are CAFF and SLAR. The awareness program models, however, have failed to distinguish the effects of CAFF and SLAR. Therefore, it is impossible to determine which of these methods accounts for the shifts in performance, or if the success is related to the combination of SLAR and CAFF. The discussion

developed here attempts to define CAFF and SLAR instruction in terms of what it will look like in this study.

3.1 Contrastive Analysis as the Foundation of CAFF

In its pedagogical implementation in SLA, contrastive analysis can be limiting in that it is confined to areas where two languages differ. In fact, there has been little attention paid to contrastive analysis theory recently. However, in reviewing one of the seminal works in this field, Lado's *Linguistics Across Cultures, Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers* (1957), it became clear that the basic principles of contrastive analysis make up a critical ingredient in AE feature instruction. According to Lado (1957), when two language varieties overlap to a great extent, focusing on feature differences between the first variety and the second variety becomes important to being able to acquire the second variety. In the following sections, I will review the elements of contrastive analysis for comparing the grammatical structures of two varieties as presented in Lado's work.

First, it should be noted that grammatical structures are defined in contrastive analysis as, "systematic formal devices used in a language to convey certain meanings and relationships" (Lado 1957). In other words, there is no divorcing form from meaning in analyzing compared forms in compared systems of language.

Keeping the above definition of grammatical structure in mind, the heart of contrastive analysis lies in the contention that similarity and difference of grammatical structure are determiners of ease and difficulty¹. Furthermore, the degree of difference determines the level of difficulty.

When a grammatical meaning is the "same" in two languages, for example, 'modifier', 'subject', 'statement', the form that signals it may

be different on two levels. The lesser difference remains within the same medium. The greater difference goes from one medium in one language to a different medium in the other language. (Lado 1957)

An example of a difference where the medium is constant but the item is different occurs for a native speaker of English learning Spanish. Both languages use a function word to form questions. Namely, the question word *who* in the sentence *Who is your brother?* is equivalent to the word *quién* in the sentence *¿Quién es tu hermano?* The new item, *quién*, needs to be learned, but it can be used within a medium that is familiar.

An example of the lesser difference between an AAVE feature and an AE feature would be the use of *it* as a subject place holder rather than *there*. It is clear in 1a and 1b that *there* in AE can be both an adverbial with a locative meaning or it can act as an expletive, filling the subject position and acting as an existential indicator.

1a. There is no way to fix this car.

1b. There is the dress I was telling you about.

In AAVE, however, *it* is variably used to hold the subject position and indicate existence as *there* is in AE. Therefore, we might get 2 as the translation of 1a in AAVE.

2. It is no way to fix this car.

When the medium is different, according to Lado, there is a greater difficulty in acquisition. Take again the English speaker learning Spanish, but this time he/she is trying to acquire the future tense. In English, the future tense is indicated by a function word, *will*, in a sentence like *I will talk*. Spanish, however, can indicate future tense with inflection. When the subject is the first person, therefore, one adds *-é* to the end of the infinitive form of the verb, *hablar*, to create *hablaré*—‘I will talk’.

Exemplification of a greater difference between many VE and AE can be seen in the communication of plurality in nouns. VE varieties variably use a modifier in the clause to express plurality, whereas AE uses the plural morphology to express the same.

3a. She has five friend coming to the party.

3b. She has five friends coming to the party.

It is clear, therefore, in the above juxtaposition of VE (3a) and AE (3b) that these varieties variably use distinct mediums to express plurality.

For Lado, there is a very specific procedure for acquiring a second variety. The foundation of this procedure is the analysis of the two systems at play to discover the points where contrast occurs. Once a point of contrast is identified, the next step is to figure out the level of that contrast and to prioritize those areas that might be more difficult due to difference. Beyond this focus on same or different medium, it is important to consider contrasts in variability in AE feature instruction. It is not hard to imagine how important contrastive analysis is for students of AE who are, in many cases, completely unaware of the specific differences between AE features and the features of their vernacular varieties.

3.2 SLA Research Relevant to CAFF Instruction

When acquiring the features of a new variety, which has many features overlapping with the first variety, contrastive analysis may be an essential tool. In the exploration of early contrastive analysis theory, there is an underlying assumption of explicit instruction concerning linguistic form, but much controversy has developed since as to how much to focus on form in language instruction. To clarify the most effective method for implementing contrastive analysis in AE feature instruction, it is important to review SLA research in this area.

A wide range of research in SLA and teaching has been devoted to the fundamental distinction between two ends of a spectrum. At one end, *focus on formS*, consists of the explicit focus on the structures conceived of in traditional grammars and developed in generative linguistics. Research has shown that second language learners, whether in the classroom or in natural settings, do not suddenly acquire discrete grammatical structures (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991). Therefore, classroom methodologies continually try and fail to simulate this process by introducing discrete structures, often separated from meaningful context, in the appropriate order for learner's consumption. Unfortunately, second language learners seem to exhibit a very non-linear pattern in the actual acquisition of these features (Meisel, Clahsen, & Pieneman 1981).

One reaction to these challenges in *focus on formS* instruction was a shift towards *focus on meaning*. This method, which is at the other end of the spectrum, contests that second language learning functions similarly to first language acquisition. SLA, according to this theory, is best achieved through naturalistic interaction in the target language without explicit focus on forms (Krashen 1985). There are, however, problems with this methodology. First, though there has been controversy concerning the existence and/or specific age range of a critical period for language learning, there is considerable evidence that there are maturational effects at work in older learners (Long 1990, 1993, Newport 1990). There is also evidence that learners who receive formal language instruction more efficiently attain linguistic ability (Long 1997).

The impasse between these opposed methods of language instruction, *focus on formS* and *focus on meaning*, often leads to instructors remaining on one end of the spectrum or the other. There are strengths and weaknesses to each theory. For example, knowing that actual sequences of language acquisition do not follow set sequences created for the classroom should not

discourage all use of *focus on formS* into a successful SLA experience. Moreover, finding evidence of successes related to instruction focused on the structural forms of language should not lead to a complete abandonment of *focus on meaning* (Doughty & Williams 1998).

Instead of concentrating on one end of the spectrum or the other, many theorists of SLA have chosen a new synthesis of *focus on formS* and *focus on meaning*. This new vision of SLA, called *focus on form*, is an outgrowth of the Interaction Hypothesis, which takes the interaction between learners and speakers of the target language as the focus of acquisition. Note that focus on form instruction is nearer to the focus on formS end of the spectrum in that it maintains the belief that students should be taught to have a conscious awareness of structural elements of language.

The feedback that occurs in these interactions – when meaning is being negotiated – involves linguistic simplification, negative feedback in the form of recasts, and other tactics that highlight the form-function relationship without depriving a second language learner of additional target vocabulary or structure (Doughty & Williams 1998). It is this kind of feedback that can pull the learner's focus to just the kind of contrastive analysis that Lado (1957) discussed. An added benefit to the *focus on form* endeavor is the motivation of the learner to be aware and practice the implementation of form in the target variety while they are negotiating meaning. It is this blend of *focus on formS* and *focus on meaning* that results in what has been termed “noticing”.

I use *noticing* to mean registering the simple occurrence of some event, whereas *understanding* implies recognition of a general principle, rule, or pattern. For example, a second language learner might simply notice that a native speaker used a particular form of address on a particular occasion, or at a deeper level the learner might understand the significance of such a form, realizing that the form used was appropriate because of status differences between speaker and hearer. Noticing is crucially related to the question of what linguistic material is stored in

memory...understanding relates to questions concerning how that material is organized into a linguistic system.
(Schmidt 1983)

Noticing is an imperative first step for students who are unaware of systematic differences between their native dialect and the academic variety (Siegel 1999, 2003). The *focus on form* method incorporates the very elements of *focus on formS* and *focus on meaning* necessary for the targeted contrastive analysis that has proven most effective in AE feature instruction. From the descriptions of the awareness programs in section 2, it was this type of CAFF that helped bring about positive results for students of AE in the awareness programs and was, therefore, used as a model for the current research.

3.3 Research Relevant to SLAR

CAFF instruction describes one strategy that has been part of successful programs for teaching features of academic varieties. The other strategy at play is SLAR (as defined in the introduction). As noted in Rickford (1999), “Students’ self-esteem and interest in Standard English and the language arts tend to increase as they learn that their vernacular is a systematic and valid form of language.”

Instructors often react negatively toward students using VE features in their classes. Smitherman (2000) describes how this can manifest in a classroom in her essay, *English Teacher, Why You Be Doing the Thangs You Don’t Do?*. Teachers who believe they are preparing students for the outside world by emphasizing the academic variety, often correct so vehemently that they discourage students from participating. The delivery system used to teach AE features and the attitudes it reflects is discussed in a study conducted by Piestrup (1973). The study looked at the model of continuous correction versus what was termed the *Black Artful*

method. The Black Artful method teaches AE features through rhythmic play rather than heavy correction. This study found that students taught through the Black Artful method participated more enthusiastically and scored higher on reading tests than the corrective approach (Piestrup, 1973). Instructors are often unaware of the way they are judging students as they correct their students' vernacular English features. It is this lack of awareness, in the instructor as well as in the student, that can act as a roadblock for AE feature acquisition. This is an example, in addition to the studies reviewed in the previous section, of how challenging negative attitudes toward VE can positively affect AE feature instruction.

According to the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen 1985), affective variables like anxiety or low self-esteem can impede input critical to language acquisition. The affective filter has a great deal of power in helping or hindering a student's language learning ability.

It may be that the use of the L1 in formal education results in positive values to these variables with regard to L2 learning. When the child's mother tongue is valued in the educational setting, it leads to low anxiety, high motivation, and high self confidence, three factors which are closely related to successful [academic language learning] programs. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988)

Shifting the affective filter is one of the possible results of SLAR instruction. Sharing with students the linguistic soundness of their home varieties and giving them opportunities to explore the importance and worth of the academic variety in their lives may cause the affective filter to lower.

Prior to this study, there was no clear exploration concerning the role of SLAR in AE feature instruction. Some scholars claim that the shift in affective filter that may result from SLAR would be the only necessary shift for students to acquire AE features (Krashen 1985). I believe that SLAR may act as a gateway to CAFF instruction – an additional and critical part of the successful AE feature instruction equation. Many language instructors seem to *focus on form*

or *focus on forms* without any SLAR instruction, without realizing the extent of the barriers that prevent students from engaging in their educational objectives. If the educational system hopes to address the language-related difficulties of students who struggle with AE, it is essential that the role of SLAR be researched further.

Conclusions Leading to Current Research

This review of the literature concerning AE feature instruction sets the stage for the current study. Ultimately, teacher education must include a comprehensive understanding of language diversity and the impact of said diversity on academic performance. We have now reviewed the convergence and divergence of VE and AE, explored key elements in successful studies concerning academic language instruction, and uncovered SLA research relevant to AE feature instruction. The next step is to investigate the relative effectiveness of CAFF and SLAR to develop the right balance of these elements for teaching AE features.

Notes:

1. It should be noted that many variables may be at work in SLA. Some studies in SLA have shown that certain errors made by second language learners are developmental in nature, rather than errors resulting from transfer (Dulay and Burt 1974). Lado's idea of ease and difficulty in SLA being based on similarity and difference of grammatical structure should not be taken as the only reason for level of difficulty.

Procedure & Methods

1. Setting

This study was carried out at the New York City College of Technology (henceforth NYCCT), of the City University of New York located in Brooklyn, New York. According to the 2006-2007 fact sheet distributed by the office of the president, NYCCT serves many students who, considering their ethnic identification as well as their socioeconomic level, are very likely to have among the features of their spoken English many that do not correspond to features of academic English (henceforth AE) writing. Thirty-seven percent of the students at NYCCT identified as Black (non-Hispanic), 29 percent as Hispanic, 16 percent as Asian/Pacific Islander, 11 percent as White (non-Hispanic), and 7 percent as other. Eighty percent of the incoming freshmen receive governmental funding based on income.

The fact that many NYCCT students struggle with AE writing is confirmed by the results of the College entrance exams. Of the entering freshman students, only 11% pass all three exams (in reading, writing, and math). Only 31% pass the writing entrance exam. The performance on the entrance exam suggests that difficulty with AE features is widespread at NYCCT.

2. Subjects

The subjects for this study were students in developmental writing courses. These students were required to take the course because they had failed the entrance exam in writing. Because this investigation focused specifically on students who speak vernacular English (henceforth VE), but who are not new learners of English, participants in the study had to have been speaking English all their lives or for six years or more. So the group combines first- and second-language speakers of English, but does not include any students for whom English is a

brand-new, still developing language. I am aware that, for participants in the study for whom English is a second language, the effects of second language learning are rarely gone after six years speaking English. However, many non-native English students I have worked with exhibit VE features in their speech and writing. Therefore, as long as the subjects met all of the criteria, including the use of VE features identified for this study, they were invited to participate. In the end, there were seven students who had learned English as a second language – two in the SLAR-only treatment condition, two in the CAFF-only treatment condition, and three in the Combined treatment condition. The remaining seven students were native speakers of some variety of English.

Students interested in participating in the study completed an intake process to assess whether they were appropriate candidates. Acceptance into the study was based on meeting all four of the following criteria:

1. English Proficiency: Students were accepted if they had been speaking English since birth. If they had not spoken English since birth, they had to have been speaking English for at least six years and to have a member of their household with whom they regularly spoke English. In this way, I felt confident that all students, though some were still struggling with AE feature acquisition, had a high level of fluency in VE.

2. VE Features Present in Speech: When students came to join the study, they were asked a number of open-ended questions. Because I represented a teacher figure, my belief was that students would aim to speak using features of AE in my presence. Therefore, if students were unable to use these AE features in many of their responses, I took that to mean that they did not have full command of these academic features. As noted in Coleman (1997), students who are

unable to produce AE features in spoken language often struggle with these features in their writing.

3. VE Features Present in Translation Task: Before treatment, students were administered a task that required them to translate VE features into AE features. There were 24 possible feature translations. To choose the cut-off number of VE features that would put a student at a disadvantage in his college career, an English instructor outside of this study was asked to look at the task and tell me the number of errors at which she would consider lowering grades of a writing assignment due to VE feature use. Based on the response, it was decided that if students failed to recognize and translate accurately three or more vernacular features in their pre-treatment translation task, they were included in the study. (See Appendix G for full example of translation task)

4. VE Features Present in Writing Task: An AE writing task modeled on the American College Testing (henceforth ACT) college entrance exam was given to prospective participants. All VE features in the writing tasks were tallied. Because there was a great variation in the length of essays reviewed, the actual number of tokens of features found in the essays would have provided skewed results. Therefore, a method of calculating a VE feature level was created by dividing the number of tokens of VE features by the number of sentences. Students were accepted into the study if they had a VE feature level of 20 or higher, e.g. 20 VE features in 100 sentences, in their pre-treatment writing task.

It is important to acknowledge that some of the occurrences of VE features, whether they occur in the translation task or the writing task, may be a result of performance mistakes that are made by writers with all sorts of different backgrounds. However, because there was ample evidence of the VE features being tested in the participants from the overall intake process, the

study moved forward with the assumption that the majority of VE features present in participants' writing were not plain performance errors.

3. Treatment

This study was created to test the relative effectiveness and interaction of contrastive analysis focus on form (henceforth CAFF) and sociolinguistic awareness raising (henceforth SLAR), two elements found in many successful programs teaching AE features. The study's main hypotheses are the following:

- SLAR instruction, present in both the SLAR-only and Combined treatment conditions, will increase participants' sociolinguistic understanding, as well as their VE and AE appreciation.
- These increases will facilitate and act as a catalyst for the CAFF instruction. Therefore, the Combined treatment condition will have as a result a greater decrease in VE features than the CAFF-only or SLAR-only treatment conditions.

In order to test the hypothesis, participants in the study were divided into three treatment conditions:

- Instruction centered on the exclusive use of Contrastive Analysis Focus on Form (henceforth 'CAFF-only')
- Instruction centered on the exclusive use of Sociolinguistic Awareness Raising (henceforth 'SLAR-only')
- Instruction that combined SLAR and CAFF (henceforth 'Combined').

Separating participants into three treatment conditions made it possible to measure the effects when each instructional element was used in isolation, as well as when the elements were combined. The decision of which students participated in each group was made based on scheduling constraints.

The first treatment condition received CAFF instruction. For these sessions, I used students' writing tasks and writing samples from their class work to identify key VE features as a focus for CAFF in the context of their own writing. I then guided students in finding clearly stated distinctions between each feature as it appeared in VE and in AE. Based on these distinctions, participants kept a list of common feature contrasts to be aware of in their academic writing (see Appendix A for sample lesson).

The second treatment condition engaged students in SLAR. Students in this treatment condition were exposed to readings and activities that helped them develop an understanding of sociolinguistics and the relationships of language and power in our society. Students in this treatment condition engaged in discussions of the role of political economic content in language attitudes. These discussions addressed how language attitudes are related to and often perpetuate societal beliefs, e.g. racism and classism (Spears 1999).

Furthermore, students explored some evidence to help convince them of the systematicity of their language variety (see Appendix B & C for sample lesson and syllabus).

The third treatment condition used a combination of SLAR and CAFF instruction (see Appendix D for sample lesson plan). Each session started with a short SLAR activity (10-15 minutes) and then students were exposed to CAFF in the same manner as when CAFF was taught separately.

4. Measures

The present study used a variety of measures to assure there was no interference from the teachers of the participants, to assess the sociolinguistic awareness level (also referred to as sociolinguistic understanding) of participants, and to assess the VE feature use of participants. However, it is important to remember that this research was designed as a case study. As such, and especially considering the small sample size, the following measures are not meant as claims of statistically significant evidence of treatment effects. The following is a discussion of each of the measures:

- Teacher Survey
 - Student Survey
 - Translation Task
 - Writing Task
- (See Appendices E-G for complete measures)

4.1 Teacher Survey

The English teachers of the study participants were assessed before the study with a teacher survey to find out what exposure the students might have had in class to CAFF and SLAR. It was important to assess this because CAFF and SLAR were the main elements the students would receive in the study. I asked a number of questions to assess the teachers' use CAFF and SLAR. In addition, each instructor was observed within the first week of the study to make sure that there was no CAFF and/or SLAR in the classes. Some of the teachers exhibited some *focus on formS*, which is grammar instruction that is not connected to students' writing. It should be noted, however, that all of the instructors were adjuncts with backgrounds in English Literature or Creative Writing. Having been an administrator for a pool of English adjuncts very similar to these, I can attest that writing instructors with this preparation usually have little or no experience in grammar instruction. Based on their responses to the teacher survey, as well as the

teacher observations, I concluded that none of the instructors were using CAFF instruction as defined in this study.

Teachers' awareness concerning VE varieties and their exposure to linguistics and sociolinguistics relevant to SLAR instruction was assessed through questions in the teacher survey. Some examples are listed below:

- *Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you write and how most of your students write?*
- *In what way, if any, do you address non-standard language features in your classroom? Be specific – What activities do you do? What do you say?*
- *What kinds of language do you think are most valued in our society? And why do you think these kinds of language are valued?*
- *Have you taken any courses in your preparation as an English instructor that have addressed grammar instruction? Yes/No If yes, describe briefly the content of this/these course/s.*
- *Have you taken any linguistics/sociolinguistics courses in your preparation as an English instructor? Yes/No If yes, describe briefly the content of this/these course/s.*

Based on the teachers' responses to these questions, I concluded that the teachers of the participants in my study had little or no awareness of VE varieties at play in their students' language use. This lack of understanding of VE and sociolinguistics would have prevented them from engaging in any kind of SLAR teaching with the project participants.

4.2 Student Survey

A student survey was administered before and after treatment to assess each participant's sociolinguistic understanding, as well as to gather basic demographic data about the participant. First, participants were given a sample student essay with VE features. The participants were

then asked to comment in the following way: *Describe the kind of writing you see here. Try to say anything and everything you can to show what you think about this language sample.* The participants' responses to the sample student essay were analyzed to find evidence of sociolinguistic understanding. Participants' responses to this activity revealed whether participants could recognize VE features in someone else's writing, whether or not the participants had negative judgments about the features (calling the features improper or incorrect), or whether participants had some sociolinguistic understanding that helped them name VE features as belonging to another variety. Participants were also asked to answer the following questions as a part of assessing their sociolinguistic understanding:

- *Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you speak and how most of your teachers speak?*
- *Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you write and how most of your teachers write? Do you write the same as most of your teachers?*
- *Describe your way/s of speaking.*
- *Describe your way/s of writing. How do you feel about the way/s you speak?*
- *How do you feel about the way/s you write?*
- *Why do you think that the kinds of language used in school by teachers are more valued in our society?*

In order to measure the sociolinguistic understanding of participants, a rubric was developed. I used the rubric to assess students' reactions to the sample student essay and their responses to the above questions. The rubric assessment resulted in a sociolinguistic understanding score from one to five for each question. See rubric below:

Sociolinguistic Understanding Rubric

5 - High level of sociolinguistic awareness. VE features always judged positively.

4 - Fairly high level of sociolinguistic awareness. VE features often judged positively.

3 - Moderate level of sociolinguistic awareness. VE features sometimes judged positively.

2 - Low level of sociolinguistic awareness. VE features rarely judged positively.

1 - No/almost no sociolinguistic awareness. VE features never judged positively.

Student Survey Question	Sociolinguistic Understanding Level					
	Low	Med	High			
Describe the kind of writing you see here. Try to say anything and everything you can to show what you think about this language sample.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you speak and how most of your teachers speak?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you write and how most of your teachers write? Do you write the same as most of your teachers?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Describe your way/s of speaking.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Describe your way/s of writing.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
How do you feel about the way/s you speak?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
How do you feel about the way/s you write?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Why do you think that the kinds of language used in school by teachers are more valued in our society?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
*Sociolinguistic Understanding Score =						

*Appreciation score determined by averaging the level for each question. Note: Evaluator should not include those questions where evaluator marked N/A.

Additionally, a method was devised to assess the appreciation of participants of AE and VE. Of particular interest was a way to measure whether or not students' appreciation of the academic variety increased with the various treatments. Therefore, I assessed participants' appreciation of AE as well as VE by assessing the answers to student survey questions with the following rubrics¹:

AE Motivation Level

- 5 - High level of appreciation for the features of AE.
 4 - Fairly high level of appreciation for the features of AE.
 3 - Moderate level of appreciation for the features of AE.
 2 - Low level of appreciation for the features of AE.
 1 - No/almost no appreciation for the features of AE.

Student Survey Question	AE Appreciation Score					
	No	Somewhat	Yes			
Do you want to learn to speak the same way as your teachers?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Do you want to learn to write the same way as your teachers?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
*AE Appreciation Score =						

*Appreciation score determined by averaging the responses to questions.

Home Dialect Motivation Level

- 5 - High level of appreciation of VE features.
 4 - Fairly high level of appreciation of VE features.
 3 - Moderate level of appreciation of VE features.
 2 - Low level of appreciation of VE features.
 1 - No/almost no appreciation of VE features.

Student Survey Question	AE Appreciation Score					
	No	Somewhat	Yes			
Do you want to speak the same way as your friends and family?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Do you want to write the same way as your friends and family?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
* VE Appreciation Score =						

*Appreciation score determined by averaging the responses to questions.

4.3 Translation Task

In order to test participants' ability to identify and translate from VE features into AE and vice versa, participants were asked to complete a translation task a week before and a week after treatment. In a pilot of the current study that was conducted in the fall of 2006, an outside grader

was asked to identify features in student writing samples that caused them to lower the students' grade. The features identified by the grader were then narrowed down to the features that were also identified in the literature as examples of the VE varieties used by my subjects. These features then became the target features in the translation task. The targeted features are listed below:

Feature Description

Feature	AE Example	VE Example
a. Past tense	Yesterday she played the piano for two hours.	Yesterday she play the piano for two hours.
b. Possession	Bob's friend is always looking over my shoulder.	Bob friend is always looking over my shoulder.
c. Plurality	I checked out three books from the library.	I checked out three book from the library.
d. Third-person singular	Jessica lives next door to her aunt.	Jessica live next door to her aunt.
e. Irregular Past Tense	She took a math class with me last year.	She take/taked/tooked a math class with me last year.
f. Subject-verb number	They were both wearing their best dresses.	They was both wearing their best dresses.

The translation task was modeled after the translation task in the Fogel & Ehri (2000) study, *Teaching Elementary Students Who Speak Black English Vernacular to Write in Standard English: Effects of Dialect Transformation Practice*. The directions for the VE to AE translation task were for students to make necessary changes to sentences to put them into the form their teacher would expect. For the AE to VE translation, students were asked to make any necessary changes to put sentences into the form they would use with their friends in an informal setting. There were twelve sentences and four instances of each feature difference (as listed in the above chart) in each translation task (VE to AE and AE to VE). The sentences in the pre and post-tests,

as well as part I and part II, were created with the same features that could be changed. For example, in the sixth sentence of the VE to AE task and the sixth sentence of the AE to VE task, there are two features that might be changed – 1. a possessive marker, 2. a third person singular marker.

Translation Task*

Translation Type	Sample Sentences
VE to AE feature translation	<i>Christina^b little sister often ride^d her bike to school.</i>
AE to VE feature translation	<i>The school's^b newspaper often gives^d examples of students who have overcome great obstacles to succeed.</i>

*Note: Focus features identified by superscript letters to match above feature chart.

Students easily engaged in the VE to AE translation task; however, they often did not engage in the AE to VE task. It seemed that it was a completely foreign idea to move from an academically accepted variety into a variety that they saw as unacceptable in school. In most cases, students found only one or two features that they could change to VE. There was only one student who saw her vernacular variety as an asset in some settings – namely when she traveled to her parents' country of origin – and was able to translate into VE. In reviewing part II of the translation task, it became clear that a new method would have to be developed in the future to assess a students' ability to translate from AE to VE.

4.4 Writing Task

Because this study aimed to measure the best way to reduce the number of VE features in the actual context of academic writing, a writing task was given to the participants a week

before and a week after the treatment. The writing task was modeled after the ACT writing assessment. The ACT is a writing assessment widely used as a college entrance and placement exam in the U.S. The task prompts students to choose between two proposals and write an argumentative essay supporting their choice. The following is an example of a writing task prompt:

Your school is considering ways to help large numbers of immigrant students to become better integrated into the life of the school. Two proposals have been put forth to address the situation. The first idea is to organize a series of Saturday workshops the students could attend, which would help them navigate the school system and focus on some of their problems. The second idea is to fund clubs in the school that would allow students to showcase the cultural traditions of their native countries. Write a letter to the school president explaining which proposal would better help immigrant students to become integrated into the life of the school.

Students were given 60 minutes to complete the task, as is the case for the official administration of the ACT. The writing samples were given an overall score by a certified ACT grader. Then a VE feature level (number of VE features divided by number of total sentences) was calculated for each participant. The VE features level was used to select participants, as well as a method for measuring change in VE feature use by treatment condition from pre to post-treatment.

Notes

1. Because there is a common assumption that teachers are female, results of the AE and VE appreciation measures may be clouded by the unintended feminization of AE in these questions.

Results and Discussion

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Study

This research was created as a case study with a small sample size. Though some quantitative measures were used to explore the effects of the treatment, these measures were not intended to provide statistically significant results and should not be interpreted as such. This study had three treatment conditions:

- Instruction centered on the exclusive use of Contrastive Analysis Focus on Form (henceforth 'CAFF-only')
- Instruction centered on the exclusive use of Sociolinguistic Awareness Raising (henceforth 'SLAR-only')
- Instruction that combined SLAR and CAFF (henceforth 'Combined').

The study measured the possible effect of each treatment condition on the dependent variable, the reduction of vernacular English (henceforth VE) features in the academic English (henceforth AE) writing of college students. The dependent variable was measured by means of two tasks:

- The VE to AE translation task
- The writing task

The VE to AE translation task consisted of 12 sentences with VE features. Participants were asked to make necessary changes to sentences to put them into the form their teacher would expect, as in the following:

1. *Christina little sister often ride her bike to school.*
2. *Large vehicles is becoming less popular because of high gas prices.*
3. *How many day until your brother best friend come to visit.*

This task was created to test participants' ability to identify and translate from VE features into AE features.

The VE feature assessment-writing task was modeled after the American College Testing (henceforth ACT) writing assessment. The ACT writing assessment is widely used as a college entrance and placement exam in the U.S. Therefore, it is a measure of a student's ability to write using AE features. The task prompts students to choose between two proposals and write an argumentative essay supporting their choice. The following is an example of a writing task prompt:

The town zoning board has announced plans to create a public space in a vacant lot in your neighborhood. Two proposals have been made. One proposal is to build handball and basketball courts on the lot. The other proposal is to build a community arts center. Only one proposal can be put into effect, so a decision must be made. The town zoning board has announced that the final decision will be based on which proposal will most improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. Write a letter to the town zoning board, explaining how your choice will improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Students were given 60 minutes to complete the task, as is the case for the official administration of the ACT. Each writing task was given an overall score by a certified ACT grader. Then a VE feature level was calculated for each participant by dividing the number of tokens of VE features by the number of sentences. This VE feature level was the base line from which the reduction in VE feature use was measured.

Sociolinguistic understanding on the part of the participants was assessed by evaluating their responses to some of the survey questions for judgments about VE feature use. The sociolinguistic understanding scoring rubric below shows the survey questions from which the response was assessed on the left and the rating for the response on the right. The explanation for the rating system is described at the top of the rubric.

Sociolinguistic Understanding Rubric

5 - High level of sociolinguistic awareness. VE features always judged positively.

4 - Fairly high level of sociolinguistic awareness. VE features often judged positively.

3 - Moderate level of sociolinguistic awareness. VE features sometimes judged positively.

2 - Low level of sociolinguistic awareness. VE features rarely judged positively.

1 - No/almost no sociolinguistic awareness. VE features never judged positively.

Student Survey Question	Sociolinguistic Understanding Level					
	Low	Med	High			
Describe the kind of writing you see here. Try to say anything and everything you can to show what you think about this language sample.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you speak and how most of your teachers speak?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you write and how most of your teachers write? Do you write the same as most of your teachers?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Describe your way/s of speaking.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Describe your way/s of writing.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
How do you feel about the way/s you speak?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
How do you feel about the way/s you write?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Why do you think that the kinds of language used in school by teachers are more valued in our society?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
*Sociolinguistic Understanding Score =						

*Appreciation score determined by averaging the level of each question. Note: Evaluator should not include those questions where evaluator marked N/A.

The VE appreciation test and AE appreciation test were assessed by evaluating participants' response to select questions from the pre- and post-treatment survey. The questions used are listed below. The participants were asked to circle the number on the right that most closely represented their response. The ratings from each pair of questions were averaged to determine the appreciation levels.

AE Appreciation Test						
Student survey question	AE appreciation Level					
	No	Somewhat	Yes			
Do you want to learn to speak the same way as your teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Do you want to learn to write the same way as your teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Appreciation Level – AE =						

VE Appreciation Test						
Student survey question	VE appreciation Level					
	No	Somewhat	Yes			
Do you want to speak the same way as your friends and family?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Do you want to write the same way as your friends and family?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Appreciation Level – VE =						

1.2 Hypotheses

The study's main hypotheses are the following:

- SLAR instruction, present in both the SLAR-only and Combined treatment conditions, will increase participants' sociolinguistic understanding, as well as their VE and AE appreciation.
- These increases will facilitate and act as a catalyst for the CAFF instruction. Therefore, the Combined treatment condition will have as a result a greater decrease in VE features than the CAFF-only or SLAR-only treatment conditions.

1.3 Participant Characteristics before the Study

My analysis of the participants' writing on the intake translation task and the intake writing task showed that the participants shared a similar level of VE feature use across

treatment groups. All participants, whether they were headed for the CAFF-only treatment, the SLAR-only treatment, or the Combined treatment, had the kind and quantity of VE feature markers that an official ACT grader had indicated could prevent a student from passing the ACT exam. Additionally, I was able to assess the participants' sociolinguistic understanding and understanding through intake interviews and student surveys. I observed that the participants in all three of the treatment groups shared a common lack of sociolinguistic understanding at the start of the study. The students referred to their VE varieties as incorrect or improper. In fact, many of the participants were apologetic and showed signs of being ashamed when giving examples from their VE varieties. Participants were also tested¹ on whether they were different from each other on the pre-treatment measures and the results suggested that participants assigned to each of the three treatment groups were not different from one another.

2. Textual Analysis Representing Treatment Conditions

This research was designed as a case study to carefully explore how students' writing is affected by the three treatment conditions. To create a clearer picture of the transformation that occurred after each treatment, I have included a textual analysis of the writing of one participant from each treatment condition. It is my hope that these accounts will offer a more complete understanding of what occurred in the study and that the stories of these students will set the stage for the more global results to be discussed later in this chapter. The names of the participants have been changed to protect their privacy.

This section will show, on the basis of qualitative, case-study observations of three students, what will later become apparent as a characteristic of the entire group, namely the much greater consistency and effectiveness of the Combined treatment over the CAFF-only and SLAR-only treatments. We will see in this section that the changes in the writing of the student

exposed to the Combined method are clearer and more pervasive than those observed in the other two students.

2. 1 CAFF-only Participant – Jack

Demographic Description

Jack is an 18-year-old Chinese American who was born in the United States. He says that he has spoken both Chinese and English since he was a baby because his parents have always spoken to him in Chinese and his older siblings have always spoken to him in English. Jack uses VE features in speech and in writing, which is evidence that Jack has acquired a vernacular Chinese American English. Jack was exposed to CAFF-only instruction.

Pre-Treatment Observations

During our first meeting, Jack mentioned that he doesn't raise his hand in class because he feels self-conscious about how he talks. After the interview, once a classmate of his was out of earshot, he told me that he had a problem with "verbs and stuff". He said he was embarrassed because he was raised in New York City and shouldn't have the trouble his parents have. This statement is based on the common misperception that whereas AE and other prestige varieties of English are complete linguistic systems, VE varieties are incomplete or defective linguistic systems. When asked to report on the similarities and/or differences between how he writes and how most of his teachers write, Jack states, "My writing isn't that much similar to most of my teachers because I make minor grammar errors [*sic*]."

Treatment and Post-Treatment Observations

Using Jack's intake writing task and translation task as starting points, I brought Jack's attention to contrasts between his feature use and AE features. From this activity, we created a

list of common contrasts (see sample below) for Jack (past tense, third person singular, and subject verb number) to use in proofreading his work. Jack's list also consisted of strategies for translating from his features to the AE features. This was the focus of our activities throughout the treatment.

Common Contrasts List – Sample Item			
My Focus Feature	AE Strategy	VE	AE Translation
Plurality	Plural –s is almost always used as a marker on nouns in English! It is not variable as in my variety. Whenever a noun is referring or representing more than one thing (even if you have already said this by using a number - like the word two in two cars - or another word that shows more than one - like many in many songs) you must add and –s, -es, or –ies.	He has four sister and a brother.	He has four sisters and a brother.

Jack was able to proofread using his common contrasts list, though this ability did not lead to a change in beliefs about his feature use. He continued to think of his VE features as a source of shame. In fact, he would often apologize for using the VE features and criticized himself when he found them in his writing. So Jack hasn't understood yet that his VE features make up good, complete systems for use at home and among friends and in certain intimate social circles, but not appropriate for school. There is no shame in the foods, clothes, and behaviors that we reserve for home. It is the difference between communicative, technical worth and social worth that he has not learned.

Jack's score on the translation task (which represents successful attempts to translate from VE features to AE features) increased from 66 to 87 as a result of the CAFF-only treatments. His VE feature level went from 88 before treatment to 70 after treatment, showing some reduction in use of VE features.

Table 1 shows Jack's use of specific VE features pre- and post-treatment. The numbers reported for the translation task are tokens of VE features that were not successfully translated to AE. The numbers reported for the writing task were tokens of occurrence of VE features for each category.

Feature	Translation Task		Writing Task	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
past tense	1	0	2	3
Possession	1	1	0	0
plurality	1	1	0	0
third person singular	1	0	1	2
irregular past tense	1	1	1	0
subject-verb number	4	1	4	2

*Features reductions indicated in bold.

Jack showed a reduction in VE features in three categories on the translation task. In the feature category subject-verb number, he reduced the occurrences of VE features by three. In the writing task, Jack only had reductions in two feature categories, irregular past tense and subject verb number. The reduction in the subject verb number VE features is confirmed in both the translation task and the writing task. This may show a real shift for this participant in his understanding of this feature category as a result of the CAFF-only treatment. However, Jack also showed an increase in VE features in the writing task in two categories – past tense and third person singular – which means that there was not consistent reduction in these feature categories. So, overall, Jack seems to show an improvement in his ability to translate from VE to AE in only one feature category – subject verb number.

At the start of the study, Jack had a sociolinguistic understanding score of 2.4. When he finished, his sociolinguistic understanding score had decreased slightly to 2.3 - the highest score being 5. This is not surprising because there were not any sociolinguistic awareness raising activities in his treatment condition.

2.2 SLAR-only Participant – Layla

Demographic Description

Layla is a 22-year-old African American student who has lived in New York City her whole life. She is a monolingual English speaker. Her speech and writing include many VE features. The features present in Layla’s language (see samples below) are features often associated with African American Vernacular English (henceforth AAVE).

- Habitual *be* - *He be givin’ me late shifts*
- Remote past *bin* – *She bin tellin’ us how to write a counter argument*

Layla was exposed to SLAR-only instruction.

Pre-Treatment Observations

From our first meeting, Layla was very outspoken. She felt that her high school had failed to teach her “correct” English and she was angry about that fact. She said she had always been told her writing was acceptable for school, but realized when she got to college that her writing was not good enough. She knew she had too much “slang” in her writing. She thought that she would be able to take care of her writing problem if she was just a bit more careful. When asked about the similarities she saw between the way she speaks and the way many of her teachers speak, she stated, “I speak, well, not proper enough I think, but most of my teachers speak proper [*sic*].”

Treatment and Post-Treatment Observations

Layla was appreciative of the SLAR lessons. She was excited about the idea that the way she usually spoke and the features she used were just as systematic as AE features. However, it took a few key feature examples to really convince her. It was not until the last couple of meetings that she would catch herself when she referred to her VE features as improper. At that point, she started to call these features different rather than wrong.

The shift in Layla's beliefs about her language was very apparent. She discussed how the language she used should be respected and that if the president could speak AAVE, then she would speak the language of power. She also mentioned a number of times that she thought some of the lessons I had presented should have been taught to her in elementary school so she could have felt better about herself throughout her academic experience. I saw a clear growth in her sociolinguistic understanding as a result of our lessons. Unfortunately, it was clear that this change in perspective was not followed by a shift in how she approached her essay writing for her class. She did not discover particular feature contrasts between VE and AE, and, therefore, was unable to translate from VE into AE when it was called for in her writing assignments.

Layla's score on the translation task actually decreased from 75 to 71. Her VE feature level was constant - 27 before treatment and 27 after treatment - showing no reduction in use of VE features.

The numbers reported for the translation task in Table 2 are instances of VE features that were not successfully translated to AE. The numbers reported for the writing task were tokens of occurrence of VE features for each category.

Table 2 - VE features remaining in Layla's writing in two tasks after SLAR-only treatment*				
	Translation Task		Writing Task	
Feature	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
past tense	1	1	0	1
Possession	1	1	0	0
plurality	1	1	2	0
third person singular	1	2	0	1
irregular past tense	0	2	0	1
subject-verb number	2	0	0	0
*Features reductions indicated in bold.				

Layla only showed a reduction in the use of VE features in one category - subject-verb number - on the translation task. In the feature categories third person singular and irregular past tense, she showed an increase in VE use. In the writing task, Layla only had reductions in VE use in one feature category as well - plurality. However, Layla showed an increase in VE feature use in the writing task in three categories – past tense, third person singular, and irregular past tense. Layla's performance on the translation task and writing task do not show a clear reduction in VE features in any feature category.

At the start of the study, Layla had a sociolinguistic awareness score of 2.2. When she finished, her sociolinguistic understanding score had grown slightly to 2.5. This shows her sociolinguistic understanding moving in the right direction, but it is surprising that there was not a larger increase in the appreciation score due to the SLAR instruction. As I will discuss further in the section addressing the sociolinguistic understanding test results, it is possible that the sociolinguistic awareness raising alone, without the contrastive analysis focus on form to offer

concrete linguistic evidence of the two systems at work, may account for the modest gains in this area for the SLAR-only treatment condition.

2.3 Combined Participant – Sierra

Demographic Description

Sierra is an 18-year-old student who was born in Jamaica. She has lived in the United States for six years and visits her grandmother in Jamaica about once a year. When asked what languages she speaks, Sierra replied, “English, sometimes broken English.” A number of the features present in Sierra’s speech and writing are consistent with features associated with Jamaican English. Sierra was exposed to both SLAR instruction and CAFF instruction as a part of the Combined treatment group.

Pre-Treatment Observations

Sierra was quick to let me know that she spoke “crazy” sometimes. She said her whole family could speak English and a kind of “broken English”. She then offered some examples.

- 1. Me go a di store and buy tree hot dogs last week while Greg and Lisa a wait
fa me*
- 2. Two years ago the boi tell me a story that sounded true but now mi see all of
him stories and lies*

She said she knew this was just a “broken language” and that sometimes it “messed her up” at school when she would get it mixed up with “proper English”.

Treatment and Post-Treatment Observations

Because Sierra had already identified the Jamaican Creole she spoke as a system (though, according to her, a broken version of one) there was very little work to be done in convincing her that her vernacular variety and AE were separate linguistic systems. It was, however, a new realization that her variety was just as systematic as AE. In fact, I could see an intense interest in her gaze as we uncovered how language was infused with societal beliefs, and, specifically, how she saw this here and in Jamaica.

The success I had in increasing Sierra's appreciation of sociolinguistics only came as a result of our ability to bridge two activities:

- Looking at linguistic evidence that her variety was just as systematic as AE through CAFF exercises
- Reading about and discussing well-established generalizations about how language functions in society

It was the absence of the discussion of language in society that prevented this type of sociolinguistic understanding from developing in Jack, even though he gained some awareness that his variety was a rule-governed linguistic system. And in Layla's case, she developed an understanding of the sociolinguistic situation she was in, but without the tools provided by CAFF instruction, she was unclear of how to make changes in her writing.

As part of the Combined treatment that Sierra was exposed to, the raising of sociolinguistic understanding was followed by careful attention to specific feature contrasts between her variety and AE. It was during this work that Sierra gained a lot of confidence in her writing. Using her common contrasts list, she was able to proofread her own papers quite successfully. Again, the use of CAFF instruction in our Combined treatment sessions seemed to

act as reinforcement for the argument that her language was just as systematic as AE. Sierra saw her own language patterns in her writing and, therefore, became quite proficient at successfully translating VE features into AE features.

Sierra's score on the translation task went from 58 to 79. Her VE feature level went from 56 before treatment to 38 after treatment. Both of these scores represent a decrease in use of VE features in her academic writing.

The numbers reported for the translation task in Table 3 are instances of VE features that were not successfully translated to AE. The numbers reported for the writing task were tokens of occurrence of VE features for each category.

Feature	Translation Task		Writing Task	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
past tense	1	0	2	0
Possession	4	1	0	0
plurality	0	1	3	2
third person singular	3	2	0	1
irregular past tense	1	0	1	0
subject-verb number	1	1	1	0

*Features reductions indicated in bold.

Sierra showed an increase in VE feature use in the plurality category. In the writing task, Sierra had an increase in VE use in the feature category third person singular. However, in a substantial number of features, in many more, in fact, than did Jack and Layla, Sierra showed a clear reduction of VE features. Sierra's reduction of VE feature use was seen in four feature categories in the writing task. The reduction in past tense, and irregular past tense is confirmed in both the

translation task and the writing task, which may be evidence of this participants' understanding of these feature categories as a result of the Combined treatment.

At the start of the study, Sierra had a sociolinguistic understanding score of 2.4. When she finished, her sociolinguistic understanding score had grown to 3.3. These results are also supported by the finding to be discussed in section 5 that the Combined treatment condition results in greater gains in sociolinguistic understanding than either the CAFF-only or SLAR-only treatment conditions.

The cases of Jack, Layla, and Sierra demonstrate single instances of the results that I observed for each treatment condition. In each group there was positive growth of some type, but only the Combined treatment condition brought about the type of change necessary for AE feature acquisition.

Table 4 – Overview of Case Studies –Translation and Writing Tasks*				
Student – Treatment Condition	Translation Task Score		Writing Task VE Level	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Jack – CAFF-Only	66	87	88	70
Layla – SLAR-Only	75	71	27	27
Sierra - Combined	58	79	56	38
*Reduction in VE features in AE from pre- to post-treatment on translation and writing tasks indicated in bold.				
Table 5 – Overview of Case Studies – Sociolinguistic Understanding				
Student – Treatment Condition	Sociolinguistic Understanding Level			
	Pre	Post		
Jack – CAFF-Only	2.4	2.3		
Layla – SLAR-Only	2.2	2.5		
Sierra - Combined	2.4	3.3		
*Gains in Sociolinguistic Understanding from pre- to post-treatment indicated in bold.				

It was in the Combined group that students were able to understand both ideas: how their variety operates in society and why their variety is no less complete than AE. And it was only in the Combined group that they were able to take this new sociolinguistic understanding and use it as a basis to begin to embrace the endeavor of AE feature acquisition.

With this positive movement seen in the Combined group, it might seem like there should be a greater reduction in or complete removal of VE features in the academic writing of these students. The fact that this greater change did not occur may be due to the limited length of the study, as well as the complexity of the task of learning and differentiating two highly similar linguistic systems.

3. Translation Task Results

Keeping the stories of Jack, Layla, and Sierra in mind, we can move to the results of the study for all participants. We will now take a more global look at the results for the measures of this study - translation task, writing task, sociolinguistic understanding test, VE appreciation test, and AE appreciation test - for each treatment condition as a group. Again, the reader should bear in mind that these results are based on a very small sample size and that no statistical significance is claimed for the results.

Table 6 reports mean scores for the translation task for all participants in the study taken together. Recall that there were five contrastive analysis focus on form (CAFF) participants, four sociolinguistic awareness raising (SLAR) participants, and five Combined participants. The table compares pre- and post-treatment scores for each of the three treatment condition groups. There is one column for each of the groups. The table shows mean pre-treatment scores on the first

row, mean post-treatment scores on the second row, and, most relevant to our discussion, mean change scores on the last row.

Table 6 - Translation task: Comparison between pre- and post-treatment mean scores under three different treatment conditions*			
	Treatment Condition		
	CAFF-only	SLAR-only	Combined
Pre-treatment	7.70	8.38	6.60
Post-treatment	6.90	6.50	8.90
Change	-0.80	-1.90	+2.30

*Note: The score on the translation task represents how many successful translations, of 24 total, were made from VE features to AE features. A reduction in the VE features in this measure is represented by a positive pre- to post-treatment change score.

The only treatment condition that achieved a positive change score on the translation task, indicative of an increase in AE features and of a corresponding decrease in VE features, was the Combined treatment condition, at +2.30. There were negative change scores on the translation task for the CAFF-only treatment condition, - 0.80, and on the SLAR-only treatment condition, -1.90, indicating in both instances increases in the use of VE features.

The fact that the Combined group was the only treatment condition to achieve a positive change score supports the hypothesis that the Combined treatment condition would achieve the greatest decrease² of VE feature use. Additionally, the negative change scores for the CAFF-only and SLAR-only treatment conditions suggest that these groups do not contribute to the reduction of VE features in the participants' writing. It is important to note that the change score for the SLAR treatment condition was twice the negative score of the CAFF-only treatment condition. This tells us that while both treatment conditions fail to achieve the desired result, the SLAR-only treatment condition leaves the participants even further from the goal of reduction of VE features than the CAFF-only treatment condition.

3.1 Reduction of Specific VE Feature Use in the Pre- to Post-Treatment Translation Task

The data from the translation task was additionally analyzed to see if there were particular VE features that were affected more than others as a function of treatment condition. Table 7 shows change scores which were created by calculating the difference between pre- and post-treatment scores for each feature. Results for each of the three treatment groups are reported in separate columns.

Table 7 - Translation task: Change in mean VE features in pre-and post-treatment under three different conditions			
Change pre to post	Treatment Condition		
	CAFF-only	SLAR-only	Combined
past tense	-1.20	-4.00	+4.40
possession	-8.10	-0.75	+8.70
Plurality	+2.20	-3.75	+0.80
third person singular	+3.10	-7.75	+3.10
Irregular past tense	-4.67	-3.53	+6.26
Subject-verb number	-3.90	+4.50	+0.30
*Change scores representing a decrease in VE features indicated in bold.			

A particularly interesting result shown in Table 7 is that the Combined treatment condition showed increases in all AE feature categories on the translation task. This tells us that, even though there may be a reduction in some VE feature categories in the CAFF-only group and SLAR-only group, the participants exposed to the Combined treatment condition are the only ones to show-an overall reduction in VE features.

4. Writing Task Results

Table 8 reports mean scores for the writing task for all participants in the study taken together. Recall that there were five contrastive analysis focus on form (CAFF) participants, four sociolinguistic awareness raising (SLAR) participants, and five Combined participants. The table compares pre- and post-treatment scores for each of the three treatment condition groups. There is one column for each of the groups. The table shows mean pre-treatment scores on the first row, mean post-treatment scores on the second row, and mean change scores on the last row.

Table 8 - Writing task: Comparison between pre- and post-treatment mean scores under three different treatment conditions*			
	Treatment Condition		
	CAFF-only	SLAR-only	Combined
Pre-treatment	5.10	7.00	10.30
Post-treatment	5.80	8.75	8.20
Change	-0.70	-1.75	+2.10

*Note: The mean rank score on the writing task was calculated by dividing the number of VE features used in a given essay by the number of sentences in that essay. A reduction in the VE features in this measure is represented by a positive pre- to post-treatment change score, which is also indicated in bold.

A positive change score on the writing task was only seen in the Combined treatment condition, +2.10. Both the CAFF-only and SLAR-only treatment conditions showed a negative change score from pre- to post-treatment in the writing task, -0.70 and -1.75 respectively, meaning that the use of VE features actually increased from pre- to post-treatment under these treatment conditions.

The results of Table 8 also support the hypothesis because the Combined treatment condition is the only one that shows improvement³ in the use of AE features in the writing task. The SLAR-only treatment condition was, again, further from the goal of decreasing VE features than the CAFF-only treatment condition by this measure as well. However, according to the

results of the writing task, neither SLAR-only nor CAFF-only treatment conditions help participants reduce VE feature use. In fact these treatment conditions seem to hinder the acquisition of AE features.

The writing task was of particular interest because it is often possible for students to demonstrate use of newly learned language features when language is taken out of context, as was the case in the translation task. Yet students are not often able transfer the linguistic knowledge gained to writing in context, as was tested in the writing task. Therefore, it is noteworthy that the Combined treatment condition achieved a reduction in VE features not only on the decontextualized translation task but also on the more contextualized writing task.

4.1 Reduction of Specific VE Feature Use from Pre- to Post-Treatment Writing Task

The data from the writing task was additionally analyzed to see if there were particular VE features that were affected more than others as a function of treatment condition. Table 9 shows change scores which were created by calculating the difference between pre- and post-treatment scores for each feature. Results for each of the three treatment groups are reported in separate columns.

Table 9 - Writing task: Change in mean VE features in pre-and post-treatment under three different conditions*			
Change pre to post	Treatment Condition		
	CAFF-only	SLAR-only	Combined
past tense	+0.60	-4.13	+2.70
possession	-0.40	+1.00	-0.40
Plurality	-1.00	+0.38	+0.70
third person singular	+2.40	-3.38	+0.30
Irregular past tense	+0.40	-1.00	+0.40
Subject-verb number	-0.90	+1.00	+0.10

*Change scores representing a decrease in each VE feature indicated in bold.

The change scores show that the CAFF-only treatment condition showed the greatest increase in AE feature use in third person singular. The SLAR-only treatment condition showed the greatest increase in AE feature use in possession and subject-verb number. And the Combined treatment condition showed the greatest increase in AE feature use in past tense and plurality. It is difficult to see any direct patterns from looking for the greatest increase in each treatment condition. However, it was very interesting to see that while the CAFF-only and SLAR-only treatment conditions only showed an increase in AE feature use in three out of six feature areas, the Combined treatment condition showed an increase in AE feature use in five out of six feature areas. This finding supports the outcome in the analysis of specific features found in the translation task – namely, that there is a greater overall reduction in VE feature use in the Combined treatment condition.

4.2 Specific Feature Reduction in Translation and Writing Task

After looking at the specific feature reductions in the translation and writing tasks to see which features were most reduced by which treatment conditions, I looked to see the results of

both tasks combined. I considered there to be a true reduction if there were positive feature reduction results on both tasks on a particular feature. True change represented by [+], lack of true change represented by [-].

Change pre to post	Treatment Condition		
	CAFF-only	SLAR-only	Combined
past tense	-	-	+
possession	-	-	-
Plurality	+	-	+
third person singular	+	-	+
Irregular past tense	-	-	+
subject-verb number	-	+	+

What I found was that the Combined treatment condition had the best reduction results for past tense, plural, and irregular past tense. The best reduction results were shared by the CAFF-only and the Combined treatment conditions for third person singular. And the best reduction results were shared by the SLAR-only and the Combined treatment conditions for subject-verb number.

Five features that showed positive results – past tense, plural, third person singular, irregular past tense, and subject-verb number – involved CAFF instruction. These results suggest that there is a relationship between CAFF instruction and success in these feature reductions. However, the CAFF-only group was only most successful at reducing one of these features. So, if these VE features in students' writing were more vulnerable to change due to CAFF instruction, why don't we see that same change in the CAFF-only group? Because these changes did occur in the Combined group, it seems that these students lacked the necessary catalyst of sociolinguistic awareness raising that would facilitate CAFF.

I think it is particularly interesting that the only feature that was reduced by the SLAR-only group (as well as the Combined treatment condition) was subject-verb number. It may be that this feature has more salience than the other features for students who become aware of the fact that two linguistic systems are at work.

4.3 Writing Task Outcome Scores

The participants in this study were in a summer program because they had failed the American College Testing (henceforth ACT) writing exam. Passing the ACT exam is central to the academic advancement of the participants. If they do not pass the exam, they are prohibited from taking certain courses in their majors and must pay to repeat the ACT preparatory course the following semester, no small requirement for a student population where 80 percent of students receive need-based federal aid. If the participants do not pass the ACT writing exam after two attempts during the regular school year, they are dismissed from the college.

Because the ACT exam was so closely tied to academic advancement for the participants, the writing task that was used for this study was modeled after the ACT writing exam. Moreover, the ACT writing exam was employed as the context for CAFF instruction. For these reasons, I felt it was important to look at their outcomes on this task.

The test is scored on a twelve-point scale. The passing score is seven. The CAFF-only treatment condition had an increase in average score of 0.60, the SLAR-only treatment condition had an increase in average score of 0.50, and the Combined treatment condition had an increase in average score of 1.00. The largest increase was seen in the Combined treatment condition. Additionally, 60 percent of the students in the Combined treatment condition had passing scores. Only 40 percent and 25 percent of the students had passing scores in the CAFF-only and SLAR-

only treatment conditions respectively. Though these results cannot be exclusively attributed to the treatment, they suggest that a greater reduction in VE features in the Combined treatment condition may be related to a greater increase in ACT score and pass rate for this treatment condition.

5. Sociolinguistic Understanding Test Results

Table 11 reports mean scores for the sociolinguistic understanding test for all participants in the study taken together. Recall that there were five contrastive analysis focus on form (CAFF) participants, four sociolinguistic awareness raising (SLAR) participants, and five Combined participants. The table compares pre- and post-treatment scores for each of the three treatment condition groups. There is one column for each of the groups. The table shows mean pre-treatment scores on the first row, mean post-treatment scores on the second row, and mean change scores on the last row.

Table 11 - Sociolinguistic understanding test: Comparison between pre- and post-treatment mean scores under three different treatment conditions*			
	Treatment Condition		
	CAFF-only	SLAR-only	Combined
Pre-treatment	9.00	8.63	5.10
Post-treatment	4.40	9.88	8.70
Change	-4.60	+1.25	+3.60

*Note: The sociolinguistic understanding score was obtained by averaging participants' responses to the student survey questions as described in the introduction. An increase in sociolinguistic understanding would be represented by a positive change score, which is also indicated in bold..

There was a 4.60 decrease in the sociolinguistic understanding test under the CAFF-only treatment condition. There was an increase in the SLAR-only treatment condition and in the Combined treatment condition, 1.25 and 3.60 respectively. These results show a gain in sociolinguistic understanding in the SLAR-only and Combined treatment conditions. The results

suggest that SLAR instruction, which was a part of the SLAR-only treatment condition and the Combined treatment condition, is associated with an increase in sociolinguistic understanding⁴.

One hypothesis for this study was that SLAR instruction would increase students' sociolinguistic understanding and, therefore, facilitate AE feature acquisition. The mean increase in sociolinguistic understanding by students exposed to the Combined treatment condition supports this hypothesis.

Another interesting finding is that there was a greater mean increase in the sociolinguistic understanding test from pre- to post-treatment for students in the Combined treatment condition. This result suggests that engaging students in the analysis of VE features and AE features through CAFF instruction may increase their sociolinguistic understanding more than if they receive only SLAR instruction.

This outcome is supported anecdotally by the Combined treatment condition participants who often related the concrete VE/AE feature contrasts that they encountered in their CAFF lessons to the sociolinguistic awareness raising activities that they had completed previously. For example, one participant started to see that his use of a zero marker for plurality had a pattern, and, therefore, was not just a careless error. When he realized this, he said he could see how perceptions of him might change if his teacher or the Mayor spoke New York Latino English (the variety with which many of his features were associated). This participants' reasoning developed from the discussion we had in one of the SLAR lessons about the Max Weinreich (1945) quote, "A language is just a dialect with an army and a navy."

Finally, the CAFF-only treatment condition showed a decrease in sociolinguistic understanding. This is an important point for those who consider using contrastive analysis to teach AE features without paying attention to students' sociolinguistic awareness. This result

may show that focusing only on structural contrasts between AE and VE may reinforce negative associations that students may have with their home variety.

6. VE and AE Appreciation Tests Results

Because the desired goal of this study is a decrease in VE feature use in students' academic writing, a natural expectation would be that successful students would show an increase in their appreciation of AE features coupled with a decrease in their appreciation of VE features. The argument might be that students would develop negative feelings toward their variety and, therefore, keep its features out of their writing. However, based on literature concerning SLAR instruction reviewed for this study, this expectation is based on a misunderstanding. In fact, the expectation should be that an increase in appreciation of VE features would signal a shift in the mindset of students that would make them more open to AE feature acquisition, so that successful students, on this reasoning, should show increased appreciation of both AE and VE features.

Table 12 reports mean change scores for all participants in the study taken together. Recall that there were five contrastive analysis focus on form (CAFF) participants, four sociolinguistic awareness raising (SLAR) participants, and five Combined participants.

Table 12 - VE and AE appreciation test: Change in mean score in pre- and post-treatment under three different treatment conditions*			
	Treatment Condition		
	CAFF-only	SLAR-only	Combined
VE appreciation test	-1.00	+1.38	-0.10
AE appreciation test	+0.30	+1.75	-1.70

*Note: The VE and AE appreciation scores was obtained by averaging participants' responses to the student survey questions as described in the introduction. An increase in VE or AE appreciation would be represented by a positive change score, which is also indicated in bold..

6.1 Results of the VE Appreciation Test

The decrease in appreciation in the Combined group was very small, - 0.10. However, this decrease was unexpected. It is possible that students who are exposed to SLAR have an increased appreciation of their variety of English, yet exposing students to the challenging task of AE feature translation through CAFF may create some negative associations with their home variety. Essentially, when students realize the challenge (made clearer through CAFF instruction) that they face due to their home variety, their appreciation of that variety might initially wane.

The CAFF group showed a decrease of 1.00 in the VE appreciation test, which was expected because students in this treatment condition did not receive SLAR instruction, though there was some speculation in the literature that just exposing students to some type of contrastive analysis would raise their sociolinguistic understanding (Siegel 1999).

There was an expectation that students who received SLAR (SLAR-only and Combined participants) instruction would have an increase in their appreciation of VE. This result was only confirmed in the SLAR-only treatment condition which had a 1.38 mean rank increase in VE appreciation.

6.2 Results of the AE Appreciation Test

The hypothesis stated that SLAR instruction, present in the SLAR-only and Combined treatment conditions, would result in an increase in appreciation of AE. The change from pre- to post-treatment in the AE appreciation test only increased for the CAFF-only treatment condition, +0.30, and SLAR-only treatment condition, +1.75.

There may be something about CAFF instruction that makes the process of AE feature learning less intimidating and increases their motivation to attempt said process. The largest increase in AE appreciation score was in the SLAR-only treatment condition, which was expected according to the literature related to sociolinguistic awareness. (Krashen 1985, Skutnabb-Kangas 1988)

The decrease in AE appreciation in the Combined group, - 1.7, was an unexpected result. A possible explanation for this result is that students who are exposed to CAFF as well as to sociolinguistic awareness raising instruction are given the clearest view of their language learning situation. If this is the case, students may view the challenge of learning AE more realistically and have some decrease in AE appreciation. A crucial observation, however, is that this reporting of decreased AE appreciation did not match the outcome of the Combined treatment, which was the condition that showed the greatest reduction in VE features.

Finally, it is critical to acknowledge that these results may be due to group effects with such a small sample size. Moreover, the participants' appreciation scores were assessed using only two questions. This limited source of data may have resulted in inaccurate measurement of VE and AE appreciation. These questions would need to be assessed for future research purposes to see if they were interpreted in the intended manner by the students.

7. Discussion

7.1 Conclusions Concerning Main Hypothesis

The data reported in the present study shows that the Combined treatment condition was the only one that decreased the mean scores in the use of VE features in the participants' writing. These results suggest that SLAR and CAFF in combination are more effective than SLAR alone or CAFF alone in helping students succeed in AE feature acquisition. The crucial finding being that that SLAR seems to make a meaningful contribution to structure focused instruction.

7.2 CAFF-only and SLAR-only

An important part of this study was also to measure the benefit of CAFF-only and SLAR-only treatment conditions when used in isolation. Based on the literature related to both CAFF and SLAR, I expected that there would be some decrease in VE feature use in each treatment condition. Related literature supports the idea that increasing students' appreciation and understanding of their home language varieties would improve their ability to acquire the academic variety (Krashan 1985, Piestrup 1973, Rickford 1999, Smitherman 2000). Prior research also supports the idea that CAFF instruction would be successful in helping students acquire a new language variety (Doughty & Williams 1998, Lado 1957, Schmidt 1983, Skutnabb-Kangas 1988). However, not only did the CAFF-only and SLAR-only treatment conditions not show a decrease in VE usage as expected, but they showed an increase in VE features in both the VE to AE translation task and the writing task. Based on this data, therefore, there appears to be little benefit in using CAFF or SLAR in isolation.

7.3 Increase in VE Features for SLAR-only

The SLAR-only and CAFF-only treatment conditions resulted in an increase in VE features, which is the opposite of what was expected. This outcome may offer some additional insight into these elements of AE feature instruction. The greater increase in VE features in the SLAR group may be a result of a positive association with the vernacular variety that could encourage students to maintain VE features and reject AE features. This idea is supported by the greater increase in VE appreciation. Moreover, it is possible that the initial effect of SLAR is an increased use of VE features, an effect that can be shifted with CAFF instruction.

7.4 Increase in VE Features for CAFF-only

What is the explanation for an increase in VE features in the CAFF group? When students are exposed to CAFF without explicit attention paid to sociolinguistic understanding, it is possible that negative beliefs they have about their variety features are reinforced. These negative beliefs may act as barriers to language acquisition. Support for this possibility can be found in the decrease in VE appreciation in the CAFF treatment condition. However, we may see a lesser decrease in VE features in the CAFF group than we see in the SLAR group because these students have developed some concrete tools for translating VE features into AE features in spite of the negative beliefs they may have about their home variety.

7.5 Recommendations for Future AE Feature Instruction

A number of recommendations can be made for AE feature instruction based on the results of this study. The major finding in this study is that students who are exposed to SLAR-only instruction or CAFF-only instruction do not successfully reduce VE features in their

writing. Based on this result, the recommendation for instructors teaching AE features is that they combine SLAR instruction with CAFF instruction rather than use SLAR or CAFF alone to help their students succeed in AE feature acquisition. This advice is important because many English instructors are willing to embrace CAFF activities because they are similar to grammar instruction, which they see as related to the content of an English class; yet instructors do not think it is important to spend time discussing the sociolinguistic situations of their students. It should also be acknowledged here that many English instructors have had little or no background in sociolinguistics, which may contribute to their reluctance to addressing it in class. Therefore, professional development in sociolinguistics would have to accompany future implementations of the Combined treatment condition.

Furthermore, based on the success of the Combined treatment group that used the assessments for this study to monitor progress, I would recommend that teachers make the entire AE feature instruction process transparent to their students. This can be done by using some of the instruments used for this study – translation task, writing task (which should be shifted to fit the essay forms and content of the course) and student survey – and making these formative assessments for students. By doing this, students can consciously monitor their performance in AE feature acquisition as well as sociolinguistic understanding.

7.6 Challenges of Current Study and Suggestions for Further Research

In this section, I will address the following four issues that have become highlighted in relation to the current study:

- research within only one educational level
- only connected to English curriculum

- linguistically heterogeneous groups
- limited length of treatment and immediate post-treatment testing
- incomplete focus on realities of attrition of the vernacular variety
- limited research of SLAR related activities
- lessons restricted to features relevant for AE writing

Research within only one educational level

One limitation of the current study was that it was limited to college students. The results paint a picture of college students struggling with VE feature use in their writing. Though this also gives us some insight into any student who shares the same struggle, there may be very different reactions to CAFF-only, SLAR-only, and Combined treatment conditions for high school students and elementary students.

In my experience working for six years as a New York City public school teacher and five years at the college level, I have found that college students are more motivated than high school students to engage in academia in general and AE feature learning specifically. In fact, many high school students I worked with who spoke vernacular English varieties strongly rejected spoken and written AE. There was a strong social factor to the rejection of AE. Shifting the beliefs that peer groups have about AE may need to be taken on by the whole school community to be effective. Based on this information, future iterations of this study in high schools, which are necessary, should enhance the SLAR portion of the Combined group to combat the negative associations with AE before CAFF is attempted.

This research should also be repeated at the elementary and junior high school levels. A study of these levels would have to be undertaken to form a research design for the age groups involved. From my limited understanding, I believe that very young elementary school children

may have more motivation for learning AE features; however, older elementary and junior high school students may be similar to high school students in their negative association with AE, which is socially reinforced. If this were confirmed, the younger students could follow a design similar to this study. The older elementary and junior high school students, however, may need increased SLAR instruction before CAFF is introduced, as recommended for high school students.

Only connected to English curriculum

Furthermore it is taken for granted in this study, and in general, that English class is the only setting for interventions like the one undertaken in this study. However, the expectation of AE use in writing and speech is present in all academic fields students encounter from elementary school through college. Efforts should be made in the future, to expose teachers of all content areas to the endeavor of AE instruction for students who use VE features. My experience suggests that there is little chance for affecting change in language instruction at the high school level without a shift in the school community as a whole. One can imagine how confusing it might be for a student to learn to value and understand their home variety in English class, only to be reprimanded for VE feature use in Biology class. These conflicting messages would be very confusing to the student and would make it difficult for him/her to engage in CAFF. Based on this reasoning, a school's administration should be encouraged to institute more global AE related interventions.

Linguistically heterogeneous groups

The participants of the current study used features from multiple vernacular varieties, including AAVE, New York Latino English, East Asian English, and South Asian English. Though the focus features for the study were common in all of these varieties, having a

heterogeneous group may have masked some differences in outcomes that occur in more homogenous groups. For example, it is possible that CAFF-only treatment would have some success in decreasing VE features in students who have South Asian English features in their writing. Therefore, it is important to explore how linguistically homogeneous groups react to the various treatments tested in this study. The heterogeneous grouping was valuable for many educators in New York, where this heterogeneous feature use grouping is mirrored in their classes. However, AE feature instruction may often occur in more homogenous classes.

Limited length of treatment and immediate post-treatment testing

Finally, this study took place over an intensive summer session, which limited the number of sessions and, therefore, length of treatment. This concern could be addressed by repeating the intervention during the course of a regular semester. In this scenario, there would be a CAFF-only class, a SLAR-only class, and a Combined class and the treatment would be more sustained. Presenting treatment within English classes would have the added benefit of full control over the participants' exposure to treatment elements.

Additionally, there was no measure of the length of effects of the treatment. Because the students were only tested one week after the treatment, it is impossible to know whether the students were able to retain the knowledge gained during treatment. In the future, the ability of students to retain treatment effects could be measured by re-administering the post-treatment translation task and writing task a few weeks or months after the treatment.

Incomplete focus on realities of attrition of the vernacular variety

As was mentioned in the procedures and methods section, there was an interesting occurrence when administering the translation task. Very few students successfully engaged in the AE to VE translation task. During the intake session, this reluctance to shift from AE to VE

could be due to the fact that they are in an academic setting and cannot imagine that their vernacular variety is the desired output. However, I was surprised to see that very few students engaged in this task in the post-treatment translation task as well. This result tells me that there was not enough clear discussion about the use of the vernacular in students' lives.

In personal communication with Arthur Spears, I was made aware of the likely gradual attrition of the students' vernacular variety as they continue to acquire AE features as a result of their increased involvement in the academic community. Spears suggests that future studies in this area should take care to have open discussions with the students about their very real fears of losing connection with their communities due to VE feature attrition. The absence of this discussion could lead students to respond to the fear of VE feature loss by rejecting AE feature acquisition and, therefore, suffering academically.

Limited research of SLAR related activities

The more time spent preparing SLAR lessons, the greater the realization of the vast store of material that could improve the sociolinguistic understanding of students. Any future research in this area should include a research and planning period for developing SLAR lessons that would help build a SLAR curriculum appropriate for the students being served. A suggestion given by Arthur Spears in personal communications that might be of particular import in opening the doors to AE features instruction for students would be to draw parallels between VE and AE, on the one hand, and language pairs that are very similar such as Serbian and Croatian or Spanish and Portuguese on the other.

Lessons restricted to features relevant for AE writing

The scope of this study was limited to teaching those AE features relevant for students' writing. A crucial next step for helping students succeed academically is to address spoken

features of AE. It is my impression from initial research in this area that, unlike what occurred in this study, this endeavor would require more attention paid to distinguishing features of the VE varieties. The focus on distinguishing VE features would be required because there are more phonological than grammatical features that are variety-specific and that do not overlap with the features of AE phonology. This task may be more of a challenge when working with linguistically heterogeneous student populations.

Notes:

1. The sample size of 14 excludes the use of parametric measures of association, such as ANOVA, to analyze potential differences between groups. This is not necessarily a limitation; however, as the corresponding non-parametric measure of association, the Kruskal Wallis test was used. The pre- to post-treatment outcome increase is statistically different for the three groups. And with a chi square of 5.258, $df = 2$, $p = .072$, we can reject the null hypothesis within the .10 level of confidence and state that the three groups were significantly different from each other on the measure pre- to post-treatment outcome increase. The pre-treatment measures for the translation task, chi square = .424, $df = 2$, $p > .10$, the writing task, chi square = 3.96, $df = 2$, $p > .10$, and the sociolinguistic awareness level, chi square = 2.67, $df = 2$, $p > .10$, revealed no significant differences between treatment groups on these measures. These results suggest that the treatment groups were more similar than different before treatment.
2. Chi square analysis on the post-treatment translation change variables showed no significant difference between any two treatment conditions (chi square = .922, $df = 2$, $p > .10$).
3. Chi square analysis did not reveal significant differences (chi square = 1.323, $df = 2$, $p > .10$) between any two treatment conditions on the writing task.
4. No two treatment conditions were statistically different from each other on the sociolinguistic understanding test change score (chi square = 3.104, $df = 2$, $p > .10$).

Appendix A

Sample Lesson Plan - CAFFTopic: Plural

Suggested teacher talk noted in bold.

CAFF Goal

By focusing on the contrast between the use of plural in vernacular English and AE, we will be able to translate from vernacular English to AE and vice versa in practice exercises and within our own writing.

Creating a Strategy through Contrastive Analysis Focus on Form

Students will analyze examples from their own writing in contrast with examples of the academic variety to develop strategies to use in future writing exercises. Each student will have a portfolio of his or her writing to work with during the *focus on form* portion of the lesson. The portfolio will have a place for features of focus that the student needs to practice translating into and out of the academic form. Each lesson, the student will focus on one of these grammar areas, slowly building up a repertoire of translation strategies for their academic writing practice.

In this section of the lesson, students will explore a contrast between the vernacular variety and AE and use that contrast to build their own strategy for translation from the vernacular variety into AE. The instructor should have a strategy template that helps the student become aware of the differences through questioning and guidance.

Take a look at the following two sentences and see if you can find the difference.

1. *The students in the class have two week to finish the essay.*
2. *The students in the class have two weeks to finish the essay.*

Let's try to come up with a strategy that would help us figure out when to use the Plural in the way it is used in Academic English, where it takes an -s

Plural Strategy

Whenever a noun is referring or representing more than one thing (even if you have already said this by using a number - like the word two in two cars - or another word that shows more than one - like many in many songs) you must add and -s, -es, or -ies.

book + s = books

dish + s = dishes

spy + s = spies

Hint 1: There are some irregular plurals – these you just have to learn. Here are some tips:

Singular

sheep

mouse

Plural

sheep

mice

child

children

Hint 2: There are many words that are called collective nouns that may seem confusing because they represent a group, but they are still considered singular in academic English.

committee

army

jury

Now take a minute to add this strategy to your AE Translation Checklist

Common Contrasts List			
My Focus Feature	AE Strategy	My Variety	AE
Plurality	Plural –s is almost always used as a marker on nouns in English! It is not variable as in my variety. Whenever a noun is referring or representing more than one thing (even if you have already said this by using a number - like the word two in two cars - or another word that shows more than one - like many in many songs) you must add and –s, -es, or –ies.	He has four sister and a brother.	He has four sisters and a brother.

Practice

Try using your plural –s strategy to translate these sentences in to Academic English.

These sentences should come from the student's writing

Now proofread the following passage from your essay using the plural –s strategy.

This should come from the student's writing

Evaluation Exercise:

Try to state the plural–s strategy for Academic English in your own words.

Now write two sentences using the plural–s.

Appendix B

Sample Lesson Plan – SLAR

Topic: Introductions to Sociolinguistic Reality of Vernacular Varieties

Suggested teacher talk noted in bold.

Awareness Goal

By reading and discussing “Black English: So good it’s ‘Bad’” by Geneva Smitherman, we will be able to define both African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Academic English (AE).

Kick off questions:

What are language varieties?

What language varieties do you hear around you?

Practice

Now let’s take a look at the following essay and see what we can find out about dialects and, in particular Black English. Together let’s read chapter 21 – Black English: So Good It’s “Bad” [1981] from: Smitherman, G. 2000. Talkin that talk: Language, culture, and education in African America. New York, NY: Routledge.

Take a minute to think about the article we just read. Now go back and choose a paragraph that was particularly interesting to you. Talk a little bit about why you chose this paragraph.

Evaluation Exercise

Can you give me some evidence that AAVE is rule governed?

How would you define the language your teachers expect you to use in your papers?

What are some of the social perceptions of people speaking AAVE?

What are some of the perceptions of people speaking academic English?

Appendix C

Sample SLAR Syllabus – AAVE Feature Use

Learning Objective	Activity	Materials
Session 1 Examples of language diversity and social implications thereof – introductions to AAVE	Brainstorming our language experiences Becoming language scientists	Black English: So Good It's "Bad" [1981] from: Smitherman, G. 2000. <i>Talkin that talk: Language, culture, and education in African America</i> . New York, NY: Routledge. Gilyard, Keith. <i>Voices of the Self: A Study of Language Competence</i> . Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1991.
Session 2 The linguistic equality of language varieties	Looking at a couple of examples of Vernacular English features Finding systematicity in the features of your home variety	DiPaolo & Spears, <i>Studying Vernacular Dialects</i>
Session 3 Examining our reactions to dialects. How do we judge our own dialects and the dialects of others?	Chapter exercises from DiPaolo & Spears, <i>African American English</i>	DiPaolo & Spears, <i>African American English</i>
Session 4 What are the ways that language is judged in schools and in society?	Discussion questions from <i>Do you Speak American?</i>	Excerpt from PBS <i>Do You Speak American?</i>

Each SLAR session was tailored to the students need and variety as much as possible.

Reading List for SLAR included excerpts from the following:

- Baugh, J. 1998. Linguistics, education, and the law: Educational reform for African-American language minority students. In *African-American English: Structure, history, and use*. Ed: Mufwene, Salikoko S., Rickford, John R., Bailey, Guy, and Baugh, John. London, England & New York, NY: Routledge.
- Coleman, Charles. 1997. Our students write with accents – oral paradigms for ESD students. *College Composition and Communication* 48-4.
- Gilyard, Keith. *Voices of the Self: A Study of Language Competence*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1991.
- Green, Lisa. 2002. *African American English: A linguistic introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Piestrup, Ann McCormick. 1973. *Black dialect interference and accommodation of reading instruction in first grade*. University of California, Berkeley: Monographs of the Language Behavior Research Laboratory, no. 4.
- Rickford, John. R. 1999. *African American Vernacular English*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Smitherman, G. 1977. *Talkin' and Testifyin': The Language of Black America*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.
- Spears, A. 1998. African American Language Use: Ideology and So-Called Obscenity. In S. Mufwene, J. Rickford, G. Baily, and J. Baugh Eds *African American English: Structure, History, and Usage..*, 226-250. New York: Routledge.
- Spears, A. 2006. African American Communicative Practices: Performativity, Semantic License, and Augmentation. In J. Baugh, H. Samy Alim (Eds.). *Talkin Black*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Spears, A. African American English. To appear in: *Increasing Diversity in Introductory*
- *Linguistics*.(Eds) Di Paolo, M. & Spears, A. (in press)
- Weinreich, M. 1945. The YIVO Faces the Post-War World, in *YIVO Bletter* vol. 25 nr. 1,
- Jan-Feb 1945 pp. 3-18.
- Wolfram, W. 2006. *American English*. MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Appendix D

Sample Lesson Plan – SLAR+CAFF

Topic: Introductions to Sociolinguistic Reality of Vernacular Varieties & Plural -s
Suggested teacher talk noted in bold.

Awareness Goal

By reading and discussing “Black English: So good it’s ‘Bad’” by Geneva Smitherman, we will be able to define both African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Academic English (AE).

Practice

Now let’s take a look at the following essay and see what we can find out about dialects and, in particular, Black English. Together let’s read chapter 21 – Black English: So Good It’s “Bad” [1981] from: Smitherman, G. 2000. *Talkin that talk: Language, culture, and education in African America*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Evaluation Exercise

How would you define the language your teachers expect you to use in your papers?

What are some of the social perceptions of people speaking AAVE?

CAFF Goal

By focusing on the contrast between the use of plural in vernacular English and AE, we will be able to translate from vernacular English to AE and vice versa in practice exercises and within our own writing.

Creating a Strategy through Contrastive Analysis Focus on Form

Students will analyze examples from their own writing in contrast with examples of the academic variety to develop strategies to use in future writing exercises. Each student will have a portfolio of his or her writing to work with during the *focus on form* portion of the lesson. The portfolio will have a place for features of focus that the student needs to practice translating into and out of the academic form. Each lesson, the student will focus on one of these grammar areas, slowly building up a repertoire of translation strategies for their academic writing practice.

In this section of the lesson, students will explore a contrast between the vernacular variety and AE and use that contrast to build their own strategy for translation from the vernacular variety into AE. The instructor should have a strategy template that helps the student become aware of the differences through questioning and guidance.

Take a look at the following two sentences and see if you can find the difference.

3. *The students in the class have two week to finish the essay.*
4. *The students in the class have two weeks to finish the essay.*

Let's try to come up with a strategy that would help us figure out when to use the Plural in the way it is used in Academic English, where it takes and -s

Plural Strategy

Whenever a noun is referring or representing more than one thing (even if you have already said this by using a number - like the word two in two cars - or another word that shows more than one - like many in many songs) you must add and -s, -es, or -ies.

book + s = books
dish + s = dishes
spy + s = spies

Hint 1: There are some irregular plurals – these you just have to learn. Here are some tips:

Singular

sheep

mouse

child

Plural

sheep

mice

children

Hint 2: There are many words that are called collective nouns that may seem confusing because they represent a group, but they are still considered singular in academic English.

committee

army

jury

Now take a minute to add this strategy to your AE Translation Checklist

Common Contrasts List			
My Focus Feature	AE Strategy	My Variety	AE
Plurality	Plural -s is always used as a marker on nouns in English! It is not variable as in my variety. Whenever a noun is referring or representing more than one thing (even if you have already said this by using a number - like the word two in two cars - or another word that shows more than one - like many in many songs) you must add and -s, -es, or -ies.	He has four sister and a brother.	He has four sisters and a brother.

Practice

Try using your plural -s strategy to translate these sentences in to Academic English.

These sentences should come from the student's writing

Now proofread the following passage from your essay using the plural –s strategy.

This should come from the student's writing

Evaluation Exercise:

Try to state the plural–s strategy for Academic English in your own words.

Appendix E

Teacher Survey

Name _____ Course name _____

Years teaching this course content _____

Course description:

Educational Background (starting with undergraduate degree):

Rate the frequency of each by writing a number from 0 to 100 using the scale below:

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
Never		Seldom			Sometimes		Often			Always

- _____ 1. I teach grammatical structures separate from other course material.
- _____ 2. I devote my class time to doing grammar exercises.
- _____ 3. I address grammar in my students' writing during class time.
- _____ 4. I address grammar in my students' writing by providing written feedback.
- _____ 5. I assign grammar practice within the context of students' writing during class time.

Now read the following essay excerpt. Mark the sentences the way you would if this appeared in one of your student's papers.

As a child, I had a huge tendency of taking risk. My parents would always tell me not to do certain thing, but most of the time I would do it anyway. For example, disobeying my parents to go swimming along with friends in a river that 25 ft deep. That day I learned taking risk can be fun, but it can also cost you your life.

On a night I was laying on my bed anticipating for the following day to arrive because my friend and I plan to go to the big river. I couldn't wait because the big river would be fill, due to the amount of rain that fell for the last two consecutive days. That night my father came to my room and tell me, make sure that, when tomorrow comes you get all your homework and chores complete before you go anywhere. And do not go to the big river I nod my head towards him, he then turned the lights off and left my room.

That morning after I finished my chores, it was almost 1pm. There was no rain, the sun was in the center of the sky with huge patches of lily white clouds in all different shapes and size floating in the sky and the birds was chirping each other as if they were having conversations

with one another. My friends and I met up in my back yard, they were all excited and ready to go to the river.

- A. What are the issues in the above student writing?
- B. Write the explanation you would give this student concerning what to work on.
- C. Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you write and how most of your students write?
- D. In what way, if any, do you address non-standard language features in your classroom? Be specific – What activities do you do? What do you say?
- E. What kinds of language do you think are most valued in our society? And why do you think these kinds of language are valued?
- F. Have you taken any courses in your preparation as an English instructor that have addressed grammar instruction? Yes/No If yes, describe briefly the content of this/these course/s.
- G. Have you taken any linguistics/sociolinguistics courses in your preparation as an English instructor? Yes/No If yes, describe briefly the content of this/these course/s.

Teacher Observation Form

After observing the instructor for at least one hour, circle the appropriate value to represent the frequency and quality of each behavior.

Instructor: _____ Observer: _____ Date: _____								
Description of target behavior	Write a check mark for each time you see this behavior.	How often was each behavior carried out?					Was the behavior carried out systematically?	
		Never				Often	Yes	No
1. Instructor teaches grammatical structures separate from other course material.		1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No
2. Instructor devotes class time to doing grammar exercises.		1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No
3. Instructor addresses grammar in students' writing.		1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No
4. Instructor addresses grammar in students' writing by providing written feedback.		1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No

5. Instructor assigns grammar practice within the context of students' writing.		1 2 3 4 5	Yes No
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Appendix F

Student Survey

Name _____ Course _____

Phone _____ Email address _____

Major _____

Date of birth: ___/___/_____ Gender: male ___ female ___

How would you define your ethnicity? _____

Where were you born – what is your country of origin? _____

If you weren't born in the U.S., how long have you lived in the U.S.? _____ years

Have you moved back and forth between the U.S. and your country of origin? Yes/No

If yes, please explain:

What languages do you speak?

What was the first language/s you learned?

Imagine a fellow student shows you the following draft of an essay that they had written for their class.

As a child, I had a huge tendency of taking risk. My parents would always tell me not to do certain thing, but most of the time I would do it anyway. For example, disobeying my parents to go swimming along with friends in a river that 25 ft deep. That day I learned taking risk can be fun, but it can also cost you your life.

On a night I was laying on my bed anticipating for the following day to arrive because my friend and I plan to go to the big river. I couldn't wait because the big river would be fill, due to the amount of rain that fell for the last two consecutive days. That night my father came to my room and tell me, make sure that, when tomorrow comes you get all your homework and chores complete before you go anywhere. And do not go to the big river I nod my head towards him, he then turned the lights off and left my room.

That morning after I finished my chores, it was almost 1pm. There was no rain, the sun was in the center of the sky with huge patches of lily white clouds in all different shapes and size floating in the sky and the birds was chirping each other as if they were having conversations with one another. My friends and I met up in my back yard, they were all excited and ready to go to the river.

A. Describe the kind of writing you see here. Try to say anything and everything you can to show what you think about this language sample.

B. Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you speak and how most of your teachers speak?

C. Tell me a bit about the similarities or differences between how you write and how most of your teachers write? Do you write the same as most of your teachers?

D. Describe your way/s of speaking.

E. Describe your way/s of writing. F. How do you feel about the way/s you speak?

G. How do you feel about the way/s you write?

H. Why do you think that the kinds of language used in school by teachers are more valued in our society?

Now circle the number that represents your response to each of the following questions:

	<i>No</i>		<i>Somewhat</i>		<i>Yes</i>
I. Do you speak the same as most of your teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
J. Do you write the same as most of your teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
K. Do you speak the same way as most of your friends?	1	2	3	4	5
L. Do you write the same way as most of your friends?	1	2	3	4	5
M. Do you want to learn to speak the same way as your teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
N. Do you want to learn to write the way that is expected in school?	1	2	3	4	5
O. Do you want to speak the way your friends and family speak?	1	2	3	4	5
P. Do you want to write the same way as your friends and family?	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you!

Appendix G

Translation Task

Feature Description		
Feature	Academic Example	Non-academic Example
a. Past tense	Yesterday she played the piano for two hours.	Yesterday she play the piano for two hours.
b. Possession	Bob's friend is always looking over my shoulder.	Bob friend is always looking over my shoulder.
c. Pluralality	I checked out three books from the library.	I checked out three book from the library.
d. Third-person present tense singular	Jessica lives next door to her aunt.	Jessica live next door to her aunt.
e. Irregular past tense	She took a math class with me last year.	She take/taked/tooked a math class with me last year.
f. Subject-verb number	They were both wearing their best dresses.	They was both wearing their best dresses.

Translation Test and Answer Key

Directions: Please make any necessary changes to the following sentences to put them into the form your teacher would expect. Do not change from past to present or from present to past.

Answer Key: Words requiring translation are underlined. The expected markers are coded as a-f and listed below. The words in the actual test are not underlined.

1. A student I know come^d to school 20 minutes early so that he can get to class on time and hear the lecture the teacher give^d.
2. Maria and her brother was^f spending five dollar^c a day on an unhealthy lunch. Last week they eat^e French fries three days in a row.
3. Last week, I ask^a James why he spend^e his money on an expensive lunch in the cafeteria when there are two restaurant^c just a block away.
4. Yesterday, Christina^b teacher suggest^a a book to help her with her writing.
5. On my last trip to Brazil, I seen^c an amazing variety of birds and insects.
6. John don't^f mind being late for Professor Johnson^b class.

7. Christina^b little sister often ride^d her bike to school.
8. Large vehicles is^f becoming less popular because of high gas prices.
9. How many day^c until your brother^b best friend come^d to visit.
10. Many citizens was^f upset by the protest last night, and they want^a the police to stop it right away.
11. King Kong fell in love with a beautiful woman and chase^a her up an enormous building.
12. As a teacher, I have to memorize a hundred new name^c every semester. Last semester it take^e me a month to learn all of the names, and I even buy^c a special notebook to help me remember.

Directions: Please make any necessary changes to the following sentences to put them into the form you would use with your friends in a more informal setting. Do not change from past to present or from present to past.

13. My teacher always brings^d her coffee to class and drinks^d it while we are taking our quiz.
14. I ran to the store and bought^e three hot dogs^c last week while Greg and Lisa were^f waiting for me in front of school.
15. Two years ago, he told^e me a story that sounded^a true, but now I see that all of his stories^c are lies.
16. Last week, Sam's^b friend walked^a me home from school.
17. The last time I went to the doctor, I saw^e a brochure about a new drug for asthma.
18. My aunt's^b cat doesn't^f like to be picked up.
19. The school's^b newspaper often gives^d examples of students who have overcome great obstacles to succeed.
20. Magazines are^f always telling lies about celebrities.
21. Andrea comes^d to class late five days^c a week, and then she uses her friend's^b notes to catch up.
22. Last night, all of my friends were^f waiting for me in front of the building. They wanted^a me to go with them to play handball.
23. It took me five hours to make dinner last Saturday. I cooked^a a wonderful meal.
24. Two years ago, 12 new singers^c went^e to Hollywood and sang^e their hearts out.

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