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**HYPERCORRECTIONS AND DIALECT FORMS IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF
NATIVE BORN COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM GEORGIA**

City University of New York

Ph.D. 1985

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HYPERCORRECTIONS AND DIALECT FORMS IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF
NATIVE BORN COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM GEORGIA

by

BARBARA HELEN WHITE WRIGHT

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Linguistics in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

1985

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Linguistics in satisfaction of the dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

HYPERCORRECTIONS AND DIALECT FORMS IN THE COMPOSITIONS
OF NATIVE BORN COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM GEORGIA

by

Barbara Helen White Wright

Adviser: Professor Edward Bendix/ Professor R.M.R. Hall

A study of the writing of remedial college students, both black and white, born and raised in Georgia, showed the main source of errors in their college compositions were hypercorrections and dialect forms. A linguistic analysis revealed both morphemic and syntactic nonstandard linguistic features which could be attributed primarily to black students and other nonstandard features which were used equally by black and white students. The 146 informants (94 black and 52 white) were upwardly mobile, upper and lower working class, community college students. Socioeconomic skewing of the nonstandard linguistic features was not apparent in this sample.

The linguistic situation in Georgia must be viewed as a stage in linguistic change where the black students' language is evolving (decreolization) from black dialect toward standard English with overlays of hypercorrection and white southern dialect. The white students' language seems likewise to be evolving from white southern dialect toward standard English with overlays of hypercorrections and borrowing from black dialect. Hypercorrections which work

by overgeneralization of rules to new contexts demonstrate the students' knowledge of the rules of the target language, give clues to the working of the human brain, and trace language change in progress. Hypercorrections, often indistinguishable from the dialect forms themselves, are the key to disambiguating many of the underlying dialect forms found in the compositions. Of special interest to the linguist are the zero hypercorrect forms resulting from reversal of the negative concord rule and loss of the invariant be of Black English.

A post creole continuum model is used to compare the frequencies by black and white students of the four primary nonstandard morphological features (which statistically define the black dialect): nominal final -s, subject verb agreement, final -ed, and zero copula.

Among the nonstandard syntactic features used by the college students, seven features defined the black students' dialect: negative deletion, confusion between participle and infinitive construction, resumptive subject pronoun predicate marker, the coordinating conjunction which, deleted relative pronoun in subject position, inverted word order of embedded clauses, and transitional devices.

PREFACE

This dissertation began in September 1977, when I started teaching English at the DeKalb Community College in Clarkston, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta. With a Master of Arts Degree in Linguistics from Harvard University and further graduate work in Linguistics at The City University of New York, I also had teaching experience in foreign languages and in English-as-a-second language at the college level. But this was my first experience teaching English and my first time to teach in the South.

The first quarter teaching at DeKalb, I was given an advanced composition course to teach: research and term paper writing for freshmen. Unfortunately I was not prepared for the dialect differences I encountered in the writing of the students in this class. I was surprised by the quantity and the types of nonstandard usages these students had in their compositions.

A large number of students in this advanced course had difficulty writing standard English. When I pointed out errors to the students (I had to call these errors because I was teaching standard English) the students did not know how to make corrections and in many cases their own personal dialect was very resistant to change.

Paradoxically, the one student who had the most difficulty with standard English composition was a young black man who chose to write his term paper on "Black

English."

Since he was an Elementary Education major, he was very much interested in and concerned about Black English and although he recognized that other people used Black English, he said he did not. When I pointed out nonstandard forms in his first version of the term paper, he was unable to correct them satisfactorily.

My own introduction to Black English and other social dialects occurred several years earlier when I attended a course with Professor Nils Hasselmo entitled "Languages in Contact" which he taught as a visiting lecturer at Harvard. Later I was inspired to investigate Black English further after hearing a lecture by William Labov on variable rules in the black dialect in New York City. At The City University of New York in 1971-72, I took a seminar course on Creole Languages taught jointly by Professors R. M. R. Hall, Edward Bendix, and Beatrice Hall. In this class I learned many of the practical aspects of linguistic interference, a situation that led to the formation of such creoles as Haitian, Papiamentu, and Gullah, off the Georgia coast, and Louisiana French Creole.

Thus I found myself, a trained linguist, teaching English in Atlanta, Georgia, to both black and white students and finding that each had difficulty with standard English but that the errors the two groups of students made were not always the same.

During my five years of teaching at DeKalb Community College, two years at Georgia State University, and several semesters at the Georgia Institute of Technology, I observed that while some of the errors the students made in their compositions are typically Southern, other errors are exclusively made by black students.

This dissertation has grown out of my teaching experiences. I am grateful to the administration of the DeKalb Community College, South Campus for their cooperation and permission to use students' compositions. The students themselves have helped and inspired me to complete this study in the hope that my observations here described will benefit other teachers and students in the same situation.

I have benefitted from the insights of my dissertation committee: Professors R.M.R. Hall, William A. Stewart, Edward Bendix, and John Holm without whom this dissertation would not have been possible. The administration of C.U.N.Y. has been helpful in allowing me to matriculate for an excessive period of time. My mother, my children, and my husband have all been supportive to the best of their ability. Colleagues too numerous to mention individually have assisted and contributed data and ideas. But in the final analysis, I am the author of this dissertation and take credit for its success and responsibility for any mistakes.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Scope of the Project:

When I began this research project, the aim was not to replicate anyone else's research into Black English, but rather to examine purely syntactic features and not to be so overburdened with statistics as to make the dissertation difficult reading. It was important to avoid the mistakes of other researchers who had limited themselves to a few features (Dunlap, 1973) or looked at too many features (Sternglass, 1973). The project was set up to compare black and white students in the Atlanta area but they would be college students rather than elementary as in the previous Dunlap study (1973). Only native born students could be included so as to avoid interference with foreign languages which had plagued the Sternglass Pittsburgh sample (1973).

In this way, the effects of white Southern dialect and black dialect could be compared and analyzed in the writing of modern day college students. Special emphasis would be placed on the analysis of syntactic features as per the suggestion of J. L. Dillard (1972). I would take Feagin's (1979) analysis of white speech in Anniston, Alabama as a guide to the white Southern dialect since Anniston is in close proximity to Atlanta and presumably has a similar dialect.

College students' compositions were used because of my affiliation with the DeKalb Community College and also because for these older students the process of language acquisition--at least in its first, non-remedial, stage--is essentially complete and they have already put on their adult linguistic selves. Although this dissertation is, of course, written from the vantage point of Standard American Written English and deviations from this norm are everywhere signalled, I have tried everywhere to avoid being judgmental. Throughout I strive simply to report the facts not to state a preference of any kind.

This dissertation as it stands is essentially static: it reports and analyzes the grammatical structures used by a group of DeKalb students, used at one moment in time -- usually the composition written for the purpose of placement in a college class. It does not attempt to evaluate these students' progress, or lack of it, as they tried to learn how to make their grammar and rhetoric conform to literary norms. Such an undertaking would have been most interesting; however, a dynamic study of this sort presupposes a detailed description of the starting place, which is what I have tried here to provide. Also, evaluating students' progress almost of necessity brings with it an evaluation of their teachers' effectiveness, something which would have introduced many unwanted complications.

1.2 Results:

A corpus of 40,000 words was collected from 146 college students at the DeKalb Community College in DeKalb County, a part of the metropolitan Atlanta area. The corpus was in the form of essays, one from each student who was selected for the study. As a control, 100 additional essays were available which had been collected under identical conditions from students attending classes at Georgia State University, but these essays have not been included in the study.

Permission was obtained from the administration at DeKalb and at Georgia State University before data collection was begun. Background information questionnaires similar to those used in the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States Project (LAGS) were administered to all remedial students who were willing to fill them out. They were asked name, age, sex, race, occupation, class they were taking, birthplace, and languages spoken at home. They were also asked about their parents and spouse: birthplace, occupation, and level of education. The students were asked for permission to use their compositions after the purpose of the project had been explained to them. Of the students who filled out the questionnaire only those born and raised in Georgia who spoke no foreign languages at home were selected for the study. Permission for the participation had to be obtained in writing.

The essays themselves were written for the most part under test conditions in a 50 minute period on an assigned topic drawn either from their personal experience or from general knowledge. Most of these were placement tests given at the beginning of the quarter so as to test what the student brought with him to school rather than what he had learned in the class.

The 146 essays from the DeKalb group were analyzed, counted, and tabulated in order to find general tendencies. Students were divided into four groups according to sex and race: black females, white females, black males, white males. The analysis of the linguistic production of the four groups showed significant differences for morphological and syntactic features.

1.2.1 Morphological Features:

Nine morphological features were analyzed and tabulated (see Table 1).

Subject Verb Agreement

Nonverbal Final -S (Nominal, Possessive, Adverbial)

Copula Absence (Verb to be)

Final -ED (Verbal or Nominal)

Tense

Prepositions

Articles

Spelling

Diction (Choice of Words)

There were significant differences between the groups of students in these features:

Race was a significant factor in the first four morphological features: subject verb agreement, nonverbal final -s, copula absence, and final -ed (based on the chi square tests, significant at the .01 level of confidence).

Race was a factor to a much lesser degree in three other features: nonstandard articles, prepositions, and tense (based on chi square tests, significant at the .1 level of confidence). There was some semantic evidence for Dillard's claim of tense/aspect differences between past tenses of Black English and

standard English (based on evidence of nonstandard
have/had by black students: see 3.2.6)

No quantitative differences were found between the groups
for the last two features: spelling and diction.

No statistical correlation was found for age, sex or
socioeconomic status and the morphological features here
described:

Age grading does not apply to adults. Older students
in this study did not make less errors than younger
students. Since the range in age was 17 to 65 years,
all of these students were adults. There was evidence
for age grading theory when these adults students
were compared to black fifth grade students in
Dunlap's Atlanta study of a decade earlier (see
3.2.3).

Gender differences in language production were not
statistically significant for the groups as a whole
although individual differences were noted.

Socioeconomic skewing (noted by other linguists) was
not apparent. Students with lower socioeconomic status
did not produce noticeably more errors than students

with higher status. Students represented lower working class, upper working class, and lower middle class populations only, clustering around the upper working category. No representatives of the upper middle or upper class could be found taking remedial English classes (a fact that probably shows that they did not suffer from dialect interference in their writing).

TYPES OF ERRORS (MORPHOLOGICAL)

SPELLING SUBJECT FINAL-S DICTION TENSE FINAL -ED PREPOSITIONS ARTICLES ZERO
VERB COPULA

NUMBER OF ERRORS	450	212	168	102	107	115	120	59	56
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	87	76	69	68	61	57	68	41	30
RANK ORDER	1	2	3	5	6	7	4	8	9

TABLE 1

NOTES:

Number of students out of 146.

Final -s nonverbal

Diction means choice of words.

Tense refers to colloquial usage often rather than grammatical errors.

final -ed means loss of -ed or hypercorrect final -ed.

1.2.2 Syntactic Features:

Nine syntactic features were classified and analyzed.

Sentence Length

Negative Deletion

Inverted Word Order of Embedded Clauses

Passive Sentences

Transitional Devices

Resumptive Subject (Pronoun)

Present Participle/ Infinitive Confusion

Relative Pronoun Deletion in Subject Position

Conjunctive Relative Which

The syntactic features were analyzed qualitatively but not studied statistically. The reason I have not tried to quantify the results here is because, as extensive as my corpus was, it was nonetheless impossible to find enough truly comparable contrastive situations for any sort of counting to be meaningful. Nevertheless, seven of the syntactic features were problems for the black students: negative deletion, participle/infinitive confusion, resumptive subjects, conjunctive which, subject relative pronoun deletion, inverted word order of embedded clauses, and transitional devices.

Negative deletion and other strange uses of the negative marker were noted although they were not frequent errors. Some of these were similar to one of Funkhouser's

findings in St. Louis (1976:120-121); total absence of the negative marker in a negative sentence. This may result from a hypercorrection of the nonstandard negative concord rule (see 3.3.2).

Participle/infinitive confusion: an interesting parallel to the past participle errors in the morphology section is the confusion between present participle or gerund constructions and infinitive constructions. William A. Stewart has supplied me with a possible explanation from varieties of creole English in which form and function mergers of to/for + verb and the progressive may occur (personal communication, 1983, see 3.3.7).

Errors with which: three kinds of errors occur: which with a preposition missing or hypercorrected, which used in place of that or who, and which as a coordinating conjunction often accompanied by a hypercorrect pronoun (see 3.3.9).

Deleted subject relative pronoun: standard English does not delete the subject relative pronoun, but some examples of this were found in the corpus. J. L. Dillard (1972:58-60) has noted that this structure occurs fairly frequently in Black English (see 3.3.8).

Inverted word order in embedded clauses: not present in the creoles, inverted word order seems to be a borrowing from standard English (see 3.3.3).

Transitional devices are often misused by basic writers but particularly by the black students in the sample population from DeKalb. They are unable to manipulate the transitional devices of literary English (see 3.3.5).

For two other syntactic features there was no correlation between the groups of students and nonlinguistic features of race, sex, age, or socioeconomic scores.

Length of sentence did not correlate significantly with whether or not the students made errors in their writing. Two types of what are called developmental writers appeared in the sample: those who write very short sentences, sometimes sentence fragments, and those who write very long sentences, frequently run-on sentences. The average sentence length was as short as nine words per sentence for the essay of one black female as compared to fifty-one words per sentence for another black female. Sentence length was not an accurate predictor of maturity in writing (see 3.3.1).

Absence of the passive construction: only passives without agents were used in the texts and passives were not

used extensively in the corpus. A test was given to several classes of remedial students to see if they did in fact know how to form the passive sentence. Results showed that they did know how to form and use the passive correctly.

Preference for the active sentence may be governed by the large number of topics involving personal narrative and the way these students view themselves in relationship to the world around them (see 3.3.4).

1.2.3 Linguistic Significance of this Study:

Evidence is given here for the existence of a black dialect in Georgia which is separate from the white Southern dialect and not the result of socioeconomic skewing. This demonstration is based on four morphological features and seven syntactic features found in the writing of native born remedial college students from Georgia.

These students can be placed on a post-creole continuum and many of their features can be traced to creole origins (see Table 3). (Creolization and creole origins are beyond the scope of the present study, see 5.1 for a summary of the creole hypothesis).

Hypercorrection, among the various factors which caused the students' language to deviate from the norm of standard English, is certainly one of the most important. It is a phenomenon which up to now has received very little attention. In 5.2.1 I draw together much that has been previously written about hypercorrection and analyze these seemingly varied opinions, illustrating each of the ten points with examples from the corpus. Hypercorrection of one kind or another was active in virtually every feature that has been analyzed in this dissertation. In some cases analyzing the hypercorrections is the only way to unravel what is happening in the examples between black dialect and

POST-CREOLE CONTINUUM FOR DEKALB SAMPLE

(including black dialect features in the
writing of white students)

ACROLECT
(STANDARD ENGLISH)

Percent of Black Students	(5)	7.4%	32.7%	Percent of White Students
	(4)	22.3%	40.3%	
	(3)	27.0%	21.1%	
	(2)	30.8%	5.7%	
	(1)	11.0%	0%	
BASILECT				

TABLE 3

NOTE:

- 5 never use dialect features
- 4 use only one dialect feature
- 3 use two dialect features
- 2 use three dialect features
- 1 use all four dialect features

Based on usage of four black dialect features:
nonstandard subject verb agreement, absence of
nominal final -s or hypercorrection of the same,
absence of past -ed or hypercorrection thereof,
absence of the copula verb.

standard English. Hypercorrections are not only manifestations of linguistic change but they are one of the mechanisms that cause it. The way they operate is by overgeneralization of a rule into a new context where it would not normally apply. This can result in either the unexpected presence or absence of a feature. Most importantly the hypercorrections demonstrate that the speaker using them has some knowledge of the target language and its system of oppositions or he would not be able to overgeneralize the rule into new contexts.

The linguistic situation in Georgia must be viewed as a stage in linguistic change where the black students' language is evolving from black dialect toward standard English with overlays of hypercorrection and white southern dialect. The white students' language seems likewise to be evolving from white nonstandard Southern dialect toward standard English with overlays of hypercorrection and borrowing from black dialect (see Chapter 3 for examples).

What seem to be archaisms in the language of the blacks and perhaps the whites also may very well be a literary influence from the King James Version of the Bible used in many churches throughout the South. Bible study is a very important part of growing up in the South.

1.2.4 Sociological Significance:

Social class differences were not significant for this study. All the students in the sample were upwardly mobile in that they were attending college when few of their parents had done so. Most of the students clustered around the lower to upper working class categories in their social status but this was due to their parents' occupations and lack of education. The students themselves had often attained higher status and better jobs than would be indicated by their working class indices.

For this reason, it can be assumed that less social stigma exists for dialect speakers (or dialect writers) than was formerly indicated. More research needs to be done to determine whether presence of regional or dialect speech is in fact a deterrent to social success, especially in the South.

1.2.5 Educational Significance:

Implications for the classroom teacher are many. Table 2 gives a chart of the number of errors per 300 word essay that each group of students would make on the average. According to the results of the analysis of nine morphological and nine syntactic features, black students

will need extra help with four morphological features:

Subject Verb Agreement

Nonverbal Final -S

Copula Deletion

Final -ED

And seven syntactic features:

Negation

Participle/Infinitive Confusion

Resumptive Subject (Pronoun)

Relative Pronoun Which

Deletion of Subject Relative Pronouns

Inverted Word Order

Transitional Devices

Both black and white students in remedial classes have problems with five of the morphological features:

Tense

Prepositions

Articles

Spelling

Diction

Both groups of students should continue to be taught in the same remedial classroom. Nothing would be gained by segregating classes since many of the writing problems overlap. Black students with many dialect features will continue to need special help which can be provided with writing labs, tutorials, and programmed instruction.

A COMPARISON OF THE FOUR GROUPS FOR RATE OF ERRORS
PER 300 WORD ESSAY

	SPELLING	SUBJECT VERB	FINAL - <u>S</u>	DICTION	TENSE	FINAL - <u>ED</u>	PREPOSITION	ARTICLE	COPULA DELETION	TOTALS
BLACK FEMALES	3.36	2.01	1.86	.75	.90	.75	1.02	.72	.28	11.65
BLACK MALES	3.84	2.76	1.65	.96	.96	1.50	1.23	.45	.36	13.71
WHITE FEMALES	3.06	.27	.33	.78	.36	.58	.45	.12	.03	5.98
WHITE MALES	3.51	.63	.54	.19	1.02	.57	.78	.24	.14	7.62

TABLE 2

Note:

The table was calculated by counting actual errors for each group, dividing by the number of words in all the essays for that group to give errors per 100 words, and then multiplying by 3.

final -s either absent or hypercorrect.

final -ed : either absent or hypercorrect -ed.

Preposition, Tense, or Article non-standard.

1.3 Sample Essay:

Many of the problems which the teacher of remedial composition faces can best be understood from a concrete example with an explication de texte that follows. For this reason a fairly typical composition by a black male college student is appended here. This composition was written under test conditions in 45 minutes on the topic: "Has your upbringing helped or hurt you in your academic studies? Explain."

Although this student was not included in the present sample from DeKalb College (because he attended a four year school as a junior) his work exemplifies all the errors found in the papers analyzed for this research project.

As can be seen from the manuscript copy of the composition, the student worked carefully, going over this writing to amend and correct things which he was not satisfied with. The underline marks on the composition picking out verb forms are his own and were not made by some exam evaluator; they show that probably he was aware of the fact that he might make mistakes with verb forms though he was not cognizant of just where his errors might lie.

Following the xeroxed copy of the actual essay, I have added a running commentary line-by-line of errors with transcriptions and dialect features present in the composition.

1.3.1 Xeroxed Copy of Essay on the Next Three Pages:

Figure 1

Begin writing on this page.

Because I am poor, black, and sport giftly, my upbringing has ~~harm~~^{harm} my academic studies. I was born on a poor broken down farm deep in southern Georgia where stresses were put on working, sport or exercise, and school last. Of course this is an example of many black in Georgia. But ~~we~~^{we} all ~~do~~^{do} not suffering in school on the same level. Some suffer a little less and others a little more. I guess I am one of the others that suffer a little more. Because of poor schooling, stresses on sports and Black's unique language which was taught to me by my ~~poor~~ northern mother and father, my upbringing has ~~harm~~^{harm} my academic studies.

When I attended school for the first time, I was amaze, frighten, and a bit suprised to see grades one through twelve in the same school. My school taught the ~~usual~~ usual courses like reading, writing, and math but it was taught just I thought to get by and to say that one has been taught to read, write and ~~poor~~ work.

simple math problems. It was taught just enough to say that one knows it but to get over in today's world one needs not ~~know~~ ^{know} enough to get by; one needs to all there is ~~in order to~~ to know. If more teachers or better teachers had stressed the facts ^{about} ~~that~~ learning should be a continuous process I believe I and most blacks would be a lot ~~smarter~~ ^{smarter} today.

The second ~~big~~ largest factor ~~that~~ in my upbringing that hurt my academic studies ~~was~~ ^{were} the stresses of sports. Every kid in my school had a sport which he or ~~she~~ she was good at. When tryout for school teams came around the coaches had many to choose from which mean he could choose the best of ~~each~~ ^{each} categories. So many kids only when to school to play ~~and~~ sports with me being a guilty victim too. If school or coaches or ~~to~~ somebody had stressed or explained that sports are fun but ~~that~~ ^{learning} to read, write, and all the other things one needs to learn to be successful in today's world, me and many other blacks

would be a lot better off today.

~~And~~ Finally the hardest ~~and~~ factor
to come in my upbringing - our unique and incorrect
means of speaking call Black's language. When I was very
small the only words I heard ~~and like~~ was
those on my mother and father, so naturally I
was taught to speak just how they spoke. But the
way ~~so~~ many old southern blacks speak in wrong,
incorrect and ~~stupid~~ down right discussing in today's
societies.

1.3.2 Commentary on the Essay:

***Line 1: Because I am poor, black, and sport gifty, my upbringing

gifty is a typical derivational mistake common among black students (see 3.2.10). The -y is the student's perceived suffix rather than -ed which he does not use. I call this a diction (derivational) error and not a spelling error. The meaning is clear enough but the student seems to be avoiding the word athletic perhaps because he does not know how to spell it.

***Line 2: has harm my academic studies. I was born
harm has no final -ed. This is the sixth most common error of the morphological type and one of the four morphological errors which define the black dialect (see 3.2.4). In this example there may be assimilation of the -d to the following m-, but the consonant cluster assimilation rule does not work for all cases.

I was born see in the handwritten copy how the student underlined the subject once and the verb twice to show that he does have some notion of grammar.

***Line 3: on a poor broken down farm, deep in southern
Georiga where

poor broken down teachers of remedial composition often advise their students to use emotional appeal to get the sympathy of their exam graders.

Georiga the letters i and g are reversed and this is done

throughout the essay (see ***Line 6).

Spelling was the most common error in the corpus with an average of more than three words misspelled per 300 word essay (see 3.2.9).

***Line 4: stresses were put on working, sport or exercise, and school

stresses with plural and sport without -s are two examples of what I term the nonverbal final -s error or nonstandard dialect feature which defines the black dialect in this study (see 3.2.3). There are some contexts where stress plural and sport singular are acceptable but this is not one of them. For example in British usage sport would be acceptable in this context. The presence of -s on stress shows that the student can have an -s in an awkward environment. Nonverbal final -s is the third most common nonstandard form found in the corpus.

***Line 5: last. Of course this is an example of many black(s)

Note the unusual word order of the previous sentence. black may or may not have a final -s. If there is an -s then it probably was added at a later time when the student reread his essay. If there is not then the word many carries the plural meaning for this student and no -s would be needed in his dialect.

***Line 6: in Georiga. But we all do not suffering in school on

do not suffering would be do not suffer or are not suffering in standard English. From the text it is apparent that the student crossed out are and put do. There are a large number of nonstandard forms associated with the present participial (see 3.3.7).

Georiga is the same misspelling as in ***Line 3.

***Line 7: the same level. Some suffers a little less and others a

some suffers the verb is singular because it has a final -s but the subject some is grammatically plural in standard English. I have called this a subject verb agreement error (see 3.2.1) or nonstandard subject verb agreement; however, this is really a hypercorrect form of the verb. The hypercorrection may have occurred when the student reread this paper and saw that some did not have -s so he may have added -s to the verb. Some remedial English teachers tell their students to check subjects and verbs for final -s.

***Line 8: little more. Guest I am one of the others that suffer

guest should be guess. This is possibly a hypercorrect spelling which could result when the student realizes that he has sometimes simplified consonant clusters in final position and he is afraid he may have done it here. There is an alternative explanation that the student meant to write guessed, the past tense, and did not know how to spell it, but the context of the sentence would not call for a

past tense verb. Since historically Black Vernacular English does not have the past tense marked with -ed, this student may be confused about when to use it. I have discussed similar problems with final -ed and hypercorrect final -ed in 3.2.4.

***Line 9: a little more. Because of poor schooling, stresses on sport(s)

It is not clear from the handwriting whether sport has an -s and a comma or just a comma. Nonverbal final -s is a mark of the black dialect discussed in 3.2.2.

***Line 10: and Black's Unique lanuage which was taught to me by my

lanuage should be language. The student indicates that he is aware of the difficulties some blacks have with their own dialect, even though he is unable to do anything about his own difficulty writing standard English.

***Line 11: southern mother and father, my upbringing has harm

upbring should read upbringing. This appears to be an example of the general problem with the gerund ending and similar to the problem with the present participle ending: there are many similar examples where the -ing of the present paticiples and gerunds is absent (see 3.3.7). harm shows the lack of final -ed that is required on standard English past participles (see 3.2.4).

***Line 12: my academic studies.

The sentence structure of the previous sentence shows the student to be able to apply some of the rules of standard English syntax but there is a logical problem with this sentence. Because means 'what with'.

***Line 13: When I attended school for the first time,

Note that the student has used the final -ed for the standard English past tense.

***Line 14: I was amaze, frighten, and a bit suprised to see grades

amaze and frighten are both missing the final -ed of the standard English past participle, but suprised uses the -ed correctly. The reason for this remains unclear (see 3.2.4).

***Line 15: one thought twelve in the same school. My school

The student has already indicated on thime three that he is from a rural background. Schools such as he describes are rare today even in rural areas though certainly no less able to provide a good education than the traditional elementary and secondary schools. Doubtless the student was frightened to see so many bigger children at his school.

thought should read through. He makes the same spelling error later in the essay.

***Line 16: taught the usual couses like reading, writing couses should read courses. As a Southern dialect speaker the student probably does not pronounce a post-vocalic r

before another consonant and hence his pronunciation could have led him to fail to write the r in this word. There are other instances in this text where post-vocalic r is correctly represented.

***Line 17: the math but it was taught just enough to get by.

enough should read enough a spelling error similar to guest on ***Line 8 of this page where the student was unsure about final consonant clusters which led to his hypercorrect spelling.

***Line 18: And to say that one has been taught to read, write and work

PAGE 2 (Sample Essay):

***Line 1: simple math problems. It was taught just enough to

Same hypercorrect spelling of enough.

***Line 2: say that one knows it but to get over in today's

The student is contrasting get by with get over. Get over has special meaning in the black dialect (see Smitherman, 1977 for an extended definition) which is roughly 'succeed'.

***Line 3: World one needs not only know enough to get by; one needs

A favorite expression in the essays of college students in this study is today's world. The here and now is very

important to them and they have very definite ideas about what the world is and how it should be. Note that this student correctly used the apostrophe.

***Line 4: to all there is to know. If more teachers to all should read to know all. It is worth noting this student's attitude: that he can learn all there is to know and that if he hasn't done so yet it is because more teachers didn't teach him properly.

***Line 5: or better teachers had stressed the facts about learning stressed and facts both have the correct morpheme endings for standard English.

***Line 6: should be a continuous process I believe I and following the preposition about there is an embedded clause: learning should be a continuous process. This kind of embedding is common in black dialect with He was talking about + S. In standard English the about would have to be accompanied by how.

There is no period after process. This kind of run-on sentence is very common in the writing of the students in the study (see 3.3.1).

I and is an indication of what J. R. Ross (personal communication, 1968) called the me first phenomenon. According to him the first person singular is the initial constituent of all conjoined structures (in no way a creolism). Ross has argued that this is psychologically

basic to the human species. Later rules of social politeness say that the speaker should always come last.

***Line 7: most blacks would be a lot smarter today.

This kind of reasoning is not logical and it does not follow that education makes a man smarter (more intelligent) just more knowledgeable. Some such types of higher sentence relationships are discussed in 3.3.5>

***Line 8: The second largest factor in my

***Line 9: upbringing that hurted my academic studies were the

Here upbringing has the final -ing and hurted has the final -ed which in the latter case is hypercorrect.

The verb were agrees with studies not its grammatical subject factor as in standard English.

***Line 10: stresses of sports. Every kid in my school has a sport

has probably should be had for the proper sequence of tenses with was in ***Line 11. I have discussed this confusion between has/have/had in detail in 3.2.6. This kind of distinction appears to be different in black dialect and even Southern whites are losing the distinct forms and meanings of the verb have.

sport and sports are both used correctly with and without final -s.

***Line 11: which he or she was good at. When tryout for tryout should have a definite article: the tryouts. The

use of articles seems to be different for black dialect than for standard English (see 3.2.8).

***Line 12: school teams came around the coaches had many

***Line 13: to choose from which mean he could choose the

The pronoun he does not agree with its antecedent in number (coaches).

which mean is either means or meant in standard English.

Both these features of absent final -s and final -ed have been discussed in Chapter 3.

***Line 14: best of each categories. So many kids only
when

when should read went. Both these words are phonetically [wɛn] for dialect speakers. So the author of this composition had no basis for choosing between when and went the two orthographies for this phonetic realization.

categories is a hypercorrect plural.

***Line 15: to school to play sports with me being a guilty
victim

The juxtaposition of two contradictory words is called an oxymoron in literary terms (guilty victim). This may be a sophisticated use of the language to achieve just the right meaning or it may be an inappropriate choice of words.

***Line 16: too. If school or coaches or somebody had
stressed

school and coaches both need definite articles: the school,
the coaches.

too correct spelling. This word is a frequently misspelled one in remedial classes (see 3.2.9)

stressed has the past participle ending here.

***Line 17: or explained that sports are fun but learning to read

***Line 18: write, and all the other things one needs to learn to be

***Line 19: successful in today's world, me and many other blacks

This whole sentence illustrates a particular type of syntactic structure common to many black students (see 3.3.7). An embedded clause with a participial gets stranded without a verb or an object to complete the sentence.

me and is another example of the me-first rule and here it is in its more classic guise of the objective case: me.

PAGE 3 (Sample Essay):

***Line 1: would be a lot better off today.

***Line 2: Finally the hardest bad factor

In the language of school children in DeKalb County bad and baddest are terms of approbation. The author of this essay is trying to approximate standard English usage and not succeeding very well.

***Line 3: to correct in my upbringing - our unique and incorrect

***Line 4: means of speaking call Black's language. When I was very

It is hard to say whether the student really lacks pride in his heritage or whether he is using rhetorical devices to gain readers sympathy. The sentence structure is two NP's without a copula linking verb. The student is trying to signal a change of subject with the first NP and then give more precise detail with the second NP (see 3.3.5 Transitional Devices). The word call should be past participle called in standard English.

***Line 5: small the only worlds I heard was

The hypercorrect spelling of worlds for words may have resulted because the l is not pronounced before a stop in such words as DeKalb, would, and so on.

was the verb of the sentence does not agree with its grammatical subject worlds.

***Line 6: those on my mother and father, so naturally I on would be of in standard English. This use of prepositions that diverge from the standard English is common in the writing of black students. There are other examples in 3.2.7.

***Line 7: was taught to speak just has they spoke. But the
has should be as.

***Line 8: way many old southern blacks speak is wronge,
wronge should be wrong.

***Line 9: incorrect and down right discussing in today's
I think he meant disgusting not discussing. The loss of the

t from the consonant cluster st is a common simplification (see 3.2.9).

***Line 10: societies.

This word should be in the singular for standard English. Note in the preceeding sentence the emphatic and rather vehement rejection of Black English which is typical of many speakers of this dialect.

The student who wrote this essay did not pass his essay exam although he most certainly aroused the emotions of the exam graders. His essay showed some promise because he was aware of the subjects and verbs and his overall rhetorical organization was not bad. He indicates that he knows that some blacks have trouble writing "correct" English. But because this exam was testing his ability to write a composition in standard English, there is no way an exam grader could have given him the passing mark he needed. If the test had required that he express himself merely in whatever language or dialect he might have at his disposal, he might have received a passing mark due to his paper's organization and content.

This essay serves as a good introduction to the other essays in this dissertation because the student's paper illustrates virtually all of the nonstandard features which define the group of black dialect students. This student's inconsistencies are striking. It seems that half the time he is writing in standard English and half of the time he

writes in black dialect. Also there are a large number of hypercorrections which are neither black dialect nor standard English.

The rest of the dissertation will examine the DeKalb Sample Essays in greater detail. Chapter 2 will examine the background of the students such as this one who participated in the study (94 black students and 52 white students). Chapter 3 will analyze the linguistic features found in the essays and will find out what defines the unique black dialect and how it differs from white nonstandard English and in turn standard English.

In Chapter 4 I will summarize most of the significant previous research on Black English, on Dialect Interference in Writing, and on Comparisons of Black and White Nonstandard English.

It is especially important to look at hypercorrections to see just how they are covering up the true structure of black and white nonstandard dialect. Chapter 5 deals specifically with some theoretical problems concerning hypercorrections with examples from the texts. Much of this has never been discussed in a single place before although ideas have been drawn from several sources.

While the results of this dissertation will come too late to help the student who wrote this essay to write standard English, it is hoped that the accurate description of written black dialect in the sample will benefit other

students like him and will also help their teachers who are trying to teach them to write standard English for the students' educational and professional advancement.

2.0 Extralinguistic Factors:

2.1 DeKalb College Informants (146):

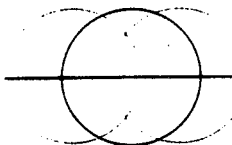
Out of 235 questionnaires returned from students at DeKalb Community College, 127 were from females and 108 from male students. Only 146 of the students qualified for the study since 89 of them did not have the required criteria: must have been born and raised in Georgia, could not have lived outside the state for more than 4 years, could not have a foreign language spoken regularly at home, and must be willing to fill out the questionnaire to give permission to participate in the research project by allowing an essay to be copied.

2.2 Data Collection:

Data collection was begun at DeKalb Community College in December of 1979 after permission was obtained from the administration of the college, run by the Board of Education of DeKalb County in the greater Atlanta Metropolitan area (see letter of permission from Pat York on the following page). The population of this college was chosen especially because the college has an open door policy, allowing entrance to anyone who has a high school diploma or equivalent and thus has many remedial English students. Data collection was completed in the Spring quarter of 1981.

2.2.1 Questionnaire:

A questionnaire based on the LAGS (Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States) Project Questionnaire was given to all the



DeKALB COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SOUTH CAMPUS

17 PASTERSVILLE ROAD, DECATUR, GEORGIA 30035

February 18, 1980

Barbara H. Wright
4410 John Wesley Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30035

Dear Barbara:

Dean Hill and I have studied your request for permission to use in your dissertation project copies of essay papers written by our Developmental Studies students. We understand that a permission questionnaire will be completed by each student whose paper is to be used. We further understand that the project is to be a descriptive linguistic study and will not involve experimentation or value judgements.

If these are correct understandings, the Developmental Studies Division will be happy to cooperate with you on this project.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia York, Chairperson
Developmental Studies Division

Figure 2

students to fill out. Their teachers received a sheet of instructions to help students fill out the questions (see samples of each on following pages). Questions involved information sufficient to determine the student's socioeconomic status: occupation and education of student, spouse, and parents. Other information required was birthplace, age, sex, race, class now taking, teacher's name, length of time lived outside the Atlanta area, languages other than English spoken at home. Information on the SAT and other test scores was solicited but not required since many students did not take the SAT or did not remember what they got. However, it was essential that the student sign his questionnaire to give permission to participate and give his social security number so the essays on file could be located.

2.2.2 Writing Sample:

The writing samples used in this research study were all written under test conditions in 45 to 50 minutes on an assigned topic. They were written for the most part as essay exams for placement purposes before the students had begun taking English classes. In the Fall of 1979 an essay placement test was instituted at DeKalb College South Campus which was then graded by three graders who made no marks on the papers but made recommendations for placement in English courses accordingly. The essays had to be kept on file so that I was able to make xeroxed copies at a later date when

date _____

LINGUISTIC SURVEY: Background information sheet

Informant's name _____ Soc. sec. no. _____

community _____ county _____ state _____

birth place _____ age _____ sex _____

occupation other than student _____ education completed _____

date first enrolled at DeKalb College _____ SAT scores Verbal _____

Math _____

English course now taking _____ Teacher's name _____

language other than English spoken at home _____

family ancestry _____

mother's birthplace _____

mother's education completed _____

mother's occupation _____

father's birthplace _____

father's education completed _____

father's occupation _____

husband/wife's birthplace _____

husband/wife's education completed _____

husband/wife's occupation _____

Have you ever lived outside the Atlanta metro area? _____ Where? for how long?

A grammatical study is being conducted in the Atlanta/DeKalb county area by a graduate student in Linguistics. With your permission he would like to use some of your essays written in your English class at DeKalb Community College. Your name will not be used.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

signed permission

Figure 3

Linguistic Survey: Background information sheet

Informant's name: Student's name as it appears on the school records

Date: Today's date

Community: The name of the city or section of a city you live in. For example, Decatur, Wesley Chapel or Atlanta, Grant Park.

County: DeKalb or Fulton or Cobb

State: Georgia

Birthplace: City and State

Age: Present age

Sex: M or F

Race: Black, White, Asian, other.

Occupation: Present job

Education: High school or 1 year college, etc.

Date first enrolled at DCC.: for example, Fall 1979.

SAT score: If you know your scores please put them down. If you took the SAT but do not remember the scores put DON'T KNOW. If you did not take the SAT put N.A.

DEP score: Do not put anything, this does not apply.

English course now taking: English 98 or 99, this quarter.

Teacher's name: The name of your English teacher this quarter.

Languages other than English spoken at home: Put the name of names of all languages other than English which you speak at home. If you do not speak any other languages put N.A.

Parents' birthplace: Put the city and state where both of your parents were born. If you do not know, put D.K.

Family Ancestry: Put the country or countries of origin of your ancestors. For example, England, Ireland, France, Africa.

Have you ever lived outside the Atlanta/DeKalb area? Where? Name the place you lived. For example, spent 1 year in the Army in Vietnam, or 2 years in California as a child 3-5 years old.

Signed permission: If you will allow your paper to be used for the study please sign your permission.

Student I.D.: We may need this to locate the diagnostic essay and SAT scores

Figure 4

the students filled in the questionnaires. Topics for the exams were either personal interest or general interest topics and students were given a choice and asked to write a minimum of 300 words.

Through these essays it was possible to study the language the student brought with him to class rather than what he had learned. No attempt will be made to judge or compare teachers.

2.3 Race and Sex of Students:

Out of 146 students selected for the study, 52 were white and 94 were black. The largest group in the study is the black women with 56 informants; next came the black men with 38 participants. The disproportionately large number of black female students reflects the makeup of the typical remedial class at this school and the fact that larger numbers of women attend community colleges. There are 27 white women in the study and 25 white men students. Many more white men than women attend remedial classes at the college so that it was difficult to obtain enough white females for the study. Table 4 gives the breakdown of students in the group of informants by race and sex.

2.4 Age of Students:

The average age of DeKalb College students in 1977 (the date for which figures are available) was 34. Many of these students have families and jobs, attending college in the evening or on weekends. No attempt has been made to

BREAKDOWN OF STUDENTS BY RACE AND SEX

	BLACK	WHITE	TOTALS
FEMALE	56	27	83
MALE	38	25	63
TOTALS	94	52	146

TABLE 4

differentiate between evening, daytime, or weekend students. Probably the two clues to whether a student is day or evening is his age and whether he lists an occupation other than student.

The average age for students in the DeKalb College sample was 23.9 years. One hundred and thirty-three (133) students indicated their ages on the questionnaire while thirteen did not fill in the information. This questionnaire indicated that the average age of students attending remedial English classes was much lower than the average for the college as a whole. Ages in the sample population ranged from 17 to 65: median age of 41 and mode of 19 years. Twenty-five students, nearly one fifth, were just 19 years old. Another twenty-four were 18 years-old. These two age groups accounted for 36% of the total number of students. The fact that all students in the group tended to be younger than the average students in the college does not suggest a possible correlation between age and some of the nonstandard features found: age grading does not apply to adults. Table 5 indicates a breakdown of students by age in the various groups in the DeKalb College sample.

2.5 Classes Attended:

The breakdown by class attended at DeKalb College is the following: 62 students were enrolled in English 98, the most basic of remedial English classes, 53 students were taking English 99, the precomposition class, seven students

AGE OF STUDENTS BY RACE AND SEX

	BLACK FEMALES	BLACK MALES	WHITE FEMALES	WHITE MALES	TOTALS
RANGE	17-43	18-35	18-47	17-65	17-65
MEAN	23.3	23.4	24.8	25.1	23.9
MODE	18	19	19	18	19
NUMBER AT MODE	13(26%)	7(21%)	6(23%)	6(25%)	25(18%)
MEDIAN	30	26.5	32.5	41	41

TABLE 5

*Exclusive of 13 students whose ages are unknown

attended English 100, a review grammar class for technical school students, and the remaining twenty-four students took either English 101, the college composition course, or English 102, the research paper course. As much as possible students were used in the study who attended remedial classes. However, those who were used had previously been remedial students if they now attended regular English classes.

The five instructors who administered the questionnaire contributed all of the informant-students to the study. Students attended either of two campuses of the Dekalb Community College. Table 6 gives a breakdown of students by class attended.

2.6 Birthplace of Students and Their Parents:

One important question the students were asked is where they were born and where their mothers and fathers were born. Some researchers have indicated a positive correlation between rural birth and the existence of certain dialect features (see Feagin, 1979). In particular urban blacks and rural whites are supposed to share a number of dialect features according to Wolfram (1974). This point of view is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2. Since every student in the study must have been born in the state of Georgia, this information is already available about his birthplace; however, many students did name a specific city in that state. When no city was

CLASSES STUDENTS ATTENDING

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTAL
ENGLISH 98	27	22	7	6	62
ENGLISH 99	17	5	16	15	53
ENGLISH 100	2	3	0	2	7
ENGLISH 101	0	0	3	1	4
ENGLISH 102	10	8	1	1	20
TOTALS	56	38	27	25	146

TABLE 6

specified it was assumed that they meant rural Georgia since the only large urban ghetto area is in the city of Atlanta and environs. In addition some students born in Henry, Clayton, or Gwinnet counties were classified as rural since at the time of their births the counties were mainly rural agricultural areas.

In looking at the birthplaces of parents and students one can see six distinct possibilities: urban, rural, Georgia unspecified city, Out of state, foreign born, and don't know. These last three apply only to parents not to students. Tables 7, 8, and 9 give breakdowns of the birthplaces of students and their parents and students and their parents by race and sex.

It can be seen from the tables that the students in the DeKalb College sample are predominantly urban born (75/41) as opposed to rural born. However, the parents of the students are mostly rural rather than urban born (105/55). Thus, if there is a rural influence acting upon the students' language, it would come from the rural background (2/1) of the parents or even the grandparents of the students. In Table 8, which breaks down the area of birth of students according to their race and sex, one can see that in all cases there were more urban born students than rural students. The ratio is close to 2/1 for black female students (27/15) and 3/1 for white male students (16/5). If these findings hold true for remedial students as a whole,

BIRTHPLACES OF STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS

	URBAN	RURAL	GEORGIA	OUT OF STATE	FOREIGN	DON'T KNOW
STUDENTS	75	41	30	NA	NA	NA
MOTHERS	30	52	11	16	0	1
FATHERS	25	53	10	16	1	5

TABLE 7

NOTE: Thirty-six students did not give a birthplace for mother and father.

BIRTHPLACES OF STUDENTS BY RACE AND SEX

	URBAN	RURAL	GEORGIA	OUT OF STATE	FOREIGN	DON'T KNOW
BLACK FEMALES	27	15	14	NA	NA	NA
BLACK MALES	17	12	9	NA	NA	NA
WHITE FEMALES	15	9	3	NA	NA	NA
WHITE MALES	16	5	4	NA	NA	NA

TABLE 8

then there may be an urbanizing influence acting on the student's language. Or this may just be a reflection of the location of junior college and upward mobility of urban students.

In Table 9 the figures on birthplace of parents by the race and sex of students shows that a significantly larger number of black parents were born outside the Atlanta area than in Atlanta (71/29). Likewise, more white parents were also born in rural areas (34/26).

Of sociological interest is the fact that DeKalb County had the highest per capita income in the state of Georgia in the early to mid 1970's and it was to this area that many urban middle class and upwardly mobile blacks moved to escape the inner city. Thus there did not seem to be any trace of the fragmented ghetto family in this study.

PARENT'S BIRTHPLACE BY RACE AND SEX

	URBAN	RURAL	GEORGIA	OUT OF STATE	FOREIGN	DON'T KNOW
BLACK MOTHERS	16	36	9	5	0	1
BLACK FATHERS	13	35	8	7	0	3
WHITE MOTHERS	14	16	2	11	0	0
WHITE FATHERS	12	18	3	9	0	2

TABLE 9

NOTE: Thirty-six students did not give a birthplace for mother and father.

2.7 Education of Students' Parents:

Results of the question on education of parents showed that mothers of black students had more education than their fathers. Eleven mothers had less than a high school diploma while seventeen mothers had high school or beyond. Fifteen black fathers had less than a high school diploma, but only twelve had a high school diploma or beyond.

For the parents of white students the trend was the same. Twelve white mothers had less than a high school diploma versus thirty white mothers with high school or beyond. For the fathers of white students, twenty-six had attained high school graduation or beyond, but fifteen had not.

In Table 10, there are nine different groupings for education of parents. These groupings are (1) eighth grade or less, (2) attained ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade, (3) completed high school, (4) up to three years of college but no four year diploma, (5) completed college, (6) some graduate school but no advanced degree, (7) holds a graduate degree, (8) question not asked on earlier form of the questionnaire, (9) student wrote don't know.

Answers to the question on education of parents was used to help tabulate the socioeconomic level index number for each student. Other information used to calculate the index number was the occupation of parents, students and their spouses. Unfortunately the earliest form of the questionnaire did not ask all the questions that the later form did.

EDUCATION OF PARENTS BY RACE AND SEX

	UP TO 8TH GRADE	UP TO 11TH GRADE	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	COLLEGE GRADUATE	SOME GRAD SCHOOL	GRADUATE DEGREE	NOT ASKED	DON'T KNOW
BLACK MOTHERS	4	6	10	4	3	0	0	66	1
BLACK FATHERS	8	4	10	0	1	1	0	68	2
WHITE MOTHERS	5	7	19	6	4	0	1	10	0
WHITE FATHERS	8	5	13	4	9	0	0	11	2

TABLE 10

NOTE: An earlier form of the questionnaire failed to solicit information on parents' education. This problem was remedied later giving the information on this table.

2.8 Occupations of Students, Their Parents, and Spouses:

Information on occupations is essential in determining the socioeconomic index number of the students. Traditionally this information is determined from the occupation of the students' father alone. The earliest form of the questionnaire asked the occupation of the student alone because the students were assumed to be closer to the average age for students at the college (34 years) and thus their parents' occupations would be irrelevant. However, when it was found that students were much younger and did not all have occupations, questions were added concerning the students' parents and spouses. Information on mother's occupation is as relevant as the father's job for determining socioeconomic index for those students whose upward mobility may be a result of their mother's education and occupation.

For the black women students, one half of them listed an occupation (28/56), eighteen gave an occupation for their mother and fifteen gave a father's occupation.

The black male students listed eighteen occupations for themselves, ten gave an occupation for mother, while eleven gave an occupation for father. Occupations for the mothers included the following: four housewives, three domestics, one licensed practical nurse, one nursery school teacher, and one retired. The fathers' occupations were one policeman, one warehouseman, one contractor, one cement

finisher, one laborer, one truck driver, one clerk, one furniture worker, one deceased, one retired, and one don't know.

Six of the black female students said they were married and seven of the black males students were married and gave occupations for spouses.

Out of the twenty-seven white women, twenty-four listed occupations for themselves, one was disabled, and two left occupation blank. Eight said they were married and gave occupations for spouses. Twenty-four students gave occupations for their mother, two were blank, one mother was deceased, and five mothers were housewives. Twenty of their fathers had occupations listed on the questionnaire plus three don't know, two blanks, and three deceased fathers.

Twenty of the twenty-five listed occupations other than student; the other five left the question blank. Nine of the men were married and gave occupations for spouses. Eighteen men filled in the question on their mother's occupation: seven were housewives, and one deceased. For fathers' occupation, seventeen men listed an occupation, one father was deceased.

Table 11 gives all the occupations that the students listed for themselves, their parents, and spouses. The occupations are grouped together by type for ease of recording the information and frequency figures accompany each category. Note that the largest number of students are

office workers with medical and dental assistants as the second largest. More mothers were housewives than any other occupation while more fathers worked in the skilled trades. Occupations of spouses varied: skilled trades, small business owners, office workers, managers, or supervisors.

TABLE 11

OCCUPATION OF STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND SPOUSES

STUDENTS	MOTHERS	FATHERS	SPOUSES	OCCUPATION
1	20	0	1	Housewife
22	12	2	3	Office workers
4	7	5	3	Managers or supervisors
11	7	-	2	Medical assistants
2	1	8	-	Transportation (drivers)
4	-	4	2	Salespersons
5	4	2	2	Teachers and paraprof.
4	-	3	2	Law enforcement
-	4	-	-	Domestics
3	2	1	-	Computers
6	-	10	3	Skilled trades
2	4	7	2	Factory workers
1	1	1	1	Real Estate
-	1	1	-	Insurance
5	1	-	1	Bookkeeping
2	-	1	-	Engineering drafting
-	-	3	-	Construction
1	1	2	3	Owner small business
-	2	-	-	Legal assistant
1	-	2	-	Laborer
1	2	-	1	Waitress or cook
1	-	1	1	Recreation

STUDENT	MOTHERS	FATHERS	SPOUSES	OCCUPATION
-	-	1	-	Armed Forces
-	-	1	-	Farmer
1	-	1	-	Minister
1	-	1	-	Utility lineman
-	-	-	1	Reservationist
1	-	-	-	Artist
1	-	-	-	Disk jockey
1	-	-	-	Meat cutter
9	-	-	-	Student work study
1	4	15	-	Retired, disabled, deceased or don't know

NOTE: Students were not asked about parents' occupations on the earlier form of the questionnaire, hence the large number of parents not accounted for.

2.9 Socioeconomic Index:

By taking the information on education and occupation of the students', their parents and spouses, numbers were assigned on a scale of one to seven (a modified scale often used in educational studies) which resulted in an index number for comparative purposes for eighty-seven of the 146 students. The scale is as follows:

CRITERIA FOR SOCIAL CLASS INDEX

EDUCATION		OCCUPATION
Graduate School	7	Professional or Executive
Some Graduate School	6	Teacher, Comp. Prog.
Bachelors Degree	5	Mangr, Supervsr, R.N.
Some College	4	Owner Bus, Tech., Sec.
High School Grad.	3	Union Trades, Clerk, Lpn.
Some High School	2	Skilled Labor
Elementary School	1	Unskilled Labor, Domest.

Table 12

Traditional socioeconomic scales have used education, occupation, and salary of the student's father as criteria for social class membership. Information on salary was not asked. There were several reasons for this: there would be no way of knowing whether students were being truthful, salaries in the South are much lower than those in other parts of the country, it was feared students might refuse to participate in a linguistic study if asked economic

questions.

An example of the method for determining Socioeconomic Index Number will help to clarify the procedure: student #126 a white female has given the following information about her family and her self. She is working as a file clerk in a bank. Her spouse has had some college and works as a bank teller. Her mother is a high school graduate, working as a Real Estate agent. Her father who has had some college is a computer programmer. Each item of information is assigned a number of points on the scale represented above:

Husband	Some College	4
	Bank Teller	4
Mother	High School	3
	Real Estate Agent	4
Father	Some College	4
	Computer Programmer	6
Student	File Clerk	3

Total 28

28 divided by 7 = 4 average SEC number

The index number on the scale for this student is 4 points which is right in the middle of the group. She a little bit above the average for her group. If one were to assign a social class on the basis of estimated salary for these occupations, this student would probably be classed as

lower middle class.

Another example is student #202, a black male who is married to a college graduate Registered nurse. He works as an electrician. His mother only finished the tenth grade and his father the fourth grade. The mother works in a nursery, while his father is a cement finisher. Points were assigned on the scale for each item of information:

Wife	College Graduate	5
	Registered Nurse	5
Mother	10th Grade	2
	Nursery Teacher	3
Father	Fourth Grade	1
	Cement Worker	2
Student	Electrician	2

Total 20

20 divided by 7 = 2.8 average SEC index

The low score for this student is based on his parent's low index numbers, although at the age of 28 he seems to have acquired a lower middle class status.

A complete list of students with their socioeconomic index numbers is given at the end of this chapter (see Table 16) along with other relevant information such as age, sex, race, and frequency of nonstandard morphological forms used. Averages were computed for all four groups of students in the study and the results are given in Table 13 on the

following page. The most frequently occurring number was three which was assigned to twelve students and the midpoint for all students is 3.45.

It is interesting to note the homogeneity of the population participating in this study. The average index number for the four groups is very close. If one had to attach a traditional name label to the numbers they probably would be lower working class (up to 3), upper working class (3 to 3.9), lower middle class (4 to 5.5). No one scored over 5.5 points. A chart (Table 14) on the following page shows just how close the groups are. When compared to the general population, they all peak at a lower number than would be expected where the middle class is the norm.

Unfortunately no correlation can be found between the socioeconomic indicator and the presence or absence of nonstandard features measured in this study (see T. Students with higher numbers of nonstandard features can be found with lower middle class index numbers (4 - 5.5).

There are several possible reasons for this which sociologists need to investigate further. Perhaps the criteria they use to assign social class are no longer valid. Perhaps Southerners are less rigid in their censorship of persons with dialect features. So that dialect speech does not impede one's progress up the socioeconomic ladder. Upward mobility may be the most important factor which sets this group apart. Affirmative action may be responsible for the changing pattern of social class membership seen in this study.

SOCIOECONOMIC INDEX FREQUENCIES

	LESS THAN 3	3 to 3.9 POINTS	4 to 5.5 POINTS	OVER 5.5
BLACK FEMALES	10(45%)	9(40%)	3(13.5%)	0
BLACK MALES	6(30%)	10(50%)	4(20%)	0
WHITE FEMALES	6(22%)	11(40%)	10(30%)	0
WHITE MALES	7(39%)	6(33%)	5(28%)	0
TOTAL	29	36	22	0

TABLE 13

NOTE:

Range of scores for the four groups was the following:

BF:2-5.5 BM:1.4-5 WF:2-5.2 WM:1.5-4.4

Average scores for the four groups was the following:

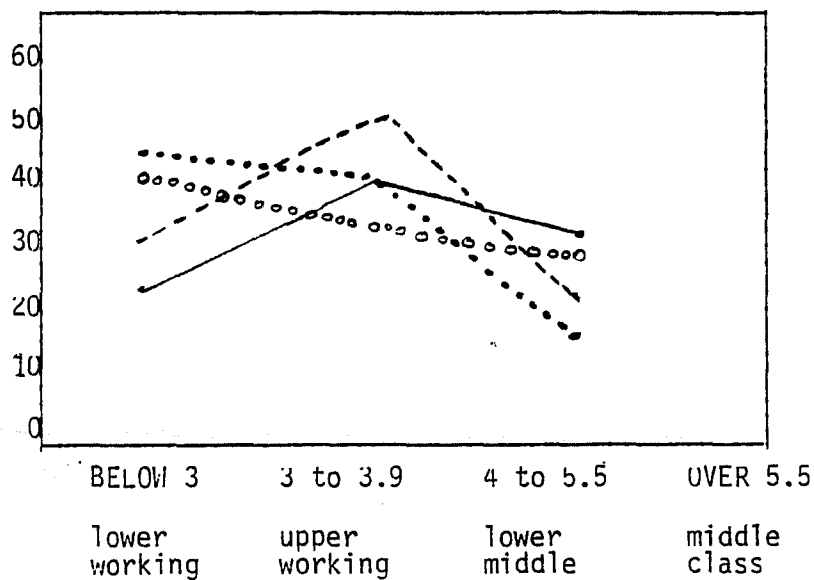
BF:3.13 BM:3.11 WF:3.48 WM:3.14

Averages for the entire group were 3.22 or

approximate upper working class status.

DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIOECONOMIC INDEX

PERCENT



NOTE: based on 87 students

Compared to the bell curve for the general population
all these groups peak too early. Skewed to the left.

TABLE 14

.....	black females
-----	black males
————	white females
soooooo	white males

AVERAGE USAGE OF DIALECT FEATURES
ACCORDING TO SE INDEX, RACE, SEX

	UNDER 3	3.0 to 3.9	4.0 to 5.5
BLACK FEMALES	2.0	2.5	1.7
BLACK MALES	2.1	2.4	2.5
WHITE FEMALES	0.8	1.0	1.0
WHITE MALES	1.5	0.6	1.2

TABLE 15

NOTE: This table shows the number of dialect features used by the students out of the four significant for race.

This conclusively proves that there is no correlation between socioeconomic class and nonstandard feature usage for these four black dialect features: subject verb agreement, final -s nominal, loss of final -ed, and copula deletion.

TABLE 16

STUDENT	AGE	BIRTH PLACE	SOCIO ECONOMIC	SUBJ VERB	FINAL -S	ZERO TO BE	PAST -ED
001	22	U	3.5	4	9	0	1
002	18	U	-	10	19	5	0
003	30	U	2.5	3	9	0	0
004	30	U	4.0	1	2	0	0
005	33	R	2.7	2	2	0	0
006	31	G	2.4	0	3	0	0
007	22	R	2.2	6	4	3	0
008	29	U	2.0	0	0	0	1
009	27	U	3.3	1	1	0	0
010	19	R	3.5	2	2	0	0
011	22	R	2.2	0	0	0	1
012	18	U	-	0	0	0	1
013	20	U	3.0	0	1	0	0
014	19	R	5.5	0	0	0	0
015	18	U	-	1	0	1	3
016	22	U	3.0	4	1	0	1
017	19	R	3.0	2	6	3	3
018	25	G	2.5	0	2	0	0
019	18	U	5	5	7	1	0
020	18	R	3.5	1	1	0	4
021	39	U	-	0	3	0	2
022	43	G	3.6	0	1	0	0
023	30	G	-	1	1	0	0
024	18	U	-	1	1	0	0
025	32	R	-	0	1	0	0

NOTE: student numbers identify the student's race and sex.

Black female 000's, Black male 200's

White female 100's, White male 300's

STUDENT	AGE	BIRTH PLACE	SOCIO ECONOMIC	SUBJ VERB	FINAL -S	ZERO TO BE	PAST -ED
026	18	U	-	1	7	2	0
027	18	R	-	0	0	0	1
028	22	G	-	0	0	0	0
029	21	G	-	0	0	0	1
030	18	U	-	9	3	0	1
031	20	U	-	2	0	0	0
032	40	R	-	4	5	1	0
033	25	R	-	2	0	4	0
034	19	G	-	3	1	0	1
035	19	U	-	1	2	1	1
036	19	U	-	4	1	0	1
037	17	U	-	1	0	3	0
038	22	R	-	1	0	1	0
039	21	U	-	0	0	0	0
040	18	U	-	0	0	0	0
041	20	R	-	0	0	0	2
042	18	U	-	9	1	0	1
043	19	R	-	2	1	0	0
044	19	U	-	1	1	2	2
045	18	U	-	0	0	0	3
046	18	U	-	0	0	0	0
047	-	G	-	1	1	0	0
048	-	G	-	2	1	0	0
049	-	G	-	1	0	0	0
050	-	G	-	2	0	0	0

STUDENT	AGE	BIRTH PLACE	SOCIO ECONOMIC	SUBJ VERB	FINAL -s	ZERO TO BE	PAST -ED
051	-	G	-	0	0	0	0
052	21	U	2.7	2	2	0	0
053	39	R	2.5	3	2	0	1
054	35	U	-	1	0	0	0
055	27	G	3.5	4	5	2	1
056	19	G	2.5	1	1	1	1
201	32	R	2.1	2	0	2	1
202	28	R	2.8	1	0	0	0
203	25	U	3.4	5	1	0	3
204	26	G	4.0	4	4	0	2
205	28	U	3.3	2	2	0	0
206	-	G	-	5	5	0	0
207	-	G	-	3	7	2	10
208	-	G	-	0	0	0	1
209	19	U	2.0	0	2	0	1
210	19	U	-	4	1	1	2
211	19	U	-	1	0	0	1
212	19	U	-	3	2	0	0
213	20	U	-	0	0	0	0
214	19	R	-	0	1	0	1
215	21	R	3.0	0	2	0	3
216	20	U	-	1	1	0	1
217	26	R	3.0	1	0	0	0
218	18	R	-	0	1	2	2
219	25	U	3.0	4	2	0	5

STUDENT	AGE	BIRTH PLACE	SOCIO ECONOMIC	SUBJ VERB	FINAL -S	ZERO TC	PAST BE	-ED
220	20	R	-	4	0	0	0	0
221	20	U	-	0	0	2	2	
222	19	R	-	0	0	1	0	
223	30	U	2.8	3	0	0	1	
224	24	U	2.2	3	0	1	1	
225	35	U	3.5	2	1	1	1	
226	22	U	4.0	6	2	1	0	
227	19	U	-	4	4	0	0	
228	18	U	-	4	8	4	1	
229	18	R	-	3	1	1	1	
230	21	R	3.0	3	6	3	5	
231	30	R	3.7	12	1	0	2	
232	-	G	-	1	1	0	2	
233	-	G	-	1	0	0	0	
234	22	G	3.0	0	0	0	1	
235	27	R	1.4	4	3	0	1	
236	28	U	3.1	2	0	0	0	
237	25	G	4.0	0	1	0	0	
238	30	G	5.0	2	2	0	1	
101	19	U	4.0	0	0	0	0	
102	-	G	4.7	0	0	0	0	
103	21	U	3.2	2	0	0	0	
104	25	G	3.3	0	0	0	0	
105	29	U	2.2	0	1	0	6	
106	19	R	2.5	0	0	0	0	
107	35	U	3.0	0	0	0	0	
108	21	U	5.2	0	0	0	0	

STUDENT	AGE	BIRTH PLACE	SOCIO ECONOMIC	SUBJ VERB	FINAL -S	ZERO TO BE	PAST -ED
109	25	U	3.6	0	0	0	0
110	21	R	3.5	0	0	0	0
111	22	U	4.1	0	0	0	1
112	22	R	3.2	0	1	0	2
113	32	U	2.4	0	2	0	0
114	22	R	4.0	0	1	0	1
115	18	U	2.6	0	2	0	1
116	19	U	4.0	0	0	0	0
117	40	R	3.5	3	3	0	0
118	21	R	4.0	0	0	0	1
119	37	U	5.0	0	1	0	0
120	47	R	4.0	0	0	0	0
121	20	U	3.0	0	0	0	1
122	18	U	5.0	0	2	1	0
123	32	R	2.0	0	0	0	0
124	19	U	3.2	1	0	0	0
125	24	R	2.6	0	0	0	0
126	19	U	3.0	1	1	0	3
127	19	G	3.2	1	0	0	0
301	65	G	-	0	0	0	0
302	24	R	3.3	0	4	0	0
303	38	R	2.8	2	2	0	1
304	23	U	2.4	3	0	0	1
305	30	U	2.8	0	0	0	1
306	29	U	2.0	0	1	1	6
307	29	G	-	0	2	2	0
308	18	G	-	0	0	0	2

STUDENT	AGE	BIRTH PLACE	SOCIO ECONOMIC	SUBJ VERB	FINAL -S	ZERO TO BE	PAST -ED
309	16	U	-	0	3	1	0
310	17	U	4.0	0	1	0	0
311	22	U	-	0	0	0	0
312	26	U	1.5	0	0	0	0
313	26	R	2.3	3	4	0	0
314	21	U	4.2	2	0	0	0
315	19	U	-	0	2	0	0
316	18	U	3.2	0	0	0	0
317	18	U	4.4	1	1	0	2
318	19	U	4.2	0	2	0	0
319	18	R	2.2	0	0	0	0
320	30	U	3.0	0	3	0	0
321	26	R	3.5	0	0	0	0
322	19	U	3.2	0	1	0	0
323	18	U	3.6	2	0	0	0
324	28	U	4.0	0	0	0	0
325	30	G	-	0	0	0	0

CHAPTER 3: Nonstandard Linguistic Features:

An analysis of this 40,000 word corpus from the compositions of native born college students from Georgia, both black and white, revealed a variety of nonstandard features some of which were almost entirely used by black students. For the sake of presenting the results in a simple and coherent manner findings have been divided into morphological and syntactic features.

The division is somewhat artificial since morphology and syntax are not mutually exclusive and phonology may figure into some of these nonstandard features as well. However, morphology here shall refer to occurrences which can be counted and quantified according to possible occurrences or number per 100 words. These nonstandard features serve as proof of the existence of a separate black dialect distinct from the southern regionalisms that occur in the writing of many of the white students.

In the language of the English teacher these nonstandard features are called errors. They are not really errors if they are systematic and reflect an underlying structure of a separate dialect. The term errors should properly be reserved for mistakes that the student has made in transcribing his language into writing (performance errors). In this analysis an attempt will be made to distinguish these two phenomena whenever possible.

Hypercorrection is the third phenomenon which needs to be explained for the data. These occurrences are most definitely clues that something is happening in the students' language. For this reason, hypercorrections are included in the count along with nonstandard features as further proof of a separate dialect. The student is attempting to produce what he thinks is the standard form but his set of imperfectly learned rules results in a hypercorrect form. This is quite different from the production of a performance error which is purely accidental and not systematic or rule governed. These theoretical problems will be taken up at some length in Chapter 5.

A sufficient number of examples will be included along with the statistical count to show exactly what this kind of nonstandard feature looks like and what its environment is.

3.1 Statement of Purpose

The aim of this study was to elucidate a corpus from a population that had not been studied before, to explain their nonstandard writing forms, in the hope that these observations could be generalized and would prove useful to teachers and students alike.

Along the way it has been necessary to discuss theoretical considerations, previous findings of other linguists as well as peripheral matters of historical or sociological significance. These other discussions will be mainly found in Chapters 4 and 5. When they do enter into

Chapter 3 they are pertinent and should not be viewed as a digression from the main purpose of this project.

The content of these essays might be fertile ground for a psychological or historical study at some future date. They are quite unique and yet reflective of a generation of college students and how they view their world, their aspirations, their fears, and their relationships with others. There is no implied judgement of the informants in this study. This researcher views them as unique, interesting, and valuable human beings not as the "guilty victims" that the writer of the sample essay in Chapter 1 saw.

3.1.1 Origins of Black Dialect

There seems little doubt that a nonstandard dialect of English is spoken by some blacks within their own community and that this nonstandard dialect is reflected in the writing of many blacks in this DeKalb College sample. A pertinent question at this point is how did this dialect evolve.

There are two theories on the origin of Black English. One possible explanation for the evolution of Black English has been offered by William A. Stewart, Beryl L. Bailey, and J. L. Dillard. Their theory has been categorically denied by James Sledd and also at various times by William Labov, Walt Wolfram, and Ralph W. Fasold. The creolist hypothesis suggests that a pidgin arose as a trade language which later

developed into a creole as descendants of black slaves who had been brought to this country used it as their primary means of communication. This creole had a structure and grammar of its own distinct from English, Spanish, Portuguese or any other language it may have borrowed vocabulary form.

Black English represents a decreolization of the original creole so that some creole features will have survived en tout, others will have been camouflaged by surface-form "correction", and still others replaced by non-creole (though not necessarily standard) forms.

The creole origins theory carries with it an implied analysis of present day language situations: anything which may have evolved from creole starts out with at least two representations of the copula verb with no copula before predicate adjectives (see Holm, 1984), without verbal endings, and with only the definite plural as compared to the nominal singular/plural oppositions of the Indoeuropean languages, and without possessive endings because most creoles are like this. In addition one would look for semantic categories of tense and aspect to be different from that of English. Where the features of standard English do occur, they are probably the result of decreolization and borrowing.

On the other hand, the supporters of the anglicist theory, also known as the dialect geographers position,

maintain that the black dialect is the result of linguistic change away from an earlier form of regional English by rules which delete the elements of that English such as the verb to be, possessive endings, plural endings, and verbal endings preferably by phonological rules.

Implicit in the anglicist theory is the necessity of finding environments where deletion may take place, similar to the contraction rules for verbs in standard English.

For more discussion of the theories see 5.1.1 and 5.1.2. Clearly the creolist hypothesis does a better job of explaining the facts. Most of the opponents of the creolist view have capitulated. See Labov 1982.

3.2 Morphological Features (nine nonstandard)

A classification of the most common and most frequent nonstandard morphological features occurring in the corpus showed nine main categories: subject verb agreement, nonverbal final -s, final -ed, zero copula, nonstandard tense, prepositions, articles, spelling, and diction.

Table 1 repeated on the next page gives the types, frequencies, and number of students using each nonstandard feature. Table 2 repeated on the following page shows the number of occurrences found in an average 300 word essay. It can be seen that only four of the features were significant features of the black dialect: subject verb, final -s, final -ed, and zero copula.

In the tables, nonstandard features are referred to as errors because that is what English teachers would call them and these are what cause students to fail English courses and essay tests time and again.

The order of presentation of the nonstandard morphological features is to place first the four features tied significantly to race and then to discuss other kinds of nonstandard features which seem to be equally common for speakers or writers of both racial groups.

The first two features to be analyzed both involve a final -s: one the verbal -s final, and the other the nonverbal -s. Together these features accounted for one third of all the errors that black students made on their compositions.

3.2.1 Nonstandard Subject Verb Agreement

The nonstandard subject verb agreement occurs when the subject of the verb does not agree with the verb: this usually happens with the singular subject and verb in the present tense singular where it ought to take an -s but the -s is missing. Some linguists, such as Fasold have tried to show this as a deletion phenomenon resulting from a phonological consonant cluster simplification, although this does not explain the missing -s where there is no cluster. Others have noted the -s cropping up where it was not needed and talked of hypercorrection phenomenon (see Chapter 4 for a more complete discussion).

In the present study, 52% of the students used nonstandard subject verb agreement (76 out of 146 students of whom 65 were black). There were a total of 212 examples in the corpus (black students accounted for 190 of these).

Generally linguists have only counted absence of the -s morpheme on the third person singular verb as a nonstandard dialect form, but the present count includes 63 hypercorrect forms from black informants and 12 hypercorrections from white students.

A hypercorrect form is a verb with the -s ending on a verb which is supposed to be plural by reason of having a plural subject (for more on the definition of hypercorrection, see Chapter 5).

The present analysis contends that hypercorrection

should be counted along with loss of the final -s because they both reflect an incomplete mastery of the standard English verbal system and neither one is related to phonological rules.

3.2.1.1 Statistics

In the table on the following page, the number of occurrences of nonstandard verb agreement is compared to the total number of verbs occurring in the corpus for each of the four groups giving a percent of deviant forms. Students were divided into groups by race and sex. Black male students as a group had the largest percent of nonstandard subject verb agreement and the largest group of students using these dialect forms. White females used the least number and had the smallest number of users. This feature was significant for race at the .01 level of confidence (see Table 17).

NONSTANDARD SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTALS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	37	28	5	6	76
PERCENT OF STUDENTS	66	74	18.5	24	52.1
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	101	90	8	13	212
PERCENT OF VERBS	7	9.2	.68	1.8	4.9

TABLE 17

Significant for race at the .01 level of confidence.

Table 18 shows which subjects the black and white students had the most difficulty with. Both groups made nonstandard agreement with noun or noun phrase subjects: black students' examples number 80 while the white students had only 10.

The next most frequent subject in nonstandard agreement for the black students was the third person singular subject pronoun he/she/it. They outnumber white students 38 to 1. White students had more difficulty with indefinite pronouns such as one, neither, each one, someone, person, there is, there are (28%).

White students made 18% nonstandard agreement with the pronoun which whose antecedent did not agree with its verb and black students had this problem 4% of the time (the actual number of examples for black students was almost twice that of white students). Black students had more difficulty with the pronoun that and its verb (15%) fourteen times more often than white students (9%).

The pronouns who and what did not seem to bother either group of students.

Nonstandard agreement with hypercorrection with the other personal pronouns I/you/they figured 10% of the time for black students and never occurred with white students.

Since Nouns and Noun Phrases caused so many problems with agreement, it is important to examine just what these nouns were. The examples show an amazing similarity in the NP subjects which have caused difficulty.

Some of the more frequent NP subjects belong to the semantic category of collectives which may account for the problem the students had in distinguishing between grammatical singular and plural: for example such words as society, government, county, DeKalb (the name of the college and the county), staff, police, police department. The nouns man, woman, senior (high school) are used as generics. In standard English the collective nouns may refer to a large number of things or persons but they are grammatically singular.

Other nouns with a plural meaning in context may be seen by students to be collective groups taking singular verbs: friend, pregnancy (girls who are pregnant), child, author, mom and dad, the two son, Julian mother and a black woman. These would have a plural verb in standard English.

Other nonstandard agreement occurs when subjects are abstract and may not be understood as either singular or plural semantically: characteristic(s), percentage, bottom, the good, good thing, resolution, qualities, procedures, education.

CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECTS IN NONSTANDARD AGREEMENT

	BLACK STUDENTS	WHITE STUDENTS
NOUN PHRASE	42%	45%
<u>HE/SHE/ IT</u>	20%	5%
<u>I/YOU/THEY</u>	10%	0%
<u>THAT</u>	15%	9%
<u>WHO</u>	3%	0%
<u>WHICH</u>	17%	18%
<u>WHAT</u>	7%	0%
INDEFINITE PRONOUN	5%	28%

TABLE 18

NOTE: It would be misleading to compare results for black and white students since these are percentages and not actual numbers. Black students made nine times more errors than white students.

3.2.1.2 Data: Subject Verb Agreement

Code Numbers identify the informants' race and sex.

000's black females 200's black males

100's white females 300's white males

Z is used to show the missing -s.

s is used to show hypercorrections.

042 people who doesn't care

219 my first cousin who impressZ me

016 It give a person a chance to what developeZ their minds

019 which one interestZ me the most

002 for the senior who haven't thought

002 I am me. which makeZ you

036 the qualities which is enriched in a friend is that

202 oak stained panneling which matchZ the gold

203 the rules which was made

024 First selecting a book that interestZ you

019 something that really don't interest you

019 one field that interestZ me

007 someone that understandZ you, that knowZ you

016 many people that attendss college today wantss a good job

030 not the parent that abuseZ their children

031 the major things under the hood that makess the car
function

032 a parent that abuseZ their children

030 the ones that are married and lovess together

030 not the ones that comes and see you
030 parent that sits and tellZ you
017 beening without a good education causeZ you
017 a good education helpZ people to be known
030 the characteristics of a good parent startsu when
030 husband and wife has a child
026 government provideZ all kind of help
032 the child lookZ also to the parent
032 what his child sees and hearZ
032 having a clean home or plenty of food doZ not allway
035 a senior have and has more advantages (has)
034 whatever mom sayZ it goes
034 the characteristics of a good parent is to become
033 a education showZ a person the right way
038 the socity in Georgia and other states are looking
036 the qualities that an ideal friend has is so personable
042 my mother influenceZ my life (influenced ?)
049 the patient's condition seemZ to worsen (seemed ?)
050 the author quoteZ Secretary Adams
052 the den have oak panel
052 my New Year's ResolutionZ for this year is very few
053 Sarah thinkZ she has to be the best
053 clothes makesu a person
048 which psychologistZ term anxiety
204 all the little things that makesu a good relationship
117 two sofas and an old rocker which seatsu

117 the wallZ are . . . which gives it
 126 bake potatoes which is
 036 the qualities that an ideal friend has is so personable
 042 the person that has the most influence in my life is my
friends
 042 people that wants to see other people do bad
 050 a car that runZ by peanut butter
 054 two brotherZ that attend here
 231 every child that comeZ into the world
 226 another qualitie that needZ to added
 227 other thingZ that goeson (or another thing)
 231 anything in creation that conveyZ a message
 238 person that likeZ going around
 219 the person that fitZ the qualificationZ
 204 the word responsible that meanZ to me to do my best
 204 wish meanZ rent of a space (which)
 206 the one who playZ
 228 a girl that likeZ you to be wright on time
 231 every child that comeZ into the world
 001 the educational part of life, which todays life mainly
 dependZ on education
 002 your friendZ tell you they are working here there
 002 good thingZ come to people who wait
 003 the college graduate feelZ he has accomplished
 007 the characteristics of a good friend is some one whom
 007 good friendZ are the person that makesyou smile

015 after these procedures has been done
 233 whether the rights . . . was in violation
 226 when a friends has not given up on you (friends have)
 228 police department have most serious drug cases (has)
 228 my thumb just goZ straight to my mouth
 228 what other habitZ are like (habits are)
 226 protection giveZ inner-piece
 226 friends looksat each other
 229 college's offersall types of Degrees
 231 that man meanZ mind
 231 that man meanZ mind and woman meanZ mind too
 231 negative values in the form of words such as lust,
 racism, and disobedience to divine laws destroysthe mind of
 man
 235 money and a good job does play important roles (special
 use of the verb do as a past tense marker).
 236 as the story openZ we find
 236 the author in this story chooseZ to address
 224 that where education comeZ in
 206 person with a good sound personality tendZ to be the
 ones (a person tends or people tend)
 206 the physical feature are the most important (features
 are or feature is).
 219 Robert have been working (has)
 207 at some point of the story convergeing was Julian
 mother and the Black woman (were)

207 the two son's young and old was all they had (were)
210 the staff here at DeKalb showZ great interest
220 the guy they went to school with . . . don't have to
work and don't steal (doesn't)
303 the problems that has existed
304 carpet which fillZ
304 freshener that sitZ
323 clothes . . . which helps
002 the bottom giveZ you courage
004 marketing needZ people
003 a job secures a person and giveZ them
001 most teenage pregnancyZ are face with
001 unwanted pregnancy occurZ more often
009 nursing to me meanZ caring for others
010 friend also shareZ some of the same philosophy of life
(friends share or friend shares)
010 the characteristicZ of a good friend are many
023 a college educated person utilizeZ their knowledge
019 my educational goalZ are I want to get all the
education
120 my mom and dad was sitting in the dinning room (were)
048 the authors of the magazine frequently writes many
informative selections
047 overall the emphasis are placed on (is)
230 any other motherZ are sometime nice
230 then comeZ a time

235 that society sayZ is intelligence
 204 all my education centZ around (centers)
 225 a child makeZ in growing
 225 the extreme changes . . . demandsu that a parent
 (hypercorrection)
 224 education have always been (hypercorrection)
 223 my thoughts on the characteristics of a good friend is
 according to a scripture (are)
 217 the characterists of a good friend is one who (are)
 211 from food to magazines is found (are)
 210 the programs for developmental studies has really
 (have)
 210 DeKalb has an outstanding basketball team and are
 planning (is)
 205 a small pugged nose restZ just below
 003 knowing how to conduct yourself at all times, what to
 say and how to say it makesu your feel free and comfortable
 (hypercorrection)
 117 a double book case with a shelf between holdZ the TV
 124 these reasons why I admire my mother so much is because
 (are)
 303 the surrounding counties has helped Atlanta (have)
 304 the overhead light giveZ you light when you need it
 314 the authors seemsu to side with (hypercorrection)
 Verbs with Personal Pronoun Subjects
I: meets, has (2), is are.

You: is (4), needs, doesn't, starts, wants, quits.

They: does, looks, goes, influences, tells.

It: have, matter, seem, take (2), receive, protext, feel, give.

He/she: like (2), have (6), greet, get, work, come, purchase, hear, see, taste, smell, feel, dress, laugh, try, want (2), talk.

Other Pronoun Subject

One: encounter, interest.

Each one: have.

Person: have.

Neither: want, take, give.

There is/there are: There isn't too many kids.

There was no children.

3.2.1.3 Comparison to Previous Research Findings

A comparison of the findings of this study with those of other research studies would be very useful; unfortunately other researchers have broken down their features in ways different than the ones here. A comparison is still useful because of the extremely low number of nonstandard features used by the black students in some other parts of the country.

For example, Sternglass in her 1973 dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh using 304 freshman compositions has divided her data on subject verb agreement into five types according to the kinds of verbs. The total number of nonstandard agreement examples she found was 102 for 304 subjects. Sternglass has eighty-one black students in her Pittsburgh sample. It is difficult to tell how many of the black students made nonstandard subject verb agreement because she counts each of her five groups of verbs separately. The total number of students could be seventeen or as high as forty-five depending on whether the groups of students is the same or different for each verb type. Another difficulty is that Sternglass does not tell how long the essays in her study were.

Therefore a comparison of of the Pittsburgh study with the DeKalb sample is only meaningful if one can make some assumptions about the studies: that the essays were of equal length, that forty-five of the eighty-one black

students and seventy-two of the 223 white students in the Pittsburgh sample used nonstandard subject verb agreement. Based on these assumptions, Table 19 shows that the sample of Pittsburgh college students used nonstandard subject verb agreement much less than the DeKalb group of college students. Twenty-three percent more of the DeKalb group of black students used this features but fifty-two percent more of the Pittsburgh white students used nonstandard agreement. A possible explanation for this is that Sternglass included many white students whose first language was not English or at least whose parents or grandparents spoke a language other than English. There were no such students in the DeKalb sample.

A COMPARISON OF DEKALB AND PITTSBURGH
REMEDIAL COLLEGE STUDENT VERB AGREEMENT

	BLACK STUDENTS	WHITE STUDENTS	TOTALS
PITTSBURGH NUMBER OF STUDENTS	45/81	72/223	117/304
PITTSBURGH PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS	56%	32%	36%
DEKALB NUMBER OF STUDENTS	65 /94	11/52	76/146
DEKALB PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS	69%	21%	52%

TABLE 19

NOTE: Mean number of errors per student in the Pittsburgh sample is .34 but the figure for DeKalb nonstandard verb agreement is 1.45 mean usage. This shows a very great difference between remedial college students in a Northern city and those in the South even without excluding the white ethnic group. This comparison is only meaningful with the assumption stated above. (DeKalb 212 examples, Pittsburgh 102 examples of nonstandard subject verb agreement).

3.2.1.4 Hypercorrections

Hypercorrection is discussed in more detail in 5.2.1, but it is important here to make mention of the difficulty of counting errors or nonstandard forms when hypercorrections are present in the data.

Given a particular sentence with a verb having a final -s , one must look at the context of the sentence to decide whether the subject is singular both in form (i.e., lacking a plural marker-s) and in meaning (lacking a sense of plural in its semantic configuration). At this point the linguist can decide whether there is nonstandard subject verb agreement or nonstandard nominal plural with hypercorrect -s on the verb.

In a few cases the context does not clearly indicate whether the verb or subject is singular or plural and the form is counted as both a nonstandard nominal and a hypercorrect subject verb agreement.

In addition to this confusion is the fact that a zero or lack of ending might also be a hypercorrection (as I have defined it in 5.2.1.8). Thus it is possible for some combinations to be ambiguously nonstandard subject verb, hypercorrect verb, nonstandard noun, or hypercorrect noun depending upon the interpretation.

Most examples are easy to disambiguate from the context. The few that are not have been counted in several categories at the same time even though these categories

ought to be mutually exclusive.

A few examples at this point will help to explain what I am talking about.

030 parent that sits and tell you

In this sentence it is impossible to tell whether the student meant parent to be singular or plural. The verb sits may be correct if the subject is singular or the verb tell may be correct if the subject is plural. Likewise the subject may be correct if the verb sits is correct but that would make the verb tell an example of nonstandard subject verb agreement. On the other hand, if parent is supposed to be plural then the verb sits is a hypercorrection. Using hypercorrection as I have defined it in Chapter 5 as the addition of a zero morpheme or absence of ending, tell could be called a hypercorrection when the subject is grammatically singular.

It is for this reason that I have insisted on including hypercorrect forms along with the nonstandard forms. They are just as indicative of an underlying separate dialect system as the nonstandard forms and sometimes impossible to separate from that system. These hypercorrections are an indication that the black dialect in DeKalb county is decreolizing in favor of standard English for these students and hypercorrection can be taken as a positive sign of improvement on the part of remedial students. See Chapter 5.2.1 for more discussion of this point.

3.2.2 Final -s Absence (Excluding Verbs)

This category includes the absence of final -s where it is expected in standard English: on the plural noun, the possessive noun and pronoun, and on some adverbials which take final -s. Also included are hypercorrect forms with -s which do not take them in the standard and a few possessive pronouns with hypercorrect final -s. The treatment of all cases of -s absence together does not imply that the problems are all phonological.

This group of nonstandard features is significant for race at the .01 level of confidence. Out of 168 examples, black students made 148 and white students just twenty errors. Twenty-two examples involve the absence of final possessive -s. Fifteen of the examples show a missing -s on the adverb, usually the word sometimes.

The usual explanation offered for the missing final -s is that there is a phonological rule deleting the -s. Rules of this type would in no way account for the twenty-eight examples of hypercorrect -s in the sample.

Where possible context cues have been used to disambiguate intended meaning. For instance a noun and verb both lacking a final -s might either be interpreted as a singular subject with a nonstandard subject verb agreement or a plural verb with a loss of final -s on the noun.

Table 20 on the following page summarizes the statistics for this nonstandard feature.

3.2.2.1 STATISTICS

NONSTANDARD AND HYPERCORRECT

NONVERBAL FINAL -S

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTALS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	36	19	6	8	69
PERCENT OF STUDENTS	64	50	22	32	47
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	94	54	9	11	168
PERCENT OF ERRORS	.62	.55	.11	.18	.42

TABLE 20

NOTE: Errors per 100 words of text.

includes hypercorrections, possessives, and adverbial loss of -s. (adverbial final -s 15, possessive final -s 22, hypercorrect final -s 28)

significant for race at the .01 level of confidence.

3.2.2.2 Data on Final -s Loss.

There are three kinds of -s loss other than verbal: -s plural of nouns, -s possessive, and -s adverbial. In addition there is hypercorrect -s in all these cases. Related to the possessive -s of nouns, one finds a few hypercorrect -s on pronouns. In the following examples final -s absence is marked with a capital Z, hypercorrect final -s is underlined. Each informant is identified by a code number to the left of the example:

000's black female	200's black male
100's white female	300's white male

001 sometimeZ when they return back

001 most teenage pregnancyZ are face with

001 unwanted pregnancyZ occur more often

001 sometimeZ they feel insecure

001 sometimeZ without these two things

001 sometimeZ her education

002 that my advise to seniorZ

002 so all you seniorZ get up

002 a lot of seniorZ first thought (possessive)

002 for the seniorZ who haven't

002 now for some seniorZ you may want to work

002 I want to go on to bigger and better thingZ

002 to be the brain behind of alot of thingZ

002 but for another reason is that good thingZ come

002 for one simple reasons

002 your friendZ tell you they are working
003 some jobs require more than eight hours of a personZ
time. (possessive).
003 for examples (hypercorrection)
003 college students are exposed to all kinds of personZ
during their years in school.
003 knowing that he can relate to otherZ in any situation
003 a college education can be the results of a sense
(hypercorrection)
004 sales people sometimeZ spend
005 so no one takes its the wrong way (hypercorrection)
006 the book described and emphasized beautiful sceneries
(hypercorrection)
007 Good friendZ are the person
007 in time of needs and trouble (hypercorrection)
007 and sometimeZ give their last to help out
009 everyone has to do each things to the best
(hypercorrection)
010 friendZ also share
010 the characteristicZ of a good friend are many
013 one of the salesladyZ will assist me
016 while meeting new people a person can learn to speak
another personZ language (possessive)
017 to help otherZ help themself
017 by learning thingZ and subjectZ that would help me
017 I have to understand the basic need I have and then go

by getting the other needZ I want

017 I want to made thingZ happen for me

017 then in college I would develop good skillZ and

018 a personZ attitude is most important (possessive)

018 the person must have qualificationZ for the job

019 my educational goalZ are

019 one field that interest me alot is working with
childrens. (hypercorrection)

019 I have a lot of interestZ but

019 in todayZ time (possessive)

019 in other wordZ which one you enjoy the most

019 I have three sisterZ and brothers.

019 I know a lot of people who have went to school for many
yearZ sure

019 sure they have degreeZ and everthing,

020 begin to say my prayerZ, but the catch

021 after several more timeZ however

021 he could not answer my questionZ either

022 I evaluate the story as good and recommend it to otherZ
to read

024 last, tell a little about the author and the authorZ
life (possessive)

026 participate in classroom assignmentZ

026 they can do better if they put their mindZ to it

026 teach them the rights and wrongZ

026 government provide all kindZ of help

030 parentZ that sits and tell you
030 at all timeZ
030 my opinion of a good parents are ones who
(hypercorrection)
030 not the parentZ that abuse their children
030 know what he or she is doing at all timeZ
032 the characteristicZ of a good parent in my opinion are
032 the parent has to set the morals standards
(hypercorrection)
032 do not all wayZ provide all that a child needs
032 the parents are exampleZ or patterns
033 I want alots out of life (hypercorrection)
034 she like to hurt my feelingZ
035 to set an example to the under classmans
(hypercorrection not a wrong plural)
035 than the underclassmans (hypercorrection not a wrong
plural)
036 the ability to be an ideal friend of mines is
(hypercorrect possessive pronoun)
040 easily as it does for the peoples in the U.S.
(hypercorrection)
043 because its feel loved more when you do that
(hypercorrect possessive pronoun).
044 I enjoy it so much that sometimeZ I would

045 sometimeZ I feel
048 which psychologistZ term anxiety
049 despite the fact that heZ tone was eulogizing (should
be possessive pronoun with -s)
052 my New Year's resolutionZ for this year is very few
052 the den have oak panelZ all around the wall
052 over in the corner is a bar with two chairZ
053 she has a lots of different talentZ (hypercorrect and
missing -s)
053 she does some very childish thingZ
054 I have two brotherZ that attend here
054 and many other studentZ that completed
055 they all can be a headache sometimeZ but
055 wrestlings, puzzleZ, learning games and football
(hypercorrect s and loss of -s)
055 I love them a lot and hope one days they will do good
(hypercorrect)
055 sometimeZ he will aggravate them
055 he have lotZ of questionZ after
055 he will win your heart sometimeZ and then
203 the reason for this is natureZ questionmark
(possessive)
204 there are the personal thingZ like
204 it can be done in 24 hourZ
204 I am easy to understand thingZ I like
204 Just all the thinkZ it take (things)

206 some exampleZ of bad disc jockeys are
206 obnoxious jockeys also are always out of tune with the
majority of its listenerZ
206 the third type of disc jockeys is the obnoxious one
(hypercorrect)
206 upon a personZ first impression (possessive)
206 the physical featureZ are the most important
206 although personZ with a good sound personality
207 JulianZ mother (possessive)
207 clean and pure of all lifeZ illZ (possessive and plural
-s absence)
207 his motherZ face had turned unaturaly red (possessive)
207 the little negro was looking at julianZ mother
(possessive)
207 with double stairwayZ
207 and slaveZ bether than his
207 the childZ mother (possessive)
209 there will be hard timeZ and
210 the instructors here are realistic about problemZ that
210 the programs for developmental studies has
(hypercorrection)
214 in my own ways (hypercorrection)
215 to go over for errorZ misspell words and punctuation
215 now he or she should go over it again for punctuation
markZ
218 I got a change to go to all the Jr. collegeZ because

(chance)

219 the guyZ name is Robert (possessive)

225 the individual potential and characteristicZ of the
child

226 that is the personal parts of friends (hypercorrection)

226 it is good to know when a friends has not
(hypercorrection)

227 we would find out what thingZ we like to do

227 and what thingZ we heat to do (hate)

227 the baste way to keep a good friends is (baste is
best) (hypercorrection)

227 other thingZ that goes on in life

228 chewing my finger nailZ

228 none of these thingZ

228 what other habitZ are

228 eating onionZ every night

228 drinking is one of the most thingZ that killing

228 police departmentZ have

228 most peopleZ problems is (possessive)

228 when I get the jitterZ my

230 the better thingZ out of life

230 to have good surroundingZ

230 sometimeZ it

230 the good thingZ that

230 one of thingZ is

231 the words of a personZ environment

235 doctors and lawyers go to school longer than most other
professionZ but their

235 every personZ opinion (possessive)

237 in the professional decisionZ I'll be making

238 as a recreation leader oneZ duties are (possessive
pronoun)

238 schedule different typeZ of programs

105 both of us trying to seek a direction in our lifeZ

113 Ann is the type of person that puts her fellowmanZ
needs before her own. (possessive)

115 the day was very busy with touristZ and people

115 I told my friend to go for reinforcementZ

117 the wallZ are walnut panelled

117 many times I've attempted to study at my husbandZ desk
(possessive)

119 one of the most important characteristics is a friendZ
self esteem (possessive)

122 two casts on his legZ

126 the size of two large fistZ

302 every language has different rules for itZ grammer

307 the persons that would be most suited for these kindZ
of jobs

309 thus in knowing this the Iranian studentZ storm the
embassy

309 with over 50% of the U.S.Z import of oil (possessive)

309 maybe the U.S. and Iran will get back on friendly

groundsz (hypercorrect)

310 these typeZ of friends

313 their nameZ are Frank James and Brandy Wakins

313 both our wifes nameZ

315 we would feast upon mother natureZ depths (possessive)

317 for the past thirteen yearZ of which

322 hes has brown hair (hypercorrect possessive pronoun?)

3.2.2.3 COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Other linguists have noted that the noun plural -s absence is phonologically conditioned (Wolfram, 1969 and Fasold, 1972a). Wolfram does a comparative chart of the relative frequency of the absence of -s plural in the third person singular verb and the absence of -s possessive which are both phonologically conditioned losses according to his claim. He does find a difference in the rate of loss for absent final -s in these three instances. The nominal -s is present most often, the verbal -s next, and the possessive -s most frequently absent (Wolfram, 1969:144).

If the rule for -s loss were simply phonological then the rate of loss for all three morphemes would be exactly the same. The fact that it isn't suggests that the absence of final -s is not the result of a phonologically conditioned rule. Wolfram also draws this conclusion in the end (Wolfram, 1969:151).

In the DeKalb sample of essays, the absence of verbal agreement involving -s is the most frequent error while the nominal agreement is second most frequent with the possessive -s a much less frequent phenomenon. It should be noted that no comparison was made between absent and present final -s but rather a comparison between different kinds of final -s morphemes which were absent. Thus the DeKalb frequencies and the Wolfram frequencies may not be comparable.

Wolfram found a big difference in the rate of -s loss according to the social class of the informants: the lower middle class group had much lower frequency of loss than the upper working (1969:150). In the DeKalb sample there was no significant difference between the different social class groups perhaps because the spread between the various social class members was so small.

Using data collect by Fasold in a previous study, Carolyn Kessler (Fasold, 1972a) examined in some detail the phonological conditions under which -s is either dropped or changed to a lenis form of the regular sibilant. She classified 57 instances of -s loss according to phonological environment.

Eighty-six percent of the -s losses occurred after a consonant; absence was more frequent after stops than after nasals or liquids. There was no instance of -s deletion after a vowel when the following word began with a consonant. Kessler feels that Black English does have an underlying -s in the grammar and that the realization or lack of it "weakly point[s] in the direction of phonological constraints." (Fasold, 1972a:223-237).

In the composition students' essays from DeKalb there do not seem to be phonological rules operating to delete final -s. In fact the one thing that was striking about the examples is that the same words appeared over and over without the final -s. It may be that these particular words

are lacking in -s for the dialect underlying these students' "standard English" or if the -s does signify plural for them then these vocabulary items are not clearly plural but may be semantically collective: thing(13 times), type, kind, characteristic, sometime, all way. Sometimes when quantifiers are present (indicating that the noun is plural) the nominal -s is absent: two brother, three sister. Only a few occurrences of missing -s can be attributed to consonant cluster simplification: fist, tourist, psychologist, friend.

The case of the absent -s of the possessive also points to a difference in structure for the black dialect. In the creoles, as in the black dialect, there was no need for an apostrophe -s to indicate possession when this function is already signaled by the proximity of two nouns: mother house, person attitude, author life, person language, Julian mother. See Dillard, 1972:57 for more on this difference between black dialect and standard English.

3.2.3 ZERO COPULA

The third of the significant black dialect features, deletion of the verb to be, is supposed to be one of the most indicative of that dialect. According to William Labov, the copula deletion rule is very similar to the contraction rule in standard English, and the rule took into account both the phonological environment and the morpheme units adjacent to the copula. The rule generally operates on the third person singular form of the verb is. Also there are some circumstances under which are can be deleted (Labov, 1972a: 84-88. See also Labov, 1982 where he admits that he has changed his mind and accepted the creolist hypothesis).

On the other hand, William A. Stewart has argued (1966) that there is in fact no copula verb in black dialect similar to the verb in standard English. There are in fact many copula forms in the creole antecedents. This position has been detailed by John Holm in his article in *American Speech* (1984:291-309) where he shows that the creoles had no copula in front of the adjective in most creoles but other representations before NP, Verb, locative, and so on. Where the verb of standard English appears in Black English before an adjective there has been decreolization.

In the present sample there are only 56 examples of copula absence however, the rate among black students was so much greater than among white students that this feature was

significant for race at the .01 level of confidence. Black students had fifty-one examples and white students only five.

One interesting feature of the examples is that absence of the copula did not only occur before the adjective. There are also examples of the invariant be having been deleted as if by hypercorrection (see 5.2.1.8 for more discussion of this).

ZERO COPULA

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTALS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	14	12	1	3	30
PERCENT OF STUDENTS	25	28	4	12	21
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	30	21	1	4	56
PERCENT OF ERRORS	21	16	6	13	18

Table 21

NOTE: Errors per number of verbs to be.

Total number of verbs 318. Black females 140,
black males 129, white females 17, white males 32.

3.2.3.2 Environments of Copula Deletion

A chart for the environments of copula deletion shows that there is some regularity in the preceding and following environments. Partial phonological conditioning or morphophonemic conditioning of the absence or loss of the verb can be deduced from the fact that the copula is lost most frequently after the subject pronouns that, it, and what. Some linguists would explain this as the contraction with subsequent assimilation and loss of final consonant clusters. According to Stewart and Holm, the creolists explain that there is no copula before an adjective and it exists in various other forms before NP, locative and verb (Holm, 1984: 293).

An examination of the environments shows that the copula is absent 31 times after that, it, or what, and 14 times after other pronouns. For the following environments which favor deletion or absence of the copula: in front of verbal participles or before gonna is the most frequent and some of these are participles which may be treated as adjectives in the speakers' dialects.

COPULA DELETION

PRECEDING ENVIRONMENT

FOLLOWING ENVIRONMENT

That _____	19 times	_____	Verb 14 times
Pro _____	10 times	_____	Initial Vowel <u>a</u> 12 times
it _____	8 times	_____	Initial Nasal 10 times
what _____	4 times	_____	WH word 10 times
NP _____	4 times		
Prep _____	4 times		
Ind.Pro _____	4 times		
Verb _____	2 times		

Note: Wh word = what, who, which. This table summarizes the phonological and morphological environments.

TABLE 22

3.2.3.3 DATA

The following is a complete list of all the occurrences of copula deletion in the corpus. The examples are prefixed by a number that identifies each informant by name and by race and sex:

000's black female 100's white female

200's black male 300's white male

The symbol 0 indicates the missing verb.

002 that 0 my advise to senior.

002 people 0 passing you by like you is nothing. (could be the invariant be).

002 You don't know what 0 going know what 0 going on all around you.

002 be sure it 0 the one for you.

002 ask them to explain what 0 in store for you (will be or is?).

007 that 0 not what you should do.

007 or that 0 not the best way.

015 take out the number of plates and silverware that will 0 needed. (will be needed).

017 and that 0 why you are placing it now.

017 that 0 why college is part of my education.

017 the reason I want an education 0 to help other (is).

019 that 0 really the hurting part about it.

026 that 0 what 0 wrong with the world today.

026 that O why some of the people of today
032 The parent will be supportive of the child whether it O
in work or play. (is or be?)
033 And that O what started me to think about going back to
school.
033 and that O why I'm going to get a better education.
033 Because that O what I think life is all about.
033 That O why I want a education.
035 cause they don't really know what it means to O a
senior. (to be).
037 The best at what she O doing or learning.
037 I O not going to school to study just one field or
course.
037 I'm a person who wants to O known for what she can do
best. (to be known).
038 also it O what you are trying to get.
044 When I O attending high school.
044 Another reason I would like to work with small children
O because they are apart of tomorrow.
055 He O very talent. (might be invariant be)
055 But he O very intelligent. (might be invariant be).
056 There O no one who can top her. (might be invariant
be).
201 he always greet you with a smile and O alway ready to
help you. (is greeting and is ready).
201 [O] a devoted man of god. (he is).

207 Julian and his mother once 0 in the street she open
her pocketbook. (are).
207 one eye 0 large and staring (is).
210 and know what 0 happening here at DeKalb College.
218 That 0 how I got to come to school up here.
221 and to me that 0 about all I have.
220 it would just 0 a waste of very valible time. (would
be).
222 The college or university should 0 a little or a lot of
everything. (should be)
224 That 0 where education come in.
225 and accept those that 0 beneficial. (are).
226 Careing is another qualitie that need to 0 added. (be).
228 Drinking is one of the most thing that 0 killing our
society.
228 And that 0 about all I can think of.
228 One suggestion 0 never developed a habit that can kill
you.
228 that 0 not nothing
229 I think this 0 a very modern thing to the educational
system.
230 it 0 normal for a mother. (might be invariant be).
230 do it right if you 0 going to do it. (are).
230 sometime it 0 a pleasure to be around
122 The car had to 0 going 45. (be).
306 My wife was crying and everyone one 0 upset at the

drowning of Gayree and I. (was).

307 Their 0 also the opportunities in sale of goods. (there
are).

307 no matter if it 0 oil, water collar

309 so he 0 going to die soon.

3.2.3.4 Comparison to other studies

In her Pittsburgh study of college students, Sternglass (1973) found 25 examples of copula and auxiliary deletion from thirteen black students and eleven whites. This is only half as many examples of the features as were found in the DeKalb corpus. In the present study there were fifty-six examples most of them from black students.

In conclusion, a comparison with the Sternglass study shows a much greater loss of the copula in the DeKalb sample. There are many possible explanations for this. One can only speculate that the population of black students from the Pittsburgh area didn't use the black dialect in question or if they did (which seems to be the finding of the other studies around the U.S.) then they had received more adequate preparation for written composition class than had their counterparts in Georgia.

In Dunlap's study (1973) of fifth graders in Atlanta Public Schools, he found 246 zero copulas in a corpus of 350,000 words; however his figures do not include copula deletion after what or that, the most frequent environment in the present study (twenty-three out of fifty-six examples).

Since the populations of the Atlanta and DeKalb sample are very similar except for the age of the informants, one might expect to see some age grading for this feature. Dunlap's totals do not include copula absence after what or

that. If these examples are excluded from the DeKalb sample then the rate of absence for this feature is 28 out of 246 verbs to be or 11.4%. Dunlap's black students deleted 238 out of 1347 possible verbs to be for a rate of 17.6%. This comparison does indeed show age grading: that is to say that this feature of absent copula although it still persists in older students and in their writing is still less frequent than in the speech of younger students of the same population.

3.2.4 Nonstandard and Hypercorrect Final -ED

The term nonstandard -ed refers to the absence of -ed where standard requires it while hypercorrect refers to the unnecessary presence of -ed. The fourth dialect feature which is significant for race is the loss or absence of -ed on the participle, verb, or addition of -ed to the hypercorrect noun. Although the morphemes for the past tense and the participle are not the same, they have been combined in this discussion for convenience. However this does not in any way imply a phonological analysis of the reasons for their absence. The feature absence of -ed occurred 115 times in the corpus including some thirteen examples of hypercorrect -ed, included because it is a related problem. Black students accounted for 87 examples and white students for twenty-eight of these. The actual number of white students was small but two students between them used the nonstandard zero -ed nine times (students #105 a twenty-nine year old white woman, former nurse, now studying criminal justice and student #306 a twenty-nine year old white male, electrical designer, who was an accomplished story teller in the southern tradition). Both of these students had low socioeconomic scores (2.2 and 2.0 respectively) by reason of their parents' lack of education but other white students with equally low scores did not use this nonstandard feature.

The figures show that nonstandard -ed is used twice as

often by the black male group than by the females. The rate of usage by the two white groups is roughly the same.

Previous studies have suggested that a nonstandard form or dialect feature is to be found most often in the black male group (Labov, 1972b:301) but this is the only feature in the DeKalb study where this can be observed.

Wolfram (1969) and Fasold (1972a) have tried to show that the loss of the -ed is phonologically the result of consonant cluster simplification. On the other hand, J. L. Dillard (1972) suggests that Black English has a different system of tenses and aspects than standard English and that the -ed ending is not needed in black dialect to mark the tense. If this is the case then the decreolization process is responsible for the occurrences of -ed in the text (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of the various interpretations of the feature).

Further evidence of the theory of a different verbal system can be seen in this chapter under the analysis of participle/infinitive confusion and under the analysis of tense.

Table 23 on the next page gives frequency figures on the occurrence of -ed absence and hypercorrection. This is followed by an analysis of the environments of nonstandard -ed and the actual examples.

3.2.4.1 STATISTICS

NONSTANDARD AND HYPERCORRECT
FINAL -ED

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTALS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	21	23	8	5	57
PERCENT OF STUDENTS	38	61	30	20	39
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	38	49	16	12	115
PERCENT OF ERRORS	.25	.50	.19	.19	.29

TABLE 23

NOTE: Included in this category are past participles, simple past tense verbs which take -ed, a few nominals formed from the past participle, and thirteen hypercorrections. Errors were calculated per 100 words of text. This feature is significant for race at the .01 level of confidence.

3.2.4.2 Environments with Nonstandard -ED

The nature of the final -d in black dialect in the Atlanta area seems to be that of a devoiced glottalized stop (based on personal observation). In some cases it is no longer a dental but rather a glottal stop. However, because the data for the present study is written and not oral, phonology will not be dealt with in any detail in this dissertation.

Many linguists have viewed the absence of -ed as a loss due to the consonant cluster simplification when the final -d combines with several other consonants to form a cluster that is difficult to pronounce.

The environments associated with absence of final -d in writing in this sample, specifically as part of the morpheme ed, include almost every phone in the language except /k/, /y/, /v/, and /O, and given a large enough sample, these environments would probably also be included.

The -ed is absent most often before /t/ fourteen times, /ð/ ten times, nasals thirteen times, vowels twenty-four times, clause or sentence juncture seven times (see Table 24).

With this kind of evidence, the absence of -ed cannot be viewed simply as a consonant cluster simplification when it occurs so often before vowels and before junctures. Although in some instances assimilation may take place with following stops or nasals or even fricatives and then the

Environments with -ED Absence

Following Letters

ED _____	t/d	17 times
	p/b	5 times
	-/g	2 times
	m/n	13 times
	vowels	24 times
	-/th (θ)	10 times
	f/-	3 times
	h	5 times
	s	1 time
	l/r	3 times
	-/w	5 times
	Juncture	7 times

Table 24

Environments not found in the sample are

k, v, y, th (θ), ch, and sh.

Juncture refers to clause or sentence
juncture.

resulting assimilation might drop off as has been suggested by Fasold (1972a:99-115), his rules will not account for hypercorrect occurrences of -ed when it should not occur.

Furthermore, the operation of such a rule for loss of -ed in Black English as Fasold has suggested does not in any way prove the existence of a past tense -ed or past participle -ed for the black dialect.

Dillard proposes that there is no past tense in black dialect for some speakers with final -ed and that the semantic categories of the verb are indeed different (Dillard, 1972:50-51). See Chapter 4 for a more complete discussion of this point.

3.2.4.3 Data

The following is a complete list of the examples of -ed absence and hypercorrect -ed found in the sample. Absence of -ed is represented by a capital D and hypercorrect forms are underlined. The number prefixed to each example identifies the informant by race and sex.

000's	black female	100's	white female
200's	black male	300's	white male

001 are faced with
 008 head straightenD out
 011 as opposedD to an everyday job
 012 how much decoration is needD
 015 the food . . . ready to be served
 015 Next, sortout a well planD grocery list.
 015 plan a nice meal to be fixD for the Sunday dinner.
 017 that I have developD into my education form
 017 Education is really based on
 020 the next thing that I did was got up and walkD down
 020 she came and lookD down
 020 I went in and askD them
 020 I obtainD this minibike
 021 be charged to me
 023 that we failD to acknowledge.
 027 Atlanta is knowD this year (known)
 030 Should not be askD no more

035 You'll be surprised of what you can do
036 things I've mentionD and a whole lot more
041 After you have finishD high school
041 I promised them and myself I would
042 we all are going to past this test (hypercorrect
'pass')
044 I am not a shamed of. (ashamed)
044 I realized that it take
044 When I graduated from school I decidD this is
044 I realized my attraction
044 I was assignD to work
045 Once I tryD not to think 'tried'
045 I decided it was no use
045 That really scared me.
045 a habit I should never have developD is smoking.
046 my work and past the classes (hypercorrect passed)
053 My friend Sarah is not matured at all. (hypercorrect
mature)
055 he very talentD, he loves music.
056 sometimes we have our ups and downs, but we always
managed to get them straightenD out. (hypercorrect manage).
056 This person is always there when I needed her.
(hypercorrect need).
201 he have influenceD my life
203 a surprize was in stored for me (hypercorrect 'in
store')

203 He had been discharged one year before
203 one year later he joinD the navy
204 I readed your add (hypercorrect 'read' irregular past
tense)
204 I would have tryD to make more money
207 she likeD to talk
207 Julian seemD to gain
207 A well dressD negro man
207 Julian reachD up and pullD the cord (2)
207 his mother callD him to come
207 they wantD them clean
208 what happenD in the past
209 is needD to understand
210 would like to get involveD
223 what if I were in a naked state
224 the world today is bassD on education (based)
235 can only be really measureD in that field
232 had bared that out (incorrect past participle of
bear)
232 to be more biasD and not convincing
230 she had power that affectD me
231 is influenceD by
219 I used to wonder
215 misspellD words
214 I am attractive to her (attracted)
215 has been finishD go over it

215 go over it for misspellD words
219 if it killD him trying.
216 education is not the answer to a secured future.
(hypercorrect 'secure')
211 this is the most organized row
221 no play helps stimulated the mind (hypercorrect
'stimulate')
219 this would have happenD for him.
218 and askD me where
218 and askD me would
234 Jensen who once believed that
229 to have finishD high school
219 Just before the Marta rail train openD he was elected
219 that happenD after passengers get off the bus
221 I really am rapD up 'rapped up'
231 I never realized it the way
230 I think happenD, one of the thing
230 she influenceD me . . . and influenceD me into . . .
what I wantD to make or become of my life. (3)
207 she openD her pocketbook
207 the left lookD as it was unmoored
228 never developed a habit (hypercorrect 'develop')
210 to get involveD and know
105 We constantly stayD in some type of trouble
105 and not being lookD at individually
105 both of us playD basketball in highschool

105 we useD to fuse 'fuss'
 105 not until Daddy dieD last year
 105 that have shareD life together
 111 which was supposeD to
 112 I had finishD with the patient
 115 my friend and I sat down and lookD at
 118 a heart attacked and died in his sleep (hypercorrect
 'attack')
 121 the police askD me
 126 only if you love baked potatoes . . . oversized
 potatoes
 126 a baked potatoe
 303 the increaseD population
 305 would actually give . . . if you realy needD it
 306 I paddled down the river while Gayree casted the banks
 (hypercorrect 'cast')
 306 a guy named Gayree pickD me up (2)
 306 we liftD each limb up . . . we past under one (passed)
 306 a hour past bring night (passed)
 308 my body weighD 400 pounds.
 308 as I past the mirror (passed)
 317 I useD to . . . I haved lived in it (hypercorrect
 'have')

note: past has been included as a verb and participle since
 the students do not seem to be aware that it requires -ed in
 the environments they have used it.

3.2.5 Comparison of the Presence and Absence of Four Significant Features of Black English by Race and Sex.

Table 25 shows the difference between the four groups: black female, black male, white female, white male. None of the white female group of students used all four of the nonstandard features or even three of the four: nonstandard subject verb agreement, nonverbal -s, final -ed, and absence of to be. These students were most often clustered around one feature (40.7%) or no features (37%). None of the white males used all of the features either. Forty percent of this group used just one feature. Twenty-eight percent used none of the features of nonstandard.

The black female students most often used two or three of the nonstandard features. Only 10.7% of them used no features. Nearly sixteen percent of the black men used all four dialect features with a greater percentage of them using three features. Only 2% of them avoided all the nonstandard features.

Statistics on these four nonstandard features prove conclusively that there exists a black dialect in the Atlanta area. The dialect is characterized by these four nonstandard features and many others which are not statistically demonstrated here because they are syntactic (see 1.2.2). This nonstandard dialect is not limited to one social class since it can be seen in working class as well as lower middle class students.

PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF FOUR SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE
ALL FEATURES	9%	16%	0%	0%
THREE FEATURES	27%	37%	0%	12%
TWO FEATURES	30%	24%	22%	20%
ONE FEATURE	23%	21%	41%	40%
NO FEATURES	11%	2%	37%	28%

TABLE 25

NOTE: four features are subject verb agreement, absence of final-s, copula deletion, absence of final-ed.

The statistics, however, do not make any judgement about whose language is better or where the dialect came from. Another thing the statistics show is that at least one feature, absence of copula, is age graded, disappears with age.

3.2.6 Tense Usage

This category includes a wide variety of examples having to do with tense, aspect, sequence of tenses, and regional dialect expressions. They are grouped together for the purpose of statistics. There are 107 examples of unusual usage by 61 students: seventy-six examples came from black students and thirty-one from white students. The items counted are not necessarily errors but rather unusual or regional usage.

A number of linguists including William A. Stewart, and J. L. Dillard have suggested that there are verb system differences between Black English and standard English with Black English employing aspect rather than tense and (for historical reasons) not always using English copula forms (Dillard, 1972: 45-46).

Not all linguists would agree on this interpretation so one cannot infer that Stewart, Dillard, and others' claims are identical because they are not. What they do agree on is that Black English is somehow different from white nonstandard dialect and standard English too (see Chapter 4 for more discussion and more details on this).

There are not sufficient examples in this corpus to give a detailed analysis of the separate tense and aspect system of black dialect. Some of the features analyzed by Dillard in black speech are absent here: few if any examples of invariant be, negation with ain't, and past

tense marker done. Still the few examples that there are point to differences in the verbal system: some interesting examples of have and had show they are not being used by some of the black students in the same way as in standard English. These may even reflect the remote and recent perfective that Dillard talks about.

To be able to analyze the verbal system of black dialect, one would have to design another research project to test the semantic categories of the verb in spoken dialect first and then to see how this is reflected in writing. Many of the features which were mentioned by Dillard were probably absent from this sample due to the nature of college writing which elicits a very formal style. Also the features of nonstandard aspect probably disappear with age (i.e., age graded) except for the copula deletion, final -ed, and the infinitive/participle confusion.

Crawford Feagin, in her study of black-white speech differences in Anniston, Alabama, (not far from Atlanta on the Georgia-Alabama border) has said that these differences may be more pronounced in older, more rural working class whites than in upper class urban whites. Thus, one might expect to find a wealth of unusual verbal usages in the writing of students with rural backgrounds. In the examples to follow, this rural background will be noted.

Table 26 following will give figures on nonstandard tense use by race and sex of the DeKalb informants. DeKalb

3.2.6.1 STATISTICS

NONSTANDARD AND HYPERCORRECT
TENSE

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTALS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	29	17	6	9	61
PERCENT OF STUDENTS	52	45	22	36	42
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	45	31	10	21	107
PERCENT OF ERRORS	.30	.32	.12	.34	.27

TABLE 26

NOTE: Errors per 100 words of text.

Errors may be colloquial usage rather than ungrammatical.

3.2.6.2 Analysis and Comparison to Previous Studies

There are six categories of nonstandard verb usage represented in this section:

- 1) Irregular past tense verbs.
- 2) Would meaning used to.
- 3) Modals and double verbs.
- 4) Verbal prefixes and suffixes.
- 5) Do support.
- 6) Have/has/had confusion.

Irregular past tense verbs may be used incorrectly by either black or white students in their compositions. The use of these in speech has been documented by dialect geographers. In this corpus there are examples using the verbs choose, make, run, did, begin, go, give, and break. Also to be noted in other writing samples are the frequent errors involving bring, drag, and buy. It is usually the past participle form that is the nonstandard one.

There are a number of examples of would meaning used to in the writing samples. All of them were made by white students except one. Although would is often used to signify conditional, Fries also cites the meaning of customary activity for the standard usage of would (Fries, 1940:174) but this usage although not yet nonstandard is becoming obsolete.

Student #101 has two examples with would which do not

seem to have the meaning of repeated action in the past because the action discussed took place on one particular night when her grandmother became ill. Without asking the writer of the composition exactly what she meant, one can only speculate about the meaning: iterative perfective, or contrary to fact conditional perhaps. Feagin's study of Anniston white speech does not shed any light on the possible meaning of this usage except that she cites useta + would as a local form meaning repeated action in the past. The examples of would are included not because they are composition errors so much as that they are examples of a regional oral narrative feature.

Examples of double verbs come from both black and white students. They may be hypercorrections such as haved lived or helps stimulated or they may contain modals such as can feels. Cassidy also mentions the use of double verbs in Jamaican folk speech which parrallel the "paratactic piling up of verbs . . . characteristic feature of the Niger-Congo languages"(1961:62-63).

There is also a problem of sequence of tense when would or could is involved. Students do not understand the pairs will/would, can/could, and may/might. This confusion is probably due to the double modals which exist in the South and are common in speech of blacks and whites: might could, might otta, might can, might will, might would, and so on (Feagin, 1979:165). The students do not seem to understand

the standard English distinction between the two word when used separately. Double modals did not appear in the writing samples but there were residual problems with some of the words.

Verbal affixing which is supposed to be very common in some varieties of southern speech was not frequent in the DeKalb sample: only two examples were found with verbal affix: a + verb + ing used as a verbal intensifier and like to + verb which signifies that the action of the verb almost took place but the action was not completed. In the speech of blacks and whites in Anniston Feagin found many more examples (1979) of the verbal prefix a- and all of them involved violent action. The one example in the college student's writing is used with the verb kill. Feagin also found expressions with like to + verb. It does not mean 'want to' but rather 'almost'. When student #034 says her mother "like to hurt my feeling" she does not mean that her mother wanted to hurt her but that she almost hurt her but did not. When a mother says of her young child "he like to cut off his finger" she does not mean that the action was willful but rather that it was not completed and probably accidental (personal observation, DeKalb County).

Irregular use of do support is apparent in the writing of some of the black students in DeKalb. Dillard has previously mentioned the negative use of don't with the distributive be (1972:43). Do is also expected in negation

and in questions in standard English. It is the affirmative use of do that may be placing emphasis on the action as is indicated here. Smitherman notes the emphatic use of do (1977:24). In the standard English it is to be expected only when emphasizing the affirmative in response to a previous negative statement expressed or implicit. In the examples there had been no previous negative statement. Student #219 writes about his cousin Robert: he did attend Georgia State and finished. This looks like the same use of the form did that Cassidy mentions in his Jamaica Talk (1961:60) used as a preverbal anterior marker.

It should also be noted that in speech did not is shortened to dit'n (Dillard, 1972:41) and the negation can be lost as in the sentence from student #218 I did want to go which means 'I didn't want to go'.

The students in this sample seem to have a lot problems with the standard English have/has/had. Some of these have already been described as subject verb agreement errors and rightly so; however, there is evidence that something else is happening. Feagin noticed that in Anniston speech these may be losing their distinction since they all fall together (are pronounced the same) in the negative (1979:213). The representation for all three is /hadn/ or /hatn/ as it is in Georgia also. The d is devoiced and the syllabic n. This is true for whites as well as blacks. But in writing the white students do not have difficulty with these, just the black

students. What is happening in white speech may however be a different phenomenon than what is the case in black usage.

Dillard points out a parallel phenomenon of borrowing from Black English which could account for the difficulty that black students are having: Black English has been and done for remote and immediate perfective (1972:47) rather than have or had, so that borrowing of the standard English forms may lead to confusion in these forms.

In the sentence by student #201, a black male: During that period of time he have influence my life tremendously a possible remote perfective or at least confusion could be sensed in the use of have. The student is speaking of the years when his preacher had a strong positive influence on him.

#231 However, I had never realize it the way he had enformed us. This student is referring to a recent past event when he heard a famous speaker. The had implies a past action followed by another past action for the standard English speaker. The recent perfective meaning fits the sentence well because no other past action is discussed.

#043 I have never had any experience until I had my son. This student is contrasting remote and recent past events. Standard English would use had for the more remote event (had never had) and simple past for the more recent event (had).

Thus, not all of the uses of had or have correspond

easily to the remote and recent perfective dichotomy described by Dillard, rather there is confusion. It is certainly revealing that the examples that do exist were all taken from the writing of black students and all of the three students cited were of rural birth. Existence of separate semantic categories cannot be statistically demonstrated because of the small number of examples. But it is clear sequence of tense rules for standard English have been violated.

More research needs to be done in this area to determine exactly what the students mean when they use have/had and how has fits into the system of tenses and what vestiges remain of the older Black English been/done. In Jamaica Talk Cassidy noted the use of ben in folk speech as a preverbal auxiliary used to express past time (1961:60).

Likewise, in DeKalb County school children both black and white can be heard using been as a sort of verbal tense intensifier meaning 'already' + verb. I been read that book (with stress on been) means 'I already read that book a long time ago' (personal observation by a linguist at Canby Lane Elementary School in Decatur, Georgia).

3.2.6.3 Data

The following are some of the examples of colloquial tense and mode usage found in the corpus. Since some of the usage patterns overlap, the data has not been subgrouped below. Prefixed to the examples is a code showing the informants age and sex:

000's	black female	100's	white female
200's	black male	300's	white male

108 My parents didn't work on that day so we would sometimes take short trips or visit a park. 'used to' (urban born).

107 The first two weeks I didn't say a word and my heart would beat so fast. 'used to' (urban born).

101 Gary was so worried about me that he would spend the night and that is all. (one particular night may be contrary to fact conditional. Student was urban born).

101 When I would cry, he'd hold my hand and talk to me. (past event that happened on one night).

101 When I would finally open up he would reassure me and tell me everything will be alright. (sequence of tense) rule is not followed should be everything would be alright).

116 We would all go out on weekends. 'used to'

034 she like to hurt my feeling. 'almost hurt' (born in Georgia unspecified city).

228 most of all some people got a habit of going around a

killing each other for no apparant reason. (prefix may mean violent, intensified action. Student is urban born).

304 the room has gives me the taste and smell of a cozy spring day (double verb may be a hypercorrection or a performance error) (urban born)

322 hes has brown hair (double verb may be a hypercorrection or a performance error) (urban born)

317 Overall, my bedroom has been rather nice for the past thirteen year, of which I haved lived in it. (double verb is a hypercorrection) (urban born).

043 because its feel loved (three verbs may be hypercorrection) (rural born)

221 all worke and no play helps stimulated my mind. (double verb may be a hypercorrection) (urban born).

036 a truly friend is willing to give you most of what he have but not all that he's got. (have/has opposition seems to carry some difference in meaning) (rural born).

122 I watched as the car run completely over Mike 'ran' (urban born).

112 the first patient came into the room with a broke leg 'broken' (rural born).

105 things begin to change after Denise got married 'began' (urban born).

043 I have never had any experience until I had my son. 'had had' (rural born).

034 and first of all you will then learn to appreciate

yourself in doing what you had done in your growing up future. 'have' (born in Georgia unspecified city).

034 I have went through changes 'gone'

035 because a senior have and has more advantages (have/has opposition carries some special meaning) (urban born).

043 You need to feed the children so that they would be healthy kids 'will' (rural born).

044 all the reasons I have gave for wanting this job 'given' (urban born).

044 when I graduated from school I decide this is what I would like to devote my life to 'decided' 'was'

045 sometime I feel like if I don't have a cigareete I would go crasy. 'will' (urban born).

050 there is a possibility that cars can be ran by peanut butter 'run' (born in Georgia).

055 and then he can do things you never expect he did it (would do or had done) (born in Georgia).

056 sometimes I just sit down and think about the wonderful things she have done for me, back when I was small I didn't think about what she had did 'has done/had done' (born in Georgia).

056 This person is always there when I needed her 'need' (sequence of tenses).

056 When I have a problem I could always go to her 'can'

029 it was not until Sonny's brother heard him play did he understand 'understood' (born in Georgia)

201 during that period of time he have influenced my life
tremendously (had or has) (rural born).

204 I would have try to make more money out of it 'will
try' or 'would try' (Georgia born).

219 I use to wonder how all these people got all the good
paying jobs, and always have plenty of money (sequence of
tenses 'had') (urban born).

219 he did attend Georgia State and finished. 'attended'

219 Everything focusing back to the amount of education
that he had accepttted in his life and made it work for him
'accepted' or 'accepts and makes'

219 Robert have been working at this job for some time
'had'

221 the college is nice and I do like the campus. 'like'
(urban born).

230 she had power that affect me 'affected' (rural)

231 However, I had never realize it the way he had enformed
us. 'realized'/'informed' (rural).

232 the free base is almost destroyed him 'had' (Georgia
born).

235 what ever job he do get after coming out of college
'gets' (rural born).

235 he or she can feels what is important (double verb).

235 money and a good job does play important roles 'plays'

218 I did want to go to school big school and had to quite
'I didn't want to go to a big school and have to quit'

(rural born).

236 the author in this story choose to address the reader
'chose' (urban born).

3.2.7 Nonstandard and Hypercorrect Prepositions

There are one hundred and twenty examples of nonstandard preposition use in the sample from DeKalb. Some of these examples do not represent errors but rather regional usage or archaic forms. Ninety-two of the examples come from black students' essays and twenty-eight from white students. A chi-square test for this feature showed that the distribution of race was significant only at the .1 level of confidence which means that 10% of the time this distribution could be duplicated in a random sample. There is not significant difference between the male and female students in their irregular use of prepositions.

Nonstandard use involves either the presence or absence of a preposition: the most common prepositions involved were to, for, of, and in. This is the kind of occurrence that is often attributed to foreign language influence. In this case synchronic foreign language influence was prevented (other than the influence of Black English) by eliminating students with any other foreign language contact. A few of the errors might be explained as performance errors but the number of examples is too large to be explained away as slips or mistakes. It would seem that there are some structural differences between the standard English and the black dialect in their use of prepositions (see table 27 for statistics on frequency).

3.2.7.1 Statistics

NONSTANDARD AND HYPERCORRECT
PREPOSITIONS

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTALS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	30	22	5	11	68
PERCENT OF STUDENTS	54	58	19	44	47
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	52	40	12	16	120
PERCENT OF ERRORS	.34	.41	.15	.26	.30

TABLE 27

NOTE: Errors per 100 words of text.
 usages vary for some pronouns and permissible
 deletions so all these may not be called errors.

3.2.7.2 Analysis:

Most of the errors and irregularities involve the prepositions to, for, of, in, absence of a preposition when needed, or presence of a redundant preposition which could have been deleted.

For example, student #002 left out the preposition to of the infinitive when she wrote, telling you do something.

Student #221 left out the preposition of in making something he or she life.

Student #051 omitted in from the phrase the order that ideas are presented [in] is time span.(i.e.,chronological).

Student #047 omitted the dangling preposition to in It is a sensitive article, and one that some thought should be given [to].

Generative grammar provides the following explanation for some of these examples. In the analysis of English complementation which has been current since Rosenbaum (1967) infinitive phrases are seen as having in their underlying structure a for as well as the to infinitive marker. In older English, that of Shakespeare and the King James version of the Bible for example, this for could occur on the surface as it still can in the usage of many Southern dialect speakers both Black and white. Thus for Standard English I want him to go some Southerners might say: I want for him to go. (If the predicate is clefted, speakers of the standard dialect of English will invariably produce what

I want is for him to go with the for of the underlying structure retained.)

Student #227 who wrote I like for people to tile 'I like people to tell me' is a member of the dialect group which does not have the standard English for deletion rule. While this is a Southernism, it is not especially a Black dialect marker though, as is the case of many dialect features. Black informants may be more prone to produce it in their writing because they are often less aware of the literary norms than their white counterparts.

Mistakes involving prepositions in relative clauses such as The order [in which] that ideas are presented is time span and world in which we live in are rather frequent in the productions of naive and beginning writers throughout the United States. Here again Generative Transformational Grammar provides a simple explanation as to where the confusion has arisen. Given a structure in which a noun phrase is followed by a relative clause which contains a preposition followed by WH, the speaker of English has alternative but mutually exclusive strategies: he can either move the preposition with the WH word (Pied Piping to use the term suggested by J. R. Ross, 1968) or he can "strand" the preposition in its original deep structure position.

Thus the clause under discussion here could felicitously have been either: "The order in which the ideas are presented" or the order $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{which} \\ \text{that} \\ \emptyset \end{array} \right\}$ the ideas are presented in".

The inexperienced writer whether through carelessness or because he has been unduly influenced by the prescriptive shibboleth that sentences should not end with a preposition here is stuck between two alternatives. He does not "Pied Pipe" the preposition with the WH word to the position immediately following the relativized noun phrase. He does not strand it either, giving rise to this "missing preposition" error.

A sentence like the one from student #216 in this competitive world in which we live in today illustrates the common student error involving a preposition in a relative clause. Here the writer has both moved the preposition and left it in place. This error is due either to simple information overload (not remembering how the clause which contains the preposition had begun when the writer came to the preposition deletion site) or to uncertainty about the exact nature of the relativization rule of literary English. In either case it is worth noting that both of these errors, the omitted preposition and the redundant one, are properties of the writing process for native speakers of English: similar errors are uncommon in speech except

perhaps in long and complex sentences. In unpretentious speech, the preposition is stranded and no attempt is made to "Pied Pipe" it forward in its clause along with the relativizer.

NONSTANDARD AND HYPERCORRECT PREPOSITIONS

	BLACKS	WHITES	TOTALS
TO	13	7	20
FOR	10	2	12
OF	9	3	12
IN	18	3	21
Ø	<u>31</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>40</u>
Totals	81	24	105

Table 28

Errors involve either the absence or wrong prepositions. Note that the totals do not correspond to those of the previous table since not all of the examples involve these prepositions.

Another kind of example is sentences with unnecessary prepositions: wordiness. In this kind of sentence the prepositions are not always wrong but they are stylistically redundant as in the following examples:

318 and just sit back on this big sofa that you sink into when you sit down.

304 The closets are of nice size.

324 his mother called for him (called him in from outside).

319 you cant't help but to enjoy yourself.

105 During a period of time we drifted apart

210 man of god of whom I admire

045 I have many of times attempted to stop . . . and many of times I have failed.

001 When she returns back to school (back strictly speaking is an adverb).

218 I had to make up my mind up

220 for whatever job you is trying for

223 Within the system we are living in today, we are living in the me generation where 'me' come first.

018 The person must have qualifications for the job his looking for.

Some other kinds of errors are wrong because they are not idiomatic English. They remind one of the kinds of errors made by foreign students who have not yet learned that certain verbs must always be used with a particular preposition if they are to have a specific meaning. Some

examples of this kind of error are the following:

017 Then I go my getting an education 'go about'
 019 indulging into something 'indulge in'
 230 she influence me into going back to school 'influence
 me in'

044 I want to work [in] or own a daycare some day.

056 I wasn't thankful of anything 'thankful for'

055 they are very good [at] listening

037 to better educate myself into a field 'educate myself
 in'

035 you'll be suprise of what you can do 'be surprised by'
 or 'be surprised at'

001 a school drop [out] in our society

011 I have begun to think more on terms of a career 'in
 terms'

104 she thought it would get her [into] trouble

103 things will work out to marriage 'for'

Several additional examples will show more clearly just
 how the student has become confused about what preposition
 to use.

003 A college education can be the results of a sense of
 well being and security for a person.

In the preceding sentence the student has not grasped
 the difference between result in and result of. This is not
 to say that the student is not aware of the concepts of
 cause and effect but that she can not manipulate the

terminology necessary to discuss the phenomena in standard English. The distinction is very important in writing most advanced college compositions.

In another example the student is mixing metaphors and is not really thinking about how the words he is using are going to fit together in a sentence since what he has written seems logically impossible. He seems to be repeating the phrases ups and downs and going through without regard for their literal meanings:

219 He told me all the ups and downs he had gone through.

These are but a few examples of the irregular use of prepositions in the texts. They do not seem to warrant an additional set of rules for the dialect being described. Often the examples appear to be due to incomplete mastery of the standard English system, as well as accidental omission of the preposition, or wordiness due to an attempt to sound learned.

Another area that needs to be investigated is the relationship between the nonstandard preposition use by Southern black students and the archaic usage of prepositions in the King James Version of the Bible. Few would deny the tremendous influence of the church and the Bible on Southern blacks.

The influence is greater, I think, than in other regions of the country and it is not just a religious influence but also a social, educational, and philosophical

influence. Bible study too is a very important part of all church activities. Thus it would be very possible for archaic usages to be introduced and perpetuated in the speech and writing of those blacks who are regular church goers. Activities of many churches in the DeKalb area occur everyday, with services on Sundays and Wednesday evenings (personal observation of DeKalb County resident).

3.2.7.3 Comparison to Previous Studies

In Errors and Expectations, Mina Shaughnessy discusses what she calls the preposition dissonance (1977:192-193). She gives some examples of what she means by this term and then says that these are "advanced" errors. She writes, "Students at the least experienced level of Basic Writing rarely make them, choosing instead to stay within the error-safe limits of a basic vocabulary."

The errors that Shaughnessy describes are what I have termed in this study "incomplete mastery of the system". These resemble errors made by foreign students. Since Shaughnessy uses examples from Hispanic or Oriental Americans who have learned English as a second language, she had difficulty separating out the influence of a foreign language on the incorrect use of the preposition. None of the examples from the DeKalb students can be attributed to a foreign language since none of them spoke any (Black English is here excluded).

Contrary to what Shaughnessy thinks, most of the errors here are not advanced errors. By definition the DeKalb students in the study are basic writers and do not make many advanced errors. There is a difference between these preposition errors and those commonly called "wordiness" errors. Advanced students make errors of wordiness while beginning writers make the dialect related errors.

Dillard cites several examples of unusual preposition uses which he attributes to the different distribution of prepositions in Black English (1972:69). "This slight mismatch in prepositions with standard English is the result of historical approximation from pidgin/creole stages of much greater differences"(1972:69). Dillard also points out that some creoles "manage to indicate positional relationships without the prepositions which standard English considers necessary"(1972:69). This is good evidence that the zero prepositions found in this study are not the result of performance errors.

3.2.7.4 Data

The following is a list of most of the examples of nonstandard prepositions and stylistic awkwardness involving prepositions found in the sample. The examples are prefixed with a code number to identify each student, his race, and sex:

000's black female 100's white female

200's black male 300's white male

001 sometime when they return back to school (redundant)

001 a lot of teen-age pregnancy results in the high percentage of school drop [outs]

001 when she returns back to school, she is behind (redundant)

001 teenage pregnancy faces problems with being poor, being non-white, and a school drop [out] in our society (the student may not be able to have out in front of in).

002 people passing you by like you is nothing telling you [to] do something (perhaps this is meant to be direct address).

002 If you want help you got [to] ask for help to get help

002 to be the brain behind of alot of thing. (redundant)

003 A college education can be the results of a sense of well being and security for a person. 'result in'

003 Therefore obtaining a college education it allows you to move in any level of relationship with others and feel comfortable about it 'into' or 'on'

007 help you out when you need [to] be

007 this person will always be able to keep your personal problems that you sometimes feel you must talk to someone about to themselves. 'keep to themselves'

007 become someone they will be proud [of] and yourself happy to be.

011 I will be looking into a program of study that will turn me [out] into the world as a success.

011 during the past few years I have begun to think more on terms of a career for myself. 'in'

012 will you have balloons in upper surface of the room 'on'

016 it gives a person a change to [see] what develop their minds about how other people get along with each other in this vast world in which we communicate in. (stranded preposition in).

017 then I go my getting an education 'about'

017 I have to understand the basic need I have and then go by getting the other need I want to develop 'about'

017 that will give me a skill that I have develop into my education form to help me go along with my life place 'develop with' and go into'

019 indulging into something that really don't interest you 'indulge in'

020 the next thing I did was got up and walk down in my room 'down the hall into?'

026 some of the people of today (redundant)

031 but one should have an auto mechanic to check the

engine (have someone to do something is a typical construction in the Atlanta area that is not standard English. The standard would delete the to).

032 a good parent will be careful of what his child sees and hear (of may be deleled).

033 a education is a knowledge of understanding of, or skill in, by study, instruction (not clear what is meant here).

034 to be a strong parent you must have a responsibility on your hands 'take responsibility in'

034 whatever I do out of life 'do in'

034 learn to appreciate yourself in doing what you had done 'by doing'

034 but it's a world of work to me as of help 'for me'

035 you'll be surprise of what you can do 'by'

036 Another quality that a person might have toward his friend in which it is something which is cherishable (redundant)

037 I want (won't) do to (too) good of a job (redundant)

037 because I would not try for a job that I know I don't have no experience [in]

037 to better myself into a field or course that I am interested in. 'in a field' (final in is dangling)

038 I mite give out but I want give out 'I might give up but I won't give out'

040 the one change I have to myself if I can be someone.

- 'the one chance I have to see if I can be someone'
- 041 what kind of career they want in them self 'for'
- 042 they influence you the most out of your life. 'in your life'
- 043 now a baby needs cuddling up and holding (similar to the favorite Jamaican tag adverbial particle cited by Cassidy, 1961:68).
- 044 I hope to study and learn about Early Childhood Education to it's highest. 'in every detail'
- 044 I want to work [in] or own a daycare
- 044 sometime I would work off the clock (probably a local expression).
- 045 I have many of times attempted to stop smoking (redundant)
- 045 it was no use of trying to stop (redundant)
- 051 the order that the ideas are presented [in] is time span
- 052 the den is the only room beside the bedroom [in which] 'besides'
- 055 they help with choices (chores) at home and pick up behind themselves. 'after'
- 055 they are very good [at] listening
- 056 I wasn't thankful of anything. 'for'
- 201 a man of God of whom I admire (hypercorrect)
- 204 buy of land for a home (redundant)
- 204 maying (making) the thing you dream for 'of'

204 I know of some of the responsitive (responsibility)
(redundant)

204 rent of a space (redundant)

207 Julian seem to gain great satisfaction at 'by'

208 in the period [in] which she was now living

210 I felt that DeKalb was the best school to go [to] in
the metro area

214 she can keep her fellings (feelings) towards someone to
herself, and not express them with me 'to'

215 next one should mak (make) a good outline on the topic
'of'

216 in this competitive world in which we live in today
(second in can be deleted).

217 sharing what they have to offer to one another
(redundant)

218 DeKalb has a lot of things that I like about it
(redundant)

218 this is a very good school to come to [to] play
basketball (deleted to)

218 I had to make up my mind up (second up is
hypercorrect).

219 to help him deal [with] and understand people

219 he told me [about] all the ups and downs

220 for whatever job you is trying for (dangling
preposition)

221 want to make something [out of] he or she life

221 I heard about the college of DeKalb was a very very
 good school 'that'
 221 for as work. Me I'm an average student 'as far as'
 223 If I or anyone were [to] send
 224 [as] long as man kind exist
 225 a well rounded person makes the same for a child 'out
 of'
 225 a parent be flexible in his method [of] teaching
 227 I like for people to tile (tell) (for deletion)
 228 you should never sleep to (too) long on a day you have
 to get up early on 'on which'
 228 you might have you and (an) important date to a girl
 'with'
 229 their (there) seems to be more students to have finish
 'who have finished'
 229 this allows student [to] be admitted to college
 230 to become the best at what you do 'in'
 230 she had power that affect me into better my education
 230 my mother like any other mother are sometime nice to be
 around with (hypercorrect)
 230 she influence me into 'in'
 230 I didn't know what I want to make [of] or ~~become~~ of my
 life 'become in'
 233 without eventually causing some static and eventual
 abolition to that system 'of'
 235 bankrupt is his only solution out (hypercorrect)

103 he dress very well to the latest fads 'in'
103 things will work out to marriage 'for'
103 I am very close to his mother to where sometimes I feel
she is my mother (colloquial)
103 he can be very obstinate to everyone 'with'
104 her father was transferred to move (hypercorrect)
104 she also was very creative with making things 'in' or
'at'
104 she thought it would get her [into] trouble
105 neither one of us agreeing to either suggestion are
(or) ideas by our parents 'from'
105 during a period of time we drifted apart (redundant)
105 realizing to ourselves that we both want and need
different things 'in'
111 the next thing I noticed was the great ease in which I
could park the car 'with'
117 so I end up back to my favorite room 'in'
304 the closets are of nice size 'a'
305 a man who physically is of a small frame 'has'
306 everyone was upset at the drowning of Gayree and I 'by'
306 Gayree pick me up [at] 6:30 Friday
313 I spend more time spending money than working in hours
for it 'by the hour'
314 a very truthful and serious article that everyone
should read and take notice [of] too
316 I would have to buy a new car of which would probably

be either a mercedes convertible or a corvette

(hypercorrect)

317 my bedroom has been rather nice for the past thirteen
year of which I haved lived in it (hypercorrect)

318 its just right for laying back on a cold winter night
'lying on'

319 if your're lucky enough to be there at the right nite
'on the right night'

319 you can't help but to enjoy yourself (to deletion)

322 what really makes a friend to me 'for me'

325 one day when my dad was out playing . . . his mother
called for him 'called him in'

325 he has not over the last six years changed very much
'he has not changed very much over the last six years'

3.2.8 Nonstandard and Hypercorrect Articles:

Most of the errors found in the corpus concerning articles have involved the indefinite article. For example, the use of a where an is required in standard English because the noun begins with a vowel or silent h. Another kind of indefinite article error occurs when the hypercorrect an is used where a should be. These two errors are dialect related errors since only black students make them. This evidence gives further support to the claim of Dillard (1972) that Black English has only one indefinite article: a .

Errors involving the omission of the indefinite article or switch to the definite article the when the meaning doesn't warrant this is an error analogous to those made by foreign students. There are also examples in the corpus where the article should be zero but it is included. These may be the result of restructuring that occurs with decreolization. The examples further suggest that the semantic categories in the article and perhaps the nouns also are different for Black English.

From the examples one can see that the situation is not so simple that one could say that the students who make errors do not know when to use a or an: they also do not know in some cases when to use an article in accordance with the standard English system, when to omit it, when to use a definite or an indefinite.

William A. Stewart has suggested (personal communication, 1983) that cases like sentence 030 may involve a process commonly found in creole languages: a plural form in the lexical source language being borrowed as the base form and being unmarked for number: on this interpretation of 030, a good parents would mean 'a good parent'.

Cassidy (1961:64) writes that the definite article in Jamaican folk speech is frequently omitted and that the indefinite article is one or a.

A chi square test shows this feature to be significant for race at the .1 level of confidence meaning that at most 10% of the time this distribution of errors could be duplicated in a random sample. Thirty-four black students made errors with articles but only seven white students made them. Black students had a total of fifty-one errors or nonstandard uses of the article while white students only had eight. Table 29 summarizes statistics on this nonstandard feature.

NONSTANDARD AND HYPERCORRECT
ARTICLES

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTALS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	22	12	3	4	41
PERCENT OF STUDENTS	39	32	11	16	28
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	36	15	3	5	59
PERCENT OF ERRORS	.24	.15	.04	.08	.15

TABLE 29

NOTE: including 17 hypercorrection errors all made by black students.

Percent of errors is per 100 words of text.

Some examples of the a/an errors are as follows:

- 009 an registered nurse 'a'
- 016 a educated spouse 'an'
- 031 a auto mechanic 'an'
- 046 to get an degree 'a'
- 219 get a honest opinion 'an'
- 016 a educated husband 'an'
- 040 to get a education'an'
- 038 an good education 'a'
- 220 but got a education 'an'
- 033 a education show 'an'
- 033 I want a education 'an'
- 049 a anonymous 'an'
- 230 she is loveable and a attracted person 'an attractive'

Another kind of hypercorrection error occurs when a or an becomes and.

- 009 in and nursing home 'a'
- 040 I would like and education 'an'
- 040 because without and education 'an'
- 006 his partner and chinese bookkeeper 'a'
- 225 sees a child as being and extension of himself 'an'
- 228 because you might have you and important date 'an'
- 046 and average student 'an'

Some errors occur because the articles are there but should be omitted (this is a hypercorrect article).

- 026 there is not a such word 'such a word'(misplaced

article).

030 a good parents 'good parents'

235 drive a people own to a higher level of life 'drive people on'

219 and always have a peace of mind 'have peace of mind'

034 you must have a responsibility on your hands 'have responsibility'

030 the both of them 'both of them'

033 I want alot's out of life 'a lot'

Other mistakes occur because the article which should be there has been omitted.

002 branch of [the] service

014 preparing for [an] examination

218 about [an] hour drive

218 I had [a] good game

224 from watching [an] other

116 Jim and I meet at [the] Pickle Barrel Restaurant

320 my wife was wheeled to the maternity ward and [the] waiting was about to begin.

055 they ask [a] lot of question

Still other mistakes are due to the use of the wrong article, definite or indefinite.

037 I am the person who try the best at what she doing 'a'

026 education will pay off in a long run 'the'

3.2.9 Spelling:

Mina Shaughnessy, referred to at various points in this work, devotes a whole chapter in her book, Errors and Expectations, (1979) to classifying spelling errors. With 450 misspelled words in the DeKalb writing samples, this error is important enough to spend some time analyzing. Each student has misspelled an average of three words per essay (average 300 words). At a school such as DeKalb College where English teachers are asked to give failing grades to students with five words misspelled, students may fail an English course because of poor spelling. However, few college teachers give spelling more than an hour or so of class time even in remedial classes. Perhaps teachers ought to spend more time talking about spelling or give it a less prominent place in the criteria for a passing essay.

In the DeKalb study black and white students misspelled words at approximately the same rate. Eighty-seven students misspelled words or sixty percent of the students. White females had the largest percentage of misspellers. Not counted as spelling errors were the obvious dialect related loss of final -s, -ed, or article errors. Also excluded are the choice of words errors discussed in the next section.

Table 30 summarizes the statistics on spelling errors.

SPELLING

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTALS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	35	12	22	18	87
PERCENT OF STUDENTS	63	32	81	72	60
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	168	125	84	73	450
PERCENT OF ERRORS	1.12	1.28	1.02	1.17	1.13

TABLE 30

NOTE: Percent of errors is per 100 words of text.

Even after excluding all spelling errors related to specific dialect features there still remain a large number of errors which appear to be related to regional dialect pronunciation current in Georgia.

The systems of phonemic oppositions of the various white and black rural and urban dialect groups found in Georgia clearly have played a significant role in causing these spelling errors. This topic deserves systematic investigation but unfortunately this is not possible due to the nature of the written data.

The examples can be divided into three types: those involving vowel, final consonants, and internal consonants.

Written vowels are sometimes confused because they are pronounced in the same way:

<u>i</u> in sit and the <u>ea</u> of seat	
<u>i</u> of fill	<u>e</u> of feel
<u>a</u> of want	<u>o</u> of won't
<u>a</u> of sale	<u>e</u> of sell
<u>i</u> of pin	<u>e</u> of pen
<u>a</u> of are	<u>o</u> of or
<u>o</u> of on	<u>ow</u> of own

Final consonant mistakes can be of the type where an unpronounced final consonant drops off as in neares or they may contain a hypercorrect final consonant such as wild for while or and for an. Likewise the substitution of ence for ent in different or confident is another example of

confusion due to loss of a final consonant which is not pronounced in either ent or ence. Note that in change and change, final consonants are omitted and vowels are the same.

J. L. Dillard mentions differences in the derivational process in Black English which may apply here for different/difference and confident/confidence (1972:66). Other examples of derivation have been included in section 3.2.11 under the discussion of derivation.

Ocassionally an internal consonant is changed; maying for making and mean for million. Sometimes whole syllables are lost as in seemly for seemingly and opportunly for opportunity. Shaughnessy would attribute this kind of error to the student's inability to visualize the word on the page and recognize that it is wrong. More than likely the error is due to the student's own pronunciation of the words (personal observation of trained linguist and teacher in DeKalb county for ten years).

Some of the dialect related spelling errors are the following:

want for won't and won't for want
and for an and an for and
fill for feel and feel for fill
fell for feel and fellings for feelings
along for alone and alone for along
change for chance

costomer for customer
assistant for assistance
different for difference
confident for confidence
are for or
sit for seat
sale for sell
wild for wide
wild for while
fine for find
mine for mind
everythine for everything
win for when
heat for hate
on for own and own for on
tract for track
why for while
caret for correct
wiche for which and wish for which
mean for million
think for thing
neares for nearest
seemly for seemingly
opportunly for opportunity

Other kinds of errors that the students made were similar to those made by all freshmen composition students:

the homophone errors, for example:

to - too - two

there - their - they're

lose - loose

no - know

accept - except

course - coarse

sight - site - cite

through - threw - thru

affect - effect

then - than

write - right - wright

do - due

alot - a lot

allways - always

allright - all right

3.2.10 Diction/Word Choice:

This kind of error is a mistaken choice of words. Mina Shaughnessy devotes a chapter in her book (1977) to vocabulary which contains a discussion of problems like these that she encountered in 4000 placement essays written by entering freshmen at The City University of New York. Her categories of vocabulary mistakes are more detailed than the ones presented here because her corpus is much larger than the one collected at DeKalb College another school with open admissions.

In the DeKalb essays there were 102 diction errors which have been broken down into five broad categories with some overlap. These categories are the following:

1. Derivational: misuse of suffixes or prefixes on nouns, adjectives or adverbs.
2. Lexical: misunderstanding of lexically marked characteristics (i.e., core semantic or dictionary meaning) such as transitive, intransitive, animate, inanimate, etc.
3. Connotation: misunderstanding of the special nuances attached to a specific word not contained in the dictionary meaning although lexically correct.
4. Register: violation of the social context of a word, for example use of slang in a formal writing situation.
5. Dialect: the use of a term in written situation that is inappropriate because it belongs to ethnic or regional speech expressions which usually are not formal enough to

use in writing class).

These errors may not actually be errors in the sense that they are often not grammatically incorrect (especially in the last three categories) but they violate conventions of style established for formal writing situations. The first type of error is grammatically wrong and the second one is "lexically" ungrammatical but may be correct in certain contexts, for example, humorous or satirical writing.

Traditional terms have been used to describe the errors in this section because these are problems that a composition teacher would have to deal with and label them thus. More recent work in discourse analysis has established a new vocabulary to describe logical and higher sentence relationships that the words may semantically imply.

In one instance, Dr. A. D. Van Nostrand of the Georgia Institute of Technology and director of the Center for Research in Writing at the same school has devised a method of teaching logical relationships in writing which shows some promise and does not involve use of the traditional terminology of diction. With regard to obvious diction or word choice errors, the student is told that his line of reasoning is faulty, his argument isn't logical, his essay lacks coherence or his examples don't prove his point. Naturally the student would have to be familiar with this

new terminology in order to benefit from the teachers comments. The student is then expected to discover for himself that the reason his argument lack coherence is because he has misused some of his vocabulary or made a wrong choice of words.

While it is true that often a wrong choice of words results in an illogical or uncoherent relationship in an essay (see section 3.3.5 Transitional devices), a student who is not very well read can not be expected to deduce a wrong choice of words. Knowledge of nuances and connotation either comes from reading a lot or being exposed to a literary vocabulary. This is not to imply that basic writers do not understand logical relationships but that they do not have the necessary experience with literary English to manipulate the vocabulary effectively. For this reason I see nothing wrong with utilizing the traditional terms 'wrong choice of words' and telling the student to look in his dictionary.

Quite another way of looking at mistaken choice of words is presented by Frei in his Grammaire des Fautes (1929). He discusses five tendencies to change in a language which can inevitably lead to a mistaken choice of words. Word choices are made for definite reasons. Deviations from the norm represent functional changes in the system not mistakes, according to Frei.

The frequency of diction errors is comparable for all

four groups and there is little difference in the number of students making these errors by group. But in general there is a difference in the kind of diction error the students make, for instance: black students make more errors with derivational and lexical categories while white students make more errors of connotation. As a rule, when a student's writing ability improves, his absolute number of errors involving connotation increases as the first two categories decrease. In other words, just as the student begins to think that he has mastered the grammar and thinks he has a command of written English, he finds he is making many more errors in his vocabulary. This is discouraging for a student but he can be made to realize that his risk taking and searching for just the right vocabulary item will pay off eventually when he becomes more familiar with the connotations and not just the dictionary meanings of words. "thesaurusitis" is the term used by Dr. Malinda Snow of Georgia State University (personal communication, 1980) to describe the connotation error since it would almost seem that the student had an open dictionary or thesaurus at his desk as he searches for ever bigger and better words to use in place of familiar ones.

Table 31 gives statistics on the Word Choice error and its use by the various groups of students.

The following are some examples of the different types of diction or choice of word errors. These categories

WORD CHOICE

	BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE	TOTALS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	29	17	12	10	68
PERCENT OF STUDENTS	52	45	44	40	47
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	38	31	21	12	102
PERCENT OF ERRORS	.25	.32	.26	.19	.26

TABLE 31

NOTE: Percent of errors is per 100 words of text.
Errors means poor choice, inappropriate choice,
incorrect choice of words.

involve a certain amount of overlap with other categories.

DERIVATIONAL:

- 301 a modern conventional city 'convention'
- 306 my most rememberable experience 'memorable'
- 034 I will never try to disrespect her 'disobey' or 'have
disrespect for her'
- 031 should be done very careful 'carefully'
- 055 My baby boy is very active and talkable 'talkative'
- 036 the qualities an ideal friend has is so personable
'personal'
- 054 they were completely relaxed not pressurized
'pressured'
- 226 understandment is one of the main 'understanding'
- 103 he is so loveable and understanding 'loving'
- 209 my objection is computer programming 'objective'
- 214 I am attractive to her 'attracted'

LEXICAL:

- 014 he should be in a quiet place whereas he would
concentrate 'where'
- 039 I have a problem in compensating what I read
'comprehending'
- 209 I restrain myself to being patient
- 230 she had power that affect me into
- 210 I came to DeKalb to establish a source of education
- 209 I must indulge deeply in my subjects
- 104 until her father was transferred to move

105 did we fully comprehend the meaning family really did
mean

103 there are some days when he can be very obstinate to
 everyone

124 I would say she gives her concerns and responsibilities
 at the office

120 Baldwin injected reality in this troublesome story
 'troubling'

034 Because life is going so soon each day

032 so the parents reflect on the children 'children
 reflect on the parents'

026 to have a job thats worth paying

001 out of wedlock mothers happens mostly to the non-white
 female

CONNOTATIONAL:

119 kindness is a feeling for a friend that responds to his
 love for that friend

118 he had sustained a heart attacked

303 In retrospect, Atlanta is a very beautiful city.
 'inconclusion'

323 This seems to enhance the spirit of most teenagers.

011 this is a period which I shall lable as only the
plateau of my achievements

011 during this period of refurbishment (going to college)

047 the author also advocates that school in Los Angeles
 California, and many other states are beginning to return to

the use of the paddle. (thesaurusitis for 'say')

048 Many women think of the subject of math as having no
compromise.

036 qualities which is enriched in a friend is 'embodied'

003 a job secures a person 'makes a person secure'

017 like I want to work in a reasonable place

008 for this is very important and a necessity in reaching
my boundry 'goal'

REGISTER: socially unacceptable terms are colloquial
expressions, slang, or jargon. Some examples are also
cliches.

107 he did help break the ice (in the classroom)

104 she got to get reacquainted with her old friends

305 he is mighty strong

318 I just like to lay back

316 the reason being because

325 she was laying on her bed

220 I have been out of school for two years and nothing has
turned my way.

235 Money is not that much important

219 Robert even got raised from driving a bus

227 Tell them to kiss your grants 'kiss your grits'

221 I must be on my p and q at all times 'mind my p's and
q's'

DIALECT: while these dialect or regional expressions may
not be incorrect they may be inappropriate for formal

writing.

218 Time about to come, I had to make up my mine up.

228 or just get you an alarm clock

008 I feel like if it is something

045 Sometimes I feel like if I don't

044 Sometime I would work off the clock

302 I just don't see where English is that important

304 the closets are of nice size

305 a man who physically is of a small frame

104 she had just come to find out

104 and nobody seemed to figure out how to put it back

together (context indicates 'know' is the intended meaning).

104 I feel like I am the only person I really know well

enough to write about. 'feel that'

104 Don't get mislead that I don't have friends (Regional expression for 'don't be misled into thinking' plus spelling error).

3.3 Syntax:

Nine aspects of syntax will be examined in this section. Although the division between syntax and morphology is at times rather arbitrary since the two are interdependent, nevertheless, I have grouped these nine features under syntax because they can not be statistically analyzed the way morphological or word level errors can.

In order to analyze the students' strategies for writing composition, students' problems with understanding the concept of the sentence in writing were examined. Two basic types of writers emerged: those who wrote very short sentences, often fragments, the bare bones type of sentence lacking all but the minimum of detail and the other type of writer who wrote excessively long sentences, often run-ons overburdened with detail and many clauses. These two types of writing did not correspond with any of the non-linguistic features (age, race, sex, or socio-economic status).

In addition to the analysis of students' concept of the sentence, seven other syntactic features were analyzed which were mostly a problem for black students: negation, inverted word order, transitional devices, resumptive subject pronouns, present participle-infinitive confusion, deleted subject relative pronoun, and conjunctive relative. One final feature, passivization, was studied because it at first seemed to be a kind of sentence that was being avoided by the students. As part of the regular classroom

assignments exercises were given to determine whether students could form passive sentences. Students were asked to apply the passive transformation to sets of active sentences. Without exception none of the students had the least difficulty performing this task. On closer examination of the texts there did appear to be passives without agents where the adjective versus participle status of the form is unclear and also some other strategies for conveying the passive meaning which are discussed in 3.3.4.

When talking about syntactic features, linguists do not normally use statistics because it is impossible to estimate the potential occurrences of a construction. For example, the number of relative clauses in a sentence is only limited by the speaker's ability to remember what he is talking about or until the writer has lost sight of the original antecedent. Second, most linguists do not use statistics when dealing with syntax because one example is generally enough to prove a point (a dialect difference or an exception to a rule). Linguists who deal with syntax do not usually have to worry about performance errors the way morphologists do.

The next sections are divided into nine parts. Whenever possible examples will be presented in some detail and reference will be made to the work of other linguists.

3.3.1 Sentence Length and the Students' Concept of the Sentence:

The total number of essays collected from DeKalb Community College students 146 containing 40,000 words. For convenience the students have been divided into groups by race and sex.

For the black female group, with 56 subjects, the essays totaled 14,979 words of an average length of 268 words per essay. The length ranged from the shortest essay of 101 words to the longest with 494 words. It is interesting to note the wide variation in the students' concept of the sentence for the black female students. The punctuation of four students yielded sentences averaging from 9 to 10 words per sentence, and on the other end of the scale the two highest scores for average sentence length as measured by the students' punctuation words per sentence.

The corpus for the black male students totaled 9,782 words for the 38 essays. The shortest essay was only 134 words long while the longest was 615 words. Punctuation strategies yielded an average sentence length for this group ranged from 10 words per sentence to 39.5 words per sentence.

The size of the corpus for the 27 white female students was 8209 words or an average of 304 words per essay. The shortest essay averaged 10.9 words per sentence and the longest 29.6 words per written sentence as punctuated.

The essays from the 25 white males totaled 6250 words for an average of 250 words per essay. Two essays averaged 13 words per sentence for the shortest sentences. The longest sentences in the group had a mean length of 26.6 words per sentence. Because the range is much smaller, this is a much more homogeneous group, at least in so far as strategies for punctuating the sentence are concerned (as revealing the students' concept of a sentence).

The following table will give comparative statistics on sentence length for the four groups:

BLACK FEMALE	BLACK MALE	WHITE FEMALE	WHITE MALE
total			
words 14,979	9,782	8,209	6,250
range 9.1 - 51	10 - 39.5	10.9 - 29.6	13 - 26.6

TABLE 32

One problem with measuring sentence length is that many remedial students do not have the concept of sentence clearly in mind so that some of them place periods at the end of phrases or clauses while others wait until the ends of whole paragraphs. The result is either the fragment or the endless run-on sentence. Thus one student may begin new thoughts with a capital letter but being unsure of periods, he may wait until the end of a paragraph to place a

period. In a way, one can see that using both a period and a capital letter is a redundant way to mark sentence ends. I have made no attempt to second guess students by introducing my own punctuation into the essays.

Because sentence length is sometimes taken as a measure of the maturity of a writer, and most of these students were by definition immature writers, having been placed in remedial English classes, it is surprising that there is as wide a range in the lengths of sentences as there was in this corpus. This study shows that some of the traditional measures of remedial education may not be applicable to dialect speaking students. Traditional measures would have one expect to find that students who wrote longer sentences or used more sophisticated constructions would make fewer errors especially dialect related errors. However, this was not the case. Maturity in writing is an elusive concept as far as the DeKalb group of students is concerned.

In a further attempt to define sentence maturity, I also calculated the number of subordinate clauses in relation to the number of sentences (as conceived by the students' punctuation). In counting subordination the following were included: adverbial clauses and noun clauses with subjects (excluded were gerunds, participials, and infinitive phrases). One would expect that the students with a high number of subordinate clauses would write longer sentences and the students with fewer subordinate clauses

would have shorter sentences. In fact there was no correlation between length of sentence and number of subordinate clauses: for example, student #012 had only three subordinate clauses but an average sentence length of twenty-two words which is higher than the average. Student #022 used nineteen subordinate clauses but her sentences averaged thirteen words per sentence, far below the average.

It is interesting to note in this respect that a study done by Laurie W. Pant using Dunlap's Atlanta data showed that black students in the study produced more subordinate clauses than white students matched for age, sex, and socioeconomic group. Her conclusion was that "amount of subordinate clauses is not the major factor in producing longer T-units"(1969). Her study is discussed in more detail in 4.6.4.

One observation from the DeKalb group is that many beginning writers do stream-of-consciousness writing with one thought after another added until they run out of things to say. At this point the sentence ends with a period. For a good example of this type of writing student #230 writes:

My mother like any other mother are sometime nice to be around with, they have there different sometime it a pleasure to be around but then come a time when it can be a headace, but I'll talk about the good thing that I think happen one of the thing is which she influence me into going back to school and influence me into

going to school, which I didn't know what I want to make or become of my life.

This student, a 21 year-old black male (s.e. 3.0) employed as a clerk, averaged 39.5 words per sentence simply because he did not know where to put a period, so he waited until the end of his paragraph. The length of his sentences is not any indication of his verbal maturity. Certainly his essays show some thought and good insight into mother-son relationships, but he is completely lacking in the linguistic concept of sentence of standard English writing.

Another sort of extreme example is the student who has had some training in writing and has been told to be careful of sentence fragments and run-ons. This student is so frightened at the thought of making a mistake that she makes her sentences as short as possible. The following example from student #015 will illustrate the results:

A Sunday dinner is an easy process. First, step deceide upon how many that you are planning to invite. Then, plan a nice meal to be fix for the Sunday dinner. Next, sortout a well plan grocery list. As you plan this grocery list, include the amount of food that will be needed, for the dinner. Then take out the number of plates and silver ware that will needed, to make a well set table. After these procedures has been done. The food has been cooked, and ready to be serve. Always cook over the amount

of food that you will normally need. Due to the family will come back for seconds.

The essay was written by an eighteen year old black woman who gave no occupation other than student (s.e. not available). The average length of her sentences was only 9.4 words. Her writing more closely resembles what has been called "immature" writing because of the lack of subordination and other types of sentence combining. But I do not feel that her sentences are in any way less 'mature' than the writing of the student whose single sentence totaled 80 words. In fact it would seem that this student's short sentences result from her contact with an English Instructor and not from the lack of instruction as one might expect in the previous student's case.

The following example of a sentence from informant #126 shows the kinds of devices she used to achieve her long sentences:

When you first walk in the door, and up to the glass top counter, a tall black man pulls out a bake potatoe, the size of two large fist, from the hot steaming oven behind him saying, "What will be today," as he slices open the potatoe and places it on a small platter.

This young woman also made extensive use of subordination with which, as in the following sentence:

Every other friday I eat lunch at Tater Treats which is

relaxing, but has delicious baked potatoes which I love and enjoy eating.

The informant was nineteen years old and worked as a dental assistant (s.e. 3.0). She indicated that she was born in Atlanta as were her parents. She said her mother had completed high school and worked as the manager of a cafeteria while her father had some high school and worked at the General Motors Plant. As with so many of the other students in the study, this one's mother was better educated than her father and had a job at a higher status level, although probably not a better paying job. It is difficult to see anything in her background that would account for her apparent writing "maturity" (54 word sentence) in contrast to the rest of the group which only average 15.4 words per sentence.

Student # 112, whose sentences averaged only 10.9 words, worked as an x-ray technician (s.e. 3.2). She was a 22 year-old white woman who said that both of her parents were born in rural Georgia. While her mother had some college and operated a family owned daycare center, she said her father had only completed 7th grade and worked as a welder. A typical paragraph from her essay follows:

The first time I ever saw a large amount of blood was when I started working at a hospital. It started one morning about eight o'clock. The first patient came into the room on a strecher with a broke leg. That

wasn't bad, until I removed the top sheet. Under the patients leg was a large amount of blood.

An analysis of this paragraph and a comparison with the earlier example from informant 015 shows there is not a difference in style between the short sentences of the black student and the short sentences of the white student. The white student does, however, show more variety of sentence structure and the black student uses more sentence fragments.

In comparing the examples of long sentences, one can see a big difference in sentence structure. Whereas the black student #230 has continued his sentence until everything has been said, he does not seem to have a command of the techniques of subordination which will allow him to fill his sentence with information while avoiding the trap of the endless run-on sentence. The white student #126 has also tried to fill her sentences with detail, but knows how to use subordination, coordination, and modifiers to help her. In this way, her writing is more sophisticated than that of the other students whose writing has been analyzed thus far.

In conclusion, it is clear that the sentence as conceived by the student is a poor predictor of sentence maturity (so-called) as regards its length for the black students and also a poor predictor of success in English Composition class. Because of the rhetorical devices many

of the black students have used, the longer their sentences, the more mistakes they will make. For the white student, sentence length does point to an increased command of the more sophisticated rhetorical devices. There may be some relationship between urban birth and a tendency to write longer sentences, judging by the examples cited, it does not follow that urban born students who write long sentences will be more sophisticated writers. The occupation of the student and education and occupation of parents are similar for all types of basic writers in this study whether they write long or short sentences. The range of sentence length indicates that there is much more variation among the black group of students than the white students, the latter appear more homogeneous in their writing style as measured in sentence length.

3.3.2 Negation:

Double negation is something one always expects to find in nonstandard speech and writing. Since Labov's study of New York English (1972a) we have expected to find negative concord in Black English as well. Therefore, it was surprising not to find more examples of these in the corpus and it was mystifying to find examples of something else instead: negative deletion.

Negative deletion has been previously documented by both Funkhouser (1976) in college students' writing, and by Feagin (1979) in speech in Anniston, Alabama. Neither of these linguists discusses the origin of such a phenomena.

Funkhouser notes the case of apparent negative marker deletion which he says follows the same conventions as other phonologically motivated deletions (1976:119). He found thirty-seven examples of negative deletion in his corpus taken from 22 students' compositions in St. Louis. In each case contextual clues indicate that a negative meaning is present in the sentence. For example, the sentence we had a meeting which was really important to me but I went anyway should read 'wasn't really important' (1976:120).

He also notes that there is sometimes a do insertion to mark that a negative is 'operating in the deep structure' (1976:121).

Tecelia did have very much to offer (1976:121).

In other examples consonant cluster simplification of

n't seems to have caused the loss of the negation in the combinations wasn't, weren't, wouldn't, or couldn't.

Feagin describes some cases of negative contraction in her study of white Southern speech in Anniston, Alabama. She points out that she found haven't, hadn't, and hasn't all falling together as /hadn/ with the assimilation of the final t to the nasal. She found parallel assimilation with couldn't, wouldn't, wasn't, and didn't (1979:213). She also found her informants especially trying to avoid ain't (1979:213).

In another example from the literature William Labov mentioned in Language in the Inner City that the phrase I couldn't care less seems to mean exactly the same as I could care less (1972a:194).

Negative deletion seems to be directly related to the negative concord rules of Black English because it is not possible to explain all its occurrences with a phonetic consonant cluster simplification rule. William Labov has written some very complex rules for negative concord which state that any number of words in a sentence may take negation without changing the meaning of the sentence for the black speaker: It ain't no cat can't get in no coop means 'no cat can get into any coop' (1972a:130).

Unfortunately, Labov's rules will not account for the negative meaning of I could care less and will not explain Funkhouser's examples any better than Feagin's phonological

observations.

The black linguist, Geneva Smitherman, has also tried her hand at writing rules to explain or predict the negation of the Black English sentence. Her rules are somewhat different than Labov's but still do not explain the negative sentence without negation.

The following are some examples from the DeKalb sample:

218 I did[n't] want to go to school big school and had to quite because I did[n't] know how to study and I [didn't] want to go all four years, so I said I'm going to a junior college to see what school is all about. 'I didn't want to go to a big school and have to quit because I didn't know how to study'

221 And if and I take place in some activities I would be so bored. 'and if I didn't take part in some activities'

034 And to become a winner not a loser. And that's not what I want to be. I want to become a nother of a family and have kids my age now. But life is going so soon each day and people are[n't] about to change. 'aren't about to change'

122 But at the time it did[n't] seem possible

125 Sometimes having a helping hand is worse than [not] having any help at all.

020 Although I did[n't] and show my parents how bad I wanted 'didn't show'

What seems to be happening in these sentences is that

the students are trying to avoid the negative just as they have been told to avoid ain't and the double negative. There are analogies with a few current expressions such as the following:

I could care less 'I couldn't care less'

Does a chicken have lips?

In the first example the speaker seems to think the negative meaning will be apparent. In the second example the speaker's underlying answer is of course or of course not depending upon the question.

These examples are parallel because there is generally no difficulty in processing the information and understanding the speaker's intended meaning with or without the negation present.

It seems clear that the examples of negative deletion in writing result from a hypercorrection of the negative concord rule that erases negation markers not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Both black and white students have tried to avoid the multiple negation.

William A. Stewart (personal communication, 1983) observes that cases of apparently deleted negation marking have come to his attention in Gullah and other forms of Black English. In classroom observation, he has noticed instances like I [PAUSE] do it, (with negative intent clear from the context) apparently from I ain't do it with ain't deleted under the school-talk rule "Don't say ain't."

In addition, he has also noted Gullah constructions like Everybody didn't go meaning 'nobody went' which could simply involve reassignment of the negator away from the quantifier, but could also involve hypercorrective deletion of the wrong (first) negator in multiple-negated Nobody didn't go.

These observations about hypercorrection could also account for Funkhouser's examples in a more plausible way than a phonological rule would. In 5.2.1.8 this kind of hypercorrection is explained in more detail: unnecessary presence of a feature is not the only kind of hypercorrection; hypercorrection may be represented by a zero morpheme or absence of that feature.

Other instances of nonstandard negation, amply described in the literature, have also turned up in the corpus: double negation, negative concord, nonstandard ain't (only one example), misplaced negation, superfluous negation, and misspelling of the negation due to homophony in the dialect (want for won't). Some examples follow:

002 People passing you by like you is nothing telling you do something but you can't because you don't know nothing (negative concord).

002 You want to be part of a crowd but you ain't with it.

030 Questions should not be ask no more (negative concord).

037 So I want have to depend on no one but myself

especially no man!

038 I mite give out but I want give out.

037 Because I would not try for a job that I know I don't have no experience (concord).

039 I have graduated from a technical school and don't remember but half of what I learned (don't but means 'only').

043 Being a good mother takes a lot of experince if you never had none (concord).

045 A habit I should never have develop is smoking (never should have).

056 If it wasn't for her I don't think I wouldn't have even made it this far (concord?).

235 Moreover one can not say that money nor a good job are not two of the main goals in life (superfluous negation)

221 Like I say all work and no play helps stimulated the mind (missing negative)

221 As for work. Me I'm an average student that loves to work (missing negative:)

228 The only one I can't thing of is chewing my fingernail 'the only one I can think of is'

228 And the point to tell you all this so you will never encounter none of these thing (concord).

219 to help stop some of the crime stopage (double negative in meaning).

207 He don't take nobody's pennies (concord).

228 That not nothing what other habit are (double negation).

121 He said he would have never even looked for me if he hadn't seen my bumper lying in the middle of the road (would never have looked).

319 The atmosphere is so relaxed you can't help but enjoy yourself 'can only'

325 My dad did not have but a sixth grade education 'had only'

001 They can't afford to have an abortion, because they can not afford it (cannot may be more emphatic in this dialect).

3.3.3 Inverted Word Order:

Many linguists have noted inverted word order in embedded clauses in Black English and some of them have wrongly attributed this to the creole origin of Black English. William A. Stewart (personal communication, 1981) has informed me that he thinks inverted word order is a borrowing from white nonstandard English or perhaps even standard English and originated as a restructuring, perhaps a hypercorrection, during the decreolization process. It is easy to see how this might have come about. See the following examples:

1. Ask him if he can go.
2. Ask him, "Can you go?"
- *3. Ask him can he go.

The first two sentences are correct while the third looks like a Black English sentence. The embedding process of sentence 3 is not complete because

- (1) although the pronoun person has shifted from you to he, the word order is still inverted as for the question and
- (2) if or whether is missing.

Dillard (1972:64) mentions that the if in Black English is also a borrowing from standard English because in some places it occurs and in others it is absent. It does not occur in sentence 3 or in the following:

a man get rich, he still pay taxes.

There were only a few examples of inverted word order

of embedded clauses in this corpus. Three examples show inversion instead of an if clause:

030 Ask them do they need help or advise.

020 I went in and ask them were they going to buy a mini bike.

218 He ask me would I like to come up there.

Judging by the small number of examples with inverted word order instead of if, this does not present a particular problem for the college student, black or white. If anyone makes the error in writing though, it is more than likely the black student who uses the construction frequently in his speech. I have noticed from personal observation that young black school children who live in the DeKalb area use the inverted word order for if in casual conversation with friends and it is certainly an easy rule to acquire: young white children who come in contact with black children in school can be heard using inverted word order on occasion (personal observation of a DeKalb county resident).

The function of inverted word order is to show that a question is being asked. Questions in standard English take either WH-words with inverted word order or simple do-support. The nonstandard speaker may not see this as a question or an if clause, but something in between taking the function of both: inverted word order for a question and pronoun shift for embedded clause.

3.3.4 Passive Sentences:

The absence of the passive formed with be in most creoles might lead one to suspect a problem with the passives among nonstandard black speakers trying to write standard English. Cassidy writes in Jamaica Talk (1961:61), "Completely lacking from folk use, and apparently one of the last acquisitions on the road to Standard English, is the passive voice." He goes on to explain that this is because the passive is formed in standard English with the verb to be and the past participle which are usually absent from folk speech also. In fact, Beryl Bailey points out that Jamaican Creole does have an agentless passive without be and a passive of sorts with overt agent (1965:81): passive can be formed with the help of other verbs such as get or become.

The following are a few examples of this kind of passive in the compositions:

104 Don't get mislead 'do not be misled'

104 I even get confussed about my feelings 'I even am confused by my feelings about'

Other kinds of passives occurred which looked very much like copula plus adjective where the the copula is present and there is no agent mentioned:

027 Atlanta is know 'is known'

011 student . . . that is highly looked upon

006 the periods of time were better described

- 003 you are trained how to do certain things
- 003 college students are exposed to all kinds of person
- 037 a person wants to [be] known for what she can do
(hypercorrect zero morpheme)
- 044 I was assign 'assigned'
- 047 the emphasis are placed on 'is placed'
- 048 the article was written
- 048 math is viewed
- 051 the ideas are presented
- 051 more women are depressed (this may be copula plus
adjective)
- 203 the rules which was made 'were made'
- 208 changes that had been made
- 209 background which is need 'needed'
- 211 from food to magazines is found
- 213 a friend is chosen
- 215 the outline has been finished
- 215 the paragraph has been completed
- 223 which is explained in the Bible
- 224 the world today is bass on an education 'based'

These sentences show that students can use passive constructions without agents in some contexts: usually with inanimate or abstract subjects and when discussing topics which are non-narrative (in formal writing).

Most of the topics the students wrote on in the corpus were personal narratives. The students usually saw

themselves as active participants in their environment and not in terms of objects acted upon. A notable exception is the student who was writing about the birth of his first child who contributed the following:

320 After arriving at DeKalb General, my wife was wheeled to the maternity ward.

Apparently his wife arrived at the hospital under her own power but then collapsed and was carried off to the maternity ward under someone else's power.

Professor Beatrice Hall (personal communication, 1980) pointed out that her college freshmen in New York used a very large number of passives in their writing. After reading some of the essays from DeKalb she remarked that these students did not seem to be using any at all.

I discounted the possibility that English instructors had been telling these students to avoid the passive construction because it is overused by freshmen. These students did not seem to be overburdened with advice from English instructors, quite the opposite. As part of the regular classroom curriculum, some exercises were given to students in English class to see if they could form passives with agents from active sentences. Everyone in the class was able to form passive sentences without error although they first had to be told what a passive was because they did not know the term. Probably the construction of passive sentences is not a difficulty for either black or white

students in remedial classes but they may need instructions on when to use the passive.

If some students appear to have difficulty using the passive it would undoubtedly be caused by their difficulty with the verb to be and their problems with the participles (see other sections of this chapter for these two points). The curious lack of passives with agents needs to be investigated further with larger writing samples.

3.3.5 Transitional Devices:

Often students are told to use transitional devices to make their writing flow more smoothly, but they are not well read enough to know that the transitions used in speech are not always the same ones that can be used in a formal writing situation.

This leads students to adopt the formula of using first, second, third, finally, and in conclusion which becomes very tiresome for the teacher to read and if not done correctly can lead to confusion since the words suggest a time frame or chronological order rather than an order of importance. For example:

012 First of all How large is the room?

012 Secondly now for the tables will you have the tables decorated with table cloths?

013 Finally the finishing touch look back and see all the beautiful work you have done for a party.

018 Second of all my name is LaWanda Harris.

020 It keeps a enjoyable overrefined smell this smell makes everyone seem as though they were out doors in the fresh spring air. Finally, the atmosphere is just great.

303 In retrospect, Atlanta is a very beautiful city. 'in conclusion'

Sometimes students try to show relationships by using cause and effect transitional words.

015 Due to the family will come back for seconds.

017 I want this cause I wouldn't make it like I wanted to.

017 The reason I want an education so I don't have to depend on so many people

208 As a result of the changes that had been made for the Black people it meant that the whites would have to converge with them.

219 Everything focusing back to the amount of education that he had accepted in his life and made it work for him.

020 Thus as the above ways are discuss, one could tell that Marty and Val are totally two different people.

013 Also why I like the Beachcomber there clothes are very odd.

316 The reason being because

Other students are fascinated by big words and try to use them often without really understanding the relationships they convey.

014 He should be in a quiet place whereas he would concentrate. 'where'

003 Therefore obtaining a college education it allows you to move in any level of relationship with others. 'after'

031 Although the used car looks good but needs mechanical work means that the car dealer should sale the used car at a reasonable price. 'because'

054 Therefore after having to fight inflation a problem that faces you financially leaves one feeling down and out (after means 'since' or 'because' in Jamaican folk speech

according to Cassidy, 1961:65).

204 The fact that I am business minded I would have try to make more money out of it. 'because of the fact that I am business minded'

014 He should study his note so that he can memorize and know the examination. 'he should study his notes to prepare for the examination'

Teachers tell their students to be sure to use examples and analogies without telling them how to introduce the examples or how to select a good one.

017 Like I want to work in a reasonable place.

017 Like without an education I could not write.

017 Like who ever heard of a person beening something, without an education.

042 Like we have a test I am not studying they tells me to study because we all are going to past this test.

001 Like if you give parties are play your music loud, you have to be sure that you don't disturb the people around you.

Other transitional devices that students misuse are adverbs of time and comparison and constrast.

020 Marty as compared to Val weight is about 115, whereas Val weight is about 125.

020 Marty is a nice intelligent young lady that weighs about 125. Marty is also a single lady with no children to take care. On the other hand I am a nice intelligent lady

that weighs 115 and I am also a single lady with no children.

015 After these procedures has been done the food has been cooked and ready to be serve.

015 Now that the food is ready plan a nice desert.

002 Now for some senior you may want to work after graduate.

218 The time about to come, I had to make up my mine up.

224 Long as man kind exist it will never stop.

055 Then he can do things you never expect he did it.

A few of these have already been discussed in the sections on choice of words, and resumptive subject.

In general, these problems with transitions seem to present more difficulty for the black students although rural white students in the study appear to have an equal amount of trouble. William Labov (1972a) has shown how black students are not deprived of logical and rhetorical devices in their dialect but that does not mean that they can manipulate learned and literary terms with ease. Mina Shaughnessy has pointed out that all basic writers have trouble with transitional devices (1977).

Many of these uses of transitional devices amount to hypercorrections of one sort or another because students are using phrases they do not understand when they might just as easily use less literary terms that they are already familiar with to express these same relationships.

For a different point of view, Lunsford (1979:38) states that basic writers "have not attained that level of cognitive development which would allow them to form abstractions or conceptions." While this may be true for some elementary school students, the students in this study were all adults and certainly could form abstractions and concepts although they did have trouble using the terminology of literary English.

3.3.6 Resumptive Subject:

The first kind of resumptive subject involves a repeated pronoun and the second type a repeated noun.

The resumptive subject pronoun has also been called the double subject or pleonastic subject (Smith, 1973:92). A few linguists have noticed that the resumptive pronoun is similar to the preverbal clitic subject pronoun of the creoles and of certain West African languages where it can function as a predicate marker (Bendix, personal communication:1985). However, others believe it to be the result of the appositive construction used as in standard English (Cassidy, 1961:55).

It should be noted that the sentences which bear a resemblance to the standard English appositive are not ungrammatical, for example:

055 My three sons they are very interest and exciting to be around.

055 My oldest one he is the active one of all.

228 Me myself I don't have a serious habit.

Other sentences with resumptives are at best awkward:

002 Now for some senior you may want to work after graduate.

221 Far as work me I'm an average student.

238 the type of person that should go into the recreational field. First of all she should be a well educated person.

207 Julain and his mother once in the street she open her

pocketbook to try and give the little child a nickel.

Copying of the pronoun to the right and left is one possible analysis, as in the preceding sentences from students #221 and #228. Another analysis is that the noun is extraposed to the left leaving a trace or shadow pronoun in its place (Romaine, 1984:268). This explanation which satisfies traceability requirements of generative grammarians would also appear to account for sentences with intervening relative clauses whose relative pronoun has been deleted which Dillard (1972:59) has called the zero relative pronoun sentence (see section 3.3.8). Dillard's example is:

Ray sister seven year old go to school at Adams she got a new doll baby (1972:59).

Here we see the relative clause and the main clause still distinguished but it is the relative clause which may be unmarked and the predicate which is marked with a resumptive pronoun.

A second type of structure, which seems to function similarly to resumptive sentence, is actually a rhetorical device for introducing new topics of conversation, but there is no resumptive pronoun.

026 Grants and loans there is not a such word as I don't have the money.

228 and drug pot is another and it is not prohibited.

042 Friends and also my environment. Because I don't want to be around people who doesn't care about themselves, or

nasty dirty places or people, who just don't care .

This last type of device is different in that no pronoun appears so that there can be no question of extraposition or copying of the subject. I believe this to be a rhetorical device also found in speech for introducing a new topic of conversation. The new subject of conversation is mentioned and then information is given about it. There is repetition of nouns similar in semantic content but no pronouns are used:

Grants and loans = money,

friends = people,

drug = pot.

In one final example of this type, the repetitions are a summary or conclusion of material already mentioned as a topic:

002 The money, the education, the experience you never knew places you will go and visit.

Here the topic the experience is amplified by the places you will go and visit.

In conclusion, the resumptive process may in fact include two separate phenomena: the resumptive subject pronoun that marks the predicate either with or without preceding relative clauses and the resumptive noun of similar semantic content which amplifies a newly introduced topic or summarizes information about that topic.

3.3.7 Present Participles, Gerunds, and Infinitives:

There were about fifty examples in the corpus of errors with present participles or infinitives. White students did not seem to have much difficulty with these constructions, nor did they try to use them often. Since the gerund and participial constructions are difficult and not often used in colloquial speech, it is surprising that remedial black students would use them so often unless they reflect a structure in their own dialect that is similar.

The black students who used participles or gerunds did not seem to know when to use them and when to use infinitives. The constructions were confused and often used interchangeably when in standard English it is not always possible to substitute gerund/ participles for infinitives. William A. Stewart has suggested that a possible creole origin for this confusion can be found in Gullah where the preverbal /də/ of the progressive and the preverbal /tə/ of the for/to complementizer, under certain circumstances, sound the same (personal communication, 1983).

Cassidy mentions a construction in Jamaican where a predicate adjective is followed by an infinitive: "When we were tired to bawl we watched the fire" (1961:58). Standard English would represent this as 'tired of bawling'. Cassidy also notes the lack of inflected participials in Jamaican traditional folk speech as well as from Niger-Congo verb structures that may have given rise to them.

In light of these facts, it is easier to see why speakers of black dialect in this population might also have the difficulty with participles that they had.

One kind of error occurred when the black student either tried to use a participle as the main verb of the sentence or a participle with manner adverbial as the subject of the sentence, for example:

216 By having an education and not knowing what to do with it, is just as bad as not having any education (John Holm indicates that in the Bahamas by is an embedded participial marker and presumably not an agentive, [personal communication, 1985]).

204 By frist buy[ing] stock and bonds to what can be done with it in that way (note the infinitive use).

204 By purchase[ing] of colthes, shoes and all over thing 'by purchasing of clothes, shoes, and all other things'

003 Knowing that he can relate to other in any situation (main verb).

A favorite construction with black students is the gerund or infinitive as its subject. Sometimes the sentences may be correct and other times not, for example:

031 To purchase a used car should be done very careful and very precautious 'purchasing'

213 Choosing a friend doesn't happen over nite (correct).

017 Beening without a good education cause you so many problems 'being'

220 Get ahead of my friends can let them know that the guy they went to school with is now something big in life 'getting'

225 To be able to reject bad ideals from friends and accept those that beneficial (no main verb).

002 To be the brain behind of alot of thing (no main verb).

002 To put my advise into meaning (no main verb).

026 To have a job thats worth paying (no main verb).

034 To become a winner not a loser (no main verb).

034 And to look after your kids and try and help them to grow up each day of they're lifes (no main verb).

052 To change the way I feel about other people (no main verb).

052 Being with my family more (no main verb).

052 [To] stop working hard and to enjoy myself (no main verb).

052 Taking care of the car (no main verb).

054 Therefore after having to fight inflation a problem that faces you financially leaves one feeling down and out, knowing the only way to help is by going to school to attempt to acquire skills as well as knowledge (dangling participle).

In addition to these problems there were many examples of participles without ing. The deleted ending from participles and gerunds has been described in a study of

Hillsboro, North Carolina by Frank Anshen (1972). He demonstrated that while both blacks and whites drop off the ing ending from participles in their speech, only blacks did it with significant statistical frequency. Black students in DeKalb College also left off the ing ending in their writing but only one white student did and this in a narrative account in traditional story telling style.

055 My three sons they are very interest[ing] and exciting to be around.

230 My mother does get a little overpower[ing] sometimes.

207 the child mother said with rage and swing[ing] a fist.

204 I am enclose[ing] a cope of my resume (this is the progressive tense).

230 She had power that affect me in to better[ing] my education.

204 as well as responsible for train[ing] them.

204 wish mean rent[ing] of a space

204 There are the personal thing like buy[ing] of land

204 By you give[ing] me

044 the major one that will keep me going to school and learn[ing] all that is necessary.

306 and a hour past bring[ing] night

306 the sun was begin[ing] to set

053 I like to dress well, nothing special, just cleaning and matching (hypercorrect ing).

Two examples that especially point out the confusion the black informants were having with infinitives and participles are the following:

044 So I hope in attending DeKalb college I will be able to accomplishing my educational goal.

034 The characteristics of a good parent is to become well grown person inside yourself, and to learn the response that of becoming to be and adult.

Not all participle errors were typical of black dialect speaking students. Another kind of error, often called the dangling modifier, is common among more advanced writers in composition classes. A very few of these errors turned up in the corpus:

003 Therefore obtaining a college education it allows you to move in any level of relationship with others (subject of obtaining should be you).

112 Well, after moving the patient over to my table a large clot had formed (subject of moving should be I).

233 In reading this article, there were somethings known to the reader that in a given circumstance could have been totally irresponsible (subject of reading should have been I).

3.3.8 Zero Relative Pronoun in Subject Position:

There are several dialects of nonstandard English for which deletion of the relative pronoun in subject position is allowed. One of these dialects is the black dialect studied here. The deleted subject relative pronoun was not a major problem in terms of total number of errors in the written compositions; however, one would expect this kind of construction to be more frequent in speech based on the analysis done by Laurie W. Pant of Dunlap's Atlanta data which showed black elementary school students using 28% more subordinate clauses than white students the same age (Pant, 1969).

Once the relative pronoun has been deleted there is no way of knowing which pronoun it might have been. According to standard grammar, The Macmillan Handbook of English (1947), who is used to refer to persons and occasionally animals, which refers to animals, things, and ideas while that may refer to both persons and things. Furthermore, the subject (nominative) case relative pronoun may never be deleted but the others may. Who is always a subject pronoun in formal standard written English with whom taking on the objective case function. Thus if a relative pronoun in subject position is absent it may be a who or a that if it refers to people, for example:

I'm the kind of person I like to work by myself.

The sentence was collected in an interview for the

Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS) Project in Atlanta by this researcher. The informant closely fit the criteria of other students in the study in DeKalb: she was twenty-nine years old, had attended Atlanta Junior College, born and raised in Atlanta.

Standard English would have 'person who like' or 'person that like' but black dialect might also have the undifferentiated pronoun which.

For the black dialect it seems that there exists an undifferentiated relative pronoun or generic relative pronoun which is used to refer to people, places, things and animals. This pronoun is probably which. There is evidence in the creole languages of an undifferentiated relative pronoun.

In Jamaican folk speech, according to Cassidy there is usually no relative pronoun needed, "like the Niger-Congo languages it gets along with paratactic constructions". He gives the example: "The man owe me money gone a Cuba"(1961:57). Later as relative pronouns are acquired they are not differentiated as in standard English.

Looking at the examples from the point of view of the creolist Bickerton (1977a:274) and linguist Suzanne Romaine (1984:271) one sees the decreolization process taking place in three stages: first the zero pronoun, next the personal resumptive pronoun marking the predicate, and finally the full range of relative pronouns and disappearance of the

pronoun marker.

Dillard has given several good examples of this in his Black English (1972:59):

The boy 0 sit over there 0 got a pencil in he hand he my friend (the resumptive he picks up the subject function after intervening relative clauses with zero relative pronoun and marks the main clause).

Ray sister 0 in fourth grade 0 live down the street she got a brand new doll baby (the pronoun she is a predicate marker after intervening relative clauses with zero pronouns).

Another example shows partial use of relative pronouns:
049 The child's father, who seems to be deeply torn by his daughter's condition, begs the doctor to try and do everything possible, would not consent to the doctor's request (either begs or would not consent has a deleted relative pronoun).

In the section 3.3.6 where the resumptive pronoun is discussed we saw that the process of using the pronoun as predicate marker is not limited to those sentences where there is a relative clause present. In the section 3.3.9 on Conjunctive Pronouns there is more analysis of certain kinds of conjoined clauses which may or may not be relatives. All these constructions may be interrelated as Romaine (1984) suggests but they are treated as separate problems for the student attempting to write in standard English composition class.

3.3.9 Conjunctive Relative Pronoun Which:

The most unique function of the black dialect relative pronoun which is its use as a conjunction. In standard English an independent clause may not be introduced by which but black students used this word to coordinate clauses all the while maintaining its special meaning as a relative pronoun referring to words or thoughts in preceding clauses or sentences. In most of the examples of this type, one can easily substitute and for which (however there is some loss in meaning).

Terrebone noted similar examples in the Dayton area students' writing but could not explain what was happening (1975).

Only the relative pronoun which may function as a conjunctive, none of the other relative pronouns may take on this meaning. The origin may be creole. One student (not in the study) from Jamaica used this pronoun with its conjunctive meaning extensively in his compositions. Cassidy (1961:63) gives similar examples of a conjunctive relative pronoun say which loses its full verb function.

In the examples from the DeKalb sample, which is grammatically a conjunctive and does not function as the subject or object of its own clause. Therefore, it is possible to see other subject or objects in the sentence when one might expect that which would take on that function. For example in the following sentences:

003 The college graduate feel he has accomplished a stable carrer wiche after employed he reaches a feeling of security in life.

001 most of the time they end up lacking the educational part of life, which todays life mainly depend on education.

036 Understanding is another quality that a friend has which I can describe it as to say a friend understands (which refers back to understanding but does not function as the object of its own clause. It has that function. This seems redundant but is not because which is grammatically a conjunctive relative, as Cassidy calls it [1961:63]).

224 Another reason why I want an education when you leave (live) in a home with your parents, sister and brother, which some of them might be in school, they learn from you (which refers back to sister and brother, but some is the subject of the clause).

230 I admire my mom because of the main reason she is in m generation which she try to influence me in every possible way she can (which refers to mom).

230 She influence me into going back to school and influence me into going to school, which I didn't know what I want to make or become of my life (which is either referring to the whole thought or to me).

White students in the DeKalb sample did not use the relative which as a conjunction. The test of whether which is a conjunction or a subordinate is whether it has another

function in the following clause. For example the sentence from a white student:

126 Every other friday I eat lunch at Tater Treats which is relaxing, but has delicious baked potatoes which I love and enjoy eating (The second which refers to potatoes but is also the object of the verb love. The black students would have written, which I love and enjoy eating them).

Other kinds of errors with the relative pronoun which do not involve its use as a conjunctive relative. The construction of the relative which with a preposition has been discussed under Pied Piping in 3.2.7. For example:

016 in this vast world in which we communicate in.

Another error with which results when the relative pronoun is used in place of who, whom, or that to refer to persons. It seems that which is a generic pronoun that is preferred. See for example:

010 People which are alike and like to do the same things they make very good friends (which refers to people and should be who or that in standard English).

In the previous example which does not function as a conjunction. Note especially the use of they as a resumptive pronoun (see 3.3.6).

Chapter 4: Review of Previous Dialect Studies of Black English:

In order to get a perspective on how the DeKalb sample fits in with other dialect studies of Black English and Nonstandard White English that have been done, it is important at this point to compare and contrast findings of this study with those of some previous studies.

4.1 Dialect Geographers:

The emphasis of many early dialect geographers was to collect vocabulary words for common items and events in people's everyday lives and to attempt to draw dialect boundaries on the basis of these items. There was little attempt to study the structure of the dialects and how they differed. But the attitude of dialect geographers was much more enlightened than that of certain persons who suggested that blacks, for instance, talked differently because they had thicker lips or flatter foreheads.

Dialect geographers unlike English teachers did not proscribe certain forms as being ungrammatical: they recorded these forms without comment. Or if they did comment, they wondered about the origin of certain terms and tried to offer possible etymologies.

In his book, A Word Geography of the Eastern United States, the noted dialectologist Hans Kurath writes:

By and large, the Southern Negro speaks the language of his level of education. But in some respects his

speech is more archaic or old fashioned; not un-English, but retarded because of less schooling. As far as the speech of uneducated Negroes is concerned, it differs little from that of the illiterate white . . . Distinctive Negro speech, the so-called Gullah, is to be found only in those parts of the low country of South Carolina and Georgia in which the Negroes have greatly outnumbered the white for two centuries or more (1949:6).

In speaking of the low country, Kurath meant the coastal region of Georgia not Atlanta. The Writer's Project of the W.P.A. had already collected some samples of Gullah texts in the coastal regions of Georgia by 1940.

Raven I. McDavid, Jr. (1965) and James Sledd (1969) agree essentially with Kurath's notion that level of education or socioeconomic skewing is the origin of the differences between black and white speech.

However, the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS Project) (1974) is for the first time including some black informants separately in the urban language study so that linguists can assess the importance of racial and urban influence on the language. The urban Atlanta part of the project is under the direction of Dr. Charles Billiard of Georgia State University. His course for English teachers at GSU is especially enlightening for those teachers who have had little contact with black dialect and other

nonstandard dialects. Billiard's part of the dialect interview involves a one hour taped interview with each informant speaking in an informal interview situation with a college student. Some of the interviewers are black as are those interviewed. When the interviews are transcribed in phonetic notation they will be analyzed for particular items such as vocabulary words and verb forms. This in itself may not be very useful to the student's of black dialect but the entire collection of interviews and transcriptions will be housed at Emory University in Atlanta and will be open for researchers to examine (Charles Billiard, personal communication: 1981).

No written data has been collected in connection with the LAGS project, so that the method of obtaining data and the form of the data will be entirely different from that of the corpus collected at DeKalb College. However, it is to be expected that the results of the dialect questionnaire will give similar results to those of the compositions: i.e., a distinct black dialect and another white Southern dialect both of which intermingle with each other and with standard English. The DeKalb data is collected from a special subset of informants: the college students in the Atlanta/DeKalb area.

4.2 Labov:

In the early 1960's William Labov then a graduate student at Columbia University was one of the first linguists to try to write grammatical rules which incorporated demographic in them: race, social class, education, income, age, sex, religion and native language. He also differentiated social contexts: casual or careful speech. His first studies included urban New Yorkers and later he studied people living around Martha's Vineyard. By 1966 he turned his attention to the black dialect of Harlem.

Labov's data for the study he published in Language in the Inner City (1972a) was collected in south central Harlem from members of three black youth gangs plus 100 adults and a few white children. He used the variables of class, age, and race. Not only did he study the contraction and deletion of the copula, but he also studied the various occurrences of multiple negation in his taped interviews. In order to obtain samples in a more informal setting he employed some black interviewers who were at that time graduate students.

Although Labov later discussed other features of black dialect he is perhaps best known for his work on the copula deletion and contraction rule, the negative attraction and concord rule and his discussion of the "Logic of Nonstandard English," all of which are reprinted in his book Language in the Inner City (1972a).

Labov's new variable rules are unique in that they involve a new notational system, including social variables as constraints on the rules (1972a). He demonstrates that social factors do correlate with linguistic factors (1966a).

In the article on Logic, Labov takes issue with the notion that Black English Vernacular "lacks the means for expression of logical thought" (1972a:225). He maintained that speakers of Black English interact verbally with great skill, in fact, "in many ways working class speakers are more effective narrators, reasoners, and debaters than many middle class speakers . . . "(1972A:213). Therefore, he asserts, inner city black children are not linguistically deprived.

4.3 Stewart:

William A. Stewart discusses the earlier version of Labov's copula deletion rule in a paper called "Social Dialects" presented at the Research Planning Conference on Language Development in Disadvantaged Children held at the Ferkauf Graduate School of Education at Yeshiva University in 1966. The results of Stewart's paper are published in the minutes of the proceedings (1966):

The whole study is saturated with the view that all the grammatical differences between non-standard Negro and the standard Speech are essentially produced by phonological determinism - that is that phonological rules have altered the phonological structure of the language in such a way that, for examples, verb tense markers have become collapses or have disappeared, that singular-plural distinctions have collapsed or have disappeared. The view is, consequently, that the grammatical structure has been altered at a very low level, although at a deeper structure the grammatical systems of non-standard dialect are retained, and these deep structure similarities crop up now and then in certain features of the language (1966:53-62).

In his paradigm for the verb to be Labov sees the /r/ and the /z/ dropping off but the /m/ of the first person singular am is retained thus proving that there is a copula

in the deep structure of Black English. Stewart says this is not proof of the existence of the copula in deep structure because the form of the first person singular of the verb to be shows up as s in the sentence Im is. Stewart claims that this proves that there is no copula in Black English and that it should be added in, due to hypercorrection when it is present at all (1966: 60).

This argument has been elaborated very convincingly by John Holm (1984) with historical evidence from various creole languages. He shows in effect that historically there was no copula in positions before predicate adjectives and that in other positions the copula takes other forms not a single form as in standard English. It was Stewart and Holm's arguments that finally convinced Labov (1984) that the black dialect he had been studying was indeed a descendent of the earlier creole languages.

Stewart has always maintained that Black English has a different verbal system than standard English. In one early published description (1966:61) he described differences between invariant be and other verb forms:

he tired, and he working imply short term action

he be tired and he be working imply long term,

He was also perceptive in his reservations about the use of variable rules for linguistics. He pointed out that the form is either there or not there: a rule which will be written in terms of percentage of occurrence can never tell

one whether the form will be present for a single occurrence (Stewart, personal communication, 1980).

4.3.1 J. L. Dillard:

Perhaps as important as Stewart's own writings is the influence which he has exercised on many other creolists including J. L. Dillard and Ian Hancock. J. L. Dillard's Black English (1972) represents the only attempt to give a systematic presentation of the complete dialect both diachronically and synchronically. The dedication of this work "to William A. Stewart who made possible the serious study of Black English" is an expression of the debt which not only Dillard but also many other creolists feel to Stewart.

In his book, Dillard discusses syntactic differences between Black English and standard English because he, like Stewart, feels that syntax is the most important area to yield evidence of a creole ancestor (1972:40).

One such area Dillard examines is the "zero relative pronoun" which he says give the appearance of having an appositive or a redundant subject:

Ray sister she got a new doll baby.

Ray sister go to school at Adams she got a new doll baby.

Ray sister seven year old go to school at Adams she got a new doll baby.

That's the chick I keep tellin' you about got all that

money (1972:59-60).

As Dillard describes these constructions, "It is only superficially like an appositive; in more complex sentences, it picks up the subject function, after a possibly very long sequence of intervening modifiers, and links it to the verb" (1972:59).

In these examples Dillard suggests that the rules for Black English are different from white standard regarding the relative clause. There may be any number of relative clauses between the subject and its verb as in the first three examples. The she in the first three examples may be called a "predicate marker" (1972:59).

In the fourth sentence there seem to be two relative clauses: I keep tellin' you about with a deleted relative pronoun in the object position, and got all that money with a deleted relative pronoun in the subject position. Standard English would allow the relative deletion in the first case but not in the second.

Dillard feels that further evidence for his interpretation can be found in the structure of some pidgin and creole languages which often take the undifferentiated or object pronoun and vary it with the subject pronoun for no apparent reason, to the Standard English speaker, that is. Another example of such a sentence with deleted or missing relative pronouns is the more complicated:

The boy sit over there got a pencil in he hand he my

friend (1972:72n9).

Here the relative clauses are sit over there with deleted who, and got a pencil with deleted who, and the main clause would be he my friend with a deleted form of the verb to be, according to Dillard's analysis, as I understand it.

A second interesting feature of the syntax of Black English as discussed by Dillard also involves relative clauses. In addition to the relative clauses with missing pronouns, he also found superfluous relative pronouns and use of the wrong relative pronoun:

He got a gun which it sound like a bee.

My youngest sister, what live in Georgia, writ me about a week ago (1972:68).

According to Dillard, the first example shows a redundant subject for the relative clause: it. My own first inclination is to cross out the relative clause marker which and to use a conjunction instead. This is the conjunctive relative discussed in 3.3.9. Some students realizing that two ideas are being expressed place a period before which and begin a new sentence with Which.

In the second example the relativizer what is referring to a person and in standard English would have to be who (see 3.3.8 and 3.3.9). Because Dillard has found other similar sentences where the relative pronoun has been deleted, he suggests that these may be cases of imitation of standard English, but evidence from Jamaican Creole English

and Gullah point to the contrary, that these are features of the earlier Creole (1972:68-69). At DeKalb College, one student who had the most difficulty with relative clauses which he used as main clauses was a student born in the British West Indies who later served in the U. S. Army and became an American citizen.

Another feature of syntax which Dillard mentions is the inverted word order of embedded questions:

Can he go?

I don't know can he go.

Why she ain' over here? (1972:63)

Dillard stresses that the first example is not an embedded quotation but the equivalent of the standard English: I don't know if he can go where the if or whether does not occur and the word order has not been inverted. In the second example there is no subject verb inversion as there normally would be in standard English (1972:63). See section 3.3.3 for more on inverted word order.

There is adverbial use of the word if in different contexts. Dillard thinks these may be attempts to imitate standard English because one doesn't find if in other sentences of the type:

A man get rich, he still pay taxes. 'If a man'

Even a man get rich, he still pay taxes. 'Even if a

Dillard stresses that the area of syntax is the most important one to study: "Syntax, the focus of more modern

linguistics, is the area in which analysis of Black English is most revealing" (1972:65).

Another point where Dillard has contributed considerably to our understanding of Black English is the verbal system. Dillard says that linguists need to redefine the categories of the verb in so far as the verbal system of Black English does not seem to require that tense or time always be indicated as it is in standard English. Dillard believes that aspect and phase are the key categories here.

Differences such as these are well known to scholars who specialize in African languages. For example Malcolm Guthrie wrote about The Bantu Languages of Western Equatorial Africa (1953):

As is the case with many Bantu languages there are two main types of meaning expressed by means of one-word tenses. Some tenses may refer to an event in such a way as merely to indicate the relative time at which it occurs. In others however, there may be no time i.e. it is derived entirely from the act of speech, the tense then referring to some aspect of the event described by the verbal. The three main aspects indicated in this way are Completion, Progress, and Repetition.

Dillard (and Stewart before him) was ahead of his time in recognizing the link between Black English and the African languages. Dillard reiterates that tense is an optional

category for Black English: "whereas in standard English every verb in a sequence (in a sentence or a related series of sentences) must be marked as either present or past, in Black English only one of the verbs needs to be marked - although more than one may be so marked" (1972:42). Dillard does not state which of the verbs needs the tense marker if any is present: it may or may not be the first in the series. This question will require further investigation at some later date.

According to Dillard, Black English represents the quality of the action in a sentence with respect to aspect and phase: continuing or momentary action (1972:44). Other researchers have analyzed the Black English verb in different ways: Loflin, Loban, Fasold, Dunlap, Smitherman, Stewart, Labov. Almost everyone has noted the occurrence of the invariant be, the absence of the copula in the present tense, and the hypercorrect forms of the present tense verbs with and without -s. Dillard has also tried to analyze the past tenses or the momentary versus the continuing actions in the past.

I find Dillard's analysis of been and done, don, ain, and din't essentially correct for I have heard these forms in the speech of many Southerners. But I did not find many of these forms in the writing samples. A few of these are discussed in 3.2.6 under Tense.

Dillard writes that the category he will call aspect

marks the verb for "ongoing continuous, or intermittent" action (1972:43).

He be waitin for me every night (ongoing action)

He don' be waitin for me every night (negated be).

The aspect of momentary action is represented in the sentences:

He waitin' for me right now (momentary)

He ain' waitin' for me right now (negated)

Ain' is the negator of momentary action whether in the past or present. Don' is the negator for be, momentary, continuous, or intermittent action.

Another negator dit'n is the negation of past for example: he went yesterday versus he dit'n go yesterday. This complicated pattern of negation is rarely found in Creoles and may be the result of decreolization, Dillard thinks (1972:41).

It is possible that this more complicated negation system is based on African languages where the negated verbs are conjugated for tense or aspect in a different way than the affirmative verbs. One can see this type of negative system outlined for the various West African Bantu languages in Guthrie (1953) where on page 17 and 18 for example he discusses the negative conjugation of Lundu (Balundu) spoken in the former British Cameroons, mainly on the western side between Mamfe and the coast. Not only are there different morphemes in the conjugations for negative and affirmative

but these morphemes vary according to tense/aspect (i.e., past, future, aspect of completion, and aspect of repetition). In some instances the tone pattern also changes. Although this has never been studied, to my knowledge, tone patterns in Black English might have persisted as significant morphemes which were not recognized by linguists unfamiliar with them. More comparative work needs to be done in this respect.

Dillard points out that in the past tense markers been and done have persisted from earlier creoles. It seems that these correspond roughly to have and had in standard English but do not mean exactly the same thing. Both been and done appear to be perfective, that is, the action has been completed, but the first is immediate perfective while the second is remote perfective (1972:47). Dillard also states that the two fall together when negated, and that there may be a difference between stressed been and unstressed been. Also done been can be used together to prefix another verb form. Dillard feels that have/has/had when found in the speech of Blacks are borrowed from the standard and are often used incorrectly. Likewise, he thinks the been and done when found in the speech of whites is only borrowed from Black English (1972:48) (See 3.2.6 for some examples from the corpus).

4.4 Black English and the Written Dialect:

Four dissertations written in the 1970's classified and analyzed errors found in students' compositions.

4.4.1 Sternglass:

Marilyn Sternglass, writing her 1973 doctoral dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh, looked at the written language of 304 students in remedial writing classes at the freshman college level in Pittsburgh. She isolated seventeen linguistic features in six categories: past tense and past participle markers, forms of to be, nonstandard subject verb agreement, articles, prepositions, and pronouns. She used both black and white students for her study; however, she did not control for presence of another native language other than English which tends to make her conclusions ambiguous. She concludes that, "with the exception of invariant be, there was no qualitative difference in the nonstandard features produced by white and black students, but there was a quantitative difference" (1974a:280-283).

The difference between the two groups was a quantitative one rather than a qualitative one. The invariant be, however, did not occur at all in the compositions of the white group, and was used only two times by black students. Except for this feature, all the other sixteen features of nonstandard English were used by both groups although the pattern was for the blacks to use the

features more often than the whites. In the case of the verb to do, the white students used it incorrectly more often, five times as opposed to one occurrence among the blacks.

Sternglass did not limit her sample to native born residents of Pittsburgh and some of the similarity between the black and white students in her study may be due to interference from foreign languages. She also found no correlation with social class in her study which she says is due to the preselection procedures of remedial college English courses. Likewise she did not study structural differences such as embedded clauses or significant word order changes.

Writing for the TESOL Quarterly in 1974, Sternglass lists the types of errors she looked at and gives examples from the writing of black and white students. In the categories of past tense, the article, and the preposition she has distinguished between hypercorrect errors and other kinds of errors; she does not do this for her other categories. Separating out hypercorrect forms from other errors in the same type of structure can give misleading results as can separating to be verb errors from other verbal errors. In addition she has separated to do and to have errors from the other two groups of verb errors (1974a).

Other problems with Sternglass' study are the relatively small number of black students as compared to the white students: 81 blacks, 223 whites; and the fact that the compositions did not result from a testing situation which surely would have produced a larger number of more diverse errors (1974a:271-283).

It is significant that Sternglass' black students write just like other students with foreign language backgrounds because they were also influenced by foreign language interference: Black English.

4.4.2 Whiteman:

Another doctoral dissertation written by Marcia F. Whiteman for Georgetown University (1976) compares writing samples of black and white working class students from central and southeastern states. The ages of the informants ranged from 9 years to adult. She compared the following features found in the writing: plural -s absence, verbal -s absence, copula deletion, word final consonant cluster simplification and post vocalic -r absence. Whiteman found some evidence of age grading, that is to say that certain errors were more numerous in the younger group and tended to disappear in older informants. Also she noted some sex role patterning: certain errors were more apparent in male informants than females and vice versa. Whiteman concluded that, "in addition to influence from the spoken language system of the writer (i.e. dialect influence), there is also

a non-dialect-specific tendency to omit in writing certain inflectional suffixes (plural -s, verbal -s, and consonant cluster -ed" (1976:183). Because of the inconclusive results she got, Whiteman made use of performance errors as a way of explaining results that did not fit into the scheme.

She and Wolfram report on the findings of part of the dissertation in an article for the Florida Foreign Language Reporter (1971). This earlier study was based on nineteen compositions written by tenth grade students in Prince George's County, Maryland, who were native speakers of Black English.

The features described in this study were 3rd person singular -s, possessive -s, plural -s, absence of the form be, multiple negation, and habitual be. In addition, the authors single out some deviant spelling caused by pronunciation: consonant cluster simplification and pronunciation differences (/pin/ for /pen/). There is no statistical summary for this article; nevertheless there are some conclusions. All of the students had -s verb errors, some students made possessive errors, almost 20% of the students had trouble with -s plural, nearly one half of the students dropped a form of the verb to be at least once, multiple negation was avoided by the students in writing although they still used it in speech. Habitual be did not occur at all in this sample (1971).

4.4.3 Terrebone:

The third dissertation, by Nancy G. Terrebone (1975) for the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanics College, described the Black English dialect in the writing of young adults from Dayton, Ohio. She used 350 compositions written by forty-two black students in a predominantly white university in Dayton. The students were from working class backgrounds, aged 17 - 20. The linguistic features which she found most frequently occurring were absence of possessive -'s, third person singular absence of -s, -s before vowels, adverbial -s absence, and double negatives. The conclusion is that the person who deletes the copula in writing also is likely to use all the major BEV features that Terrebone studied: "Therefore, the task of teaching such an individual at the age of 17 to 20 to write in Standard English is formidable if not impossible" (1975:253).

Studying the very same age group as Sternglass, Terrebone made very different conclusions. There should not be a significant difference due to geographical location since Sternglass studied Pittsburgh and Terrebone looked at Dayton, Ohio; both are large urban centers in the North. The differences can be attributed to differences in sampling techniques: Terrebone looked at large samples from a small population while Sternglass looked at a small sample from a very large population.

In addition to statistical analysis of the more common features of Black English, Terrebone looks at some syntactic features of the dialect: direct questions, embedded questions, embedded commands, the noninterrogative clause with which, that, who, whom, or zero. Terrebone first notes that she can not determine the potential number of these constructions and that is why she did not attempt to quantify the results for these features. Yet this discussion is probably more interesting for the linguist than the preceding one.

When looking at embedded questions, Terrebone found many cases with inverted word order and some where if or whether were deleted. She notes that embedding in Black English seems to be following rules other than the rules for standard English. "It is apparent, however, that the pattern so often observed as characteristic of embedded questions in BEV is simply part of a large pattern of higher level rules which apply to many kinds of embedded structures" (1975:176). Her own examples illustrate this:

He ask me what class was I coming from.

You do not have to ask anyone can you go out.

The main concern about dating that upsets many parents is where are you going, what time is it over, and when will you be back (1975:171).

The way to solved the problem is for the white man free Black man and tell about they past and don't try to

stop there future (1975:176).

I can not have anyone working for me with long hair and
do not wear shoes (1975:176).

In addition to these unusual embedded structures in Black English, Terrebone also found unusual uses of clauses with which and that. Many of these may be due to hypercorrect usage, she thinks.

The world in which they will someday be a part

The band that I am a member

I am also taking Music 112, which I think it will be
enjoyable and challenging (1975:194).

Some people like to pick on student for which they
older brother or sister done to them.

The school that which I attended.

Black people carries a attitude which they are misuse.

He wish was granted which he never grow old (1975:195).

My father did find time for us to. Which most black
father has no time for his kids.

She gave me a D, which you know, I never had a D
(1975:195-196).

The students making these errors tended to be above average socioeconomic status, in Terrebone's study, and more often male than female. Terrebone does not know what the significant meaning of which might be even after examining all the data in her study (1975:197-198). And she makes reference to a discussion by Wolfram and Fasold in The Study

of Social Dialects in American English (1974b).

Many of these examples are similar to those found in the DeKalb corpus. Sentences with conjunctive which are analyzed in 3.3.9. Others that concern the relative with a preposition are described under prepositions in 3.2.7.

4.4.4 Funkhouser:

One final dissertation with interesting insight about the writing of black students was written by James L. Funkhouser at the University of St. Louis (1976). He analyzed the writing of forty one community college students all of whom were black. The features of Black English which he found were consonant cluster simplification, absence of -ed verb inflections, absence of final -s for third person singular, present tense contracted copula and auxiliary is, noun plural, noun possessive, adverbs, invariant be, absent negative contraction n't. Only the last item is unexpected for Black English data. I found all of the same features as Funkhouser except that I didn't find any instances of invariant be in the samples from DeKalb college students. Dunlap did find many examples in the speech of black fifth graders from Atlanta (see 4.6).

Although many have noted the multiple negation in Black English only a few have seen negative deletion. Funkhouser found an unusually high number, thirty-seven examples, which he was able to identify by context cues in the compositions of twenty-two of his students. He believes the negative is

present in the deep structure because he notices do insertion in some of the sentences.

Tecelia did have very much to offer (1976:121).

We had a meeting which was very important to me but I went anyway (1975:120).

Consonant cluster simplification can account for some but not all of the absences of negation (for examples from the DeKalb corpus see 3.3.2).

4.5 Black English in Other Parts of the United States:

Other linguists undertook the study of Black English in other parts of the country to see if the dialect they had found corresponded to what had already been described. Notable among these linguists are Walter Wolfram for Detroit and Ralph W. Fasold for Washington, D. C.

4.5.1 Wolfram:

Walter Wolfram's A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech (1969) was based on his Ph. D. dissertation in which he used 48 black informants from 700 taped interviews by the Detroit Dialect Society. He also checked twelve white speakers as a control group. The linguistic variables that he looked at were both phonological and grammatical. In phonology he looked at the final consonant clusters and final -d. The grammatical features he examined were zero copula, invariant be, suffix -Z, and multiple negation. Wolfram correlated his findings with social variables including: social status based on income, residence, occupation, education, racial isolation, age (10-55), sex, and style. One weakness in the study is that his informants may not have been native born Detroiters (1969).

For his informants Wolfram found that social status was the nonlinguistic factor that correlated most frequently with the dialect features that he looked at: "the most clear-cut linguistic boundary is found between the

lower-middle and the upper-working and the least clear-cut difference between upper-working and lower-working classes" (1969:214).

Another tendency that Wolfram observed is that "females generally approximate the standard English norm more than males do" (1969:215). Wolfram also noticed that teenagers and pre-adolescents used more stigmatized forms than did adults (1969:214).

Wolfram compared his results on the contraction and deletion of the copula to Labov's and showed them to be similar. Invariant be was found to occur most often in the lower working class pre-adolescent blacks. The loss of the suffix -Z in the verbal endings was most frequent in the lower and upper working class blacks. The loss of -Z on noun plurals and possessives was much less frequent for all the groups in the study. Multiple negation has been noted frequently in Black English. It seems that there is no limit to the number of indefinite pronouns, determiners or adverbs in a single sentence which can take the negation. Wolfram also points out that a sentence may have more than one underlying negative in which case the second negation is indicated by stress. Here again multiple negation occurs most frequently with the lower working class informants (1969).

One methodological weakness in Wolfram's study is his treatment of the final -d as a phonological feature.

However, his colleague Fasold was at the time looking into the verbal system of Black English in Washington, D. C., so Wolfram left this research up to him.

4.5.2 Fasold

Ralph W. Fasold's Tense Marking in Black English: A Linguistic and Social Analysis (1972a) is another attempt to correlate social and linguistic variables to account for differences between Black English and the standard. Using 47 black informants in Washington, D.C., He looked at the absence of -ed, absence of the present tense -s, and the distributive be. The social variables were class membership according to a Warner scale, sex, and age of the informants (1972a).

All of the informants must have lived at least half their lives in Washington, D.C. Fasold used eight interviewers, some of them black, to collect his corpus. The interviewers used word games and narratives in an attempt to get away from the formal interview situation and elicit less formal speech (1972a).

Fasold wrote some phonological rules which he thinks will account for the loss of the -ed past tense marker as a consonant cluster simplification (1972a:114):

After careful investigation of the phenomenon of -ed past tense is indeed a category in the grammar of Black English. It is rare for nonstandard past tense forms to be used with irregular verbs. The alternants

[t] and [d] can be variably removed by the final stop deletion rule and the [d] can be deleted variably in both Black English and standard English by a series of rules (1972a:115).

There does not seem, as Fasold states, that Black English has a past tense with -ed which is then deleted. Another explanation that seems equally plausible is that -ed is added to the verb as part of the decreolization process. Guthrie (1953:12) uses the term past tense as an approximate term for the Bantu languages of Western Equatorial Africa but he points out that often what we call tense is relative time in these languages and more often time reference is zero. It is not difficult to imagine a similar system for the black dialect described here. In this case the representation of tense in the sentence might be the result of a variable rule.

In studying the occurrences of the present tense -s, Fasold concludes that this is a true instance of a variable rule operating. However, he did find some speakers who rarely used -s verbal and for these subjects, the verb agreement rule is missing (1972a:146-147).

In his last feature studied, the invariant be, Fasold found a "substantial semantic and syntactic difference" between Black English and the standard. However, he notes that many researchers have confused the distributive be with other instances of be where the meaning differs

(1972a:182-3).

Using the same kind of data, many researchers have widely varying conclusions.

4.6 Comparisons of Black and White Informants:

Many linguists have tried to compare Black English with both standard and nonstandard white English since the whole question of black dialect surfaced as a legitimate field for investigation. A few of the researchers and their projects will be described here: Walt Wolfram, Crawford Feagin, Howard G. Dunlap, and Laurie W. Pant.

4.6.1 Wolfram:

After studying Black English in Detroit, Wolfram turned to a comparative study, "The Relationship of White Southern Speech to Vernacular Black English" (1974a).

Wolfram analyzed a large sample of tapes from Franklin County, Mississippi, around the town of Meadville. One hundred tape recordings were made and black and white informants were chosen from three age groups: 8-10, 11-13, and 16-17 year olds, plus some middle class adults. Most belonged to the lower socioeconomic level (1974a).

Wolfram limits his analysis to nonpast tense forms of the verb to be which would normally be realized as are with subjects we, you, you-all, and they. His results show the social influence on this type of deletion which he calls "desulcalization". The five informants who never deleted are or deleted it 10-30% of the potential occurrences were

four school teachers and the son of college educated parents (1974a).

Wolfram classified his informants into four groups on the basis of /r/ deletion after pronoun. Nine of the group, called group I, deleted 100% of the time. For these people /r/ deletion is categorical. One weakness in the statistics is, as Wolfram has pointed out himself, that once the verb form has been deleted, one can not tell if the verb would have been are or is (the latter being an instance of subject verb agreement error). Wolfram states that he believes is deletion is rare in the present tense for white speakers (1974a:504-505).

Wolfram tries to write a rule which will delete are for white speakers much as Labov has written the rule to delete the copula in the speech of black speakers (1974a:511). He concludes: "there are some Southern white lects in which copula deletion does operate qualitatively much as in VBE. From this point, there is a continuum of Southern white varieties which progressively diverge"(1974a:516). This particular analysis is not applicable to the DeKalb study since copula deletion was not a frequent feature of the white students in the study (see 3.2.3).

Wolfram's discussion of the invariant be is more applicable. He maintains that if one includes both the be used normally after will or would, and the be derived from another source one will see that Southern whites do indeed

use the invariant be. It is precisely this misanalysis of the invariant be which has led many linguists to the wrong conclusions about the verbal system of Black English.

As to the distributive be, it is sometimes difficult to tell from the meaning of the sentence whether there is a deleted will or would according to Wolfram because sometimes they may have a habitual or iterative meaning. Often the tag question or the negation is the only way to tell since the negation of the distributive be is don't be:

He don't be messing around

He don't be busy (1974a:520).

A test designed to see if black and white students could disambiguate the different forms of be showed that black speakers negated the distributive be with don't while most of the whites felt the form to be won't be. Wolfram concludes that while whites in the South used invariant be when will or would is deleted, only the blacks typically use "distributive be" (1974a:522).

In a final note in his article, Wolfram suggests that: "It seems only reasonable to conclude that Southern whites speak more like blacks than Northern whites, (although, of course, not identically), not only because of the settlement patterns of British dialects in America, but because some of the distinct speech, if you will, rubbed off" (1974a:524). (see 5.1.1 for more on the anglicist position).

4.6.2 Feagin:

Another linguist, Crawford Feagin, did a nearly exhaustive survey of the white Southern dialect spoken in her home town of Anniston, Alabama. Her book, Variation and Change in Alabama English, (1979) was adapted from her earlier dissertation.

Her primary sample consisted of taped interviews with 82 natives of Anniston stratified by age, social class, and locale. Locale refers to either rural or urban birthplace (1979:25). She tried to keep the interview style as natural and informal as possible, which she could do since she was a native of Anniston herself (1979:26).

Eight linguistic items were selected for comparison: the occurrences of the third person singular don't, third person plural was, third person singular is, third person plural except they + -s, multiple negation within the clause, ain't for have + be, nonstandard irregular preterits, and nonstandard irregular past participles (1979:280).

The tests showed that for the working class in comparison to the upper class, all the features were significant to the .01 level (1979:278). In comparing urban with rural informants for the same eight features, three were found to be significant at the .01 level (invariant was, invariant is, and nonstandard irregular preterit) and one feature was significant at the .05 level (invariant

don't). The other four features were not significant (1979:279).

In the older group of rural inhabitants, the men used the irregular preterit nonstandard form more frequently and the women used the NP plural + -s more frequently. In the older urban group, the only significant difference in features was that the females used the multiple negation more often than the men. For the urban teen group, Feagin found four significant features which the young men used more often than the young women: invariable was, NP plural + -s, ain't for have + be, and nonstandard irregular preterit (1979:269-289).

Feagin's examples of Anniston white speech offer very rich material for the linguist interested in Southern dialects, especially in the Alabama-Georgia area. One interesting point she has brought out is that the negatives with have/has/had have fallen together (are pronounced in an identical way) which would lead one to assume some difficulties for certain speakers in using these in the affirmative where the distinctions may have also tended to disappear (1979:213).

4.6.3 Dunlap:

Howard G. Dunlap, in his Ph.D. dissertation at Emory University (1973) examined the speech of 96 fifth grade students in Atlanta. He limited his analysis to forms of the verb to be. The taped interviews transcribed by his

daughter were also used by Laurie Pant for a Master's paper at Emory and have since been lost (Dunlap, personal communication, 1980).

The dissertation was later published by the American Dialect Society publications. Dunlap concludes:

Judging solely on the basis of conversation recorded from the 96 native fifth-grade Atlanta informants, it might be said that the use of invariant be is the one grammatical marker which distinguishes the speech of blacks from that of whites (1974).

William A. Stewart feels that Dunlap should have separated the forms of invariant be from those that had an underlying will or would (personal communication, 1980). Not doing so may have led Dunlap to some erroneous conclusions concerning the meaning of invariant be.

Dunlap's tapes or transcriptions of the tapes would be very helpful from an historical point of view and also would provide examples of the many nonstandard features which he did not analyze. However, his dissertation does contain an appendix with a transcription of one of the black children's interviews (1974:appendix IV).

Dunlap agrees with some linguists of his day that: nonstandard speech divides from standard speech along 'an underlying linguistic continuum' which is shaped not by race but by linguistic variables of social class and caste isolation (1974)

4.6.4 Pant:

Laurie W. Pant, at Emory University, used Howard G. Dunlap's data collected for his doctoral dissertation and analyzed it for other features in her Master's of Education paper in 1969. She looked at T-units and found that black students consistently produced more subordinate clauses than the white group. The groups had been matched for age, sex, and socioeconomic class but the black group produced 1919 subordinate clauses to 1376 for the white students. Girls produced slightly more subordinate clauses than boys; 1730 to 1556. But when the high and low socioeconomic classes were compared their totals were almost the same: high 1648 to low 1638.

Her conclusion was that "race seems to affect the amount of subordinate clause production while T-unit length is related to socioeconomic level. This would indicate that amount of subordinate clauses is not the major factor in producing longer T-units" (1969).

The data, from Dunlap's transcriptions, for this study has been lost or misplaced so no further analysis can be done on it; however, the findings agree with the results of the DeKalb written sample as analyzed in this dissertation. Subordination was a very important stylistic device in the writing of the black students (see 3.3.1 for more on this).

Chapter 5: Some Theoretical Considerations:

The purpose of this research project has been to elucidate a corpus of some 40,000 words from remedial college students, both black and white, native to Atlanta and Georgia. As such, it is a dissertation in Applied Linguistics. For many years Applied Linguistics was looked upon as a valuable preparation for the language teacher but of very little theoretical value for the linguist. This view has changed recently and the inception of the new doctoral program in Applied Urban Linguistics has heralded a new beginning for Applied Linguistics with a recognition that this field draws on theoretical linguistics as its base and contributes its share of insights to the theoretical linguist concerning historical linguistics, descriptive linguistics, sociolinguistics, and mathematical linguistics.

For this reason I have deemed it essential to devote an entire chapter to a discussion of some vital theoretical problems that affect the study of the black dialect we have seen in this dissertation.

This discussion will be divided into three parts:

1. Origin of black dialect.
2. Current Tendencies.
3. Educational and Legal Implications.

5.1 Origin of Black Dialect:

There are two main points of view on the origin of black dialect. They are the creole hypothesis and the anglicist one. Both of these views have many proponents. However, it seems that the anglicists have recently capitulated: some have gone over to the creolists and others have espoused an old cause under a new name, Print Code Deficit (dyslexia) which says that some students have a neurological deficit that interferes with their ability to read and write standard English.

5.1.1 The Anglicist Hypothesis:

The view of one group of linguists is that Black English does not exist at all but as Raven I. McDavid, Jr. says: "The range of variants is the same in Negro and in white speech, though the statistical distribution of variants has been skewed by the American caste system" (1965:258). This being the case, McDavid rejects the creole hypothesis.

Howard G. Dunlap, in his dissertation at Emory University in Atlanta (1973), also mentions the statistical skewing of the feature he studied: the present tense of the verb to be. In his comparison of black and white fifth graders in Atlanta he could find no verb form that the blacks students used which the whites did not also use except the invariant be.

As a part of the rejection of the creole origins hypothesis, the anglicists also suggest that all deviant forms in their speech can be traced back to archaic English as it existed at the time the black African slaves were brought over to this country.

This dissertation has shown repeatedly that the black students' dialect features are not a function of their social class but are directly related and significantly so to their racial grouping (and thus to their ethnic heritage). Furthermore, many of these features may be traced to possible creole origins.

If there are forms in their speech and writing reminiscent of archaic English perhaps these are due to the present day influence of the King James Version of the Bible well known to all Southern Christians. A study might be conducted to determine correspondences between archaic prepositions, adverbs, and vocabulary items using a computer. However the results turn out, this would not account for differences in syntax, especially the verbal system, that exist between Modern Standard English and Black English (see Holm 1984 for specific evidence corroborating the findings of this dissertation).

5.1.2 The Creolist Hypothesis:

The creolist hypothesis has been described by William A. Stewart (1964), Beryl Bailey (1965), and J. L. Dillard (1972) but perhaps the foremost proponent of the creolist hypothesis and a great creolist is William A. Stewart, who is now at the City University of New York Graduate School and University Center teaching in the new program in Applied Urban Linguistics. His explanation of the origin of Black English is the most convincing and is now generally accepted. He related that when African slaves came to this country:

The form of English which they acquired was a pidginized one, and this kind of English became so well established as the principal medium of communication between Negro slaves from different African language backgrounds that it was passed on as a creole language to succeeding generations of the New World Negroes, for whom it was their native tongue (1967:448).

When a pidgin becomes creolized it may expand in grammatical complexity to the level of "normal or unpidginized languages" (1967:448n5).

One possible reason why the pidgin English in the New World was so widespread and similar is that it originated as a lingua franca or trade language on the West Coast of Africa where the slaves came from, according to Stewart.

Then in the eighteenth century, there was a split between the field hands on plantations and the domestic house slaves in the New World. After the Civil War the field hand creole dialect began to lose many of its creole characteristics and took on some of the features of local white dialects (1967:451-452).

Stewart believes that the subsequent creole began to modify in favor of the prestigious standard dialect, but the process was slow and not complete. He writes: "Indeed, the non-standard speech of the present day American Negroes still seems to exhibit structural traces of the creole predecessor" (1969:455).

Stewart feels that the differences that exist today between nonstandard white dialects and Black English are more syntactic than phonological or lexical (1968:463). He writes that the nonstandard speech of blacks may be:

due in part to the influence of the nonstandard dialects of whites with whom they or their ancestors have come in contact, but they also may be due to the survival of creolisms from the older Negro field-hand speech of the plantation (1967:452).

The decreolization which has taken place in Black English in the last hundred years has been mainly in the functional and lexical vocabulary rather than in syntax, according to Stewart's theory (1968:456).

However, Stewart does not think that Black English is

disappearing, but rather that the older dialect survives in the speech of young children. The retention of certain creole forms by some children may be due to the fact that children pass the forms from one to another. Originally proposed by Stewart (1965), age-grading in Black English has been further discussed by Dillard (1972:8): "relatively archaic forms are preserved in the speech of younger children." Thus as the features of Black English begin to disappear in the individual's speech as he grows older, the same features are passed along to younger children so the dialect does not die out.

Many of the features of Black English previously described in Chapter 3 of this dissertation can be traced to a possible creole origin: lack of subject verb agreement, lack of final -s on plural nouns, possessives, and adverbs, missing tense markers of past participles or past tense verbs, and zero copulas all point to the creole origins hypothesis. There is additional evidence for age-grading not within the sample but between this study and the group of informants that Dunlap studied, Atlanta fifth graders, of a decade ago. If one can assume a similar population for the two studies, the feature zero copula was used less frequently by the DeKalb group whose age was approximately ten years older than the Atlanta group (see 3.2.3.4 for more complete discussion).

Implicit in the creolist hypothesis is the notion of

decreolization: black dialect is evolving toward the standard dialect through the process of decreolization. Thus the zero copula has not been deleted but the copula has been introduced in certain contexts by decreolization as the students attempt to make their dialect resemble standard English. The anglicist position implies that the black dialect is a divergence from the standard and therefore must be moving away from it. Even William Labov's variable rule allows the copula to be deleted implying that it was once present. More recently Labov has said that he now believes the creolist hypothesis (1982).

A third view somewhat related to the anglicist's is the print code deficit hypothesis explained by Patrick Hartwell in Research in the Teaching of English (1980).

5.1.3 Print-Code Deficit:

Hartwell's Theory which has been supported by a number of educators is that "dialect interference in writing, in and of itself, does not exist" (1980:101). He adds that, "apparent dialect interference in writing reveals partial or imperfect mastery of the neural coding system that underlies both reading and writing" (1980:101). Hartwell thinks that what others have called dialect interference in writing is idiosyncratic in nature and has nothing to do with dialects.

Dialect interference has been well documented in this dissertation and has been statistically demonstrated. In addition, the students in this study were adults not children so their brains were presumably fully developed. They already know how to write but they do not write standard English.

The only purpose that the print code theory may serve is to exculpate teachers from any blame in the continuing controversy of whether or not black students have been discriminated against in testing (see 5.1.3 for a discussion of the student's right to his dialect). For if the black dialect is not responsible for interference in writing, then tests which fail black students in greater numbers are not discriminatory. This, of course, is incorrect as has been demonstrated over and over again in this dissertation. The black students' dialect was responsible for interference in writing. The Supreme Court has also recognized the discriminatory nature of some written essay tests.

5.2 Current Tendencies:

What linguistic tendencies have been operating in the language of the students in this study and other students like them to produce the linguistic forms seen in the corpus?

Linguists have proposed a number of different models and methods of handling and explaining linguistic change. Many of these methods differ but are not mutually exclusive and I have tried where possible to make use of several models since no single one seems adequate to explain all of the examples. The methods explained are the following:

Hypercorrection is perhaps the most puzzling tendency and one with much impact on this data. A theory of hypercorrection must be predicated on the notion that the forms found in the corpus are deliberate, that is, the product of linguistic competence and not performance errors. I offer a discussion of ten statements about hypercorrection drawn from the linguistic literature with examples from the corpus to illustrate each one. This hypercorrection theory have given me the insight into the data I needed to explain the linguistic forms. I plan to develop this further at some later time into a theory of language change.

The creole continuum offers another model where decreolization can be statistically demonstrated. It presupposes two completely different systems on each end of the scale: a basilect and an acrolect. Decreolization

moves in the direction of the acrolect.

Other models which are explained are linguistic interference as discussed by Uriel Weinreich (1967), variable rules presented by William Labov (1967), and the error analysis of Henri Frei (1929).

5.2.1 Hypercorrection:

Hypercorrection is a many faceted phenomenon in language which can cause language change. I will present ten general statements about hypercorrection culled from various sources in the literature.

1. Hypercorrection is a phenomenon of language learning both first and second language.
2. Hypercorrection is the overgeneralization of rules in the target language.
3. Hypercorrection reveals the nature of the oppositions in a language.
4. Hypercorrection may make a system more complex rather than simpler: increase the oppositions.
5. Early references to hypercorrection referred to pronunciation but actually it may occur on any level of language: phonemic, morphologic, syntactic, lexical, or semantic.
6. Hypercorrections are manifestations of linguistic change.
7. Hypercorrection may also occur for the listener: passive speech as well as active speech.
8. Hypercorrection does not always have to be the presence of something; it may also be the absence of something: zero morpheme.
9. Hypercorrection presupposes a knowledge of the rules of the target language: thus it is a positive force in

language learning.

10. If all the above are true then hypercorrection is also a valuable clue for the psycholinguist in finding out how people learn languages and in understanding the functioning of the brain.

5.2.1.1 Phenomenon of Language Learning:

Hypercorrection is neither a model nor a method for linguistic description: it is a phenomenon of language which many linguists have noted in both child language acquisition and second language learning. In child language studies, hypercorrection is considered a necessary step in the acquisition of an adult grammar of the mother tongue. An error is produced by analogy and overgeneralization of a rule in the wrong context.

For example, when a small child says I readed the book, he is overgeneralizing the rule that adds ed to verbs in the past tense when read belongs to a small subgroup of verbs that changes its middle vowel instead of adding ed.

If a black student says, for example, you reads the book, he may be overgeneralizing a rule that there must be an s morpheme on the verb in the present tense without realizing that the rule only applies to third person singular not second person singular. Note that the second person plural pronoun is you all or y'all.

These errors are systematic in that a certain knowledge of the structure of the target language is necessary; they are not performance errors. Along with the systematic quality of the error goes an implied notion of the direction

of the linguistic change. The language of the child, second language learner, or upwardly mobile person using the hypercorrection is moving toward and approaching the standard or prestige dialect.

5.2.1.2 Overgeneralization of Rules:

Another notion of this discussion of hypercorrection is that the learner's dialect is moving in the direction of greater regularity and more simplicity and standardization of rules. Much hypercorrection operates in this way. Rules are extended to contexts where they normally would not apply, and by doing this eliminate exceptions. For example in the writing of some of the students in this study, each final -s takes an apostrophe whether it is possessive, a contraction or just a plural.

It is important to note that many of the forms generated by a possessive -s will be correct but not because the student can correctly apply the possessive rule. In this case only the incorrect forms (i.e., absence or hypercorrection) would be counted as errors in an error count but these are enough to give the linguist a clue as to what is happening and which rules appear to be different in the individual's language.

It is apparent therefore that many of the incorrect forms found in the corpus do not represent features of Black English as it is spoken by students in the DeKalb study. They are the result of hypercorrection. Also the hypercorrect errors themselves tend to gloss over many of the differences between the black dialect and the standard. For example, the casual observer seeing that the students use apostrophe s might assume that this is the normal way of

signaling possession in black dialect and that where it is misused there is a performance error. Actually black dialect uses proximity to show possession: Julian mother and boy house.

5.2.1.3 Nature of the Oppositions in a Language:

Another interesting thing about hypercorrection is that it provides a clue to the nature of the oppositions in a language and a clue about what the oppositions will be in the future. The linguist Frei writes of the error, "si l'on admet en effet que la faute assume, dans le jeu de la par[^]ole, un r[^]ole fonctionnel, elle aura par la m[^]eme, pour le linguiste, une valeur documentaire de premier plan" (1929:32).

In this view of language errors are clues. Frei believes that if a language has a need for a particular function then a means will be found to express that function. Martinet also viewed language as functional: a language is a system of oppositions each one carrying a meaning that speakers are aware of. Although concerning primarily questions of internal change in a language rather than contact phenomena, these ideas can help to explain what has been happening in the texts of this study.

For example, many have wondered if the singular/plural opposition is meaningful in Black English because of the apparent random way -s is placed on nouns.

001 unwanted pregnancy occur
 009 nursing to me mean
 235 socity say
 053 clothes makes the person
 231 laws destroys

229 today's college's offers
 227 to keep a good friends is to be yourself
 002 for one simple reasons
 019 I have three sister and brothers
 230 a good parents

It is worth considering the possibility that Black English might actually have oppositions more complex than the singular/plural opposition of standard English. For example, most Caribbean creoles express the noun plural by postposing or preposing the third person plural pronoun, but only if the NP in question is already definite. The more basic distinction for these languages is definite/indefinite and specific/nonspecific. NP's which are either indefinite or true generics can not be marked for plurality. Some African languages also have the complex opposition of singular/ individual/ plural/ collective.

If a more complex system can be assumed for the historical predecessor of Black English, then it is easy to see how some speakers would have had difficulty trying to fit their semantic distinctions into a binary opposition: either the semantic categories will merge or new morphemes must be created to carry on the semantic oppositions.

Because I am aware of several studies now going on which will attempt to clarify this question, I will not at this time attempt to guess what these semantic categories of the ancestor of Black English might have been. Suffice it

to say that these distinctions in the noun must have been different from those of standard English. More work needs to be done to determine if this system of oppositions is widespread in the black dialect and if the semantic distinctions include, for example, singular/plural, definite/indefinite, individual/collective or specific/nonspecific. Hypercorrections have given a clue that some other oppositions previously existed in the black dialect. These semantic categories may not be operative anymore as decreolization occurs and black dialect approaches the standard. But work needs to be done on the creoles to determine the exact nature of the oppositions that existed historically.

5.2.1.4 System of Oppositions May Become More Complex:

Another tendency implicit in the theory of hypercorrection is that the system of oppositions does not always simplify: it may become more complex. Frei has referred to this phenomenon as differentiation. The leveling effect of hypercorrection has already been discussed in terms of overgeneralization of rules for a given context. At the same time, differentiation takes place extending the context of a rule and adding new oppositions in the language where they did not exist before.

For example, in the perfective tenses of standard English there may be either I have read or I had read the book meaning present perfective or past perfective. As a result of some phonetic assimilation both fall together in the South in the negative as I hadn't read the book, a sort of unmarked perfective. This may yet lead to some confusion on the part of white Southerners when using the perfective tenses in the affirmative. A collapse of part of the system may lead to collapses in other environments. Speakers of Black English formerly had a system of perfectives using been and done. Now there is apparent borrowing of been and done by white school children from black children in the DeKalb area, as for example, I been read the book with stress on been, meaning 'I have already read the book'. Although some of the black students in this study seem to use have or had more in the sense of been or done, they also

have available the semantic categories of standard and the nonstandard perfectives. Thus what appears to be a collapse of the system at one level may actually lead to new differentiations on another.

William A. Stewart (personal communication, 1983), offers another example of how hypercorrection can create new oppositions in a language. The loss of -s on the third person singular verb or the zero morpheme makes the singular and plural look alike. However, the hypercorrect -s on some verbs is creating a new opposition for some speakers, because it now may represent a contrast between present and nonpresent.

5.2.1.5 Hypercorrections May Occur on all Levels of Language: Phonological, Grammatical, Lexical:

Weinreich has pointed out that linguistic interference may take place at all levels of language (1967) and since hypercorrection is a phenomenon of interference it may also occur in phonology, grammar, or semantics.

Early references to hypercorrection can be found in Bloomfield who says these hyperurbanisms are overelegant forms from Latin or French which are incorrectly pronounced. He gives the example of a nonstandard speaker who uses "stilted verbiage and over involved syntax" in order to avoid plain dialect (1933:499).

Fries uses the term hyperurbanism and mentions using the objective pronoun whom in the subject position. "Would you let me know whom should be notified in case of accident" (1940:95).

Hockett defines hyperurbanism as the situation which arises in dialect borrowing when "an individual who is attempting to improve the outward symbols of his social status often develops regular habits - that is, analogies - for modifying his earlier pronunciation of words" (1966:436). For example, he cites /tjuwzdij/ for /tuwzdij/ tuesday and by analogy /njuwn/ for /nuwn/ noon where no native speaker of the /tj/ /dj/ /nj/ dialect would use it (1966:436).

Labov uses the term hypercorrect for speech which "goes

beyond the usage attributed to the highest status social group" (1972b:125). For example, Labov has noticed that in New York City, the lower middle classes and especially the females were the main source of hypercorrection in their quest for upward social mobility.

An example of hypercorrection in syntax has been suggested by William A. Stewart (personal communication, 1983) involving the negative concord rule. Negative concord as proposed by Labov says that once the sentence is negative other words in the sentence may be negated without changing the meaning of the sentence. Double or triple or quadruple negation is quite possible for the speaker of black dialect.

Nobody didn't go means 'Nobody went' in standard English. Stewart points out that through hypercorrection by reversing the negative concord rule of black dialect a speaker can get Everybody didn't go whichs means 'Nobody went' in standard English.

In the texts from the DeKalb sample, there are a few sentences where sentence negation has disappeared completely through hypercorrection and reversals of the negative concord rule. For example:

218 I did[n't] want to go to school big school and had to quite because I did[n't] know how to study and I [didn't] want to go all four years, so I said I'm going to a junior college to see what school is all about. 'I didn't want to go to a big school and have to quit because I didn't know

how to study and I didn't want to go all four years, so I said I'm going to a junior college to see what school is all about.'

There are three suppressed negatives in the sentence. While it is possible that in speech the negation might be carried by a suprasegmental tone or pause, in writing there is no such feature.

5.2.1.6 Manifestations of Linguistic Change:

Undoubtedly hypercorrection gives clues as to which direction linguistic change may take. Weinreich asserts that languages have certain latent tendencies for change which are simply waiting for a catalyst to trigger the change mechanism (1967:25). Sapir called these tendencies drifts (1921).

Labov's earlier book on sound change in New York City (1966) mentions that "hypercorrection can operate in a more general sense as the mechanism of change in response to pressures from below" (1966a:567). By this he meant that speakers in attempting to produce standard forms at times overshoot their target and produce hypercorrect forms.

Labov seems to believe that sound change can be observed, contrary to what Bloomfield may have said. Dialect geographers have known for a long time that sound change at least can be observed.

From the spelling in some of the texts it is easy to see examples of apparent sound change just as variant spelling of medieval texts heralded changes in the language. There are many consonant clusters at the ends of words which are disappearing from the spoken language and these final consonants are not represented in the writing of many of the students. Hypercorrection shows some of these reappearing where they do not belong in Standard English. For example: the loss of the final consonant from assistant, assistance,

different, difference, confident, and confidence. There is the addition of the final t in enough, through, and final d in wrecker and while.

While conducting a dialect interview with an Atlanta native for the LAGS project, I observed an intrusive r when this feature is not supposed to occur in Georgia. For example:

I'm an edurcated person. 'educated'

Warshington 'Washington'

Changes in the internal vowels can be observed in the speech and in writing of many southerners. Since /pin/ and /pen/ have fallen together, both being pronounced with the vowel /i/, it is often necessary to say ink pen when referring to the writing instrument. Likewise, /win/ win and /win/ when have fallen together since the vowels are the same and the /h/ sound is lost. Hypercorrect spelling gives the clues to these sound changes.

5.2.1.7 Hypercorrection May Occur for the Listener:

Weinreich notes that hypercorrection may be overdifferentiation on the part of the listener who is a speaker of another dialect or language. He gives the example of a study done by Markwardt testing some speakers of Spanish who said they heard distinctions in English where these distinctions do not exist (1967:19).

In the DeKalb corpus are several examples of hypercorrection resulting from hearing of a listener with different semantic categories in his dialect. One such example of this in the texts is the student who tried to use the standard English verbal system to express distinctions in the perfective aspect which only black dialect has. If he heard anterior or perfective aspect everytime he heard the perfect have in standard English he must be very confused by other people's apparent errors. 201 During that period of time he have influence my life tremendously.

Since the student is referring to a particular past time, standard English would normally take 'had influenced' or simple past tense. This student is apparently trying to express the perfective of black dialect. This would be been influence in the black dialect according to J. L. Dillard's presentation of the verbal system (1972:47).

5.2.1.8 Hypercorrection May Be Presence or Absence of a Feature:

Hypercorrection has been defined as the presence of a feature when it is not needed. For example, the /j/ of /njuwn/ noon. But hypercorrection may also be the absence of something, in other words, a zero morpheme.

Labov has written his rules for the present tense verb to show a loss of the final -s. Another way to look at this loss might be to say that the zero morpheme was placed on singular verbs through the extension of a rule to new contexts (hypercorrection).

Note that for the creolists like Stewart, this view is not possible since they deny that the -s ever was there. Most linguists would view the addition of an unnecessary -s to a plural verb as a hypercorrection or the addition of an unnecessary ed morpheme to a verb that does not take the -ed.

I readss

you readss

he readed

But one might also say:

he read + 0

he fit + 0 (for fitted by analogy with hit(past) and cut(past)).

These last two might be viewed as hypercorrections with unnecessary zero morphemes.

Another example of hypercorrection leading to the absence of features is the example already given of reversal of the negative concord rule. In this case the student is trying hard to eliminate the double negative that he usually uses because of negative concord so that he eliminates all negation from the sentence.

In another area, the deleted copulas described previously in section 3.2.3, while not generally the result of hypercorrection may be just that in a few cases.

There are five examples of black students who deleted the verb be from infinitives and future or conditional tenses. This could be the result of the student's trying to avoid the be of black dialect and deleting the wrong form of be. For example:

015 take out the number of plates that will 0 needed.

035 cause they don't really know what it means to 0 a senior.

037 I'm a person who wants to 0 known for what she can do best.

220 It would just 0 a waste of very valible time.

226 Careing is another qualitie that need to 0 added.

These examples provide evidence for the hypercorrection which deletes a feature and they also provide proof of the existence of a black dialect be which is stigmatized in some way so that it is avoided. Other linguists had attested to the separate form be for black dialect which has a meaning

of ongoing action. This invariant be was not found in the DeKalb corpus but this evidence of hypercorrection suggests that some of the copula deletions might in fact be these.

For example:

037 the best at what she 0 doing or learning 'be doing'

055 He 0 very talent 'be very talent'

218 It 0 a good place to get where you are going. 'be a good place'

5.2.1.9 Hypercorrection Presupposes a Knowledge of the Rules of the Target Language: Thus it is a Positive Force in Language Learning.

In the view of the psycholinguist, hypercorrections are the normal process in the acquisition of a language by a child as he strives to acquire and generalize rules of the language. This definition implies that hypercorrection is a process which is beneficial and leads to a more sophisticated command of the target language.

In the view of the second language teacher, on the other hand, hypercorrection is a scourge, something to be stamped out because it is counterproductive and only perpetuates errors. The remedial or developmental teacher views hypercorrection in much the same way because it usually represents an unfortunate attempt by the student to sound learned or sophisticated.

A third view is that of the linguist who sees that hypercorrections are our picture of language change in progress. We can see the change taking place and the mechanism of change. The mechanism of hypercorrection is the same in all three cases. The only difference is that in the first instance hypercorrection is seen as a short term transition, a rite of passage, while in the second case it is a rut that one gets stuck in, and in the third, it is a glimpse of interesting things to come.

The English teacher can take heart when he or she sees

students using hypercorrections because they indicate that the student really does have a regular system of rules at his command. He would not be able to hypercorrect if he did not have some notion of rules and grammar. The teacher ought to take this as a positive sign that there is hope for the student's eventual mastery of the grammar of the language he is trying to learn whether it is standard English or any other.

This is a much more positive view than that of a specialist in second language learning like Selinker who speaks of fossilized interlanguage competence as something that would not change or improve as long as communicative function were to be satisfied. However, in view of the upward mobility of the students in the DeKalb sample, a level might be reached where they could no longer communicate with their peers unless their language were to approach the standard. Many of the students had already reached that level where furthering their educations had become imperative.

5.2.1.10 Hypercorrection is a Valuable Clue for the Psycholinguist in Finding out how People Learn Languages and in Understanding the Functioning of the Brain.

Language learning seems to be a process of trial and error with the learner trying to formulate regularized rules and then attempting to produce utterances to see if his native speaking hearers will accept the product of his rules as grammatical in that language. If the utterances are not grammatical, then the rules will undergo further refinement. Hypercorrection is both a process and the result of this process, a necessary result of the learning process.

The process seems to be recursive in that the system of rules is continually being checked and rechecked as feedback comes in. The more utterances the student produces, the more feedback he gets, the quicker he can refine his set of rules to produce the target language.

This process would also appear to be very time consuming and counterproductive. However, one need only look to the speed with which young children will pick up a second language to see that only the human brain is a powerful enough machine to handle this many operations and store this much information. More research needs to be done by psycholinguists to see exactly how the information is stored in the brain and how the set of rules can be infinitely revised.

5.2.2 Post-Creole Continuum:

One model which is especially applicable to the linguistic situation presented in this dissertation is the creole continuum as outlined by Derek Bickerton (1973). In this model language is seen as "a dynamic process evolving through space and time" (1973:643). Bickerton's model not only accounts for free variation in language of the present day but also shows how the language is evolving. "The principal of least effort is at work, carrying out the necessary changes with the minimum introduction of new forms" (1973:659).

Bickerton sees a scale with an acrolect or prestige dialect at one end and a basilect or nonstandard variety at the other end. The direction of change is toward the acrolect. Language does not exist in a static state, as represented by this model. It is dynamic, moving "across time, across space, and within the individual" (1973:668).

I have used the post-creole continuum model to represent the students' use of the first four morphological dialect features in this dissertation to demonstrate the nonstandard to standard continuum (see Chapter 1 Table 3). This model is also applicable to the post-creole continuum language contact situation where nonstandard and standard coexist.

Table 3 shows 11% of the black students at the stage closest to the basilect using all four dialect features.

It places no white students at that point on the scale. At the other end of the scale near the acrolect are 32.7% of the white students (those who use no dialect features) and 7.4% of the black students. This type of model is much more meaningful than a statistical model for chi square demonstrating significance to the .01 or .05 level of confidence which implies a static situation.

5.2.3 Linguistic Interference:

There is linguistic interference and borrowing among the three language systems in the dissertation corpus: black dialect, standard English, and white Southern nonstandard. In book, Languages in Contact, (1967), Uriel Weinreich stresses that it makes no difference whether the two systems in contact or spoken by the same person are distinct languages or dialects of the same language, the phenomenon of interference will occur at all levels where there is a difference between the systems (1967:2). The data in this dissertation has amply demonstrated the linguistic borrowing that has gone on between white nonstandard and black dialect. The four significant features of black dialect morphology are not used exclusively by black students. There are several informants in the white group who use a large number of black dialect features. Table 16 at the end of Chapter 2 gives frequencies of various features for each informant. Student #105 had six nonstandard -ed's and one nonstandard loss of nominal final -s. For her, there

appears to be a high degree of borrowing from black dialect. She also has a low socioeconomic index number which may account for an increased familiarity with black dialect. Student #117 had three subject verb agreement errors and three nominal final -s errors. She also has a rural background. Student #306 with a low s.e. index number used ten dialect features. #313 with both low s.e. index and rural birth used seven features.

5.2.4 Variable Rules and Statistics:

Quantification of another sort has been used by William Labov in order to estimate the frequency of operation of certain optional rules according to specific nonlinguistic features. Labov was the first to quantify these optional rules and to use social factors to do so. The problem with variable rules is that they may tell the probability of whether a rule may operate but they do not tell if it will. The problem is to translate statistics into reality. The rules attempt to describe a static situation without taking into account linguistic interference from other dialects or more specifically decreolization.

For the DeKalb sample there did not appear to be any social factors operating on the data other than the presence or absence of black dialect or Southern nonstandard dialect. Sex, age, rural birth, or socioeconomic status which had been thought to be major factors were not significant for this data. Hence there was no need to employ complex statistical formulas such as the VARBRUL computer program when a simpler more traditional approach was more efficient.

The only other statistical measures used in the study were the chi square test for the significance of variables. Since the observed frequency for one of the factors, the zero copula was only five for the white group, the results may not be as reliable as hoped for. The results show the first four morphological dialect features significant to the .01 level of confidence with 3 degrees of difference.

5.2.5 Frei's Analysis of Errors:

In his 1929 dissertation at the University of Geneva, Henri Frei wrote about the nature of errors:

Une des thèses de ce livre sera de montrer que dans un grand nombre de cas la faute, qui a passé jusqu'à présent pour un phénomène quasi-pathologique, sert à prévenir ou à réparer les déficits du langage correct (1929:19).

He notes that mistakes are made unconsciously because of the functions they serve. Language adjusts to new functions by certain processes which Frei describes in great detail in his dissertation. The processes or tendencies he describes are assimilation, differentiation, brevity, invariability, and expressivity.

These tendencies may take place on any level of the language: phonology, morphology, syntax, or semantics. I have made use of these ideas in describing the data of the dissertation and also in explaining hypercorrection. Assimilation is the tendency of language to reduce signs to a homogeneous mass. Differentiation occurs when forms which have fallen together are given separate functions again. Brevity refers to the tendency of language toward economy. Invariability is the tendency to borrow identical forms from one grammatical category to another. Expressivity is Frei's term for the phenomenon in language of creating new forms

when old oppositions become automatic or arbitrary. All these concepts have contributed to my understanding of what was going on in the data. The major difference in Frei's work is that he seems to view the language he is studying as diverging from a norm or standard language whereas in the data presented in this dissertation the students' nonstandard forms are converging on the standard dialect, that is moving from different dialects to one norm. The situation is reversed or rather the linguist's point of view is reversed. The students in this study were approaching the standard language and will probably reach the standard in their lifetimes.

5.3 Educational and Legal Implications:

Do black students or any speakers of a nonstandard dialect have a right to their own language? An organization of college English teachers issued the following statement in 1972, published in part in College Composition and Communication (vol. 25.4:247):

We affirm the student's right to his own language - the dialect of his nurture in which he finds his identity and style. Any claim that only one dialect is acceptable should be viewed as attempts of one social group to exert its dominance over another, not as true or sound advice to speakers or writers, nor as moral advice to human beings. A nation which is proud of its diverse heritage and of its cultural and racial variety ought to preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly the need for teachers to have such training as will enable them to support this goal of diversity and this right of the student's to his own language.

This statement fits in well with the climate of equality and tolerance toward ethnic differences which prevailed in the 1960's and 1970's. Preservation of dialects was valuable in addition to mastery of the standard. But in reality another kind of discrimination emerged: the standard English essay exam. In Georgia, a student attending a public college or university must pass a

standard statewide essay exam or he can not graduate from a four year school. Although revealing the educational results of discrimination, nonmastery of the standard, the exam itself was seen as discriminatory.

The essay at the beginning of this dissertation is an actual essay written for this exam by a very frustrated, young black man who feels his dialect is not equal and is hindering his progress toward a college education. He did not pass the essay exam and he will continue to fail the exam until such time as he stops writing his essay in black dialect, his language, and begins using standard English in his essays.

An editorial in the Atlanta Constitution of March 7, 1980 clarifies the situation:

The Georgia Regents' Test, which must be passed before one can graduate from a school in the university system, is a good idea, but allegations that it is racially biased must be investigated. The Office of Civil Rights in Atlanta is looking into allegations by a Fort Valley State College teacher that the test discriminates against blacks. The agency says the exam will be considered discriminatory if the passing rate for blacks is less than 80 percent of the passing rate for whites. The tests are designed to measure reading and writing skills. That students should be able to read and write standard English before they are

graduated is a reasonable goal. They should be able to learn that in 16 years. You can bet employers will demand it. The catch in all this is whether the tests actually measure what they're supposed to. It is possible to put together a test that is biased toward a certain culture. Testing has reached a stage where this can be all but eliminated, so there is no excuse for it. The allegations present serious problems for the Board of Regents because test data are not supposed to be kept by race. Exams are graded blindly with Social Security numbers serving as identification for test-takers. This should further serve to guarantee fairness in grading the tests.

I have participated in the grading sessions for the Regents' Essay exams. Three separate readers grade the tests but do not make any marks on the copy. Two out of the three must give the essay a passing mark for it to pass. Generally the graders do not come from the student's home school which is identified by a code number stamped on the back of the copy.

Often one can spot the paper of a black student or foreign student by his characteristic errors. Some teachers tell students to identify themselves as black or foreign born just as the student in the sample essay did to elicit special consideration from the graders. The papers are failed not because they are written by black students or

members of other ethnic minorities but because they are not written in standard English.

In some years the passing rate for a predominantly black school in the University System of Georgia, such as Fort Valley, has been as low as eighteen percent on the essay part of the exam, whereas it can be as high as eighty percent at the Georgia Institute of Technology which only takes students with the highest combined SAT scores, few of whom are black. I personally taught a bright, personable, young black man from Fort Valley State who had completed a bachelor's degree in Chemistry and was prevented from receiving his degree because he could not pass the essay portion of the Regents' Exam. He would have been allowed to take a special foreign student Regent's Exam had he been a foreign student in a similar situation.

All of this is past history now since the State of Georgia has settled its case with the United States Government and agreed to more actively integrate the several predominantly black state colleges (against protests to maintain their ethnic quality from many black groups) and instituted a massive remedial program at the college level to enable speakers of nonstandard English (blacks) to learn to write essays in standard English.

Some students will inevitably be caught in the cracks between the old system and the new, but the majority will be better off for the changes providing that the remedial

instruction is applied in a scientific manner taking into account the areas of difficulty that black dialect speaking students have (see Chapter 3 of this dissertation).

I do not think it was the aim of the U. S. Government to wipe out black dialect but rather to promote a bidialectal situation resembling but not as extreme as that described by Charles Ferguson in his article, Diglossia (1959:336):

Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which in addition to the primary dialects of language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community; which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

To be sure, not all blacks speak black dialect, but certainly those who do should become diglossic if they wish to function on an equal basis educationally. While many professions require a good facility for communication in standard English many other technical fields are not so stringent. Results of this dissertation have shown that

many of the students had obtained responsible positions, without a facility in standard English, in more technical areas but still felt a need to return to school to learn more.

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