here and seem to be gradually turning into adpositions. ~~ach~~ verbs are called "coverbs" (e.g. Chinese *gei* 'give, ~~or~~', as in *Wo gei ta mai xiangyan* 'I buy cigarettes for ~~im~~', lit. 'I give him buy cigarettes'). Deverbal adpositions are also found in European languages (e.g. English *~~during~~*, French *pendant* 'during', Russian *nesmotrja* 'despite', lit. 'not looking').

Besides prepositions and postpositions, we occasionally find *circumpositions*, which consist of two elements bracketing the complement (e.g. *for X's sake*); *ambipositions*, which may occur on either side of the complement, e.g. Classical Greek *héneka* 'because of'; and *inpositions*, which occur between the constituents of a multiword complement (see Dryer, to appear).

[*See also* Case; Functional Linguistics; Grammaticalization; Parts of Speech; Semantics *and* Typology and Universals.]

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ADVERBS. *See* Grammaticalization; Parts of Speech; *and* Typology and Universals.

AFFIXATION. The term "affixation" denotes the technique of concatenating affixes—morphological (not lexical) elements which are non-words—either directly to roots or stems, or to affixes in the case of affix cumulation, e.g. *conven-tion-al-iz-ation.* This "concatenative morphology" is generally more common than other techniques (conversion, ablaut, umlaut—or subtraction, as in dialectal German *hond* 'dog', *hon* 'dog-s').

Affixes which follow roots are called "suffixes," e.g. *dark-en(-ed)*; affixes which precede roots are called "prefixes," e.g. *(re-)en-list.* Suffixes are in general more common than prefixes (Cutler et al. 1985), and both are more common than other types of affix. The combination of a prefix and a suffix (e.g. *en-light-en*) is classified by some as a "circumfix" or "ambifix," but only when the prefix and suffix parts are not themselves autonomous (cf. *en-* and *-en* in *en-light-en,* cf. *en-list, dark-en*), but rather are divided parts of an autonomous affix (cf. Hall 2000).

An "infix" is an affix which divides the root by being inserted into it, e.g. the Latin *n-* infix in *vi/n/c-ō* 'I win' vs. *vīc-ī* 'I won' (cf. Moravcsik 2000). An "interfix" is a meaningless affix inserted between words (e.g. Spanish *-i-* in *pel-i-rrojo* 'red-haired' from *pelo* 'hair' and *rojo* 'red'), or between root and suffix (e.g. Spanish *-eg-* in *pedr-eg-oso* 'rocky', adjective from *piedra* 'rock', similar to *pel-oso* 'hairy' from *pelo*; cf. Dressler and Merlini 1990). The existence of "transfixes" (infixed circumfixes, Broselow 2000) is dubious; see Kilani-Schoch and Dressler 1984.

[*See also* Morphology; Generative Morphology; *and* Stem and Root.]

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WOLFGANG U. DRESSLER

AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH (AAVE). Since the mid-1960s, no single variety of American English has been the focus of as much

scholarly research and publication, nor of as much public commentary and controversy, as African American Vernacular English (AAVE). What to call it has itself been an issue. Changes in the ethnic identifier, from "Negro" to "Black" to "African American," are relatively simple reflections of evolution in the preferred designations for its primary speakers. However, "Vernacular" replaced "Non-Standard" in the early 1970s as a less negative way of signaling that not every variety of English spoken by African Americans is included, that not all African Americans speak it, and that those who speak it do not do so all of the time. Finally, alternatives like "Ebonics" and "African American Language"—popularly equated with AAVE in recent public discussions, but with roots in the early 1970s—are potentially quite different in denotation and connotation. Ebonics, for one thing, theoretically includes linguistic and paralinguistic features from Caribbean and West African varieties as well as those of the United States, although in practice it does not. Moreover, both terms emphasize African ancestral roots and to some extent oppose classification of this variety as a "dialect" of English (see Williams 1975:vi; Rickford 1999:xxi–xxiii).

AAVE has attracted significant scholarly and popular interest because of its distinctiveness and vigor, its ubiquity in African American literature, music, life and culture, its connection with educational crises facing African American students, and the descriptive challenges and historical puzzles it poses for sociolinguists and variationists. For instance, variable rules were first introduced (in 1968) to handle the variable contraction and deletion of the AAVE copula ('he is/'s/Ø tall'), and the relative influence of African, English, and Creole sources in the development of AAVE is a subject of perennial interest.

Especially in its popular designation as Ebonics, AAVE is frequently associated with the current slang of black teenagers and young adults; however, slang words (like *phat* 'excellent' and *bustin out* 'looking good') tend to be relatively short-lived. Moreover, they are often regionally restricted and cross over into usage by young Americans more generally, regardless of their ethnicity. More distinctive, and in some ways more intriguing for what they reveal about interactional barriers between races, are old, geographically widespread lexical usages like *ashy* for the appearance of black skin in winter, and *kitchen* for the especially kinky hair at the nape of one's neck. These are familiar to African Americans of all ages but are virtually unknown to white Americans and other ethnic groups. African Americans are usually surprised to discover that other Americans don't recognize or employ these lexical items, at least not in the "black" sense.

Of greater interest to linguists are AAVE's phonological and grammatical features. Many of the phonological features, like the simplification of same-voice clusters ([han] 'hand', [pas] 'past') or the realization of Standard English interdental fricatives as stops ([tin] 'thin', [den] 'then'), are shared with other metropolitan English dialects. However, their frequencies are often higher in AAVE than in other American dialects, and AAVE sometimes extends the processes to environments in which other American dialects do not (e.g. *r*-deletion between vowels, as in *Carol > Ca'ol*). Some of AAVE's characteristic phonology—e.g. the monophthongization of *ai* ([ra:d] 'ride') or the neutralization of [ɪ] and [ɛ] before nasals ([pɪn] 'pin' or 'pen') is shared by Southern white dialects too, a reflection of the fact that, until 1900, 90% of the African American population was concentrated in the South. (Who got what from whom is still an open question.)

AAVE does, however, have phonological features that are more distinctive. One is the rule deleting initial voiced stops in several tense-aspect auxiliaries (e.g. the unique use of *ain't* for 'didn't', or the realization of 'I don't know' as [a õ no] and 'I'm going to do it' as [ã mə du ɪt]). This is rare in English dialects except for Gullah and the Caribbean English creoles (e.g., *ben>en, go>o, da>a*), a fact with potential diachronic significance. Another distinctive feature is the pronunciation of the vowels in words like *pay* and *no* as monophthongs, without the offglides ([ey], [ow]) found in other varieties of American English. This is commonest among older African Americans (born before World War I), and is, interestingly, also characteristic of Caribbean English creoles.

Grammatically, the features that are most distinctive of AAVE, and the ones that have been most engaging to linguists, are in the verb phrase. They include the absence of present tense forms of the copula (*is*, *are*, but not *am*), and the use of a wide range of preverbal tense-aspectual markers, like invariant habitual *be* (*he be late* 'he is usually late'), stressed *BIN* to situate the initiation of a state in the remote past (*She BIN married* 'She has been married for a long time, and still is'), and *be done* for future or habitual resultant states (*he be done ate* 'he will have eaten' or 'he has usually already eaten').

Other AAVE grammatical features include multiple negation (*He ain't goin nowhere nohow*); the inversion

of negative auxiliaries with indefinite pronoun subjects in declarative sentences (*Didn' nobody leave*); the use of *say* in serial verb-like constructions to introduce the complement of verbs like *tell* (*She told me say she would win*); existential *it* and *dey got* (*it's some chicken in the icebox, dey got some fine people here*); and the absence of possessive -*s* (*Mary∅ boychild*) and of third singular present tense -*s* (*he walk∅ a lot*). As with the phonological features, several of these grammatical features are also found in other English varieties, especially in the US South.

Quantitative studies of sociolinguistic variation in the US have often focused on African American communities, covering Harlem, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Wilmington (Delaware), Philadelphia, Hyde County (North Carolina), College Station (Texas), and Oakland, East Palo Alto, and Los Angeles in California. From these we have a rich picture of how AAVE use varies according to socioeconomic class, age, network, and style, making AAVE a prime exemplar of the orderly heterogeneity that is fundamental to sociolinguistics. For instance, studies of social-class variation from the 1960s (Harlem, Detroit) indicated that grammatical features like copula absence, multiple negation, and the absence of present tense -*s* were sharply stratified, with African American working-class and underclass speakers using them 50% to 75% of the time while middle-class speakers used them only 10% of the time or less. More recent studies of class variation in AAVE are rare, but from informal evidence and one or two systematic studies, it is clear that class stratification is as strong as ever. This explains in part why middle- and upper-class black luminaries like US Congressman Kweisi Mfume and entertainer Bill Cosby were so vocal in their critiques of the Oakland (California) school board's 1996 proposal to take Ebonics into account in teaching Standard English and Language Arts.

Use of AAVE is also more frequent among adolescents and young adults than among older speakers, except for receding features like the deletion of unstressed initial and medial syllables (e.g. [*a*]*bout*, *sec[re]t[ar]y*). It is more frequent, too, in informal conversation among African Americans who are friends or peer-group members, than in individual interactions between African Americans and whites, particularly when they are strangers. For several core AAVE features, especially ones—like invariant habitual *be* and preterit *had*—that appear to have undergone recent grammatical change, urban (rather than rural) youth appear to be the primary users. With respect to gender, early indications that males were much heavier users of AAVE features than were females have been challenged by recent fieldwork conducted by female researchers, and traditional claims that AAVE is relatively uniform across the US are increasingly being questioned. The need for more systematic investigation of regional variation is clear.

Urban African American youth—among the most vigorous speakers of AAVE—are often considerably behind grade level in reading, writing, and other subjects. Relatedly, they tend to have some of the highest drop-out, unemployment, and underemployment rates, and to be disproportionately targeted by the criminal justice system. Many of the contributing factors lie outside linguistics, including limited school facilities and trained teachers in urban ghettoes, low expectations, and institutional racism; but for more than thirty years, linguists have recognized that there are some linguistic elements to the problem, and have explored possible solutions (see Baratz and Shuy 1969, Adger et al. 1999). In fact, the earliest community studies of AAVE were funded by educational agencies who saw the potential relevance of linguistics.

Linguists working in this area often note the regular differences between the students' vernacular and the standard or mainstream English required by schools. IQ and other achievement tests can directly disadvantage AAVE speakers if these differences are not taken into account, and teachers who mistakenly interpret such differences as evidence of intellectual deficit or laziness can have stultifying effects on their students' performance. Linguists have proposed and led dialect-awareness workshops to counter teachers' negative attitudes and practices with respect to non-mainstream features and discourse patterns, and they have also advocated specific strategies for improving the teaching of curriculum-central subjects like reading and writing. These include systematic comparisons between the vernacular and standard varieties (contrastive analysis), exercises to increase students' bidialectal competence in speech and writing, and the use of dialect readers and other transitional strategies to improve the teaching of reading. Linguists were extensively involved in attempts to clear up public misunderstanding of the Oakland school board's "Ebonics" proposals to build on the vernacular's systematicity and expressiveness, and in the "King" case nearly two decades earlier, in which an Ann Arbor (Michigan) school was sued for failing to overcome the barriers to equal education posed by its teachers' negative attitudes to students' AAVE (see Baugh 2000, Rickford and Rickford 2000, Smitherman 2000). The

most recent and geographically extensive intervention project is the Urban Minorities Reading Project, which analyzes the phonemic decoding errors of African American, Latino, and white students and uses an individualized reading manual to improve literacy scores. (Visit: www.ling.upenn.edu/~labov/UMRP/UMRP.html)

Finally, questions about the history and development of AAVE continue to stimulate research and controversy among linguists. They cluster around two issues: (i) To what extent did African, British English, and Creole sources contribute to the early development and subsequent history of AAVE? More specifically, was AAVE itself once a creole, like Jamaican and other English-based creoles in the Caribbean, or did the African indentured servants and slaves who came to the US from the 17th to the 19th century acquire the English dialects of British indentured servants and settlers here, without the extensive simplification and restructuring characteristic of pidginization and creolization? (ii) Has AAVE been diverging from white American vernaculars (and Standard English) in the 20th century, and is divergence rather than convergence its current trajectory? Although theoretically independent of (i), some linguists take the position that AAVE was primarily influenced by and convergent with white English vernaculars from the 17th century to the mid-19th, and that the most distinctive AAVE features emerged only in the 20th century, as blacks moved out of the South and faced sharp segregation in urban ghettoes.

Although there is no consensus on either issue, some of the parameters have shifted, and new kinds of data are being used. The early position of William Stewart and Joe Dillard that there was a widespread US plantation creole, comparable to Gullah on the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands, no longer meets with wide support. Creolists today tend to speak more of relative influences from creole sources, either through early slave importations from the Caribbean or through local developments in (Southern) American colonies where the demographic conditions for creolization were most favorable. In recent years, relevant data have come less from literary and other texts from earlier centuries, and more from recordings made with ex-slaves in the early 20th century, or with the descendants of African American emigrés to Liberia, Samaná in the Dominican Republic, and Nova Scotia, Canada ("diaspora" data). There has been more emphasis on detailed quantitative and linguistic analysis of specific variables, like copula absence and past-tense marking, and on detailed consideration of demographic

and sociohistorical factors (see Mufwene et al. 1998, Poplack 2000, Wolfram and Bailey 2000).

[*See also* Bilingualism and Multilingualism; Diglossia; English; Pidgins and Creoles; Social Variation; *and* Sociolinguistics.]

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AFRICAN LANGUAGES. The African continent forms one of the most complex linguistic areas of the world; estimates of the number of languages spoken there range from seven hundred to three thousand. Barely more than one hundred have developed into standard languages. The majority of the languages are still unrecorded; for many, little but the name is known. Although early descriptions of African languages date back to the 17th century, African linguistics as a research field developed only during the 19th century.

1. Genetic classification. Until the 1950s, work on the linguistic classification of African languages was dominated by a threefold division into "Hamitic," "Sudanic," and "Bantu" languages (Meinhof 1936, Westermann